

2475/4056

MONASH UNIVERSITY

THESIS ACCEPTED IN SATISFACTION OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ON 1 September 2000

[REDACTED]
for Sec. Ph.D. and Scholarships Committee

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ERRATA

- p 20 line 24, replace "one" with "some"
- p 49 last sentence "theorist's" for "theorists"
- p 53 last line "code" for "coda"
- p 55 para 2 line 1 "within" for "and"
- p 62 para 2 line 8 "historian's" for "historians"
- p 86 line 19 "cementing" for "cementating"
- p 97 line 26 "is" for "are"
- p 106 line 16 "Gonzalez-Crussi" for "He"
- p 107 note 121 line 3 "code" for "coda"
- p 118 line 10 "threat: the" for "threat, the"
- p 121 line 2 "used" inserted between "words" and "in"
- p 123 line 7 "activity: to" for "activity, to"
- p 155 note 82 line 2 "*Gullible: The*" for "*Gullible The*"
- p 165 note 103 last line "one" for "it"
- p 186 last line "code" for "coda"
- p 189 line 17 "both self and others" for "both and others"
- p 205 line 24 "killer's" for "killers"
- p 226 line 9 "(except forensic pathology perhaps)," for ", (except forensic pathology perhaps)"
- p 241 line 6 "Camilla" for "Camille"
- p 241 para 2 line 2 "Griggers'" for "Griggers"
- p 244 line 8 "are/cannot" for "are cannot"
- p 293 line 17 "'I'" for "'I'"

ADDENDUM

- p 33 add footnote at para 2 line 13 "...ethical mode of being." 45a. Most particularly in *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodern Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 1992.
- p 75 note 61 line 2 at end of note "1990, pp. 188-196, especially p. 189."
- p 125 note 29 line 12 read "It is here Sedgwick also locates..."

**Pleasure, Perversion and Death:
Three Lines of Flight for the
Viewing Body**

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**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research
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31 January 2000**

Thesis Abstract

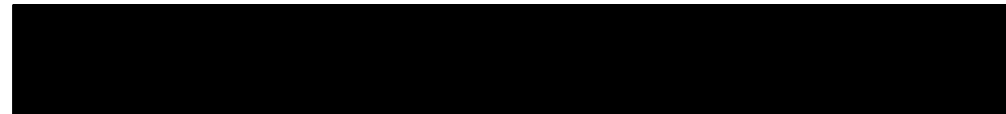
This thesis argues for a new formulation of the viewing subject. Traditionally within film theory the viewing subject is configured as having a platonic, identificatory relationship with the narrative of film. My work argues that such identification fails to address the corporeal affect of extreme images, most evident in horror films. Further I will argue that film itself stands only as a referent in order to affect the viewing body, and images of film cannot refer to a higher order of being judged 'good' or 'bad', but instead may only be measured based on the changes they cause in the viewing subject. In this way the subject viewing exists as transforming in time rather than being in space, a form or mode of 'becoming' according to the theories of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

Three terms will be explored in order to posit three lines of flight toward 'becoming' - 'pleasure', 'perversion' and 'death'. These terms are presented because they refer traditionally to horror films. Pleasure is that which the viewing subject achieves through watching, but by watching horror film any simple or conventional meaning of pleasure for the viewing subject is confounded. Perversion is a term used to denote the type of film horror films are within a traditional cinematic canon, the type of person who enjoys such films and the type of pleasure such films may elicit. Death is the aim of all horror and the pinnacle of 'that which affects' - it affects all subjects and cannot fail to elicit an affect.

This thesis conflates different discursive genres in order to explore fully its three primary terms. Medical discourse is fed into cinematic, feminist and psychoanalytic discourse. The theories of Deleuze and Guattari have been criticised by feminists for their lack of consideration of real lived bodies. Feminists have also criticised scientific discourse for its claim to objectivity and failure to address its systems of practice and power. Horror films have been analysed both in a positive and negative sense by feminist film theorists. By conflating all these discursive practices in my analysis of the viewing body I hope to repudiate the value of ideology which claims both integrity and objectivity, or an appeal to a higher order, moral, scientific or otherwise. Synthesis between epistemic systems in this thesis mirrors synthesis between the viewing body and the images which affect it towards change. As a feminist practice, this thesis posits such syntheses as valuable, urgent, and important toward formulating new knowledges.

Higher order concepts, incarnated in rigid definitions of pleasure, perversion and death defined clinically, scientifically or even filmicly, will be replaced with syntheses, of the self and others (be they film or flesh). In this way no film, or body (of a person or knowledge) may be predicted as 'good' or 'bad'. Through a transformative affect, watching horror film becomes the first, domestic and quiet moment toward theorising a Deleuzian subject in reference to a material body.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text presented herein.



Patricia MacCormack

24 January 2000

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank all those who read, listened to and critiqued the project through its stages of writing. Especial thanks to Rachel Fensham, who was hurled into supervising me despite having her own thesis to complete, who put up with some strange and miserable drafts and who was there to meet my demanding needs. Thanks and love go to Rosi Braidotti for acting not only as surrogate supervisor but surrogate family during my first overseas visit. Her overwhelming confidence in this project gave me faith in its purpose and a rigour to its writing.

Other people I wish to thank are all those who were inundated with my drafts, solicited or otherwise, at Monash University - Rose Lucas for getting me started, Denise Cuthbert for understanding during the censorship circus and a faith in my work's value, Claire Colebrook and especially Gerald Fitzgerald who's tireless enthusiasm for everything I wrote was a great encouragement. Thanks also to Maryanne Dever for support in the Centre.

Thanks most to my family. To Tony and Leon for being keen despite the foreignness of this project, for many important pictures and for support and love. To Charlotte for keeping me company during long writing hours. To Robert who was the instigation, driving force and support for every word I wrote.

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Introduction

This thesis is an exploratory work. It posits a human body in front of a television screen exhibiting images of extreme horror in order to theorise a new mode of experiencing one's own flesh and eventually one's self. This thesis is about film, yet it is adamantly not a film thesis. It is about subjectivity, yet it is against the idea of affirming or inventing new forms of subjectivity. And it is feminist, yet it includes medical texts and other discourses historically problematic for feminism. It is, then, a thesis of contradictions. But the aim of this thesis makes these contradictions clear. This thesis (somewhat ambitiously) sets out to theorise the beginning, or the first steps, of a different mode of existing in the world. Its most important aim is to theorise subjectivity as both immanently embodied and transformative, a body becoming without ever being.

This thesis is set, however, in a banal, domestic sphere - in front of the television. And who perform on this television are the lowest level of visual 'art', European gore films. I intend to utilise the relatively under-theorised genre of Italian gore film to posit a tangible space and moment whereby we, as viewing subjects, may set into motion our becoming, representing unbound flesh instead of integrated bodies. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari are the most important theorists in my analysis of this material. Their theories of becoming, of rhizomatics, of the body without organs as well as of anti-

faciality will serve as the model of being towards which my viewing body shall aspire. Italian gore films exist at the intersecting point of being and becoming because they demand a change in the viewer as a result of the affect of horror. In feminist terms, any devaluing of the traditional body of 'humanity', that being the white male healthy body, represents a point of potential rupture for the culture which reiterates such a body in every discursive system, be it science or film theory. In the 'molecular' theories of Deleuze and Guattari, the integrated, singular, spatially 'molar' subject - dominantly represented in traditional philosophy as the white, imminently omniscient male - is repudiated for molecular configurations of being temporally. The feminist¹ and Deleuze and Guattari readings of subjectivity both take the minoritarian as the first step towards different modes of being in the world, but the two philosophies are not necessarily complementary. My reading of films takes a viewer as the first minoritarian to represent the dismantling of traditional subjectivity, and feminism and Deleuze and Guattari will mediate this viewer towards a new molecular form of being, yet neither philosophy will be more or less important in this project than the other. I am not looking for narrative becomings but for potentials toward becoming and therefore the importance of feminism and Deleuze and Guattari, in this work, are their mediation rather than their (impossible) conflation.

One of the attractions of Italian gore films is that they escape a mandatory reading through film theory. They defy narrative cohesion, either by presenting surreal, nonsensical narrative, as in Dario Argento's *Suspiria* (Italy, 1977) or by offering no narrative at all, such as Lucio Fulci's *...E Tu Vivrai Nel Terrore! L'Aldila*. ('The Beyond', Italy, 1981). The majority of traditional film theory and less recent feminist film theory posits identification and the ability to read the symbols of film within the narrative structure as the prime mode of interpreting film. Horror films especially have been theorised within feminist film criticism as representing an oscillation between male identification with

¹ 'Feminist' here is used broadly, as my use of feminists is from a broad range of micro epistemes within the general term 'feminist', which is why I am reluctant to specify any one particular area of feminism as my focus.

the slasher and a female viewer's identification either with the male (Mulvey, although not specifically for horror film)² or with the monster (Williams)³. Ideas which perpetuate masculinist identificatory readings of horror film, such as catharsis (Creed) or becoming masculine to survive (Clover),⁴ exhibit a desire for feminists to look at horror films in new, less derogatory ways, however these readings remain within the traditional scope of film theory. Even such hardcore films as those analysed within this thesis have been given academic attention, most notably from Mikita Brottman in her book *Offensive Films: Towards an Anthropology of Cinema Vomitif*.⁵ This thesis goes beyond these texts, however, because the screen is not the object of analysis, nor is audience identification with the screen characters. This thesis, instead, explores the viscosity of viewing.⁶ Viscerality is not simply a reduction to viscera; hence it is not just viewing films that make us sick to the stomach. The viscera here stands for all parts of the body, both repressed (such as internal organs) and expressed (such as eyes and mouth), and the ways in which the body is affected by images, not narrative. Presumably in gore films images horrify, but within an affect of horror there lies pleasure. Pleasure is an important factor in the thesis because, despite the fact it is utilised by culture in reference to an identifiably positive effect, the pleasures of horror create a sensational affect, a psychically corporeal (where mind and body are not spliced) altering moment. Even this idea has been explored in film theory. Vivian Sobchack, in *The*

² Mulvey, Laura "Afterthought on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' inspired by *Duel in the Sun*". In Kaplan, E. Ann, ed. *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. New York: Routledge. 1990, pp. 24-35.

³ Williams, Linda. 'When the Woman Looks' in Doane, Maryanne, Mellencamp, Patricia and Williams, Linda, eds. *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*. Los Angeles: University Publications of America. 1984, pp. 67-82.

⁴ Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge. 1993.

Clover, Carol J. *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1992.

⁵ Brottman, Mikita. *Offensive Films: Towards an Anthropology of Cinema Vomitif*. Contributions to the Study of Science Fiction and Fantasy, No. 72. Westport Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press. 1997.

⁶ In her introduction Brottman discusses offensive films as those which "Focus on the experience of the human body and a concern for ideas about that experience, rather than the aesthetics of thought." 1997, p. 3. However her focus remains firmly upon the viscosity on-screen rather than off.

*Address of the Eye*⁷ uses Merleau-Ponty to read film phenomenologically. Linda Williams, in both *Hard Core* and 'Film Bodies',⁸ discusses the identification of the body with images rather than the mind or subject with narrative. At a broader level Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer*⁹ explores ways in which our vision and that which we see affects and creates the bodies we are. Perhaps I have jumped genealogically too far too fast. All of these texts, although presenting radical new ways to configure vision in an embodied subject, leave the viewing body at the site of analysis. I want the body to become futued, by which I mean that the body affected is altered irrevocably and is something different at each moment of affect. The horror of Italian gore film in this thesis, thus, not only affects the flesh but hurls the embodied self 'into orbit',¹⁰ or upon a 'line of flight',¹¹ both of which are explicit Deleuzian/Guattarian modes of becoming.

Ironically, the closest theories to my own are from a book which, through oversight or simply coincidence, I discovered only near the end of writing. Steven Shaviro's *The Cinematic Body*¹² sets out to read film viewing in a Deleuzian/Guattarian framework, aiming to theorise the "basic tactility and viscosity of cinematic experience... Cinema produces real effects *in* the viewer, rather than merely presenting phantasmatic reflections *to* the viewer."¹³ Shaviro's book encompasses horror films as well as films which deal with abject pleasure (for him comedy) and perversion, three themes important in my work. In what ways does finding and reading Shaviro's book validate

⁷ Sobchack, Vivian. *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1992.

⁸ Williams, Linda. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the Frenzy of the Visible*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1989 and 'Film Bodies: Gender, Genre and Excess', *Film Quarterly*, v.44: 4, Summer 1991, pp. 2-13.

⁹ Crary, Jonathan, (1990) *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT. 1994.

¹⁰ From "Mediators" Conversation with Antoine Dulaure and Claire Parnet. *L'Autre Journal* 8 (October 1985). In Deleuze, Gilles. (1990) *Negotiations. 1972-1990*. Trans. Martin Joughin. New York: Columbia University Press. 1995, pp. 121-134.

¹¹ From most of Deleuze and Guattari's work but here most notably (1980) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. London: The Althone Press. 1987.

¹² Shaviro, Steven. *The Cinematic Body*. Theory Out of Bounds. Vol.2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1993.

¹³ Shaviro, 1993, p. 51.

proceeding with my project? The major difference is that Shaviro, although by no means insensitive to feminist issues, seeks to set out to have fun with his theory, ("It is attuned more to cheap thrills than to judicious evaluations"¹⁴) while remaining within the parameters of conventional film analysis. This produces a playful text, which holds much potential for reading film differently. My thesis is, however, primarily a feminist text, or a feminist Deleuzian/Guattarian text, where I force issues of real bodies, real suffering and real women into consideration of the validity of becoming. For whom is becoming most dangerous? For whom is it a tactic for liberation? And from where is becoming a departure? These questions place becoming through televisual affect as a process, which must consider the particularities of each body watching, their history and what they have to gain or lose by putting themselves into orbit. For this reason the thesis is not simply an exploration of the cinematic body but a striving towards an ethics of such a body and its future potential. Shaviro's work is, of course, in no way unethical, it simply has different aims and a different genealogical, textual, and corporeal, history to work with than do I. Shaviro sees post-modernist theory as already at work in culture. I do not. He states "Precisely because postmodernism dissolves any notion of fixed or personal identity or of an integral and self-contained subject, fragments and traces of subjectivity (or better of 'personality') are strewn more or less everywhere in the postmodern landscape."¹⁵ For women, as for racially-othered, sexuality-othered or other forms of othered bodies, this phantasmatic personality or subjectivity is yet to be achieved in culture. Shaviro's astute summary of the abandon arising from postmodernism is precisely the reason for not only my own dissatisfaction with it, but also Deleuze and Guattari's attack on the theoretical movement. Postmodernism is, however, often where film theorists turn for 'new' readings and interpretations of the significations in film. And indeed for 'new' ways of understanding signification itself - a mode of reading film where any interpretation goes, as the signifier loses its fixed meaning and exists as multiple meanings for individuals that compete but which are no more or less true than each other, (this may seem a more positive

¹⁴ Shaviro, 1993, p. vii.

¹⁵ Shaviro, 1993, p.viii.

way of understanding film). Certainly for feminism the lack of solidarity in film theory has transformed the singular focus of censorship feminism in the sixties into the more liberal analysis of misogynistic film texts as signifying more than one thing to different readers. Postmodernism as a tactical form of reading which demands a mandate for neither truth nor conformity, but simply for multiplicity, has its place in film analysis. In his comparison of postmodernism and the thought of Deleuze and Guattari Philip Goodchild locates the major difference between the two in this catalogue of multiplicities. In a comparison of Lyotard and Deleuze and Guattari Goodchild points to the emptiness of postmodernism due to its inability to connect with its own multiplicities. He states:

By contrast, Deleuze and Guattari are less interested in overlap and contradictions between territories than the ways in which such different territories can interact, affect and deterritorialise each other. The difference between Lyotard, on the one hand, and Deleuze and Guattari, on the other, is therefore a matter of strategic emphasis: difference as against synthesis.¹⁶

The multiplicities of postmodernism exist exactly as Shaviro suggests they do, as fragments and traces upon the postmodern landscape. Although this may elucidate a tautology in postmodern thinking, these fragments exist as wholes, as unified and hermeneutic entities, because they do not belong in any one rational narrative, even though they remain fragmentary within a larger whole, such as society or culture. Two problems arise in this system of thinking for both feminism and for Deleuze and Guattari. The first is the dissolving of any notion of communitarianism, or connectivity or solidarity. Especially for oppressed groups, the fragmentary existence of knowledges and subjects which postmodernism creates can, at its worst, simply refer to an extreme form of egocentrism which may reaffirm the success of the traditional white male subject, even if he is now a white male post-modern subject. There is evidence of this already occurring when we look towards precisely whom is formulating postmodernism itself - Lyotard, Baudrillard and many other Western, white

¹⁶ Goodchild, Philip. *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*. London: Sage. 1996, p. 141.

male philosophers. Contrary to postmodernism's construction of multiplicity, difference does not need to exist in order to enhance the space between people, as feminism has proven. Goodchild cites the "brief but vehement attack which Guattari made on 'postmodernism' in the form of the thought of Lyotard and Baudrillard: Guattari attacked the 'social abandonism' that makes collective political action impossible by multiplying differences."¹⁷ Guattari's anxiety is an important and urgent one, not only in reference to political solidarity, but in reference also to what the meaning of difference might be. Difference does not always have to mean divided. Postmodernism makes difference socially democratic, in that it refers to the differences within everyone, and this is Guattari's problem with difference. Such a postmodern version of difference is not necessarily destructive, but it is a theory which, implemented now, is too much too soon.

Culturally, difference has more often than not referred to a negative form of being, which historically is an oppressed form of being. Difference is not yet the democratic term that postmodernism claims it to be. Difference from the dominant paradigm is often enough a political alliance, which does not destroy differences operating within such an alliance. However this form of political solidarity is as marginalising as it is solidifying and therefore excludes any dominant subject from ever needing to form a politically transformative alliance. Feminists of difference have theorised solidarity as that which celebrates difference, specificity and the potential for transformation of the subject within a politically marginal group. Recognition of cultural difference within feminism, disagreement and in fighting has been productive rather than dismantling.¹⁸ Difference in feminism creates connections and new syntheses, in Goodchild's terminology, rather than the maintenance of the integrity of difference as multiple and hermeneutic. There is no need to see difference as terminally divided, because to do so refuses any possibility of a social ethic.

¹⁷ Goodchild, 1996, pp. 140-141. Goodchild refers to Guattari, *Cartographies Schizoanalytiques*. Paris: Galilée. 1989, pp. 55-57.

¹⁸ The strongest advocate of this form of solidarity is probably bell hooks. See her article "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women." In Sneja Gunew, ed. *A Reader in Feminist Knowledge*. New York: Routledge. 1991, pp. 27-41.

The fragments of postmodernism exist as a totalising effect in space, where new ideas overlap others without necessarily transforming them. On the other hand, Deleuze and Guattari's connections and feminism's version of difference within solidarity both exist upon the temporal plane where transformation is the key element of success. This creates an ethical space because it de-totalises knowledges by connecting them uniquely with other knowledges in order to transform all knowledge, and to move the politic through time as a becoming rather than leave it in space as an ideology.

The second problem of postmodernism's creation of fragmentary knowledges and subjects is that such hermeneutic fragments have no history, hence no accountability and no acknowledgement of oppression, suffering or domination, as expressed by Jane Flax in her article 'Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory',¹⁹ among many others. Postmodernism dissolves validated subjectivity before women had any claim to it. Oppressive constructions which posit a certain kind of body as the body of reason, knowledge and hence subjectivity, prevent women from, essentially, having any form of modernity to 'post'. Women's selfhood, like their bodies, was already epistemologically strewn everywhere in the landscape before Postmodernism arrived. Postmodernism represents for feminism an ambivalent set of theories. On one level, the idea that no integrated subjectivity encompassed in a particular kind of body is valid allows women to feel less othered, even theoretically fashionably progressive. However, the idea that male philosophers can colonise the othered-ness of women - as a form of philosophical transcendence of traditional modes of being - both refutes real bodies and their histories of pain and oppression, and claims that women stand at the frontier of all 'othered' bodies, all of whom can easily be appropriated. The female appropriation of male subjectivity that brings with it equality consideration, freedom from violence and sexual predation and the freedom to be ontologically known on our own terms is not so simple. The particularities of the viewing bodies in this thesis are considered at every turn, not simply

¹⁹ Flax, Jane. 'Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory'. In Nicholson, Linda J., ed. *Feminism/Postmodernism*. New York: Routledge. 1990, pp. 39-62.

because they may refer to women's bodies, but they refer to what these bodies, in their lines of flight, are flying from. One of the most interesting aspects of the lines of flight Deleuze and Guattari posit is that these lines can only ever fly *from* that point where they began, so a line of flight is not escaping from something entirely but a connection between the previous point and the next point. In this way the histories of bodies and oppression are not simply forgotten or repudiated, but are the very nexus for the flight, which, nonetheless, leaves such an oppressive system behind.

As a project that utilises film, this thesis refers to the creation of a space towards a different mode of being, no matter how minute. The films under discussion occur only in order to alter their viewer, not simply as texts which refer to and reflect society. Traditional analysis of the signification of meaning within postmodern film theory more often refers to what Goodchild states as Lyotard's project of 'differing'; "Differing regimes of representation conflict and contradict over a space which they construct in different ways."²⁰ Each theorist posits her or his theory as a new, correct analysis of, not simply the film that they analyse but the space in which that film exists as a cultural and textual entity. My use of film is as a line of flight, not as a reflection of that which the subject flies from. For this reason my analysis of film does not refer to a new way of reading film that can be catalogued within the multiple other ways of reading film as a different option. This use of film is towards becoming, it is primarily towards the change of the viewing subject and for this reason is not a reading of film at all, but rather, an instruction or suggestion towards becoming something different for the viewer. Film becomes secondary in so much as it is the *ignition* or the agitation towards making new connections, productions and plateaus of immanence - a specifically Deleuzian and Guattarian use of film. In my schema, the line of flight is made concrete, simple and domestic. It is the smallest beginning for Deleuze and Guattari's massive and radical project.

²⁰ Goodchild, 1996, p. 141.

Horror

Theorists of many forms of horror, be they psychoanalytic or filmic in their focus, have turned frequently to Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection in order to 'capture' the horror of horror, the 'thing' horror does to the subject, or why seemingly rational civilised persons are still victim to apparently irrational phobias and fears. I, however, do not find the answers to my queries concerning horror's affect on everyday people (and sitting in front of a television is even more everyday than psychotherapy or cinematic experience) in the work of Kristeva. Although this thesis is primarily about horror it does not utilise Kristeva's model. This thesis appeals to bodies; Kristeva's to law. Kristeva sees the law, which creates and makes possible abjection, as the guiding ethic of its behaviour. I will, in a discussion with Kristeva, attempt to suggest my own ethic of horror that does not appeal to a higher order but to the flesh. However her ideas about what constitutes horror will inform my theories and will allow me, in mediation rather than abrupt negation, to consider some of the urgent problems that utilising horror brings up, because it historically perpetuates the annihilation of othered bodies. The following section is a discussion of abjection theory and the reasons behind its notable absence in the rest of this work. It will also analyse some of the systems this thesis sets out to deconstruct, work outside of, or cast a line of flight from.

Horror, Affect and the Appeal to Self

Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* and the 'I'/Other system destroyed

Although *Powers of Horror* would seem to be suitable as a major text for discussion within the context of this thesis it has not been such for one important reason. Kristeva's formulation of the notion of abjection is deeply embedded, defined and made possible by its entrenchment within the

'normalised' Oedipal symbolic structure. The abject exists through borders, definitions, rigid sealing and hermeneutic boundaries. It exists by virtue of what it transgresses yet always depending on that which it transgresses in order to be. All borders of filth, from faeces to the corpse, exist at "the place where I am not and which permits me to be".²¹ Similarly these borders must stay in place in order that the abject may be, for in a post-hermeneutic world the abject is no more relevant than the object or the integrated 'I'. Because of the claim by this thesis that what should be aimed for is unsealed, unbound and processual subjectivity, the concept of abjection seems to insinuate madness or horror from a 'real' source such as war, and hence it seems more of a disease than a strategy for transformation. This is why Deleuze and Guattari's 'line of flight' is a comparative yet more positive version of what Kristeva refers to as a falling.²² Where Deleuze and Guattari's flying suggests autonomy, and a casting away of the symbolic structure, Kristeva's falling seems to verge on madness, with the symbolic casting away the 'I' instead of the 'I' flying from the symbolic. The 'I' does not have hope for change because falling is a regression rather than progression, however it remains a form of transformation that may not always align itself with madness or with nihilistic male phantasy. I shall go into the positive potential of abjection as a falling that may be better than remaining in the symbolic, especially for those who stand against dominant symbols as an example of the un-integrated 'I'.

Powers of Horror is a rather traditional psychoanalytic text, and traditional psychoanalysis refers, whether through exploring or critiquing such a referent, to integrated, valued male subjectivity. Many elements of *Powers of Horror* affirm such a referent. At its most hopeful, *Powers of Horror* is, however, an exercise as much in what psychoanalysis repudiates, as what integrated subjectivity repudiates in order to live. In brief, the abject is that which is not knowable by the subject, not clearly divided from the subject and what the

²¹ Kristeva, Julia. (1980) *Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection*. Trans Leon Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press. 1982, p. 3.

²² "...my entire body falls beyond the limit..." Kristeva, 1982, p. 3. Kristeva's use of the corpse, or cadaver as the ultimate ab(object) is emphasised by the translation where cadaver (*cadere*) literally means to fall, p. 3.

subject must identify as outside of itself in order to remain in the proper clean world of integrated subjectivity. The abject is an encroachment and defiler of borders, barriers and hence clearly defined 'things', be they 'I' or Other, 'good' or 'bad', desirable or disgusting, language or madness, God or self. Every opposition bleeds into its polar term within abjection, every integrated thing can no longer be known as a dividual entity unique to itself. This state of ambiguity is not a state of emergency but rather a state in which all things exist and which must be constantly checked and repudiated by the surveying psyche. Our psyche exists not only to create and affirm our dividual being but to re-create and re-affirm it, every time we are confronted with filth (our own or others) or horror. The abject is a volatile, ambiguous thing which is opposed to or confuses the simplest of psychoanalytic relationships - the 'I' and the Other. The abject is the not-quite-object that is necessarily repudiated by the 'I' in order to exist - filth, defilement - while also being a condition which the unintegrated or disintegrated 'I' potentially verges on in madness, in horror and in the constant condition of fear that taking an unidentified object as the object of desire causes in the subject. Any object which is the object of desire, the Other, and which cannot be defined, known and encompassed by the 'I' causes fear. As soon as the object or Other is unclear, abjection sets in. Where the subject vehemently refuses desire for such an other, phobia or fear is evident.

Out of the daze that has petrified him before the untouchable, impossible, absent body of the mother, a daze that has cut off his impulses from their objects, that is, from their representations, out of such a daze he causes, along with loathing, one word to crop up - fear.²³

Fear seems a non-corporeal, psychical defense. It takes its form from the inability of the subject to know its object, a confusion of the 'figuring out' of object choice, similar to that which occurs when the pervert is analysed in order to excavate the reasons behind any non-normalised desire. Object choice is

²³ Kristeva, 1982, p. 6. Kristeva's basic premise for abjection relies on the maternal. Because maternity is beyond the scope of this thesis, and also because I wish to analyse a potential feminist/female/non-male subject version of abjection I will not go into a discussion of maternity.

figured in order that 'I' may exist as a constant. Fear occurs when an object is no longer clear, yet not unclear. Ambiguity is most important in abjection. It encroaches both on borders of 'I' and Other as well as on borders of knowable/unknowable, clear/unclear and clean/unclean. The reason object in abjection is unclear, the preliminary condition for fear, is due to that which attacks the basic 'I' and Other relationship - non-specific *want*. Kristeva points continually to want without object and hence inevitably without 'I'. She states

But if one imagines (and imagine one must, for it is the working of imagination whose foundations are being laid here) the experience of want itself as logical, preliminary to being and object - to the being of the object - then one understands that abjection, and even more so abjection of self, is its only signified.²⁴

Want is difficult to figure within a traditional psychoanalytic structure. It is desire that refers itself to a higher order by being a veiled desire for a specific established signifier, and it is available theoretically only to male subjects. Want for the male subject is always about first setting eyes upon an object of desire and afterwards desiring the object (whether or not this is based upon desire for the mother is beyond the scope of this discussion). In the chapter 'Pleasure' I will discuss Foucault's anxieties about using the word 'desire' for this very reason. Deleuze uses 'desire' in an unbound form and I use the term pleasure to indicate the futility of any concept of autonomous choice in desire, where choosing a singular object becomes the most important sexual activity. Pleasure indicates for me both a non-specific object (or object or quality or 'thing', that which is not necessarily definable) and a non-predictable feeling, that changes the whole self; hence affect and not effect which would return the self to its previous subjectivity. Kristeva asks us to imagine want in a similar way to how I imagine pleasure - simply a condition of process, of drive without aim or object. Imagination will become important when I discuss the ethics of watched horror but here suffice it to say that the failure of imagination in configuring want (Deleuze's *desire* and my *pleasure*) is a failure which occurs

²⁴ Kristeva, 1982, p. 5.

through appealing to a higher order - God, language, psyche - the symbolic. Those who appeal to such orders are traditionally male subjects because psychoanalysis only allows such subjects an object of desire. Female desire is based on narcissism in psychoanalytic writings, so that the woman affirms herself as object only by assuring she exists within the 'I/object system of desire, even if it is as the subordinated term. According to traditional psychoanalysis, any time a woman wishes to stray from this configuration, but does not wish to 'become male' by simply switching places, her newly ambiguous position (or lack of position) would thrust her into abjection. This idea leaves many post-structuralist feminists dissatisfied with psychoanalysis. I do not wish to suggest, however, that the fear, which accompanies such ambiguity in object choice when one has broken free of the object/'I' dualism, disappears. It is an affect-ive sensation and Kristeva emphasises repeatedly the *jouissance* of such affect. Like the ambiguity of abjection itself, the affect of abjection is ambiguously violent and soothing, fascinating and horrifying, good and bad all at once. It is, as I stated above, an already present condition in the stabilized psyche of integrated subjectivity, which must be constantly monitored and repudiated. But to allow the *jouissance*, both terrible and wonderful, of abjection to permeate subjectivity is not necessarily to wallow in madness but at the most basic level to express dissatisfaction with the concept of irrefutably sealed integrated subjectivity. And to be able to express such dissatisfaction presumes an integrated subjectivity was possible, which, for women and racially other subjects, is never a necessary given.

Abjection, Aesthetics and the Primacy of Materiality

Although a quite strict psychoanalytic theory, the theory of abjection refers constantly to aesthetics. Kristeva uses aesthetics as an example of sublimated abjection. Any concept that sees abjection incorporated at all, even in a sublimated form, is a different and un-traditional form of existing. Also, the focus in her argument on male authors leads to the question; do only those who have something to lose if they fall sublimate abjection? Elizabeth Grosz has pointed this out in her discussion of Kristeva's use of literature,

These men, if they are to avoid complete psychical/signifying disintegration, remain anchored by some threads of identity to the symbolic... They are able to maintain their imperiled hold on the symbolic only by naming the abject...²⁵.

Using art to encompass and know abjection reduces the author to something akin to the scientist. The object, or in this case, the abject, is analysed in order that it may be put to 'use' without threatening the scientist/author with the irreducible effect such a concept may have on his subjectivity. For female subjects and any subject who is or wishes to exist at the margins of integrated subjectivity and the symbolic, however, they are already abject. They may insinuate a fall but it may also be an exploration of the fall that has already been the lot of such a subject. The most important signifier of whom may already be abject-ed, and who is not, is the body. When the body is male, white and of a certain age, sexual preference and other dominant binary index, it is rendered almost invisible or at least under the control of the psyche who lives it. When the body is female or racially other, it is already located within the abject because such a body does not have a monopoly on and hence a fixed safe place within the symbolic. Kristeva locates all origins of abjection in maternity, but at a more basic level, all women are aligned with such abjection. Only the white male child can compare his successful integration into the symbolic with the horror of coming from and being undifferentiated with his mother. For those bodies not valued as part of the symbolic system within which Kristeva explicitly sets her discussion, the abject is a constant companion by virtue of castration and colour. The horror of coming from the mother is matched daily by the horror of one's own body. If the male body does not exist *as* abjection but simply at the frontier of its potential, this may explain why Kristeva only uses male authors to explore ways in which abjection is sublimated and hence controlled in literature. For a woman author to come face to face with and identify the abject is something dominant culture emphasises within her body

²⁵ Grosz, Elizabeth. *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin. 1989, p. 78.

each moment. She does not need to locate the abject; conceptually it is already in her. The horror of abjection is the horror of being for women, however, this horror may only be negative or repugnant if it is analysed through the rigid psychoanalytic structure within which Kristeva works. This thesis discusses in depth the nature of negative feelings and their affect - not necessarily negative, nor even clear as 'good' or 'bad' - on the subject who feels. Pleasure is achievable through disgust, perversion transforms us into monsters we name ourselves, and death becomes a strategy for valuing all forms of non-fixed selves over valued subjects. For women the horror of being abject-ed from the psyche of culture can not be the same as the feeling of confronting the abject that the male valued author fears and sublimates into aesthetics.

Within traditional cultural discourse woman fulfils all the criteria of the abject: she has no object of desire, but she may exhibit unbound desire; she leaks, grows and changes her body; she is ambiguous, she is more-than-one; she is defined by her flesh rather than in spite of it. Her flesh stops signifying and becomes a glaring visual object of the abject. While male subjects have their bodies only in order to signify with them - the eyes of knowledge, the head of reason, the hands of practice - woman is horror because of her failure to signify anything but her flesh. Horror films exhibit other, perhaps extreme, versions of abject flesh. All that is needed for abjection, however, is this exhibition. The woman's body needs no signification, nor do the other abject objects of horror. "No, as in true theatre" Kristeva says of the corpse, "without make-up or masks, refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live."²⁶ The horror of horror film is lack of signification; the horror of woman's body for the valued white male subject is lack of signification. A desire to place signification on images of horror, and the feelings of horror that accompany them, asks: 'what do these things *mean*?' The inability to answer is one step towards being affected, irreversibly altered by the confrontation. Within a scientific system in order to know the nature of any object at all one must know all objects, and so any image or thing that defies signification and ontological

²⁶ Kristeva, 1982, p. 3.

formulation must aversely effect the integrity of the object (us). But the literary figures analysed by Kristeva are not un-scientific men; they too are after the ontology of abjection in order to reassure themselves of their own integrity. Kristeva's authors analyse and encircle the abject with theory; they phantasise controlling and ejecting it from their psyches. It becomes exterior and hence knowable objectively. This not only makes such concepts of abjection objectively fixed but also legislative rather than interactive, a binary dominance which Seyla Benhabib sees as detrimental to an ethics of feminism²⁷. Abjection now *is*, it exists not in the modes by which we are affected, as an affect, but as an exterior predictable entity, who, when effecting subjectivity, produces a repetitive predictable result. This probability and normativity is entirely contradictory of Kristeva's definition of abjection, something that confuses borders, or which defies being known as an object. Authors of both science and literature give abjection signification through *ad nauseum* analysis. However abject 'things' continue to refuse such analysis by continually confounding and causing horror to the viewer. They may be given signification but their continual changeability and shifting borders make such significations defunct. Gore in film, and real women's bodies refuse practices of fixed signification because they continue to alter and show the formerly invisible or unsignifiable. They *show*, without masks (of signification) or make up (of ontology). To use Kristeva's example, they are the corpse to the author's flat encephalograph. Where there is only image without language there can be no control, catharsis or purging. The image without signification propels the subject, rather than expelling the abject. This is why questions so often accompany visceral horror films - why? Who? And most specifically what? (What part of a body is that... what has happened to that body?) - not the satisfaction of a narrative resolution. Horror does not appeal to language but image. Images of gory horror are not symbols, they are ruptures, they are unfamiliar (not uncanny, but completely foreign - Kristeva points out the abject is "Essentially different from 'uncanniness', more violent too, abjection is a failure to recognise its kin."²⁸),

²⁷ Benhabib, Seyla. *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 1992. This binary will become important in the conclusion to this thesis.

²⁸ Kristeva, 1982, p. 5.

confusing, garish and ambiguous. Gore images are abject not only in their representation but in what they do to the viewer. They *defy* being read, because they defy signification. They defy signification because they do not follow the narrative chain of signification from image to mind, bypassing the viscera and indeed the flesh. Traditional readers of film perform this bypass; leaving unexplored the differential impact image may have on the flesh or embodied self.

Flesh (and its relative productions) is the prime site of, and for, abjection. We are abject-ed through the flesh and because of the flesh. Abjection describes conditions of the flesh beyond the tolerance of our psyches toward that who we are. For example we are not faeces, saliva or vomit, we expel them in order to affirm our borders, which are nothing but the phantasmatic borders of our body made elastic in order to spring back into place to match our psyches, our 'who 'I' am'. But our bodies themselves are abject, not simply that which we expel from our bodies (which is a strange division anyway, the faeces and saliva we expel is the faeces and saliva that was moments before part of our incorporated bodies which we had no problem with until the refuse becomes potentially visible). The abject nature of all flesh and all bodies is re-invested in the disdainful, expelled products it produces to make such an expulsion tangible and easier. But the wound returns our abject bodies to ourselves, wounds we cannot expel. And beneath the wound is the most abject of all things, the viscera. If the ultimate symbol of integrated subjectivity is the integrity of the skin, which insinuates that *nothing* lies beneath it but a solid 'me', then the wound making visible such a terrain is extremely abject because it points to the secret inner terrains of 'me', suggesting 'I' am more than I know of me. But viscera also points to my very potential to not be integrated, to 'open up', and hence for my body to be in complete rebellion of the phantasmatic structure which conforms to my psyche. The abject, on the other hand, emphasises the Cartesian nature of psychoanalysis, fixing the mind in order to fix the body as in the case of hysteria, or fixing the mind in order to protect other bodies as in psychosis. Such science only affirms the vast chasm between the two, the mind's attempt to contort and make the body conform and the body's explicit

inability to 'listen' to the mind. The abject is a version of embodied subjectivity because the mind does not tell the body what to do and be and the body does not ignore such commands. Abjection that thrusts a subject towards the borders of madness is an example of the subject not willing to be a body. Such a body is the socially stratified body that stands in opposition to Deleuze and Guattari's 'body without organs'. In this thesis, horror escapes madness by thrusting selfhood into being a body, non-stratified and joyously so.

The Foucault/Order Thing

My anxieties about abjection and its strict relationship with borders and transgression shifts towards the textually discursive in the following section. Like subjectivity, discourse exhibits a fear of transgressing certain borders of use, readership and intent. The following discussion sets up a model of Foucault's *The Order of Things* in order to preclude a repeated transgression of epistemic ordering throughout this thesis. The use of texts in this thesis shows no respect to the epistemic integrity of divided discourses, but instead conflates them into a massive textual body, which is referred to as 'culture' in general. When science textbooks, or psychology textbooks are read simply as texts alongside horror films, the truths of science and the supposed falsities of representation become fraternising expressions from the same, and hence about, the same culture. From a feminist perspective the analysis of science and other discourses of truth and knowledge as texts first and foremost written by a subject for other subjects is essential in order to excavate through whose truths we live our lives. The fact that I do not represent the 'appropriate' subject to read scientific texts, because I am not a scientist, because I will deliberately re-read or mis-read these texts, simply takes the feminist interpretation of such texts further. As the thesis progresses, scientific texts and offensive filmic texts will come to represent identical things, and hence this conflation of the scientific with the popular will seem inevitable rather than forced. The discussion of *The Order of Things* is designed not as the cessation of the introduction but as a bridging section between the introduction and the first

section 'Pleasure'. Ideas about orders, truths and epistemologies will resonate when the thesis approaches the subjects of pleasure, perversion and death. Integrity, as a vast idea which encompasses, defines and makes possible both bodies and sealed epistemic discourses, will be destroyed theoretically through my conflation of sealed and ruptured bodies and sealed and ruptured texts.

An important feminist element of this thesis is its refusal to take for truth certain discursive epistemologies. This thesis values film as a mode for transformation, however it values scientific texts also, although no more and no less than the films it analyses. Scientific texts hold the potential to be transformative in two ways. The first way locates the appropriateness of certain scientific epistemes - for what purpose is the episteme appropriate, who should read this text, and to what does the text appropriately refer? Such a location predicts the affect-ive nature of a scientific text - that is, its educational or didactic purpose and its integration of the reading subject within the power of a unifying logos of knowledge, a language as such. This configuration of the power of a unified language and set of practices associated with scientific epistemes preserves their unquestioned ability to locate truth through the discretion of their methodology. Only by scientists and only within the parameters of the strictly regimented modes of research can questions be asked. The hermeneutics of such a configuration demands analysis by, for and through, those or that, which are 'inappropriate' - non-scientific readers, for a non-scientific purpose, outside the regimented practices and language which empower scientific discourses. Feminists, whether inside or outside the scientific realm, are just one of the more urgent inappropriate readers. The second transformative potential of scientific texts is their potential affect-iveness, ways in which they may change our thinking, our bodies and our modes of being, whether they are read within or outside of their system of logos. Science does not deny popular culture readership but it also does not encourage it. What science speaks, when deconstructed and possibly reconstructed as different, is a different form of what constitutes a text - it speaks different things and refers to different discursive languages, however it can just as easily be read as a text with no purpose or practice in mind. What

then does the science text as just a text say about bodies and being? It is the potential answer to this question that may posit new ways of deconstructing the subject, or even new ways of being. What follows is a discussion of Foucault's genealogy of the sealing of epistemes into systems with their own languages and practices, scientific and humanistic. This thesis directly deconstructs the integrity, the privacy and hence the power of such systems by conflating contrary discursive genres into one plateau of textuality.

Discourse, Epistemes and Identical Terms

Within one term there are many and varied incarnations, its multiple subjectivities. Before beginning a text, through the title or the nouns of the title, and through the library source of the title, the reader is already conditioning her/himself to the limits of the term discussed, to the particular incarnation the term will have in the context of a particular discursive genre, and hence a fixed idea of what the term is, and what knowledges or discussion it will produce - for the moment and only within that text. What happens then, when before defining and hence limiting a term (a project I do not wish to do), certain 'other' texts such as basic medical, psychology²⁹ or even neurophysiological texts are brought into the discussion? These types of discourse are usually foreign to, but in this thesis are juxtaposed intimately with, cultural texts. Hence their presence and position become unsettling to the logic or evolution of the discussion. 'Other' texts are read and analysed *no longer with their traditional usage in mind*, that is, any longer as medical texts meant only for the lab or only as truthful guides around the body. Similarly, the neurophysiological or even certain basic medical texts, such as forensic pathology texts, will be read out of their practical context as guides meant for action. Rather they will be read as texts only, without a purpose toward practical application. Without their original purpose as texts, with a particular space in time and genre, they are forcible unto others. More to the point they

²⁹ Psychology here refers to the practice of prescribing medication for abnormalities in the psychological make-up of the subject, which indicates a repetitive predictability in the field similar to (and of course as a stream of) medicine.

will be read in a manner, and through a language, for which they were *not* intended.

This thesis could not have been written without Foucault's studies, however, the major difference between the works of Foucault and this project is his emphasis on excavating and elucidating the historically and genealogically transient nature of empirical sciences which claim(ed) to be constant, and by their formulations created the very constancy they claimed to 'discover'. I am not ready to analyse entire streams of sciences, or to undermine any of their claims. I am particularly concerned only with the effects of taking science texts out of their specific plane, that is as guides for finding objective truths, and reading them as cultural texts. I am taking these texts simply as texts, out of their 'order of things', where the texts stand in an ordering of epistemic divisions from other texts but also the contents of the texts are 'in order' that they may be utilised in a particular way. I wish to explore the terms 'pleasure', 'perversion' and 'death', as potentials for opening up, as a transformative affect antagonistic to scientific versions of these terms. Science figures them first as capital measure, infinitely repeatable and always the same, and secondly, as a measure of the subjectivity of the body that experiences pleasure, is perverse or will inevitably be dead. Foucault traces the changes in science while I am seizing one moment in history by placing science texts next to cultural texts of roughly the same moment in order to produce an analysis of the singularity (and lack thereof) of these terms; terms both the sciences and cultural theory embrace but usually on entirely different levels.

In Foucault's *The Order of Things*,³⁰ he excavates the archaeology³¹ of scientific discursive formulation. By way of general introduction, Foucault

³⁰ Foucault, Michel. (1966) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Trans. unaccredited (Alan Sheridan?) New York: Vintage Books, Random House. 1994.

³¹ In *Reading Knowledge: An Introduction to Barthes, Foucault and Althusser*. Oxford: Blackwell. 1997, Michael Payne defines Foucault's archaeological aim as "the investigation of truth as a system of procedures governing forms of discourse," p. 44. This is juxtaposed against ethics and genealogy which relate to the project of archaeology by stemming from the modes and motivations (and history) of power implicit in truth systems (genealogy) and the subject's formation by the self within these systems (ethics).

focuses on two important ideas: 1) The splintering of unified Classical discourse into divided and sealed *epistemes*³² that aim to produce truths and that claim complete independence from all other epistemes or languages, and 2) The production of an object for study by an episteme. The object is formulated by the practices and aims of the episteme that wishes to excavate the truth of the object. The episteme claims objective analysis of an object, that exists outside discourse and subjectivity, yet forms that very object through its epistemic language, practice and enquiry. Foucault's emphasis is on classical, dominant and singular discourse and its fracture, through the split between the human sciences into many languages, which subsequently claim their own truths and hence exhibit their own genealogies over a relatively short period of time. He does not define these hybrid languages, which inevitably become empirical languages claiming truth, as discourse. Bruce Fleming claims,

Foucault calls the speech of the Classical age 'discourse' and characterises the modern age as an age lacking discourse. The delineation of the modern age from the Classical is not merely an alteration in languages, or the disappearance of discourse and the substitution for it of a mass of languages ('language in a multiplicity of modes of being'). It is also the fragmentation of the parts of language and a stilling of them.³³

The fragments, which resulted from the split, are hermeneutically closed off, and importantly made private in their methodology, so that the truths they aspire towards are empowered by the particularity and privacy of their languages and practices. These fractions of discourse are epistemes, which function as separate systems and hence any outside languages are discouraged from entering such particular epistemic systems. A hierarchical system is thus

³² This use of the word is taken from Payne's explanation of the relationship between epistemes and epochs, where he makes particularly clear Foucault's use of the term. Payne states: "Each of these historical periods produced its particular configuration of knowledge, which Foucault calls an 'episteme'. This he defines elsewhere as all of those relationships which existed between the various sectors of science during a given epoch. Epistemes both enable and limit the production of knowledge, not simply by external, institutional or political manipulation, but by their own determination of the extent of possible intellectual production," p. 45. Payne's determination of the extent of production is what I call the scientific aim.

³³ Fleming, Bruce. *Modernism and its Discontents: Philosophical Problems of Twentieth Century Literary Theory*. New Studies in Aesthetics v. 26. Frankfurt: Die Deutsche Bibliothek-CIF-Einheitsaufnahme. 1995, p. 121.

produced, which emphatically divides each body of knowledge from all others. This separation occurs despite the fact that crossovers in different epistemic languages have led to important discoveries. Payne writes,

Foucault observes that some of the most significant advances in knowledge have occurred when by 'analogies among the epistemes', a given science breaks out from its restrictive confines - for example, to determine truth by economic and political constructions alone - and forms a hybrid with another science.³⁴

Here the objects that epistemes of truth create would similarly become hybrid,³⁵ although the cross-pollination of epistemes may not be a desirable aim considering the independent truths each episteme aims to excavate and the unique practices towards such truths which epistemes utilise. Objects awaiting the excavation of their apparent truth are plastic in their dependence on the language and methods, (and the scientists who posit these languages and methods) of the science that studies them, and also on the openness of the science to another methodology or concept. Foucault's mentor Georges Canguilhem states:

In the nineteenth century, the substitution of biology for natural history, or the substitution of a theory of production for an analysis of wealth, resulted in the constitution of a unified object of study: life or work. In contrast the unity of the old grammar was shattered without being replaced by any sort of unique and unifying renewal.³⁶

The unified grammar of classical discourse was, thus, replaced with the antithesis of unity - many languages in which even an identical term signified completely disparate meanings. Theoretically this breakdown could have been a positive step, indicating an acceptance of multiplicity. Epistemes exist,

³⁴ Payne, 1997, p. 46.

³⁵ The transformative potential of hybridity will be discussed in the chapter 'Perversion' Affect-ion, Desire and Becoming.

³⁶ Canguilhem, Georges. 'The death of man, or exhaustion of cogito?' Trans Catherine Porter. In Gutting, Gary, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1994, pp. 71-91, quote p. 73.

however, in competition with one another, not so much in order to find a truth the quickest, but to validate the power of their respective and inimitable methodology and the unique results each produces in comparison with other methodologies.

The shattering of a single discourse produced a preference for the formulation of *objects of study* over unified theories of practices and actions - objects are figured as existing 'outside' of discourse in a realm of absolute truth simply waiting to be known. Practices and actions are then formulated after the object of study is located, although they formulate the objects as a result of their respective interests and aims. Both aspects presume the object before it is 'objectively' studied by formulating specific practices and actions prior to the object being studied as well as after it is located. This particular ordering presents practices and actions as secondary to the objects for which they are formulated to study. Theories of practice are rendered invisible in comparison with the importance given to the object of analysis, thereby diminishing the importance of justifying theoretical and methodological practices. Privileging of object over theoretical practice has ethical implications; practices are not always justified - only attaining knowledge of the object of analysis is important. For this reason an analysis of any singular term within modern epistemic 'shattered' knowledge frequently involves entering into the study of an object or 'thing', rather than a process, affect and transformation. My theoretical focus prefers the latter form of analysis. Because current scientific theories play a large part in this thesis, however, I use *The Order of Things* to demonstrate the epistemic antagonism produced when scientific terms focus on objects rather than processes. The ways in which the linguistic value of the words 'pleasure', 'perversion' and 'death' are implicitly involved with an object (us) before they exist as processes will become clear through this analysis.

Foucault states, in the preface to the English edition of *The Order of Things*, that his project is to archaeologically excavate the aim of the sciences; first, the empirical sciences of biology, economy and philology which then gave birth to

the human science counterparts of psychology, sociology and art/literature, (hereon called simply arts). He points to the order that makes possible the ordering of discourse, both within itself and in reference to other discourses aiming for the same 'order', but elucidates that this order is never itself elucidated, never drawn up or explicitly listed. The human sciences then follow rules of the empirical sciences that are themselves never set out. They are what Foucault calls the "*positive unconscious of knowledge*."³⁷ He states

It is these rules of formation, which were never formulated in their own right, but are to be found only in widely differing theories, concepts and objects of study, that I have tried to reveal, by isolating at their specific locus, a level that I have called, somewhat arbitrarily, archaeological.³⁸

Rules of formation all aim towards an excavation of knowledge of 'concepts and objects of study'. Where Foucault points out that the *rules* of formation for discourses apply to widely differing theories, it becomes clear that within widely differing theories, the *object* of study is an entirely different object, even if theories follow the same rules of objective analysis. This is so *even when the object across the different theories is the same*. So the human sciences that aspire to knowledge which can be repeatedly performed in order to indicate some form of truth or predictability are nonetheless aiming their theories at a different object than that of the empirical sciences. Foucault traces the object of study first from the 'Classical' period of science, which he locates around the pre-sixteenth century. In this time, the object of analysis was part of a world where all objects were unified through resemblance; all theories revolved around the ability to relate an object to something familiar in order that it too become familiar. These interdependent patterns are what Foucault calls similitude, or resemblance.

At the onset of the Baroque period a transformation in thought occurs, where the object which resembles becomes an idol, and dangerously irrational. The

³⁷ Foucault, 1994, p.xi, (original italics).

³⁸ Foucault, 1994, p.xi.

world, due to the change in scientific thought from unity to object-ivity, becomes instead a teeming mass of unique and incomparable entities, later called organisms. The classification of discourse, which occurred simultaneously, mirrored the sentiment that organisms are tightly independent formations to be analysed only as much as they are unlike anything else. Foucault argues against the sealing off of scientific language, "natural history cannot and should not exist as a language independent of all other languages unless it is a well constructed language - and a universally valid one"³⁹ yet points out its failure to be such as language.

Natural history can be a well constructed language only if the amount of play in it is enclosed: if its descriptive exactitude makes every proposition into an invariable pattern of reality (if one can always *attribute* to the representation what is *articulated* in it) and if the *designation* of each being indicates clearly the place it occupies in the general arrangement of the whole.⁴⁰

The aim of the empirical sciences - and at the highest point of the general arrangement stands the human - is to map out the pattern of reality they see in the human body: that all bodies are alike and that the interior of all bodies, whether it be brain, or blood, are unto themselves independent bodies that are also alike. The body is ordered, its organs are ordered and their reactive *functions* are ordered. Foucault points out the need for things to be describable in language and by becoming describable they become entities for study. They then become order-able among but never like other entities. The reluctance Foucault exhibits towards elucidating a relationship between science and language is because of the unaccountability of things such as "individual experiences, needs or passions, habits, prejudices, a more or less awakened concentration...".⁴¹ The masquerading of subjectivity and persons behind formulations of truths of science is the best place to start a juxtaposition of medical and cultural theory. For indeed, Foucault levels at scientific discourse or language the very criticism that science claims makes other discourses

³⁹ Foucault, 1994, p. 158.

⁴⁰ Foucault, 1994, p. 159.

⁴¹ Foucault, 1994, p. 158.

fallible and essentially untrue, that of subjective intervention. Is the aim of scientific discourse to transcend language, because language must originally or eventually be spoken, written or formed in certain patterns (called scientific laws) by *someone* in order to address a newly discovered 'truth'? Science, however, exists and is re-produced only within the language through which it allows its statements to come into being. As a result of this dependence on language, science empowers and specialises itself, alienating itself from other epistemes by making its speech unique, difficult to understand outside itself, and claims its language as simply a means to make repeatable the concepts it speaks. The language of science is that which enables scientists to communicate their findings, which seem to exist outside of language, hence language becomes a somewhat 'necessary evil', a communicative rather than a creative device. It also defines itself as unable to express a subject, and here is where it differs most radically from a casual understanding of language. Language is safe for science only if a subject never speaks it, or it is written in a book never to be read simply or only as a book, which is exactly what I plan to do with it. Taking scientific language out of its particular text-into-practice intention does not necessarily change its meaning. Rather, it alters the phantasy of objectivity, and creates subjective statements out of hitherto discursively private communications. By reading scientific texts as books only, they are not read in order to recreate the experiments described within them and hence cement the knowledge claimed in their conclusions. By taking the texts out of their hierarchical order and their practical application intention, (their 'in order to') and placing them on a more rhizomatic plane, they stand alongside all other texts in a horizontal configuration. They have no more or less claims to truth than a novel or a film, but their intention towards knowledge of true objects in the world will still be considered. This practice elucidates both author and reader as subjects.

At this point, before discussing the specifics of why I would want to take science out of context, I am going to look a little at why science wants itself to be always in context. Foucault points out that all languages work upon a system

of ordering,⁴² from empirical sciences to the human sciences that attempt to adapt/adopt a 'scientific' order. The constancy of language represents the constancy of the ideas and the findings of science. Although Foucault has already pointed out the flaws of the phantasy of a truthful scientific language, the desire to believe in the objective reproducibility and predictable reception of a language is a means by which science excavates the reproducibility, and separateness, of any knowledge. A belief in linguistic objectivity holds potential for change only in response to the needs and the aims of the scientists empowered through this practice, where knowledge and access to it is tempered by the reception of such a language. Because scientific epistemic languages are accessible only to those trained to comprehend them, the language, methodology, tolerance of, and directions of growth of an episteme reflect directly the scientists own desires, and hence power to constitute knowledge. Uniqueness of epistemic language is how the scientist is inducted into being scientist but it is also where all others are denied access.

The language of science is sacred, to science, or perhaps, sacred to the scientist who has access to and interest in such a practice. It is a means of communicating knowledges isolated by science, and the isolation of knowledges that may be repeated over and over mirrors the repetition of words used only in their strictest sense. In this way, any change in interests reflects only the shifts in power dynamics, which dictate where such change is suitable in conformity with the desires of the practitioners, be they corporate or individual. As experiments must be repeated under the closest of scrutiny in order for them to always remain the same, language in science must be repeated meticulously to affirm its power. The pleasure of science is not a subjective process able to be expressed by a human scientist⁴³ but an object that

⁴² In *The Order of Things* Foucault places philology with the empirical sciences and not the human sciences.

⁴³ The only one of the human sciences discussed by Foucault that seems pseudo-empirical is psychology, which is distinct from the entirely human psychoanalysis. Psychology seems to be a fluctuating stream between science and human science, between physiology and psychoanalysis. The intervention of the (subjective) mind on the (objective) flesh and vice versa is what I think may be the sore point which prevents psychology being entirely embraced by any one stream of discourse.

can only be expressed by empirical language. The aim of science is to find knowledge and to maintain its meaning, or the potentials of the alteration of such meaning, in the *reception* of the language and the imagery of science, by demanding this reception, or reading, remain constant, or at least constantly monitored within the parameters of the episteme. Hence, there is room for change only within the system and not frequently from outside it. Where human sciences are more open to interpretation, within a certain limit, medical discourse sees interpretation as failure and the activity of diagnosis (and misdiagnosis) is seen as a necessary evil along the path to the predictable and repeatable knowledge of the body. Medical science and its aims can be expressed in words such as *repetition* of event, constancy and identical *reception* of information. The physical human body, representing knowledge before the scientist, changes only within the sanctioned parameters of the practices and aims of the language of medicine, and is never different from another body, yet is different from everything else. Such a body comes to be constituted by, and reflect the aims of the science that analyses it, so that science creates the very body it aspires to observe. Certain bodies, constituted scientifically, come to represent all other bodies in the episteme they refer to. The object of scientific analysis is as similar to itself as it is unique from all other things.

Specialisation, something that is a concrete and lucid result of the classification of the world explicated by Foucault, depends entirely on the isolation of one discourse from all others. It is a further fracturing of fractured classical discourse. The cementing of knowledge, which reflects the power to create knowledge itself, forms along a micro-hierarchy within the macro-ordering of things. Foucault suggests modern science move toward a focus on function over the classical model of description. Function is inextricable from the value placed on an object for its capital worth or 'work' - its normality or its pathology.⁴⁴ Ironically, it is the ever-further seeing eye of the microscope which *describes* the body in modern medicine that allows the concept of

⁴⁴ See Canguilhem's (1966) *The Normal and The Pathological*. Trans. Carol R. Fawcett with Robert S. Cohen. New York: Zone Books. 1989.

function to come into play; so what is *seen* is that which *functions*. The human sciences, especially the arts, are imagined as all description and no function (a situation that this thesis seeks to remedy), as discourses not activated towards immutable knowledge but rather of describing and requiring passivity (watching, looking, listening) and subjectivity. Arts are phantasised as being created by a subject, while science is required to excavate those things that no human subject created, and hence must be understood after the fact. The subject is extricated from the medical sciences in order for objectivity to cause progress at a constant(ly fast) pace, and to masquerade any interest in anything other than knowledge, which includes imagining knowledge to exist without power, or without reflecting the accessibility of certain persons to such knowledge. By utilising the discourses of various streams of medicine in a cultural manner, subjectivity is mingled with objectivity, description replaces (but not without residue) evolutionary change in empirical knowledge and knowledge is re-submerged in the linguistic gaps of interpretation and hitherto uncommon access - for women, for minoritarians. My intention is to excavate a space of play, an area of interpretations, or rather a means towards a new space of interpretations, which is currently discouraged by the fiercely discrete boundaries of different discourses. I prefer a space of play to a new anti-epistemic teleology because any adamant contrapositioned version of the order of things would potentially close off discussions on the potentials of differing discourse. Closing off a discussion of the access and power implications of such discourse would simultaneously disallow the ambiguity of language, practice and knowledge, a condition that predisposes it to different modes of utilisation and access for different subjects.⁴⁵ My aim is to *explore what happens* when like terms from unlike discourses are compared. I aim to read medical texts *not* in the way they were intended to be read. I am not a doctor so any mis-reading may open up such a space of play, rather than a mistake or misunderstanding. I hope to understand medical texts not as a means by which to know the human brain or body but as a way of taking a look at what is forbidden culturally, and allowed medically, and vice versa. By reading the

⁴⁵ Ambiguity is a disruptive element for science and for religion. It will be discussed in the 'Watching Monsters' section of the chapter on perversion.

texts in this way a fuller understanding of the potential for ambiguity of meaning and the non-isolation of any term within any discourse is my project.

Toward an Ethics of Horror

Horror is traditionally seen as culturally detrimental. Depictions of horror are depictions of evil, of what *not* to do and what *not* to look for or see. Horror is defined as a negative of life, signifying not only death but also the most abject of material terrain. Horror is a feeling; a sensation of the self continually represented as capable of being an outside independent image. Something *is* pure horror, such as film, or garish news stories of disaster, or murder. This essentialisation of what horror is, instead of what horror may do, appeals to a higher sense of truth, determining subjects in space as fixed. Horror can be seen, rather, as potential process, which forms and transforms subjects in time. Horror, traditionally then, is used to describe a type of subject, which denies its effect (and for my theories a more extreme affect) of all subjects. Horror is affect for any subject who appeals to the self rather than to an external sense of order. For those who are most valued in symbolic culture such an appeal to God or language or transcendental knowledge is predictable. Yet, this thesis aims to return the subject into itself by using the imagination Kristeva points out is necessary for any configuration to refuse traditional psychoanalytic binaries. Where abjection becomes the third term that messes up the binary of object and subject, imagination must become the third term that messes up the binary of 'I' and higher order. The higher order exists only to affirm the position of such an 'I' and for post-structuralism the breaking down of such higher orders is imminent and essential. For the processual transforming subject, there is no appeal to a higher order but only a change in the non-static self. This does not ignore others, though it does repudiate the Other. Imagination allows, for want of better words, the assimilation and the ingestion of horror - the 'becoming horror' of the 'Perversion' chapter - so that the self exists as such a feeling. At the most rudimentary level this causes a form of empathy, however, what I am really attempting to theorise is a self, capable of

transforming through watching, rather than reading what is watched. By pushing the self into innumerable feelings, qualities or positions, a value of self is no longer based on surfaces of bodies which are seen to represent or at least conform to a quality of psyche (be they surfaces of sex and colour or internal surfaces formulated by science, such as genetic surfaces, whereby surfaces insinuate above all else an immutable substance able to be read and known). The valuation of bodies can no longer exist if fixed bodies no longer exist, specifically within an ordered hierarchical system. Within this different formation of bodies, consideration of the other does not occur by representation, but is broadened by qualitative affect set off through horror films.

An appeal to order, whether it is that of language or psyche, which would regulate horror as necessarily evil, is an appeal to the destruction of both imagination and a real lived other in favour of value judgement and a conceptual irrefutably outside-me Other. I am not suggesting there is a real which psyche and psychoanalysis destroys by making everything a value-laden concept. I am pointing out, however, that by situating all things within a stratified system where their qualities are easily recognisable as good, or evil, outside me or inside and hence applicable to me, the quality of every 'thing', be it representation or another body, is fixed. This means that ethical consideration of any 'thing' is bypassed for identification. Contextually sensitive consideration of all 'things', and interactive rather than legislative thinking, are two of the elements Benhabib points out as essential for a post-structural ethical mode of being. The context of represented horror in film and the context of real suffering bodies are conflated within legislative thinking, which appeals to a higher order. The act of looking and real being are similarly conflated, and film is continually read as both inspiring and being inspired by 'real life' events. Those who enjoy horror, be it in film or written narrative (though apparently less so in literature, which is 'high') are aligned with those who perpetrate it, where horror is not affect but action. In my figuring, however, the film viewer is active only in her/his own transformation, which is action enough. In legislative thinking the self must exist with another, recognisable

other, which is why the activity of watching representation is always connected with further action between persons. I do not wish to suggest there is no element of interaction entirely un-effected by watching. In fact, I am stating the exact opposite, that through watching our entire being transforms, but the ordering of terms and concepts is not always equivalent. Represented horror certainly changes us, but not necessarily in a way that does not differentiate between representation and real lived action. Horror is qualities, not *a* quality that remains constant from the television to the scene of the crime. Horror affect is not the same as horror perpetrated. And similarly self is affect, rather than perpetrating or psychotic subject. Such a self is able to differentiate the specific qualities of everything and hence cannot act identically in any two situations, as it interacts with each moment uniquely. Horror as affect is an extreme interactive situation, yet still maintains the individual quality of situation. The most generalised claim we can make of horror is that it demands high interaction and causes an often harsh affect of self. The differentiation of every situation of horror, most specifically from screen to 'real life', is, however, always the most primary element of affective transforming subjectivity.

Structure

This thesis is broken into very large chapters with many smaller sections within them. The large chapters refer on a most basic level to ideas that may potentially change us - when we feel pleasure, when we are perverse or perverted, when we think death. Gore films are equated with these three terms. They give us pleasure, they must or we would not watch them. They are the perverse genre of film, and those who watch have been clinically and morally judged as such. They refer primarily to the viscosity of death, which may be called 'real' death, because such gore is matched only by forensic pathology.

The two themes which I have discussed in Kristeva and Foucault, horror and epistemic textuality, are themes that underpin the entire body of this thesis. The

use of horror towards transformation, which is represented in films but which occurs as a symptom of becoming other, is manifest in many incarnations. Reading epistemically divided texts, such as film and medicine, purely as texts multiplies these incarnations while forming synthesis and connections between them, and potentially creating different and yet to be formed incarnations. Not only is on-screen horror that which may transform us, but the horror found in such simple terms as pleasure, perversion and death, in every genre of discourse, is studied in order to posit moments and tactics of transformation everywhere. Each of the three key terms and their affect, for an embodied subject leads me to new theories of viewing, theories which can only progress, take off, toward an ethics of becoming.

Pleasure - Beginning the Becoming

Pleasure can cause a horrification of the subject. Pleasure from the wrong source, at the wrong moment or in an alternate manner may all horrify the integrity of being. Pleasure as psychical, neurological and filmic, all at once creates an intensity, which exists at many points along many plateaus. Who can tell what will produce pleasure and who can tell where, how and why it will be produced in this flesh? Pleasure suddenly becomes pure potential, and unable to be reproduced exactly.

The pleasure we receive from horror films calls into question the binary problems of pleasure from a horrific source - is it 'good' for us, are we 'good' people to achieve pleasure from such images? A moralised either/or option is seen as mandatory in this situation. Either we are good and do not watch images of violence or we are bad and we do. Even an analysis of psychiatric and neurophysiological texts, which seek to locate the 'goodness' of pleasure, cannot clearly find or define it. Is it in the brain? Is it a chemical such as dopamine or is it simply a nervous reaction? Is it reproducible, and, if not, what constitutes a sanctioned form of pleasure as opposed to a perverse or prohibited form? The focus in this section is on the inability of the body to fit into a moral or a biological system of binary choice, in reference to pleasure. Pleasure is,

like the flesh itself, a continuous process, making and remaking itself, though never clearly.

Perversion - Becoming Filmic

Perversion is a term that refers to the horrification of a subject. Psychologically and medically it is this very horrification in culture that has produced biological and psychical explanations of perversion in order to suppress its horrific, phantasmatically infective, affect. At a basic level, perversion is change from the moment before. Becoming may be a continual form of perversion, positing perversion as a temporal existence rather than the spatial perversion represented by most theories of perversion. Perversion elicits horror because it demands the subject consider the most alien, the most distasteful, and achieves pleasure from it. Medical and psychological texts perform a consideration of perversion, but emphatically not to achieve pleasure, nor to sanction perversion, but simply to contain, in space, its outbreak. Perversion's relationship to horror is as much in reference to the social matrix it exists within as to the perverse individual. Social sanctioning and prohibition elucidates society's moral intervention and judgement upon, and hence society's horror of, an individual who is in a process of change from any current construction of the acceptable limits of the human. To conflate the medical with the filmic, and to push the term perversion past simple sexual aberration, creates a model for becoming through an excess of intensities and intersections of difference.

Gore films are considered a perverse form of art (or trash), they represent the perverse and those who watch them are somehow perverted, either by wanting to watch or after watching. Anything watched on screen is seen to directly correlate with the perverse sexuality of the viewer. These standard exclamations, also regulated by moral panic, make sense in a film theory that posits character identification as the prime practice towards achieving cinematic pleasure. Following on from appropriate forms of pleasure we come to that which is not appropriate, the perverse. Sexuality is a necessary point of

discussion but what if television is our sexuality? What if being horrified or simply altering is our sexuality? After queer there may come becoming, we need not choose a sexuality but choose the monstrosity we ourselves are to become in our aim towards a queerer than the queer. In order to be within a Deleuzian/Guattarian frame our perverted monstrous watching bodies may be the first points towards becoming monster or anything else.

Death - Becoming Horror

Death is pure horror, in every form death represents the limits of what we can deal with. Socially, death demands a response, which may be the horror that drives us to ethical action. Textually, death is referred to in binaries: the real (forensics) and the representative (film), the actual (medicine) and the figurative (philosophy), the serious (real death) and the unserious (everything else). The sanctity of death demands such binarised affect-ive sources, the reaction to forensics is not supposed to be the same as the reaction to film. Textually, these binaries rarely cross; the forensic textbook stands far apart in intent and in space from filmed death, except where they meet in such extreme films as mondo films. Wherever its incarnation death cannot elicit nothing and for this reason its horror is its power. But death can also figure in the schema of becoming. Death forces difference, it demands alterity and the consideration of the other within us and outside of us. Death demands consideration of the specificity of the body while simultaneously reducing subject to flesh. When analysing death through the body, theory resists the Cartesian, hysteric, traditionally white, male claim that 'my existence cannot cease' - it instead privileges an embodied subject that cannot consider itself without its flesh and cannot consider the other based purely on corporeal alterity.

Gore films are primarily about death. Well, perhaps they are, but the death of what? Certainly gore films are where we are most likely to be convinced death is not the end, from zombies to snuff where a real death can be relived over and over in rewind. The most important thing to remember in the consideration of representation, *any* representation, is that it does not exhibit reality. It may have

filmed or photographed reality, but us viewing it does not present us as creating, effecting or reconstructing reality. In an ethical formulation of the viewing subject, the subject matter watched is always redundant. The subject altering is the prime focus. If we alter in that we become more compassionate, less fixed and more celebratory of difference, then whether or not it was 'ethical' (really moral) to watch something and be affected by it is irrelevant. For all bodies of difference death is not the catastrophic absence of the primacy of the self that it is to white male subjectivity. How can we theorise death when we are yet to count as valued life? Death in the final section of this thesis refuses to become a simple concept, but it does become a referent to constant differing and difference. Death refers to the death of hierarchically structured bodies of value and of no value, and the body structured in itself, where skin, face and genitals become signifiers of value. Gore exhibits ruptured non-stratified flesh. It represents the death of the stratified body and it kills off the value of such a body by presenting gore as the irrefutable and inevitable image of that which we are and that which we will become. My concern is not with the fact that death will finally reduce us to the same but with the ways in which images of death, both real and faked, can affect our sense of what a body is, what it feels like to be a body and the ways in which body stratification, both of itself and in society, exists to value and devalue bodies.

Conclusion - The Ethics of Becoming

In the conclusion of this thesis, which concerns itself most with the ethics of viewing horror, the ethics of the other as posited by Benhabib in *Situating the Self* will become important. Benhabib stands against the 'anything outside me' other of Lacan and demands recognition and ethical consideration of real bodies and real lives. 'Real lived' others, Benhabib's generalised and concrete others, are considered as such, in the situations of their existence. Benhabib's demand for consideration of living bodies is fed into Deleuze on the idea of mediation as a constant consideration and oscillation between others – both our own others and the animate and inanimate others exterior to ourselves. Through mediation, becoming is able to consider its own social ethics in the world,

rather than only in pages of a book or in front of a television. Becoming, when read with Benhabib's ethics, can realise an actuality which considers the radical nature of its project without being insensitive or even separate from other living, historical bodies in the world. Becoming must transfer from the figurative to the actual in order to be a feminist and ethical project. Through a formulation of an ethics of becoming, becoming can move from conceptual or representative idea to a line of flight for a real body.

Watching television begins the line of flight towards becoming relatively safely. This line of flight does not take a real other as its momentum in the first instance so that it does not fetishise or lightly utilise the real lives of the bodies of others for its own purpose of momentum.⁴⁶ Watching television toward a line of flight uses a representation in the first instance in order to become. A representation does not constitute an other; the television does not constitute an other. Within Kristeva's theories the object and the 'I' are abject-ed, because a television is the most ambiguous of others. 'I' am abject-ed because my object of desire is not clear. But this is positive rather than destructive because the psychoanalytic phantasy of the Other, which is considered as an other but never as a concrete, 'real living' other, is changed. Objects of desire are eradicated as necessary to want, and with them also is eradicated the irrefutable Other, the 'anything-outside-of-me'. The television is a vehicle with which to indulge in want, the horrors it represents are transformative, and they change the viewer. 'Real' concrete and generalised others are considered as more than simply outside me (where 'me' and its borders are changing constantly) rather as lived bodies in time (not fixed bodies in space).

⁴⁶ As Deleuze and Guattari have been criticised for doing through their 'becoming-woman' idea. This problem is discussed in depth in the conclusion.

Pleasure

This section will discuss the term pleasure as it is defined and analysed within certain divided epistemes, following on from my discussion in the introduction of Foucault's *The Order of Things*. Pleasure has been selected for this thesis as the first of three primary terms. My analysis will elucidate pleasure as a strategy toward a line of flight through viewing by an exploration of:

- Pleasure as an affect that exceeds a singular definition, both in its location in the corporeal self, and as an object for study.
- Pleasure as a term that goes beyond meaning only a binary opposite to such terms as pain or unpleasure.
- Pleasure as beyond visibility, solidarity or other traditional methods of knowledge.
- Pleasure as a line of flight for the viewer of horror films, when the above three reasons are implemented into viewing practice.

Pleasure is highly volatile as a singular term both in its definition, and the modes by which it is described, within the human object of analysis. I will discuss pleasure as it is described by neurophysiology, psychoanalysis and then take such definitions and place them alongside a more exploratory, speculative description (as opposed to definition) of pleasure felt from film viewing. I will discuss the potentials of pleasure existing as a result of traditionally negative terms, so that the definition of pleasure at its most basic and broad level will be

questioned. Such negatives as disgust, pain, horror and fear will be analysed as pleasurable despite their alignment on the negative side of any binary involving pleasure. Also these feelings or 'affects' (which alter embodied being rather than simply effecting being, in which being returns to its former state after such effect ceases) will be analysed as constituting pleasure, forming a version of pleasure which is at once negative and positive in the traditional sense, rather than simply using the negative terms as a pleasure exclusive of any positive elements. This analysis also refuses to constitute traditional pleasure as opposed to an inverted subversive, post-structural or different pleasure. Negatives of pleasure will form part of pleasure rather than be opposed to it or be constitutive of it in a directly inverted way. Pleasure is seen as representing the interests of a subject. At its most basic level, pleasure is an exhibition of a subject who is in a 'good' state, a state of level being, happiness or any other clearly 'positive' term. For this reason pleasure alone seems to have less judgement value placed on it as representative of a particular subject; *everyone* experiences pleasure. It is seen as inescapable in neurophysiology, laying out all patterns for future experiences being either 'bad' or 'good'. In psychoanalysis, pleasure is the basic aim for the self-preserving (narcissistic) psyche. In a basic pop culture incarnation, we do things 'for pleasure', which variously indicates fun, enjoyment, happiness, comfort, and even a state of nothing which is opposed to a state of angst, pain or tension. What we choose to 'give' us pleasure is where value is located, and also read as the exterior substance or element that constitutes who we are - which then leads to naming practices we use to achieve pleasure as 'perverse', perversion being the focus of the second section of this thesis.

Representing pleasure as something which we have, achieve or which is given to us through a certain practice is a configuration which I will deconstruct by re-figuring pleasure as a continuum, as a state which may be permanent, which may simply alter in quality (pleasure hence becomes qualitative rather than quantitative) and which may alter us along with its process. In its traditional configuration pleasure effects a base-level subject who returns, after such effect, to its former level. Pleasure here is a capital product which 'works' at

effecting us, achievable in measure and as part of a clear equation where the subject plus a certain practice equals pleasure. In my re-figuration, this equation does not work because the subject does not return to a habitual predictable level of being after any and all effects upon it. The use of 'affect' in this thesis is part of a different processual representation of being (which will eventually be termed 'becoming' after Deleuze and Guattari) but here begins with a line of flight. Deleuze and Guattari advocate being as becoming, not singular but multiple, and toward this becoming the body must project itself upon a line of flight, that is, upon a line which departs from and which is simultaneously opposed to the majoritarian form of being human. Lines of flight have major elements that differentiate them from the simple opposition of self to majoritarian being. A line of flight is about speed, movement and setting off while opposition to the dominant takes as its prime motivator a correlative opposition to the majoritarian mode of being. Opposition re-anchors itself to traditional societal forms of being in every instant by continually referring to that which it opposes.¹ A line of flight takes something in society as a point of reference in order to project itself, but it is the movement towards the referent rather than any aim toward an end product that is the essence of a line of flight - flight is the term of momentum, and the line has no identifiable end. Deleuze and Guattari use woman as the first point of reference in a line of flight in *A Thousand Plateaus*, which is problematic for feminism. These problems will be most fully discussed in the conclusion. Here, however, the idea of a line of flight will be accepted as a tactic in order to express the potential of watching as pleasure and able to set the self off into a line of flight. Woman is used by Deleuze and Guattari because as a minoritarian in culture she exists undefined but not entirely foreign, as in between or as tangible, material difference. Because women are denied traditional forms of power and definition in society they already represent a line of flight. Women *must* exist differently in society to majoritarians because they do not yet have the lack of oppression that white, middle class, able-bodied men have. They therefore must exist *as* different forms of intensity, movement and specificity. Because woman is as yet

¹ This is why Deleuze is against people who celebrate perversion, addiction or suicide. His dilemma with these forms of becoming will be discussed below.

undefined in her own terms, woman also exists in her intensities different to other women. She is at once representative of a line of flight and many varied lines of flight with particular intensities and speed. Deleuze and Guattari state:

[The girl] never ceases to roam upon a body without organs. She is an abstract line or a line of flight. Thus girls do not belong to an age group, sex order or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts, ages, sexes; they produce n molecular sexes on the line of flight in relation to the dualism machines they cross right through.²

Ignoring the use of women in particular as a line of flight here (it will be addressed fully in the conclusion) we can replace it with the term pleasure and similar qualities are evident. Pleasure roams upon a body without organs – that is, a body which does not exist as a hierarchical or arboreal signified strata. In this chapter, I will discuss pleasure in both psychology texts and in neurophysiology texts as referring to completely contradictory spaces and places on the body and in the flesh. Pleasure in all of its theoretical incarnations deconstructs the arboreal signified body while trying to cement its most important signifiers – the brain and the genitals – because pleasure cannot be theorised as referring exclusively to these two organs. Pleasure does not belong to age, sex, or kingdom but defies ordering, also evinced in its contradictory incarnations in the differently ordered texts under discussion in this chapter. Pleasure also crosses the dualism machine by blatantly refusing to choose between the binaries it is forced into. Horror films are used as an elemental inclusion in the line of flight movement because they are emphatic about the crossing of dualism in reference to pleasure. Below I will perform a practical application of this theory by imagining a viewer in front of a gross horror film in order to elucidate the crossing of the dualism machine - pleasure as involving and referring to pain, disgust, and a roaming affect which de-stratifies the flesh into trembling, volatile affect. This affect is the projection that could see the flesh hurled upon a line of flight. Both perversion and death are terms which also fit well as potential lines of flight and they will coexist

² Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 277.

with, rather than stand as evolutionary from, pleasure. These three terms, through the use of horror film, can be the minute and domestic starting point to an enormous transformation in the theorisation of a potentially possible (rather than purely theoretical) becoming.

Affect insinuates permanent change, a certain open-ness of the subject to experience(s) which will necessarily alter it from the moment before, and an unpredictable quality of being always in time and momentum rather than fixed in space and nature. Effect however affirms fixity of being by suggesting the subject exists at a static level, is effected and then returns after the effect to its former level. Any change or alteration is construed as 'learning' within an epistemophilic structure of being, as evolutionary progress towards transcendence rather than radical change. Pleasure exists as a non-exclusionary term, potentially affect-ive of all beings and hence at its introduction not immediately as relevant only to certain types of persons. It does, however, exceed subject types in its potentially infinite incarnations. Pleasure is explicitly corporeal within medical epistemes, although the brain, where much anatomical pleasure is located could be seen as the organ of 'mind'. It is psychically autonomous in psychoanalysis and transcendental in the analysis of aesthetics, where pleasure is found in 'reading' film, painting or literature rather than reacting viscerally to it. Pleasure in its different epistemic incarnations not only spans all subjects but also all topographical layers of subjectivity. When cross-analysed through different genres, pleasure for this thesis becomes a useful first line of flight through its fluidity, both in definition and in its limitless plateaus for a potential affect of subjectivity.

In this chapter my focus will be threefold. First I will discuss the nature of epistemic divides in discursive practices which seek to locate pleasure. These divides both regulate modes of practice and emphatically estrange certain definitions, even if those definitions refer to the same term - for example the term pleasure will be referred to in terms of physiology, psychiatry and neurology as well as incarnated in the practice of watching film. This theme of juxtaposing identical terms defined within different epistemes was introduced

in the discussion of *The Order of Things* and will be prevalent through the entire thesis.

My second focus is on the nature of a physiological or corporeal alteration, which I wish to utilise as a means to alter the ways in which embodied subjectivity can be theorised and experienced. Using pleasure as a way to identify a momentum that affects a wholly corporeal/psychical change is a way in which a change in subjectivity, and hence a permanently changing subject, may be identified. My intention is not to theorise the nature of that changed body, only to identify the changing body unto itself, in order to theorise an embodied subjectivity-in-process. The identification of an embodied subjectivity is not juxtaposed against static, sealed and complete bodies or subjects. Instead, subjectivity as momentum conforms to the general aim of this thesis - to formulate a methodology that may be used toward a mode of becoming over traditional theories of being.

My third focus is to take the term 'pleasure' and analyse the traditional value judgements of it both empirically - through theories of its effects on the body - and (psycho)aesthetically - deeming pleasure as always being attractive, primarily sexual and beneficial to the integrity of complete subjectivity. My contention is that pleasure is not essentially the opposite of its immediately referred to binary terms, such as unpleasure or pain, with their negative value. I do not aim to compress the binaries, but rather elucidate their interdependence in order to suggest a means of doing away with terms that are necessarily defined only in opposition to one another.³ The 'nature' of pleasure will be evinced as unpredictable - neither always 'good' nor 'sexual' - and most usefully applied when it elicits change, transformation and the beginning of a process that embodied subjectivity may utilise in its ambition toward becoming, a line of flight. I have chosen to focus on pleasure before the other two major terms for transformation - perversion and death - because it is the

³ ...and that necessarily relegate one term as oppressed by the other dominant term, so that one term is actually all negative values in comparison to the isomorphic dominant term. This is Derrida's idea prevalent in many of his works, and articulated also in Elizabeth Grosz's summation of Derridian deconstruction in *Sexual Subversions*, 1989, pp 26-38.

most general, and possibly for this reason most multiply defined, or undefinable. Pleasure is also the most molecular in potential movement. Its ethical implications are not as immediate or as pressing as the other two terms because it affects everyone. Pleasure is democratically effective of all subjects; whereas death may be repressed and perversion repudiated. Most subjects would embrace pleasure as that which effects them by whatever means. So pleasure is useful by way of an introduction to terminologies that span many disparate discourses, and which may be a line of flight for every body.

An Introduction to Theories of Pleasure

The following section traces a brief genealogy of certain definitions of 'pleasure' within a historicised philosophical and modern psychiatric group of texts. The different epistemes produce alternative ways of understanding pleasure as an effect but almost all of the texts, regardless of discursive genre, emphasise the idea that pleasure is not an affect or an object but a measure. All the texts describe pleasure as a *degree* of being. This is so, whether the authors discussed in the following section see pleasure as something outside subjectivity which effects the subject on a psychical, libidinal or neurophysiological level, or something inside the subject formed of an equation in the body of outside mixed with inside forces. This mode of discourse could potentially figure pleasure as progressive in its demand for the subject to exist in a state of constant flux, rather than *fixed*. However, the degrees of subjectivity, tension and effect that these discourses evince occur always within a rigid boundary of available change rather than a continuum of speed, alteration and irreversible affect. At the centre of this mode of thinking is a level degree zero that is figured as a balance between too much and not enough. This point of equilibrium is described as necessary for reasons which begin in the Hellenistic age with an inextricably moral and medicinal mandate, and evolve into modern medicine's compulsory limits of agitation for a non-pathological body, to psychoanalysis' mental health degree of no-tension and various other descriptions of pleasure. Most of these descriptions work pleasure

as an equation that corresponds to the body's levels of health, incarnated as another equation. A balance between these two equations and the effect pleasure has upon the self is considered the minimum means by which the health of the self is maintained. Even though pleasure is incarnated as degree in almost all of the texts I will discuss below, the way in which pleasure is figured varies greatly. It is for this reason that I engage with various epistemic definitions of the term. Although their basic understandings of the term 'pleasure' are sometimes similar, their modes of applying it to a body or to subjectivity elucidate great divisions of knowledge within the various discourses. They all offer themselves, however, as a truthful version of the effects of pleasure on the human.

In considering the life of the technophilic subject's pleasure - s/he who achieves pleasure from a television, film screen or computer - the limits of neurophysiology and psychoanalysis may hopefully be the springboard to a new imagining of the plural momentum of pleasure - whether pleasure is a single unified entity, among the subject's own experience and among subjectivity in general, or whether it exists as multiplicity or molecularity, accessible only once in each form to each experience and each subject. The working definition of pleasure that will be used in this chapter is something of a 'what pleasure is not' rather than a concrete definition of what it is. But I cannot, of course, work with nothing so before the definitions of pleasure most preferred by the medical and psychiatric professions are discussed in the next section, a more cultural and perhaps less contentious definition will be discussed. I cannot offer my own definition of pleasure because it will limit the potential of the term. At a very basic level, I will suggest that pleasure is something, not necessarily a phenomenological experience, but some *thing* (thing being opposed to nothing rather than insinuating an object) which changes the idea of the subject at a level of nothing.⁴ There is no level of 'nothing' in my opinion - pleasure seems to describe a subject altering from

⁴ In the following section on perversion I will utilise Sylvere Lotringer's definition of asexuality which I see as a potential form of pleasure re-definition. Lotringer posits pleasure as neither sexual nor genital but infinite. Lotringer, Sylvere. 'Defunkt Sex'. In *Semiotext(e): Polysexuality*. Volume IV. No. 1. 1981, pp. 271-297, especially p. 286.

what it was before. Pleasure is not simply something that affects, which suggests some outside force being ingested, clearly retaining boundaries of inside and outside. Pleasure is not that which causes because cause + effect = result, suggesting a capitalist demand for 'work'. Like perversion, which will be discussed in the second section, pleasure is, for now, simply something that changes the subject in some way.

Along with his archaeological excavation of the evolution of empirical discourses, Michel Foucault traced the changes that occurred in morality, Christian, pagan and medical opinions of the body and, specifically of the activities which cause the body and the self to experience pleasure. Foucault unfortunately limits much of his discussion and his use of the word pleasure to the sexual realm, traversing occasionally to other realms of indulgence, such as food. His definition of pleasure as most often specifically sexual is not, for my purposes, sufficient in involving all the incarnations of the body and the self when they are in/with/experiencing pleasure.⁵ For the moment, however, I choose not to specify whether the pleasure I am speaking of is with or without sexual connotations. I will use Foucault's terminology and ideas to encompass a great amorphous and unbound concept of pleasure in order to give the reader some ideas about the conditions that precede and formulate any concept of pleasure when it transforms from a corporeal feeling to a spoken experience. In particular, the pleasures of viewing a screen in television, film, video and computer are what I will use as a potential vehicle for re-thinking pleasure.

My premier term towards transformative subjectivity, as I have stated, is 'pleasure'. Deleuze, in his article 'Desire and Pleasure' adamantly prefers to use the term desire, which he juxtaposes against Foucault's preference for the term pleasure. In this article Deleuze paraphrases Foucault, "I cannot bear the word *desire*; even if you use it differently, I cannot keep myself from thinking

⁵ At this point the proper word to use to describe the relationship between pleasure and the body is still contentious. Any word limits the relationship to one of cause and effect, a situation that simplifies and capitalises pleasure as a product.

or living that desire = lack, or that desire is repressed.”⁶ Deleuze adds “but for my part I can scarcely tolerate the word *pleasure*.”⁷ Although my use of the term pleasure is ultimately towards Deleuze and concepts of intensity and process over fixed subjectivity, my genealogical definition of pleasure is introduced through Foucault, however I will not utilise the term ‘pleasure’ in the same way as either of these two theorists. Foucault’s disdain for ‘desire’ comes from a very traditional, specifically Lacanian, psychoanalytic use of the term which does indeed present lack as the primary motivator of desire, and hence, desire as anti-lack or capital-ly full. Desire is, thus, involved in a matrix of castration anxiety when applied to subjectivity. Deleuze however sees desire as an *agencement*, what Brian Massumi in *A Thousand Plateaus* translates as an ‘assemblage’, of elements.⁸ Such a definition expounds desire from either being at one end of a polar structure of lack and satisfaction or lack and fulfilment. The most important use of the term ‘desire’ for Deleuze however is when he defines it as

process as opposed to structure or genesis; it is affect as opposed to sentiment; it is “*haecc-eity*” (the individuality of a day, a season, a life) as opposed to subjectivity; it is an event as opposed to a thing or a person. And above all, it implies the constitution of a plane of immanence or a ‘body without organs’, which is defined solely by zones of intensity, thresholds, gradients, flows.⁹

Deleuze covertly sees ‘pleasure’ as interrupting the “immanent process of desire; pleasure seems to be on the side of strata and organisation... pleasure seems to me to be the only means for a person or a subject to ‘find itself again’ in a process that surpasses it. It is reterritorialization.”¹⁰ In my argument it is only the use of terms, or each theorists subjective understanding of their precise and particular definitions, that causes the anxieties about one term over another.

⁶ Deleuze, Gilles. ‘Desire and Pleasure’. Trans. Daniel W. Smith. In Davidson, Arnold I., ed. *Foucault and his Interlocutors*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1997, pp. 183-192, quote p. 189.

⁷ Deleuze, 1997, p. 189.

⁸ Smith points this out in his translation of Deleuze, 1997, p. 183.

⁹ Deleuze, 1997, p. 189.

¹⁰ Deleuze, 1997, pp. 189-190.

As Foucault and Deleuze point out, the terms 'desire' and 'pleasure' are more frequently than not interchangeable, and it is only when individual theorists examine their understanding of the particular implications of these terms that the problems and successes of the terms for theory may be elucidated. I do not have the same anxiety about the term 'pleasure' as Deleuze because I see implicit in Deleuze's use of the term 'pleasure' a concept of mandatory *satisfaction* - in a similar way that Foucault despises 'desire' because it indicates lack which in turn demands fulfilment. Psychoanalytically this lack is never filled which is what keeps desiring subjects desiring. The way in which Deleuze defines pleasure indicates something similar to lack because of its insistence on satisfaction - pleasure interrupts desire because it organises equations of satisfied drives, hence completed or finished drives. Pleasure also allows subjectivity to return to its level state (or a new reterritorialised state) a concept, which I will later explicate, as rife within psychiatric, psychoanalytic and neurophysiological theory. Pleasure for Deleuze is something that happens and then subsides, or it is the cause of the subsidisation of an affect or rupture in stable subjectivity or process. Deleuze's anxieties about the term 'pleasure' conform to more traditional versions where pleasure insinuates pleasure *at* something or *for* something predictable but I understand 'pleasure' in terms of its antagonism towards those points Deleuze finds most troublesome. Pleasure is deterritorialising for me because it is a change in the state of being, or a forcing into something different from the moment before, rather than Deleuze's anxiety towards its reterritorialising threat when pleasure is pleasure in something experienced before. I see pleasure as setting into action a process of becoming through such a change, rather than Deleuze's configuration of pleasure as a state of re-finding oneself (or a reinstatement of being, a reterritorialisation). I am adamant pleasure forces an individualisation of moments rather than an establishment of a recognisable place within a strata. This is so even when a repetition of feeling is aimed for. For me the term 'desire' insinuates subjectivity over haecceity because the excavation in theory of a subject's desire then creates that subject (for example desire for a particular object choice *before* act or pleasure names that subject hetero- or homo-sexual). The object seems prevalent in desire more so than in pleasure.

Desire insinuates desire *for* while pleasure seems less autonomous and more ambiguous. Pleasure is important in this thesis because, like Deleuze's incarnation of desire, it exceeds linguistics, it has no particular beginning or end, and it alters the subject from the moment before, thus creating haecceity over subjectivity.¹¹ This is the difference I see between pleasure as a process opposed to *satisfaction* of desire. 'Pleasure' in this chapter is explored by addressing some of Deleuze's anxieties about it, but my application of the term moves it towards a positive utilisation. Such an application is involved with Deleuze's direct command above for "zones of intensity, thresholds, gradients and flows" because pleasure here is posited as not always beneficial, pleasant, positive or satisfying and most importantly, something which the Cartesian mind cannot always consciously choose for its own extricated body. Desire for me suggests this kind of sentient control, a choice, while pleasure suggests a less conscious or demanded aim. The body after pleasure in this chapter is not returned, happy or satisfied but disrupted, changed and affected. No term exists without a history or genealogy. In order to align with concepts of history opposed to concepts of truth, I return to Foucault.

In *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality Volume 2*¹² Foucault traces the alterations in attitudes about sexuality, pleasure and the body's 'constancy' in formulating a subject's idea of its 'self'. From ancient Greek authors through Christian intervention, Foucault compares these attitudes to certain 'modern' scientific and moral attitudes, which came into being in order to describe knowledge of the 'body in pleasure'. His focus on the Greeks emphasises the fallacy in believing the ancients to be amoral and un-self-regulating simply because the acts they used as vehicles towards pleasure were more diverse and would be deemed, after the Victorians, perverse. Foucault's major point is that, to the Greeks, act or object was not as important a moral consideration as

¹¹ Although I aspire towards Deleuzian becoming I will retain the term subjectivity because I am trying to posit a *beginning* point towards transforming subjectivity. I think that at this stage I am not able to confidently present a methodology that *is* becoming and hence has no further use of the word 'subjectivity'.

¹² Foucault, Michel. (1984) *The Use of Pleasure. The History of Sexuality Volume 2*. Trans. Robert Hurley. Penguin: London. 1992.

temperance, or moderate intensity. Pleasure, in this instance predominantly sexual but not exclusively so, was a degree of intensity rather than a product, (a more modern incarnation that will be discussed further on). Whatever act or object assisted the self in experiencing pleasure was sanctioned as long as the *level* of pleasure was not considered immoderate. Pleasure was quantitative not qualitative. Foucault writes,

What differentiates men from one another, for medicine and moral philosophy alike, is not so much the type of objects towards which they are oriented, nor the mode of sexual practice they prefer. Above all it is the intensity of that practice. The division is between lesser and greater: moderation or excess. It is rather rare when a notable personage is depicted, for his preference for one form of sexual practice or another to be pointed up.¹³

Georges Canguilhem, in his historical and contemporary discussion of the genesis and meaning of pathology juxtaposed against the 'normal' affirms this idea of quantitative excess as detrimental in his exploration of the earlier physiologists Auguste Comte and Comte's reading of Broussais. According to the 'Broussais Principle' pathology of the body was measured rather than identified, as a result of degrees of physiological normalcy. Independent and unique pathology and nosology did not exist in the theories of Comte and his contemporaries. Like pleasure and its existence not as some 'thing' but as degree of what was already present, actual human physiology was incapable of anything it did not already present, only of excesses or serious diminution of the 'normal' (temperate) condition. Canguilhem offers as example another Broussaisian, Bichat, thus:

Bichat's hostility toward all metrical designs in biology was paradoxically allied with his assertion that diseases must be explained in terms of the definitely quantitative variations of their properties, with the tissues which make up the organs serving as a scale. "To analyse precisely the properties of living bodies; to show that every physiological phenomena is, in the final

¹³ Foucault, 1992, p. 44.

analysis, related to these properties considered in their natural state and that every pathological phenomena derives from their increase, decrease or alteration, that every therapeutic phenomenon has as its principle the return to the natural type from which they had deviated; to determine precisely the cases where each one comes into play... this is the general idea of this work".¹⁴

Canguilhem uses this prevalent model of pathology as affected normalcy as an introduction against which he later argues. However his desire to locate a drive within medicine to cure, begins with the exposure of medicine as wanting to reform. Medicine's drive to return to 'normalcy' sick states of being holds up as desirable a single example of that which the discourse deems acceptable as a state of being. Canguilhem evinces the alignment of early physiology with theories of pleasure located around a return to a 'normal' equilibrium and a healthy state. Pathology is inextricable from physiology in the same way that pleasure is inextricable from the flesh in traditional discourse, most particularly in Foucault's analysis from the Greeks to the Victorians.¹⁵ The study of pathology and physiology and the study of pleasure's relationship to the body both focus on quantifiable measures but without the potential for transformation that a focus on quantity (to do with time) rather than quality (to do with space and the object in space) could offer. Physiology and pathology work within a system that requires time only within a space. Because the degree of variation in physiology and pathology is not one that evolves forward but one that works within a rigid measurable space and simply traverses backwards and forwards along the measure, the subject moving in time can never exceed the limits or borders of the measurable space. It is never an 'unknowable' or limitless space. Both genres of discourse, physiology and what I shall term the 'history of desire', refute the unbound momentum of pleasure. Quantitative measure not only eradicates any ability to theorise pleasure as independent but retains, in both discourses, an adamant beneficial 'state' of normalcy which claims not to be driven by a moral or subjective coda

¹⁴ Canguilhem, 1989, p. 61-62. Canguilhem quotes Bichat, Xavier. *Anatomie générale appliquée à la physiologie et à la médecine*. Paris: Brosson and Chaudé, 1801.1, XIX.

¹⁵ Interestingly Foucault was supervised by Canguilhem for his Doctorate.

but a physiologically, (and hence supposedly 'truthfully') system of temperance. Illness comes to refer not simply to a 'wrong' state of being, but rather an extreme version of something found within normalcy. Canguilhem states

To define the abnormal as too much or too little is to recognise the normative character of the so-called normal state. This normal or physiological state is no longer simply a disposition which can be revealed and explained as fact, but a manifestation of an attachment of some value. When Bégin defines the normal state as one where 'the organs function with all the regularity and uniformity of which they are capable', we cannot fail to recognise that, despite Broussais's horror of all ontology, *an ideal of perfection soars over this attempt at a positive definition.*¹⁶

Perfection, both in medicine and in the history of desire, is not something to aspire toward or aim to attain, as it is in certain other discourses. Unlike the case in religion or athletics, the perfect state in medicine and desire is something *necessary* rather than optional, something which is forced upon the subject as the subject's own responsibility rather than a goal admittedly set up by the given discourse towards which the subject looks for guidance. Perfection masquerades as the minimum necessary state for corporeal well-being, and the term normal in both medicine and desire is a degree zero level of being which I shall discuss further on. However because normal is degree zero rather than a 'thing' it can claim no value judgement. It does not suggest a super-human in morals or flesh; it instead demands a regulation of subjectivity that is compulsory for the good of the subject, not the good of the discourse that prescribes it. A level state of being is demanded of the subject and a point of beneficial equilibrium both in pleasure and in the physiological flesh is necessary rather than suggested.

The bound continuum of normalcy and health clearly exhibits how easily the point of 'normal' could alter through time, but precisely where the alteration passes from normal to pathological or excessive is unclear. If pleasure is not a

¹⁶ Canguilhem, 1989, pp. 56-57, original emphasis.

'thing' and healthy desire is not through specific act or love-object then how is the system structured? This emphasis on something far less tangible than object or act leads to the question, how was the level of excess measured? Foucault points to the Greeks' use of the concept of self, the idea of one's own subjectivity and the success one has in mastering this subjectivity, in moderating the needs of the flesh and of privileging higher epistemological pursuits. So there was, theoretically, no need for outside regulation or for the subject itself to renounce anything, as the Christian tradition encourages. The subject instead was put into a master/slave relationship with itself and in order to feel master of its own self, the subject regulated its slavery to its desire.¹⁷ Nothing therefore, theoretically, was prohibited; only over-use or indulgence in something. This contrasts with the modern idea of forbidden desire versus sanctioned desire, that certain acts or objects are simply unacceptable in any situation as vehicles for pleasure. The main vehicle for pleasure in this thesis is horror films and the traumas they depict, traditionally at best low-art and at worst, implicitly bad for the mental stability of the subject. Horror films are either 'bad for you' or banned when referred to in a negative manner. But modernity is somewhat reverting in its 'pop' cultural regulation of the self, an activity which continues as subjects are lulled into believing they always have 'choice' over their activities. They simply have to moderate whatever they choose. Where certain things are forbidden, other things, even those that are good for us are condemned the moment they become excessive, indulgent or intensely consuming.

Addicts and the phenomena of addiction prevalent in the US currently are the new Greeks in their obsession with those who cannot regulate the self in the face of the object or act of addiction. Exercise addicts, sex addicts, food addicts and any other phenomena taken beyond a certain, hazy acceptable point is a potential site for losing the self in the face of the desired object.¹⁸ This modern pathology is a co-joining of the Victorian disdain for certain objects, and the

¹⁷ Foucault quotes Aristotle's *History of Animals* VII, 1, 581b: "It is not abstinence from pleasures that is best, but mastery over them without ever being worsted." 1992, p. 70.

¹⁸ This idea is articulated most thoroughly in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's 'Epidemics of the Will'. In *Tendencies*. Durham: Duke University Press. 1993, pp 130-142.

Greek's anxiety about taking pleasure too far. Ironically as soon as modernity pathologised certain 'addictions' the factor of pleasure seemed to disappear and the self suddenly becomes victim, or to paraphrase the Greeks, slave to its addiction. Pleasure is replaced by pain, a necessary result culturally of the loss of 'self'.

For the Greeks pleasure can be constructed as a degree which effects the self. It is not a solid entity, which can be visualised or grasped tangibly, nor is it a completely intangible phantasy of effect that escapes study and even pathologisation. Foucault points out the definition of pleasure as intensity or degree was the same for "medicine and moral philosophy alike".¹⁹ The division in discourse, which exists today between, for example, the pleasure of seeing art versus the pleasure which biologists can locate and articulate within the neurones of the human brain, was not so distinct.²⁰ The Greek body and its *desire for acts of pleasure* was an ontological object where the effects of excessive pleasure were medically threatening to the self for the same reasons as they were morally or philosophically threatening. This may have something to do with the absence of the Cartesian mind/body split in the Hellenistic world, but the ancients presumably did have divisions of discourse,²¹ this was simply not one of them. This does not mean that all pleasure was figured the same in Greek ideology. But pleasure was not divided clearly into sections depending on *who* theorised it.

Desire as a concept related to pleasure was almost indivisible from the pleasure it aimed to achieve in ancient Greece. Foucault states:

¹⁹ Foucault, 1992, p. 44.

²⁰ In *The Order of Things* Foucault explicates the Classical period of natural science where all discourse somehow resembled each other in concentric circles of resemblance or similitude. However there was, in the effect of mirroring things, an insurmountable division between them. For example, art that was sublimely religious resembled prayer and religious closeness to God, yet by resembling it, it ensured that this art would never be *the same* as it. Foucault writes, "The links of emulation [In classical discursive thought]... do not form a chain but rather a series of concentric circles reflecting and rivalling one another." 1994, p. 21.

²¹ Cf. Aristotle's firm divisions in his writing on literature (tragedy, comedy and epic) where even these three genres, held together in the *Poetics*, are all given firm distinctions of style, aim and levels of success. At a larger level, literature is always kept distinct from art and philosophy in Aristotle and real bodies are firmly extricated from all forms of thinking and arts.

In the experience of the *aphrodisia*... act desire and pleasure formed an ensemble whose elements were distinguishable certainly, but closely bound to one another. It was precisely their close linkage that constituted one of the essential characteristics of that form of activity. Nature intended... that the performance of the act be associated with pleasure, and it was this pleasure that gave rise to *epithumia*, to desire, in a movement that was naturally directed towards what 'gives pleasure'.²²

In certain ways this is like the construction that both modern biology and the human sciences articulate in reference to the experiencing of pleasure. Pleasure is seen as something, which, once experienced, formulates a desire for repetition of the act. In Greece this was almost a unified entity, an organism of experience. The terms pleasure and desire, though distinguishable, seem to have little, if any, independent life. They certainly suggest one another and the relationship between them is almost circular or cyclical. The existence of a primary or first term does not seem evident. Each of the terms indicates the others and so forth. However the gap between the terms in modern thought is vast. Traditionally we desire to achieve pleasure, and pleasure achieved cements our desire for repetition, but not as an organism of desire/pleasure, simply as a subject desiring an isolated capital act, with aim, beginning and end.

In the next section I will discuss the idea of the quotient of pleasure for the modern subject, and my deep mistrust, both of the idea of pleasure being a predictable and unified repetitive experience, and of the equilibrium science suggests the body is striving towards. Desire, act and pleasure, especially in biological and psychiatric discourse, are three terms frequently imagined with quotients between them, and an objective of equilibrium is the definite aim of the equation. This is not entirely untrue of the Greeks either. The use of pleasure was a health and well-being issue. But being good for the general

²² Foucault, 1992, pp. 42-43. Also the note to pp. 43-44 which states "The frequency of expressions that link pleasures and desires very closely together should be noted. These expressions show that what is at stake in the ethical system of the *aphrodisia* is the dynamic ensemble consisting of desire and pleasure associated with the act."

health meant any excess was immediately detrimental to the body. The notion of *expenditure*,²³ one not entirely dissipated in modern thought, posed a threat, in particular to the male.²⁴ While the expulsion of sperm was good for the existence of the species, too much was liable to put the body system out of balance and leave the self in a precarious state. A 'normal' amount still managed to put the self in the state of dejection that follows coitus,²⁵ a large amount leads to death.²⁶ Foucault elaborates:

Although the volume is small - proportionally larger, however, in men than in animals - living creatures deprive themselves of a whole portion of the elements that are essential to their own existence. One sees how in certain instances... the misuse of sexual pleasure might lead to death.²⁷

In this instance the 'death' Foucault speaks of is most probably 'masculine' death. This notion of equilibrium will be argued against further on, but here it seems one of the few points that remain constant in the use of the term pleasure from the Greeks to modern biology and psychiatry.

²³ Foucault, 1992, p. 130.

²⁴ This idea still persists in certain versions of new-age thinking, for example in the Western appropriation of tantric sex.

²⁵ Foucault paraphrases Aristotle, 1992, p. 131.

²⁶ Sperm is a very ripe site for locating the evolution of body fluids currently. In *Powers of Horror* Kristeva claims that "neither tears nor sperm, for instance, although they belong to the borders of the body, have any polluting value" in her discussion of filth and abjection in relation to the body. 1982, p. 71. In 1987 Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, in the introduction to their anthology *Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press, state that "It is not just the phallocratic signifier of semen either which is the hint of potential catastrophe in sex today... it is all body fluids - blood, saliva, any puncturing of the surface of the skin..." p. 15. Semen, the fluid (as opposed to sperm, the object) is transformed in the AIDS apocalypse, into one of *those* fluids that not only pollutes, but kills.

²⁷ Foucault, 1992, p. 133. This idea's incarnations through to modern times involve many transformations, but the idea that the body must remain in balance never disappears entirely. They range from the sperm of the ancients, through the humours of the middle ages and even now the equilibrium of the psyche which involves the release of tension which will be seen later in the discussion of pleasure and psychoanalysis. A useful explication of the body in sexual balance is Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. 1990.

Pleasure in Medical Discourse - Equilibrium and Level Zero

Pleasure in medical discourse is a broad area and here it will be greatly limited. The main focus of this section is the specific and rather new field of neurosciences and sciences that deal with the 'brain' or 'mind' in a psycho- and physiological manner. Like the pathology of addiction, these brain oriented sciences both re-unite the Cartesian divided subject by planting behaviour firmly in the flesh while simultaneously stating that our flesh is formed through our behaviour and actions, thus re-splitting in effect the mind after>equals/before body ideology prevalent in most discourses.²⁸

Pleasure is imagined and analysed by medical and psychological theory in a number of ways. I shall limit the use of pleasure as a concept, not to already established genealogies with their respective limitations, but to a few basic ideas on the terminology that defines pleasure and its implications in a cultural sphere. Before I launch into a discussion with medico-biology, however, I wish to preclude its theories by pointing out the focus that is placed on the link between pleasure and the brain, i.e. the *logos*. A quote from Julia Kristeva, which I will return to, is an indication both of my suspicion of locating pleasure with the brain and with reason,

Purification is something only the Logos is capable of. But that is to be done in the manner of... stoically separating oneself from a body whose substance and passions are sources of impurity... In such a case, pleasure, having become pure and true through the harmony of colour and form as in the case of accurate and beautiful geometric form, has nothing in common with 'the pleasure of scratching' (a quote from Philebus).²⁹

²⁸ Canguilhem will not return in this section, because, although his doctorate on the normal and pathological is a medical doctorate, it is suspicious enough of the medical field to be constituted as a cultural studies thesis. It does exhibit, however, that there are those within medicine who are suspicious of the supposed omnipotence of the field, something which my use of generally traditional texts may not clearly show but which must be acknowledged.

²⁹ Kristeva, 1982, p. 27.

The firm division of body pleasure from a more transcendent mind or, literally brain, pleasure will be explored in my separation of the various epistemes. All focus of pleasure upon the brain in the following section is exploratory rather than empirically true. A focus on the pleasure of the body, or embodied subject, will follow.

Pleasure is prolific amongst physiological and psychiatric texts in two basic incarnations. The first is the idea of pleasure as a release, a drive towards eradicating the trauma of unpleasure. For example, infamous fifties psychiatrist Thomas S. Szasz writes "The concept of pleasure corresponding to this view of pain is either that pleasure is the non-ringing of the bell [where the ringing stands for the sensation of aggravated pain] or that it is the successful silencing of the noise. The former idea is commonly expressed by saying that pleasure consists of the *absence* of pain; the latter that pleasure is the state that ensues when pain is eliminated."³⁰ This idea is most prolific in Freud, who sees the pleasure-unpleasure principle as one of the primary drives of infancy. He states "The governing purpose obeyed by these primary processes is easy to recognise; it is described as the pleasure-unpleasure principle, or more shortly the pleasure principle."³¹ In its most basic definition Freud describes the pleasure/unpleasure principle as that which exists within an *economy* of the psyche.³² The psyche desires equilibrium, it begins in a state of tension (unpleasure) striving to release that tension (pleasure) in order to attain the level of equilibrium. The purpose of attaining equilibrium is to govern the economy of the psyche, perhaps more aptly named the treasurer of the psyche. In this way Freud adheres rigidly to the concept that pleasure and unpleasure

³⁰ Thomas S Szasz, *Pain and Pleasure: A Study of Bodily Feelings*. London: Tavistock Publications, 1957, p. vi.

³¹ From Freud, (1911) 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning.' In Freud, Anna, ed. *The Essentials of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. James Strachey. London: Penguin. 1991, pp. 509-516, quote p. 510, quoted in Szasz, p. vi.

³² Freud, (1911) 1991, p. 512. Freud uses the idea of expenditure in his discussion of the pleasure principle and its formulation alongside the reality principle that splits desire into either that which conforms with reality and is available or that which does not conform and hence becomes phantasy. Aversion to unpleasure within reality leads to repression, p. 510, and hence presumably an inability to regulate the pleasure principle within the reality principle would lead to psychosis. This idea is discussed further in the 'Death' section on the aggressive and regressive drives.

are available to subjectivity within a limited span or space and either an extreme of pleasure or of unpleasure is definable within this limit. The subject's pleasure/unpleasure state is one of oscillation rather than transformation. It is limited in this sense for any transformative mode of figuring subjectivity. Pleasure as oscillation rather than transformation does not allow pleasure a potential to change the subject permanently, but only to place it in a space of unpleasure which bides its time until it is able to return to a state of equilibrium through the tonic effect of pleasure.

The second neuro/psych-theoretical incarnation sees pleasure as a yield caused by a narrative of sensation, perception and affect.³³ In my understanding of this particular approach, sensation would be equivalent to what is 'outside' of subjectivity, the Real inflicting upon the subject; perception as the subject's own (and only) sensory version of sensation;³⁴ affect, according to James Drever, the "feeling or emotion attached to ideas or idea-complexes"³⁵. Both pleasure/unpleasure and sensation-perception-affect are punctuated by an establish-able end result - a product - that sets the experience of pleasure into an easily readable capital equation, available for repetition. Ironically, the use of pleasure in the first model is that of a product of absence rather than presence, the absence of pain being the fibre of present pleasure. In the second example pleasure is a product of multiplicity. A multiple series of forces, both interior and exterior to the subject, converge towards the end affect of pleasure, the affect itself also being readable as not necessarily an entirely singular or unified experience. Affect may be pleasurable, but its origin from the self suggests it may mingle with ambivalent or conflicting emotions along with pleasure. This is opposed to effect originating entirely outside the body and simply entering and affecting, unchanged, the inside of the body, or, in other

³³ Drever, James. *A Dictionary of Psychology*. London: Penguin. 1952, p. 201. quoted in Szasz, in his explication of this definition. 1957, p. 35.

³⁴ Maurice Merleau-Ponty refutes the traditional concept of perception explicitly in his phenomenological study of the term, but even his less conceptual, more corporeal version of perception privileges the dermis rather than a multi-plateaued version of corporeality that would include the viscera. See Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, (1945) *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. Colin Smith. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. 1996.

³⁵ Drever, 1952, p. 201, quoted in Szasz, 1957, p. 35.

words, something outside the self being incorporated into the self. Pleasure is not the result of an external seed planted inside the self producing an unchanged result indivisible from the self. Re-action from the mind, the action of the mind's perception of sensation, drags with it all the residue of the mind along with the narrative product of sensation + perception. Though the terms sensation, perception and affect read as narrative and indicate an end, they are implicitly inextricable in that they must be mixed to achieve the alchemical brew of affect, affect being the signifier of pleasure if that is the result of the equation.

Though this theory is prolific among psychiatric texts, Thomas Szasz explains that the term which bridges either end of the spectrum - perception - binds the binary of the physiological with the psychoanalytic. He states, "As concepts, sensation is closest to physiology (and to physics), affect is closest to psychology, and perception is a mixture of the two."³⁶ Ordering the terms within the pleasure equation relates to Foucault's argument in *The Order of Things* that modern empirical science is concerned with the *function* of things which juxtaposes the classical natural historians concern with the *description* of things (in themselves and as they resembled other things).³⁷ Perception is ambiguous, it refers both to subject and to outside clinical observation of the subject. It is both visible and invisible in its symptoms, it can be articulated but not satisfactorily encompassed by language. It is, therefore, a contentious term, because its ordering, between psychiatry and physiology, makes it unclear. Perception is the term that binds the end terms and yet it is the one term that Szasz does not place within a scientific context, either empirically or

³⁶ Szasz, 1957, p. 35.

³⁷ Foucault paraphrases Cuvier: "Our attention must be directed 'rather upon the function themselves than upon the organs'; before defining organs by their variables, we must relate them to the functions they perform... so the visible diversity of structures no longer emerges from the background of a table of variables, but from the background of a few great functional units capable of being realised and of accomplishing their aims in various ways." 1994, p. 264. Ironically, the main way in which surgeons of function in modern medicine still identify flaws or breakdowns in the functioning of an organ is through the visible and descriptive. For an example of this at an 'everyday man' level, see the television programme *Jonathan Miller's The Body in Question* (BBC 1978) Episode 12 'Perishable Goods'. Here two surgeons excavate the liver pathology of a recently deceased man by microscope, using only visual clues to *describe* the breakdown of the function.

'human'ly. The mistrust of any part of a scientific equation that may be sullied by subjectivity is traceable to Plato. Evelyn Keller and Christine Grontkowski point to the suspicion and disdain for terms susceptible to subjectivity in science. They state:

Modern science's confidence that nature, (properly objectified), is indeed knowable is surely derived from...Platonic concepts. Its confidence in the objectifiability of nature is, however, only partly derived from Plato...the greater part of two dialogues, *the Protagoras* and the *Theaetetus*, is devoted to the explication of the impossibility of basing knowledge on perception. In sum he makes Theaetetus say 'Taking it all together then, you call this perception... a thing which has no part in apprehending the truth... nor consequently in knowledge either'.³⁸

Science attempts the powerful task of predicting, classifying and knowing perception in and of the subject. It is attempting to know subjective experience despite, and because of, the fact that it is so suspicious and disdainful of it. As if to be able to predict subjective experience (such as pleasure) would eventually mean an eradication of subjective knowledge (not 'real' knowledge in scientific terms) entirely. This process is not already uncommon - doctors tell their patients based on diagnosed illness how they feel regardless of the patient's feeling.³⁹ Sensation is a change in the self through a function, (perhaps the nervous system reacting). Affect, as a medical term, is a reaction able to be read and described. Perception however, is unique to the self and not

³⁸ Keller, Evelyn and Grontkowski, Christine. 'The Mind's Eye'. In Harding, Sandra and Hintikka, Merrill B., eds. *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company. 1983, pp. 207-224. Quote from p. 212. Plato quote from 'Theaetetus', 186e.

³⁹ The whole concept of 'pain' in medicine is simply the signifier that brings the patient to the medical profession - it has little practical use in diagnosis and is even seen as untrustworthy in locating the site of illness. Medicine claims that where the body feels pain is more often than not away from the site of disease or inflammation. Canguilhem points this out for medicine, Schilder for body image psychiatry in Schilder, Paul. (1950) *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body: Studies in the Constructive Energies of the Psyche*. New York: International Universities Press. 1978. And Jonathan Miller for popular culture in his television series *The Body in Question*, 1978.

entirely open to analysis by the physiologist or the psychologist.⁴⁰ Even though scientific definitions of pleasure seem wrought with the problematic desire for a tangible product their differing methodologies elucidate a less than stable, and not entirely easy to define as positive, term. Are scientific definitions of pleasure homogenous to each other? Is the concept of pleasure always and only a singular identifiable opposite to negative terms? Or is its relationship to such binary opposites as pain, unpleasure and psychical trauma more than simply polar?

Common understandings posit pleasure in diametrical opposition to a number of other 'affects' upon the body and psyche. For the single term 'pleasure' there seems to be multiple and frequently seemingly unrelated antipodal terms. Pain, unpleasure (which itself is polyphonous in meaning), violence, fear, absence of feeling. Attainment of pleasure according to this methodology relies on the negation of these affects; it does not seem to rely as much on its own merits. For example, if sex is seen as a primary instigator of the product pleasure, whether it is infantile sexual pleasure or adult gratification, the pleasure is always haunted by sexual focus on the flesh, by the potential for the flesh to feel pain or to feel nothing. Libidinalisation of pain during sexual activity elucidates the incredibly close proximity these binary terms exist within. Frustrated drive for sexual gratification is also a spectre in sex life. The 'pathology' of feeling neither pleasure nor unpleasure in sexual activity but instead feeling frustration at the absence of either is an example of when pleasure is over-signified as presence. This signification is available only when it has the potential for something less desirable, which may be absence.

Pleasure as presence in itself without a threatening negative partner is hard to imagine. Sexual activity is pleasurable but always teetering on a precipice of potential violence (in pain, in frustration) upon the body, of active unpleasure. More importantly, the drive towards achieving pleasure through sexuality is a

⁴⁰ But necessarily relevant to the problematic notion of extreme relativity. Perception would require, in its definition, more of a mixture of physiology and psychology that exceeds the uniqueness of each of the two or an overlap of both.

drive for a specifically *recognisable* pleasure. Repetition creates *expected* pleasure as the desired result. Dominant phallogocentric terms come to mind - genital pleasure, productive orgasm, hetero-interaction. What does unpleasure perform on the body and the mind? Szasz claims "Whereas '*pain*' is a *command for action*, '*pleasure*' (which may be equated here with contentment or happiness) *calls for no action*."⁴¹ This uncovers the contradiction implicit within a capitalist definition that sees pleasure as result, or as a benefit reaped from a narrative structure. Pleasure becomes confounding as a cultural positive by being posited as both absent-negative to the present-positive of unpleasure, as well as passive to pain's active. Pleasure seems hard to conceive of without a negative. The imaginary being that is pleasure is an object which stands before the subject as something to have or to gain possession of. The desire to grasp at pleasure is a tangible drive; otherwise drive in itself would stagnate as nothing. To be able to grasp at something necessitates its becoming visible, yet pleasure seems 'invisible'; we can see its effect but not 'it' as such. It is phantasised as being readable yet there is no real description of this function. Further in this chapter, the visibility of pleasure will be more thoroughly discussed.

If pleasure is no-action, which counters the active misery of subjectivity, then it is presumed that a.) All subjects live in misery unless they live without pain (which is a stagnant state; boredom) or b.) Drive is only ever a drive away from pain rather than towards pleasure. Hence sexual activity is a decrease of pain! Psychoanalytically, especially pertaining to the winding up of sexual motor energy this may be the case. For example, in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' Freud states

We believe... that the course of those events is invariably set in motion by an unpleasurable tension, and that it takes a direction such that its final outcome coincides with a lowering of that tension - that is, with an avoidance of unpleasure or a production of pleasure.⁴²

⁴¹ Szasz, 1957, p. 203.

⁴² Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920). In Freud, Anna, 1991, pp. 218-268, quote p. 218.

Even the 'production' of pleasure however, has something to do with the release or expulsion of tension, a 'painful' affect. There is nothing new created from the equation unpleasurable tension + production of pleasure = lowering of tension. However in the cultural imagination there is a very real presence of pleasure as being rather than absence, available as an object of study, no matter how hard it is to conceptualise.

If pleasure is so pivotal to experience, and the inability to attain it causes excessive trauma that could not exist without the drive to pleasure in the first place, is the attainment of pleasure *always* dependent on the potential for unpleasure? This goes against the standard pleasure/unpleasure principle in that pleasure is not actively sought, only the alleviation of unpleasure is sought. But drive itself must be a seeking of pleasure, if it is opposed to instinct, which seeks alleviation of primal needs. Instinct dictates a survival mechanism is in force, drive is a choice made towards seeking pleasure. (Although drive props anacritically upon instinct after weaning.) Is the active attainment of pleasure relevant to the pleasure/unpleasure principle? If we read the principle literally then it is not. The pleasure principle simply demands an alleviation of tension - if there is no tension there is no need for pleasure. But culture encourages the subject to find pleasure, to hunt it and consume it. Pleasure, despite being constantly opposed by a polar term, is given almost a sentient materiality, a subjectivity of its own - it is a 'thing' which must be sought, taken, experienced. 'Does X give you pleasure?' Even though pleasure is an abstract term it is imagined as a tangible, evident object, perhaps a psychical object, but one fleshed by phantasmatic desire. Common phraseology denotes pleasure as a sentient demi-god, a parent; 'I do this *for* pleasure' or 'I *get* pleasure from this'. What this suggests is that apart from an avoidance of unpleasure, pleasure may have a self of its own.

Imagining this thing 'pleasure' as a homogenised, communally felt same, and most importantly, predictable perception of affect, is problematic. James Feibleman, taking the empirically scientific version of the term pleasure and 'adapting' it to a philosophical approach, writes, "One characteristic of

pleasure is that it is always the same. As a disturbance which spreads through the whole organism, it does not change in feeling, varying only in intensity, never in pervasiveness."⁴³ This comment immediately brings to mind the Greeks and their configuration of degrees and intensity of pleasure. But if Feibleman's comment is true in a biological sense (which I deeply suspect) then it could not be further from the truth in a cultural respect. His idea does not even begin to account for all the diversities of act which different subjects pursue in order to achieve pleasure. More importantly, it does not account for the fear culture has in those who pursue pleasure in a 'perverse' way; whether it be too much of something, not enough, or the wrong something. Feibleman's comment begs the question; why does the definition of pleasure pose such a problem if, as he suggests, pleasure is always the same? Why does disparity in drive towards the attainment of pleasure occur if all subjectivities and all experiences arrive at an exact, repetitious conclusion? Physiology also, especially neurophysiology, frequently arrives at a similar conclusion to Feibleman, positing identical repetitive pleasure within the brain.

Feibleman quotes another scientist of pleasure, D.O. Hebb, because of his particular expertise in neurology. The truth of the body, and especially of the brain - the seat of *logos* - is seen as the most conclusive example of the way in which to define a human experience. Hebb, "defines pleasure as 'a directed growth or development in cerebral organisation'."⁴⁴ The *visible* growth of pleasure, the pattern available for description that makes the function accessible, which Hebb locates in the brain, makes intensity, and desire, two peculiarly invisible terms, definable as rational function. As a directed growth or development, this biological phenomenon would presumably be directed by culture, which allows an early homogenisation not only of the normalised perception of pleasure but of the sensations that inspire it. Dangerous is the idea that drive and pleasure satisfaction are biologically implanted in the brain

⁴³ Feibleman, James K. 'A Philosophical Analysis of Pleasure.' in Robert G. Heath, ed. *The Role of Pleasure in Behaviour*. New York: Harper and Row. 1964, p. 252.

⁴⁴ Hebb, D.O. *The Organisation of Behaviour*. New York: Wiley. 1959, pp. 232-234, quoted in Feibleman, 1964, p. 255.

of the subject without acknowledging the cultural impact on what Hebb calls cerebral organisation. Both psychoanalysis and neurophysiology agree upon this.⁴⁵

Moustafa Safouan, an apparently Lacanian psychoanalyst,⁴⁶ defines pleasure by paraphrasing Freud's 'Project for a Scientific Psychology':

In the *Project* Freud writes that by desire he understands the cortical pathway that has been beaten out before, with a view to the discharge of the excitation flowing from the sense organs. The child who is hungry desires his mother's breast because a cortical channel, representing the breast, is among the network of channels that were beaten out when the afflux of hunger was halted for the first time.⁴⁷

In the language of this apparently empirical paragraph pleasure ironically *beats* a path into the brain of the child, while the agony of the absence of pleasure leaves a smooth surface. Once again, pain is configured as bulkier, more present and swollen, than the absence (here the *active* absence) which is pleasure. Pleasure violently makes its absence visible by beating into the child's brain its chasmic arrival. Pleasure in its earliest form, that which brings the most instinctual of joys, is a pain causing affect (if the beating of cortical paths may be imagined as a beating which potentially could be felt, though even the sound of it brings images of agony). It could almost be seen as some

⁴⁵ The medical implications of this theory are a question for bioethics, which I cannot possibly grapple with in the context of my interests. To naturalise cerebral biology without acknowledging cultural influx insinuates that if a drive is exhibited towards an act deemed culturally perverse; sexuality, food etc., it is a flaw in the body of the 'perverse' subject. This then becomes 'proof' of pathology, corporeal and psychical madness, and an inability 'in the flesh' to be 'normal'. It also insinuates that there is a truth in normal behaviour (the *right* pathways in the cerebrum) and a genetic (i.e. natural) flaw in non-normative subjectivity. For example, dopamine - the chemical given off by receptors in the brain that traces the established paths of pleasure, connected by serotonin - has been linked with schizophrenia. It is suggested that schizophrenics produce too much dopamine constantly and therefore their brains, like their subjectivity, is physiologically flawed. Eventually this could lead to the idea that perversity may not only be cured (or indeed that it needs to be at all) but that it can be physiologically prevented somehow through medical intervention at an embryonic stage. This idea is pervasive in the following chapter 'Perversion'.

⁴⁶ See note 73 below.

⁴⁷ Safouan, Moustafa, *Pleasure and Being: Hedonism: from a Psychoanalytic Point of View*. Trans. Martin Thom. London: Macmillan. 1983.

internal cortical form of masochistic experience. Elizabeth Grosz, in her discussion of the body and its many inscribable surfaces states

This metaphors of body writing posits the body, and particularly its epidermic surface, muscular-skeletal frame, ligaments, joints, blood vessels and internal organs as corporeal surfaces... [which] asserts that the body is a page or material surface, possibly even a book of interfolded leaves, ready to receive, bear, transmit meanings, messages or signs, much like a system of writing.⁴⁸

The brain is configured then as having a skin or surface, which is beaten into, submitting to pleasure via the inscriptions or writing upon it through which it remembers or recognises and hence 'reads the writing of' pleasure.

A positive aspect of Safouan's reading of Freud is his focus on an individual experience of pleasure as beating a *network of cortical channels*. This network suggests the vast array of drives, libidinalisations and experiences the subject strives with and towards in order to reach pleasure, are due, in a biological state at least, to no singular pathway leading to pleasure, (even that originally beaten out by one individual's satiation of a drive for pleasure). Rather, even the complex subjectivity of an infant suggests pleasure follows many unrecognisable pathways frequently to achieve a singular end, and perhaps conversely a single pathway achieves many ends. Or both pathways and ends are a dizzying polyphony. This idea could be read to encourage specificity of subjectivity, both within and in reference to a subject, whether the subject is read as biological or psychical or both, in order to efface the idea of truth and perversion at a cerebral level. Such a plateau configuration of pleasure may be a way to imagine the brain itself, as a thousand plateaus, although this retains the idea of the organised body, which Deleuze and Guattari are against.

Upon consuming physio and psycho-logical theories of pleasure, the aim of defining pleasure in itself as anything - as one or many, as passive, active or

⁴⁸ Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994a, p. 117.

absent - is elucidated as problematic. Whether or not one chooses to analyse the motivation for human pleasure, one must, it seems, analyse the motives for analysing the motives for pleasure. Especially in a desire to excavate the biological realm of pleasure, which translates frequently to the 'natural' or the 'true', pleasure analyses are either trying to find a reason for why the human feels pleasure, or learning about how to regulate the pleasure they study. It presumes a *reason*, which presumes a cause/effect equation, which brings with it many other problems of behaviour regulation such as torture, reward, homogenised subjective experience and logic in desire (or the recognition of illogical desire). Pleasure, then, as a neurophysiological entity, always looks to recognise the cortical pathways of pleasure, their primal creation, and then to theorise the normal against the aberration. But pleasure, by its abstraction, traverses far beyond human neurology because neurology cannot tell us why, how or what pleasure works upon subjectivity.⁴⁹

Earlier, I explained the product of pleasure, the 'solid' aspect of the attainment of pleasurable feeling. This aspect, which relies heavily on the equation, sensation + perception = affect, produces it as a result, the empirical equation that births a truth. In order to theorise a more amorphous, though no less affective, version of pleasure a new version of the equation must be formulated - one that has little or no resemblance, both logically and empirically - to the former. The desire for the 'solid' must be lost especially the desire for one solid. G. Ryle, a medical psychiatrist, theorises pleasure as such

To say that a person has been enjoying digging is not to say that he has been both digging and doing or experiencing something else as a concomitant or effect of the digging... His digging was a propensity-fulfilment. His digging was his pleasure, and not a vehicle for his pleasure. Exercises of hobbies, interests and tastes are performed, as we say, 'for pleasure'. But this phrase

⁴⁹ It can certainly *theorise*, but to pay any more or less attention to neurological aspects of pleasure theory is to naturalise, once again, its conclusions. Better to play with the ideas of pleasure from culture, from text, from biology and watch their interplay with each other. This is why this piece will seem at times non-committal and conflicting. Neurology itself admits that the brain is still an object of mystery within medical research.

can be misleading, since it suggests that these exercises are performed as a sort of investment *from which a dividend is anticipated*.⁵⁰

Ryle's inability to actually articulate what or how the pleasure *is*, and even his lack of desire to do so is an indication of a non-capitalist version or incarnation of pleasure. It may also indicate certain irrationality in pleasure due to Ryle's reluctance in defining pleasure as a term or concept *unto* itself.⁵¹ His insistence that pleasure is almost inextricable from the related act and desire is very much in conformance with the Greek ideal and against the desire for a capital result of pleasure. Here the irrationality of non-definition escapes its negative connotations somewhat, because it is more difficult to align pleasure with the negative, especially when it is seen in polarity to other negatives (unpleasure, pain).⁵² Pleasure's slippery definition, its very slipperiness, its fluidity (rather than the solid object science fantasises it to be) is the matrix of the joy it causes/is. Pleasure is slippery because it defies singular or object-ive definition, it is inarticulate-able, defying language and it defies bodily sanctioning, in that all bodies may experience pleasure despite their cultural status or order.⁵³ Irigaray, in her theorising of the phallic supremacy of the rational solid, states

And how are we to prevent the very unconscious (of the) "subject" from being propagated as such, indeed diminished in its interpretation, by a systematics that re-marks a historical "inattention" to fluids? In other words,

⁵⁰ Ryle, G. *The Concept of the Mind*. London; Hutchinson's University Library. 1949, pp. 108 and 132, my italics, quoted in Szasz, 1957, pp. 194 and 195.

⁵¹ Remembering Foucault and his affirmation that in naming something as unto itself in function sciences, it becomes a real object for analysis and classification.

⁵² Though, as noted earlier, pleasure does, paradoxically, align frequently with the negative terms of binary opposition: pleasure is absence rather than presence, is passive rather than active etc.

⁵³ In this respect pleasure is similar to Foucault's definition of power in that all bodies have their own version of pleasure and power which interacts with others will to pleasure/power, rather than pleasure being a monolithic element only few are allowed. This configuration elucidates the panic that perverse forms of pleasure ignite. Bodies which are traditionally oppressed cause panic for dominant culture when they experience their own pleasure, from the confusion and debate the question of what 'female' pleasure is in psychoanalysis, that Freud almost ignores and Lacan obsesses upon, to the biological excavation of homosexual pleasure in order to uncover its 'how' and 'why'.

what structuration of (the) language does not maintain a *complicity of long standing between rationality and a mechanics of solids alone?*⁵⁴

The fluidic experience of pleasure, even the image in the imagination of pleasure running and flowing, coursing through the cortical tributaries of the brain as posited by neurophysio-discourse, defies the desire to see a beneficial experience (like pleasure) as rational logic, as placed on the dominant side of cultural discourse. So rather than pushing pleasure-the-irrational outside dominant discourse, language instead articulates its presence as a solid, tangible product, exterior to and definable from activity and psychical process which exists with, and as, pleasure itself. Hand in hand with the solidification of pleasure is its visibility. Although fluids are visible, they are not easy to grasp, singular and symbol(isable). In the next section I will take quite a considerable digression to explore the visibility of pleasure, a theme which is almost the reverse of the major theme of this chapter, which is the pleasure of the visible.

Visual Pleasure/Visual Truth?

A major problem with the solidification of pleasure is that it becomes 'visible' as an object for and of knowledge. Pleasure is recognised in its solid form, and any pleasure that remains in the realm of fluidic or unspeakable (unable to be encompassed by language rather than profane), with irrationality (non-language) could be deemed deviant pleasure, or at the least, incomplete or infantile pleasure. Subjectivity, which embraces solid pleasure, recognises pleasure among other subjectivities as 'same'. Pleasure here conforms to an organism or object divisible from all others and hence reducible to a function, just as an organ is a function, in biological discourse. So human pleasure is created as a unified affect, brought about by unified, normal sensation/perception. Even solid pleasure considered 'perverse' in a normalising culture is nameable as such. This deviant pleasure deviates only

⁵⁴ Irigaray, Luce. (1977) 'The 'Mechanics' of Fluids.' In *This Sex Which is Not One*. Trans. Catherine Porter. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1985b, p. 107.

through act or object, not through an inability to articulate or even 'see' its aim, normal or perverse. It is seen as finished, 'I *have* pleasure', rather than a process of becoming, achieving or exceeding which need not end in a solid product.⁵⁵ Through this equation of same-result pleasure versus perversion, subjectivity risks the same fate of being 'deviated'. Felix Guattari weighs up the dilemma; "We are faced with an important ethical choice: either we objectify, reify, 'scientifise' subjectivity, or, on the contrary, we try to grasp it in the dimension of its processual creativity."⁵⁶ This could be equivalent to a measuring of an intensity rather than locating the result of the term pleasure within a subject. Pleasure can be the catalyst of the 'becoming-intense' of subjectivity. The less language is given to the articulation of a communal pleasure, the less equivalent narrative is built into its experiencing, and the more the processual and the creative aspects Guattari mentioned will flourish. However, even then, our desire to 'grasp it in the dimension' may be fruitless and pleasurable so; why does pleasure need to be *grasped* for analysis? To grasp pleasure still allows it to be 'visible'. If it is conceptualised in its fluid state, allowing it to wash over us and to try, not to grasp, but to become wet from it, is ambitious.

What result is hoped for by attempting to make something visual, especially an experience or intensity rather than an object? Any desire to make visual and solid the idea of pleasure seems deeply embedded in the equation in psychiatry of sensation + perception = affect. Affect, in medical discourse on pleasure, is a result, a capital object, which is either reward or punishment, beneficent or detrimental. The problem, especially in biological discourse, is how to recognise it. Recognition indicates repetition, repetition in science representing the extrication of the subject from a theory and placing it in the realm of independent objectivity. Biology and other empirical science's phantasy is that re-presentation of the *same* indicates an absolute or a truth outside subjectivity. Such an objective phantasy seems a little bizarre when it is continuously

⁵⁵ Or indeed need not end.

⁵⁶ Guattari, Felix. (1992) *Chaosmosis; An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. Trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis. Sydney: Power Publications. 1995, p. 13.

turning in on the subject (or the body of the subject as object) in which it seeks to find truth. Because there are available so many scientific texts on pleasure, both in the empirical (biological) and the human (psychiatric) sciences I can only presume there is a phantasy of 'capturing' pleasure as a unified, repetitious, solid truth which is constant in all subjects. This conforms to the aim of both science and phallogocentric culture to access and study objects rather than processes, to theorise in molar rather than molecular terms.⁵⁷ The problem for science is how to recognise pleasure. How to *see* it. And inevitably how to grasp and manipulate it.⁵⁸

The visual metaphor has, in the past few decades, come under severe attack in cultural theory. It is still, however, seen as one of the most reliable means of identification and excavation of the human body in biological science. The subject is left for the analysts while the sciences dismember its interior to invest each organ, each cell, and each molecule with a name and an image (whether the image is literal or symbolic, such as that of molecules). As Rosi Braidotti puts forth: "The central point of concern for me remains that modern science is the triumph of the scopic drive as a gesture of epistemological domination and control: to make visible the invisible, to visualise the secrets of nature."⁵⁹ Science does not always make nature's secrets visual, but it certainly makes them *visualisable* in terms of allowing them to be most easily comprehended, within dominant systems of visibility and solidity. Braidotti's concern mirrors the certain paranoia encouraged by the visualisation of *everything* and this activity suggests overtones of conspiratorial domination evident from the

⁵⁷ I am thinking specifically of Irigaray's 'The Mechanics of Fluids' in *This Sex...*, 1985b, pp. 106-118 and also Deleuze's preference for desire over pleasure because unlike pleasure desire "is process as opposed to structure or genesis". 1997, p. 189. That pleasure is structured and solidly imagined in the scientific episteme makes clear its need for re-theorisation as a non-graspable, non-solid, non-structured and hence non-phallogocentric term if it is to become a means to transformation. By their very nature solids defy transformation and structures maintain essential foundations, creating an ontology of pleasure which is antagonistic towards my aim.

⁵⁸ I do not wish to indicate by the term manipulate, a belief in a conspiracy of control and power evident in culture. Here the term 'manipulate' simply means able to be utilised as a tool rather than an enigmatic force beyond the grasp of science.

⁵⁹ Braidotti, Rosi. 'Body Images and the Pornography of Representation.' *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1994, pp. 57-74, quote p. 64.

largest area to the smallest point. Foucault speaks of the power of the threat of being potentially visual in his work on the panopticon, where the subject is transformed into something to be studied and known only by those who may or may not watch, "he is the object of information, never a subject in communication."⁶⁰ Donna Haraway too, in her anxiety about the all-seeing satellite eye expresses a similar concern.⁶¹ Luce Irigaray's conjoining of the scientific desire for visualisation as a means towards knowledge, and the desperate attempt by many discursive practices to grasp or identify 'women's pleasure' is an ideal area for discussion at this point. Irigaray uses the metaphor of the medical implement designed to reveal the visibility of women's sex, the speculum, in order to elucidate the failure of science to 'see' women's bodies without the preordained desire to visualise them as comparative to, (and hence terminally other to) the isomorphic model of the male body, specifically the penis; the solid, the easily visible sex. The desire to see, solidify and know by the visual is a desire embedded in a system of language designed for the enunciation of the primary sex of the male. Language, solidity, visibility already and always pre-supposes an ease with which all objects may be ontologically grasped (named, analysed, given a function in reference to the scientific aim explicated in Foucault's *Order of Things*) in this manner and with these codes. Language does not make or compare women's bodies and pleasure with the masculine per se. It simply *cannot speak outside of masculinity*. The concept of two sexes is a phantasy of our culture where only one sex and *everything else* exists in terms of language and the means by which biology is spoken (solids, visibility, singularity). Irigaray writes in *Speculum Of The Other Woman*,

In fact of course, these terms cannot fittingly be designated by the number 'two' and the adjective 'different', if only because they are not susceptible to comparison. To use such terms serves only to re-iterate a movement begun

⁶⁰ Foucault, Michel. (1975) 'Panopticism'. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin. 1977, pp. 195-228, quote p. 200.

⁶¹ Haraway, Donna. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Press. 1990.

long since, that is, the movement to speak of the 'other' in a language already systematised by/for the same.⁶²

Irigaray is not claiming that visibility in science is a particularly masculine and hence, negative hermeneutic. She is claiming however, that within the language of culture, visibility can only see that which is masculine as positive presence,

Now the little girl, the woman, supposedly has *nothing* you can see. She exposes, exhibits the possibility of a *nothing to see*. Or at any rate she shows nothing that is penis shaped or could substitute for a penis. This is the odd, uncanny thing, as far as the eye can see, this nothing around which lingers in horror, now and forever, an overcathexis of the eye, of appropriation by the gaze, and of the phallomorphic sexual metaphors, its reassuring accomplices.⁶³

Irigaray points out that women *supposedly* have nothing to see. It would be ridiculous to claim of course that women really do have nothing to see. But within the phallomorphic model, that is, the singular model of a body-with-a-phallus, there is always the *possibility of a nothing to see*. It is the limits of the morphological element which is inextricable from language that creates the 'blind spot' in the phantasy of a symmetry between the existence of one sex and more than one sex. From this analysis of the blinded eye in considering women's body comes the eventual blindness of linguistic and psychological discourse when articulating women's pleasure as differentiated from and somehow enigmatically foreign to, the single sex model. This does not disappear even amongst positive readers of Irigaray. Martin Jay, in his extensive study of the denigration of sight in French philosophy discusses Irigaray on the impossibility of woman ever being a reflection, or mirrored other of the male in parallel unity. Irigaray uses the speculum as an image of the un-reflective mirror, the warped reflection that women are in

⁶² Irigaray, Luce. (1974) 'Any theory of the 'subject' has always been appropriated by the 'masculine'.' In *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Trans. Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. 1985a, pp. 133-146, quote p.139. This book which is most often to be found in the gender, women's or philosophy sections of libraries and bookstores, is housed at Utrecht University, Netherlands, in the medical library as a work of empirical psychology.

⁶³ Irigaray, 'The Blind Spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry'. *Speculum*. 1985a, p. 47.

phallogocentric culture. She points out that women cannot be read as different in a specifically phallogocentric specular economy which is why the visual reading of woman is not satisfactory. Jay takes this idea as meaning all specularisation of women is always and essentially detrimental. He states, of the mirror in which the male speculates his other,

One solution would be to shatter the mirror...for on the other side of the mirror, behind the screen of male representation, is an underground world hidden from the surveyor's categorising gaze, a world where women might whirl and dance out of the glare of the sun.⁶⁴

For Irigaray to desire a world without any specularisation of anyone (but here specifically women) would mean her writings were a prescription for the end of visibility as a feminist strategy. Jay suggests her aim is not to analyse the structure of phallogocentric knowledge but to create a utopian world of women, non-visibility (invisibility?) and whirling and dancing. I do not believe this is her aim. I definitely do not think Irigaray wants women to 'go underground'. Rather, Irigaray is stating that phallogocentricity, to use Jay's terminology, has an arbitrary compulsory-ness which, like scientific discourse, masquerades as objective - objective language, objective vision (you have to see it to believe it, but then is it really true?). What we see is created as much as what we make up as phantasy. There is no essential truth in visibility, just as there is no essential truth in scientific discourse that uses repetition as a guarantee of objective reality, while the aim all along precedes the method and result. Pleasure made visible indicates, in scientific discourse, knowledge of pleasure. It is the narrative of 'vision equals solidity equals knowledge' and eventually equals power, which both Irigaray and Foucault wish to deconstruct.

Irigaray states in her discussion of the visual in terms of women's pleasure

⁶⁴ Jay, Martin. "Phallogocentricism": Derrida and Irigaray.' *Downcast Eyes. The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1993, pp. 493-542, quote p. 536.

Within this logic [of phallogocentric western discourse], the predominance of the visual, of the discrimination of form and individualisation of form is particularly foreign to female eroticism. Woman takes pleasure more from touching than from looking, and her entry into a dominant scopic economy signifies, again, her consignment to passivity.⁶⁵

This seems to be a commonly misread quote, whereby the first sentence, '*Within this logic*' is ignored and the paragraph is read as Irigaray's vindication of touch as a 'feminine' experience of pleasure while sight is consigned only to the male. Jay once again reduces Irigaray to essentialism by stating that Irigaray claims "Not only are the female genitalia plural and female sexuality *based more on touch than on sight*, but the woman's body is also less firmly divided into inner and outer than man's."⁶⁶ Many feminists have similarly read Irigaray as advocating another, 'female', sense as a new mode of experience. Sonya Andermahr, Terry Lovell and Carol Wolkowitz, in *A Glossary of Feminist Theory*, in their discussion of Laura Mulvey's psychoanalytic analysis of gaze theory state: "[Mulvey's gaze theory] has been criticised for presenting an overly monolithic conception of the gaze which denies that women have pleasure of their own, and for prioritising the visual over the tactile (Grosz, 1989, Irigaray, 1985)".⁶⁷ Irigaray, and Grosz, do not necessarily advocate tactility as a preferable new mode of sensuousness, but simply mention it as an alternative, as easily replaceable with olfaction as tactility. Neither do they condemn a prioritisation of the visual, rather of visuality's insidiously intimate relationship with solidity, knowledge, the phallus and the visual's particular incarnation within phallo-logic. Andermahr, Lovell and Wolkowitz do not make sufficiently clear that they themselves are not advocating a prioritisation of the tactile over the visual, neither do they make explicit the descriptive rather than prescriptive nature of both Grosz's and Irigaray's work on the

⁶⁵ Irigaray, 'This Sex Which Is Not One' in *This Sex Which Is Not One*. 1985b, p. 26.

⁶⁶ Jay, 1993, p. 535, my italics. Jay's division between the inside and outside brings to mind the phantasy in the Renaissance of the spongy flesh of the 'leaky female', such as those of the lustful, lying women of the plays of Webster. See Laqueur for a full discussion of the leaky female.

⁶⁷ Andermahr, Sonya, Lovell, Terry and Wolkowitz, Carol, eds. *A Glossary of Feminist Theory*. London: Arnold. 1997, p. 102. They are referring to Irigaray's *This Sex...*, 1985b.

visual. I do not believe Irigaray advocates new rules for all women and the ways in which they experience pleasure, although this aim has been the main focus of those feminists who consider her essentialist.⁶⁸ I think Irigaray is stating the placement of women in zones either as the objects of study (like the resident of the panopticon or the pathologised body under the microscope) or as representative of points of less-than-truthful or unclear knowledge, such as touch, which is rarely if ever used in science to obtain empirical discourse. Perhaps Jay is using the breakdown of divisions in women to suggest their closeness (or closer-than-men-ness) to a breakdown of binarism and 'solid' subjectivity in a similar way that Deleuze suggests all stages of becoming must first pass through 'becoming-woman'⁶⁹? Access to knowledge found in the image mirrors the access to knowledge that is the aim of empirical science. This sounds like a depressing stagnation into the world of *logos*. But if I shift the emphasis away from knowledge and back into pleasure - *not* the pleasure as analysed, as excavated, from women, from the brain, but the pleasure of empiricism and of the visual - the absent-subject of all-objective science becomes present. The language Irigaray explicates as concealing its aim, its construct and its patterns of vision and blindness, has a speaking subject finding knowledge because of pleasure. This contrasts with the scientific aim of finding knowledge because of 'science'.

I find myself now back at Braidotti's comment on the scientific triumph of the 'scopic *drive*' (my italics). Before empirical 'truth' is found, before the object is located and its function pinpointed, before every organ is wrenched from the body and reduced to thousands of layers of analysis there must exist a *drive* to want to find out. This seems a phallogocentric drive implicitly, and I do not

⁶⁸ Some examples of this are Toril Moi in *Sexual/Textual Politics. Feminist Literary Theory*. London: Methuen. 1985, Henry Louis Gates, 'Significant Others'. *Contemporary Literature* 29 (4) 1988, pp. 606-22, and Monique Plaza, 'Phallogomorphic Power' and the Psychology of 'Woman'. *Ideology and Consciousness*, 4. 1978, pp. 5-37. These criticisms of essentialism found in Irigaray are not specifically to do with visibility which is why I do not wish to engage with them here. A misreading of Irigaray as advocating touch as a woman's sense is mentioned in all of them and hence is important to include here as contributing to the relationship between the senses and sexual difference.

⁶⁹ Cf. Deleuze and Guattari. 'Becoming-Intense, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible.' 1987, pp 232-309.

wish to go into what constitutes a male drive for knowledge as opposed to a female drive for anything else. I simply wish here to refigure the notion of a privileged access to knowledge in science and knowledge in visuality by pointing out, as Irigaray does, that before any masquerade of truth or knowledge of the world, there is a subject or many subjects with a drive. The term 'drive' has, as its most important element, a relationship with desire, and consequently, pleasure. Before the science then, exists the scientist, and in/around/through the scientist there is a drive for the pleasure of...? I cannot say truth and I cannot say knowledge.⁷⁰ The drive to see further is easy to phantasise as something which medicine itself could pathologise in those who work within it. Braidotti goes on to suggest that the desire to see further in modern science is itself constitutive of a form of medico-porn. She states, "Apart from the fantasy of absolute domination that is expressed in this process, I want to stress also that this visualisation produces an attitude that I would describe as medical pornography."⁷¹ The implications of power in this matrix are most threatening and urgent, however for my purposes the way in which Braidotti takes the medical profession's desire to see further out of its strictly regimented context seems a hopeful means by which the domination effect of empirical science could be re-figured. Because of the power implicit in medical knowledge, few are able to 'see' the medical profession as pathological perverts or witnesses to a form of pornography. Evincing scientists' pleasure would render all science subjective and re-negotiate the power implicit in discourses of 'truth' and knowledge.

Technophilic Pleasure in Viewing

In the realm of a body watching television and other technomorphic bodies, pleasure's disparate nature may be applied. The drive to watch, especially to watch as a drive, before the subject matter being watched is considered, means

⁷⁰ I will point out in the final chapter however, that many scientists, if they were taken out of their context, would be non-normalised in terms of the objects and aims of their drives. They would fit in with a traditional definition of what constitutes a clinical pervert.

⁷¹ Braidotti, 1994, p. 68.

that the pleasure of watching is both a risk and an unpredictable result.⁷² Primarily the subject positions itself in front of the technic apparatus, usually in a linear manner which insinuates a mirroring between apparatus and subject, a movement towards becoming unified with, or to be aligned with, the object of desire. The television is off. Whatever erupts onto the screen when the television is on is, therefore, by default, also a part of the object of desire. A program, a chosen film, is a risk for the subject's pleasure if it has not been viewed before, whether or not the subject wants to watch. There are two categories of pleasure which come from subject-matter watched *after* the primary pleasure of watching (which, like the pleasure Ryle cited earlier of digging) occurs concurrent with and indivisible from the actual event of watching or knowing one is about to watch. These are 1) Pleasure in surprise, in event unfamiliar, or, importantly, lack of pleasure due to the subject matter, which may range, similar to the example of sexual pleasure used earlier, from the horrific to the boring. 2) Pleasure in repetition, viewing that which is familiar and receiving gratification from the image which both recalls the memory of earlier pleasure from the image as well as the current pleasure the image affords. For the most part, and especially in the example of the computer, where net surfing is about uncovering the new, discovering image by chance, the viewer is not familiar with the subject matter. Familiarity, however, is a slippery world of its own. To choose a video, to attend a film is to presume oneself to be familiar with what type of film it is; genre, *topos* (Hollywood, Art house), intellectual demand (trashy, 'arty'). In actuality the knowledge of the film before the film is an untrustworthy perception of packaging rather than a familiarity with text-to-be. Frequently, especially in the restraints of a cinema, where darkness and public spectacle make the viewer more self aware, the only pleasure experienced is the perception of the film's cessation.

⁷² In terms of censorship censors posit themselves, as scientists, *before* the pleasure of the job and hence perpetuate the myth of the 'objective' viewer able to predict truth. Because the censors watch for 'scientific' reasons, their subjective reactions are invisible at the very moment that they predict the visibility of the subjective reactions of *every one else* who watches the same thing.

At home the VCR can be turned off, the perceived world exorcised from the room. The subject can watch in fragments, the images can be muted, the film distorted into non-narrative, fast-forward, and stop. The body watching becomes invisible, it is not a potential object to be watched while watching as it is at the cinema. If the subject is familiar with the viewed text from repetitive viewing there is still little guarantee that the pleasure may be predicted in its affect. Lacan states: "... the regulation of form... is governed, not only by the subject's eye, but by his expectations, his movement, his grip, his muscular and visceral emotion - in short, his constitutive presence, directed in what is called his total intentionality."⁷³ All these features would effect not only the premier viewing of the screened text but repeated viewing also. To believe that familiarity between the eye and the image assures a familiar pleasure (or unpleasure) fails to take into account the 'muscular and visceral emotion' of the subject, the fallibility of eye and brain in conforming to one another. It also fails to account for the subject's psychical expectation and suspicious ability in accurately remembering pleasure. Such beliefs indicate the scientific reception of watching as assured repetition rather than an unpredictable change in the subject from one time to the next.

Despite neurophysiology's insistence that all pleasure runs along the same tributaries as it did the time before, be they cerebral indications or serotonin tributaries, after the discussion of science and 'repetition as truth', this seems suspicious. The definition of repetition alludes to dilution or change in experience. The expectation of pleasure repetition is the trust of the self with the reason of the brain. Deleuze states that two features constitute repetition "It is the constitution in time of the past, the present... (i.e. *before and during*)."⁷⁴ Future, although that which allows the subject to look forward to the next moment of pleasure, is redundant in this equation. Deleuze's connecting of

⁷³ Lacan, J. explicates Maurice Merleau-Ponty's 'La Phenomenologie de la Perception.' In Lacan (1973) *The Four Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis*, section 2; 'Of the Gaze as objet petite a'. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin. 1994, p. 71. As an interesting side-note, one of the questioners of Lacan in this chapter is an M. Safouan, whom I suspect may be the same Safouan cited earlier as author of *Pleasure and Being*. See Lacan, 1994, pp. 103-4.

⁷⁴ Deleuze, Gilles (1967). *Coldness and Cruelty*. Trans. Jean McNeil. New York: Zone Books. 1989, p. 115.

time and anticipation to masochistic repetition in particular points to the necessary pain of waiting for pleasure as well as waiting for pleasure itself being a form of potential pain. The reason for this potential pain is that our trust in the logic, which suggests we will always experience the same reaction to the same situation, is flawed. The 'during' must be, each time, different to the 'before', which is the anticipation or drive of pleasure. It is assumed the pleasure will trickle through the established tributaries upon seeing the same images, that each time the image is awaited it will fulfil an exact repetitious function. But the body, and its role towards pleasure, is seen as baser than the pleasure of reason. Yet it is the alter-er of the pleasure in its tensions, its movements and its visceral emotion. At the most basic level a bad mood means a bad movie in spite of the movie itself and the drive the subject may exhibit towards it. Turning back to the physiological equation sensation + perception = affect, what Lacan states as the pre-existing condition itself is an important and noticeably absent term. Its absence is a representation of the absence of the flesh in the psychical equation. Before sensation exists this tension, this grip, as well as this corporeal *expectation*, of the film, of affect, of the desire to watch at all. So pleasure arrives, if ever, after what could tentatively be suggested as a readiness for pleasure, rather than as event which disrupts a blank canvas of emotion upon the body of the subject.

The visceral reaction Lacan espouses seems an important and interesting means by which to begin to theorise the subject watching film as non-platonic or didactic. Rather than the film having a direct intervention on the 'mind' of the viewer, why cannot (and surely why would not) the film, especially a horror film which itself is concerned with viscera and viscosity, affect changes in the flesh of the viewer. Is not the term 'gut reaction' more than just a metaphor? I am not suggesting there is currently evidence or any solid theory of the reactivity of the viscera in respect to watching horror film, nor am I suggesting this would validate my suggestion. I am instead advocating a making meaningful and perhaps even visual, of the internal activity of the body, the *carnality* of the viewing subject. Because I am not a medical theorist, I do not claim to know what affect occurs within and through (but not necessarily as

posited opposite or polar to without) the subject who watches images of gore, horror and carnality. But the focus of film theory on the mind of the viewer, and the platonic relationship between viewer and film and the affect on the viewer's cerebral reaction to pleasure, indicates bias towards the self of the subject instead of aspiring (which is probably all theory can do at this stage in cultural discourse) to a theory(ies) that attempts to encompass a carnal *and* psychical viewer without splitting the two into a hierarchical order, or indeed at all. It seems as if the body *on screen* in horror film entirely replaces the body *off screen*, the ob-scene body who watches.

Barbara Creed, in *The Monstrous Feminine* devotes a whole book to the image of the abject body, the viscerally reactive body and specifically the female/maternal body, but only on-screen. Her claim is that much of modern horror is aimed at further perpetuating the psychoanalytic fear of the abject, voraciously consuming, sexually terrifying, very specifically *embodied* feminine/mother. In her discussion of William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (US, 1973), read through Kristeva's theory of the abject, Creed states:

Regan's carnivalesque display of her body reminds us quite clearly of the immense appeal of the abject. Horror emerges from the fact that the woman has broken with her proper feminine role - she has 'made a spectacle of herself' - put her unsocialised body on display. And to make matters worse she has done all this before the shocked eyes of two male clerics.⁷⁵

Creed's reading of the utterly abject body of the possessed young girl is accurate in its focus (though Creed never explicitly uses this word) on the appeal of the *indulgence* of the image of the writhing, spewing, shitting, devil-child. Woman's body is, predictably made available for visual analysis in ways that it differs from, repulses in its difference and haunts the phallogocentric single-sex body, fulfilling the very activity that Irigaray explicates in 'The Blind Spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry'. It is frustrating to her reader however that Creed is able to point to this appeal in the speculated/spectacular

⁷⁵ Creed, 1993, p. 42.

body without ever taking its why or wherefore any further. Why is indulging in images, even with a wince, of the unpaternalised body, the yet-to-become symbolic body, an appalling/appealing one? Does Creed, in her reading of the abject pleasure of horror film only refer to it being horrific if it continues to represent the pre-symbolic period of a subject's existence? Creed states

First the horror film abounds in images of abjection, foremost of which is the corpse, whole and mutilated, followed by an array of wastes such as blood, vomit, saliva, sweat, tears and putrefying flesh. In terms of Kristeva's notion of the border, [between the inside/semiotic/filthy and the outside/symbolic/clean] when we say such and such a horror film 'made me sick' or 'scared the shit out of me', we are actually foregrounding that specific horror film as a 'work of abjection' or 'abjection at work' - almost in a literal sense. Viewing the horror film not only for perverse pleasure (confronting sickening horrific images/being filled with terror/desire for the undifferentiated) but also a desire, once having been filled with perversity, taken pleasure in perversity, to throw up, throw out, eject the abject (from the safety of the spectator's seat).⁷⁶

There is a similar theory of certain images or spectacles of horror that precedes Creed's suggestion by almost twenty-six centuries. It is Aristotle's discussion of Poetics, and specifically, that of catharsis. "Tragedy...achieves, through the representation of pitiable and fearful incidents, the catharsis of such pitiable and fearful incidents."⁷⁷ Tragedy is notoriously concerned with the body in various states of rupture, and the body of Glauke melting under the acid coat of Medea in Euripides' *Medea* cannot be that far from the body of Regan in *The Exorcist* whatever their differing characters or motives were. Aristotle's catharsis, of course, carries with it an immeasurable number of problems concerned specifically with the Hellenistic context of tragedy that I do not have the luxury to go into here.⁷⁸ My reason for using it as a comparison to Creed's

⁷⁶ Creed, 1993, p. 10.

⁷⁷ Aristotle's *Poetics*, VI, ll.9-11. Trans. Leon Golden. Englewood, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. 1968, p. 11.

⁷⁸ The most obvious being the suspect historical theory that women were neither allowed to sit in the audience nor appear on stage in tragedy, although this would conform more rather than less with Creed's ideas of female spectacle and horrific catharsis.

argument however, is that both claim images which conflict with the self's ideal symbolic integrity and affect the body by allowing it to *expel* the imagery of anxiety of a pre-symbolic world it witnesses. This theory has two main problems I wish to address. The first idea of ingesting images of horror only in order to expel them insinuates a return to the desire for the phantasy of equilibrium in the body that the texts I have previously discussed also aspire towards, as well as Deleuze's reterritorialisation. There seems little discussion of motivation in Creed's work - why a viewer would want to ingest these images simply to expel them and, in the meantime, cause trauma to the self? She does suggest these images affirm psychical anxiety about the female body, which are present in the symbolic male psyche after infancy.⁷⁹ This brings me to the most important problem in Creed's theory. For a body to enjoy and take pleasure in a horror film it must presumably be a) male and b) fixed rigidly within a symbolic system and *find no space for subversion in horror images, only for repetition of oedipal scenarios*. The viewer must be male because having the phantasy of being a symbolically whole, non-abject subject is a male position. As both Creed and Kristeva point out, the female body is always and already abject. My hope is that, instead of horror films being repetitive cementating of established experiences which lead the subject into the symbolic, they may be taken out of a purely psychoanalytic context and placed back into an embodied subject, potentially a female body, potentially a post-psychoanalytic Deleuzian body. (This configuration is opposed to a divided mind/body, where the body is arbitrary or indeed abject.) I intend to make horrific pleasure transformative rather than regressive through this more Deleuzian reading/body. This begins with rejecting Creed's limitation of any reading of horror to anything except pre-oedipal, returning-maternal and other scenarios of psychoanalytic trauma. Massumi points out the fissure in seemingly similar language between Deleuze and Guattari and traditional Lacan. He states: "the body without organs is *not the 'fragmented body'* of

⁷⁹ Creed states, "In the struggle to break away the mother becomes an 'abject', thus in this context, where the child struggles to become a separate subject, abjection becomes a 'pre-condition of narcissism' [Kristeva, 1982, p. 14]. Once again we can see abjection at work where the child struggles to break away from the mother." 1993, p. 11 and 12. The narcissistic self-valuing adult then may re-live the fear of the primal breakaway and once again successfully 'escape' by escaping the abject in horror film.

psychoanalysis. A frequent critique of Deleuze and Guattari casts them as toddler visionaries in men's clothes preaching a return to the maternal body."⁸⁰ Such a reading of a non-integrated body retains the maternal as abject even if it is supposedly subversively so. Abjection as subversion is only progressive within the retained and rigid systems of psychoanalytic and necessarily phallogocentric - that which it subverts. Abjection, as I argued in the introduction, is about the sealed integrated body because the abject refers to that particular body traversing its borders of symbolisation. Exploring abjection may be a necessary step in the transformation of the body towards a body without organs or a body in process, speed and intensity. But the abject is not sufficient in order to locate a body with potential to subvert or problematise phallogoc culture. After the problematisation there must be a potential at least for a different configuration of the body. An abject body is still a female body, and by reading any monstrous body in film as a female body, the female is returned to the realm it is damned to in phallogoc culture. My most pressing question is 'where to from here?' The Deleuzian body in speed and intensity encompasses both those abject bodies on screen, our bodies as we watch and marginalised or minoritarian bodies in general without limiting any bodies into fixed being. Perhaps, since Creed does not specify *how* images of perversity are thrown up and out of our watching bodies, we could arrest their ingestion and analyse the body at the precise moment of "confronting sickening, horrific images/being filled with terror/desire for the undifferentiated".⁸¹ What Creed dismisses to parenthesis is exactly the moment in film theory that I wish to theorise - the moment *before* pleasure is finished, before the subject is restored (though I do not necessarily believe the subject is always or ever restored). Creed admits in these brackets that watching horror film changes the subject - I want to find out in what ways. For the moment, I want to focus on the subject in this state of terror and desire. Such a subject seems subverted, not only in the psyche and its established rules of integrated being ruptured momentarily by

⁸⁰ Massumi, Brian. (1992) *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*. Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press. 1996, pp. 84-5.

⁸¹ Creed, 1993, p. 10.

horror film,⁸² but also in the whole embodied self of the subject watching for pleasure.

Watching horror is a moment when the subject is made explicitly aware of its body, as Creed points out (made me sick/scared shitless), but what pleasure lies there? Because I cannot say what pleasure is inside the body I have to be content for now simply to say there is pleasure happening in the (un-Cartesian) body which, to psychoanalysis, to medicine, to psychiatry may not be an altogether 'good' rational vehicle through which the body may experience pleasure. Jacqueline Rose writes that "For the subject to enter into the possibilities of language and judgement, something has to be discarded, something falls away". She continues, in discussing the theories of aggression found in Melanie Klein, "Knowledge, as much as - inseparably from? - aggression, breaks up the unity of the world."⁸³ That which falls away is considered by Creed, in her reading of Kristeva, abject. But Rose in her reading of Klein claims that the world was *less* decomposed in infancy, and that knowledge, through and because of language, compartmentalises experience. What falls away may be abject but only through the condition of the subject who names it abject being firmly embedded in the symbolic. What falls away can never be known due to its existence before language. Negation, if ever it is vividly present in the subject, could be most so in the cinematic world. Rose states "Negation, for Lacan, is death in the structure, or what he also calls the 'real', which, for symbolisation to be possible, has to subsist outside its domain."⁸⁴ The aggression which always is and always will be theorised as a result of watching images of horror could be (and this is pure speculation, *not* a further compartmentalisation of the viewing experience) an anxious result of returning to a linguistically compartmentalised world after experiencing the pleasure of an (if horror is the world of the pre-symbolic as Creed suggests)

⁸² And of course, unfortunately this is exactly what a lot of horror films do. Which is one of the reasons for my focus on Italian horror films. More often than not they do not aim for the resolved happy ending that many US films inevitably aim for.

⁸³ Rose, Jacqueline. *Why War? - Psychoanalysis, politics and the return to Melanie Klein*. Oxford: Blackwell. 1993, p. 155.

⁸⁴ Rose, 1993, p. 155.

'irrational' landscape in film. So, to turn Creed's theory upside down, perhaps it is the return to a pre-linguistic, or an entrance into a post-linguistic world that is the pleasure of horror. The illness experienced may be travel sickness of a pleasurable kind? This suggestion is posited in order to extend the limits of reading pleasure, and I would advocate this theory along with many other potential versions of visceral enjoyment rather than to suggest there is one other way to explain the enjoyment of horror. In a re-reading of horror for its disruptive effect, and its antagonism towards the perpetuation of the sealed phallogocentric subject, is an important theory that explains the pleasure of horror and, consequently the pleasure of *not* being the most prevalent and dominant model of subjectivity.

Pleasure in the body is something biological and psychical texts shy away from. I quoted Kristeva as stating "pleasure as having become pure and true... has nothing to do with the pleasure of scratching."⁸⁵ Perhaps within the context, the corporeally abject nature of pleasure, despite its beneficial affect, is what aesthetic discourse wishes to repress, or transform into something noble. Its evidence in childhood as the primary and most obvious drive, its evidence in animals,⁸⁶ creates a feeling of guilt in human discourse that what feels good is shared with other genus. Pleasure is that scratching. It is the ridding of a niggling unpleasure and it is perceived sensation that causes a positive affect, whether the scratch is to rub the nose or to read a richly eloquent novel. Because it is not limited to the cortical tributaries of the brain, but felt also in the flesh,⁸⁷ this suggests it also resides there. The primacy of physical pleasure (and physical pain) over perplexion and understanding as an example of mental pain and pleasure indicates its seat in the body is not singular or even split into

⁸⁵ Kristeva, 1980, p. 27.

⁸⁶ A fact, which Foucault points out, was a contributing factor to the regulation of pleasure amongst Greeks, 1992, pp. 48-49.

⁸⁷ One example of the mirroring of the cortical effect of pleasure with the corporeal effect is the pleasure of intravenous drug use. The feeling of a pleasure drug injected, say, into the vessels of the arm, the subsequent perceived sensation of the 'pleasure' travelling up the vascular system towards receptors, is an incarnate tangible version of both pleasure as fluid, spreading through tributaries in the body, and the affiliation between the vascular tributaries (torso) and the cortical tributaries (head).

many localised sites, but is, in its fluidic state, all over the body.⁸⁸ Physical pleasure is non-definable as a singular product, and also non-locatable. So when watching film, physiology and psychology posit the sensation perceived through a sense, in this case, the eyes⁸⁹ - travelling directly towards the brain to an affect result - but forgo the visceral input of the image. Pleasure in horror films, the pleasure of being repulsed, obviously has receptors in the abdomen, the digestive viscera. These may not be the standard receptors unique to the nervous system (although these traverse the viscera) but the receptors which, sensed and perceived, cause the stomach to produce acid, to clench in nausea or to relax the bowel in fear. Pleasure maybe, pain maybe, but certainly affect that, whether or not the perception travels from the brain to the viscera makes itself apparent in the lower, traditionally 'less rational' area of the body.

Primacy for a singular organ, or what Szasz calls 'organism',⁹⁰ limits not only the site of perception (brain) but the ability to perceive pleasure anywhere but through the primary site which then 'sends' it to the corresponding cortical reception pathway. He writes,

As we know, the concept of sensation is closely tied to the so-called special sense organs (such as the ear, the eye or the nose), which contain the specialised structures subserving the functions of hearing, vision, smell and so forth, Light rays affect *only* the retina and sound waves *only* the inner structures of the ear. The rest of the body fails to perceive these stimuli.(my italics)⁹¹

⁸⁸ Elaine Scarry writes; "Physical pain is able to obliterate psychological pain because it obliterates all psychological content, painful, pleasurable and neutral. Our recognition of its power to end madness is one of the ways which, knowingly or unknowingly, we acknowledge its power to end all aspects of self and world." In *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1985, p. 34.

⁸⁹ Szasz writes "A represents some aspect of the environment (e.g. the stimulus) and B stands for the organism acted upon... we shall then speak of a sensation. Vision, hearing, taste and smell are typical examples." Note Szasz insistence upon an *individual, singular* site of sensed perception. Szasz, 1957, pp. 35-36.

⁹⁰ Szasz, 1957, p. 36, this term is what Deleuze and Guattari are explicitly against in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1987, p. 158.

⁹¹ Szasz, 1957, pp. 39-40.

This neither explains the ingestion of light by the skin, the pleasure found in the sun upon the dermis, nor does it account for such sensations as the desire to weep at the experience of particularly good music.⁹² Perhaps physiology would argue these are all secondary affects, which occur subsequent to the primary line of ingestion. There is a feeling in the air of music; sound waves are tangible, not visibly, but by making the atmosphere heavier to the flesh, being able to touch sound through vibrations on surfaces. The light rays which affect the retina also affect the viscera, extreme light, or images formed through light, cause nausea and abdominal discomfort, psychical anxiety,⁹³ not secondary affect but perhaps only secondary effect, if experienced sensation must be read as narrative. Effect is a singular event upon the body, affect the multiplicitous emotional, visceral, cortical result which is apparent upon the entire self. Effect is a dent in the molar self, affect a new process of the molecular being. In their thesis on becoming, which will be discussed in depth in the 'Perversion' chapter, Deleuze and Guattari ask

Is it really so sad and dangerous to be fed up with seeing with your eyes, breathing with your lungs, swallowing with your mouth, talking with your tongue, thinking with your brain, having an anus and larynx, head and legs? Why not walk on your head, sing with your sinuses, see through your skin, breathe with your belly...⁹⁴

Perhaps this idea is not so much aspiration as current reality, but still awaiting theorisation and recognition. To watch subject matter that demands desire for the repulsive⁹⁵ is to demand the organism re-think which senses perform which function (the vision of gore, the sound of gore). But the many other organs, which see and hear the film also, become increasingly agitated by the

⁹² Or for a phenomenon called the 'Stendhal Syndrome'. This refers to a medical condition whereby a person hallucinates, drools and loses consciousness at the experience of remarkable art.

⁹³ Interrogation light is used to affect the subject's will, not only the subject's eyes, it is more like the panopticon that the optometrist's telescope.

⁹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 150-151.

⁹⁵ On the most basic level, masochistic desire, filmicly Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (UK, 1987) and Tony Randel's *Hellbound: Hellraiser II* (UK, 1988) construct a tantalisation towards pain that is at once deliciously beautiful and frighteningly disgusting, ironically through a

sound/image. The watching, listening muscles, the viscera, stir at the sight/sound of gore and are stirring at the sight/sound of *itself*. Eyes are offended by images of eyes on film being traumatised, so then are viscera traumatised by seeing what they never see or by seeing what is inside, mediating with and becoming visible outside? Surely there is pleasure to be found in being made visible away from a purely medical context, according to the silent subjectivity of viscera, organs which are repressed by the eye. So is the stirring of viscera at the sight of viscera a feeling of unease, or an uneasy feeling of pleasure at seeing the unseen?

Paura Nel Citta Dei Morti Viventi - A Practical Application

Lucio Fulci's *Paura Nel Citta Dei Morti Viventi* (Italy, 1980), released in Australia as 'City of the Living Dead' loses, in translation, the premier word 'fear'. It is, however, marketed as a horror film and hence precludes itself as film by first being abject object. The relationship between a film whose title starts with fear, and whose packaging is designed possibly to repel rather than attract⁹⁶ immediately raises the question of what (or who) is attracted to it. After the imaginary subjectivity of the film (cover art, synopsis, infamy) has been replaced by the images of the film, what pleasure is found in it? Or, what pleasurable affect has the film caused without ever depicting an image of pleasure or a scenario that could be defined as pleasurable? Fear can be figured as that which places the body at risk but which continues to embed in language the condition of not being vulnerable because of the body. The fear of horror is simultaneously the pleasure of horror because it demands the body be dominant

representation of the human form, signifying beauty, but a human form skinned, signifying internality.

⁹⁶ Though this film's packaging is quite tame compared to other films released on Australian video which seem designed entirely in order to disgust, yet not disengage, the viewer. These include films such as *Demoni*, (Lamberto Bava, Italy, 1985) cover 1, *Xtro* (Harry Bromley Davenport, UK, 1982) and the surprisingly un-disgusting *Curse of the Crimson Alter* (Vernon Sewell, UK, 1968, pig head cover). Juxtaposed against these covers is the understated image of a priest on a lamp lit street looking at a house, that is the cover of William Freidkin's hyper-disgust film *The Exorcist*.

while pointing explicitly to the non-corporeal part of subjectivity, mind or cogito, being completely at the mercy of the condition of the body.⁹⁷ Fear in Fulci's city of the living dead is not necessarily fear *of* the living dead (which would be stating the obvious) but simultaneously fear of the vulnerability of the body when faced with the cannibalistic living dead, fear of the failure of cogito to ensure existence and fear of the inability to rationalise what is happening in direct relation to the ways in which the events threaten the self (as mind but through body). This film is embedded within a Cartesian model in order to make extreme its effect, which begins by enhancing the vulnerability of the self (mind) through the body but eventually represents the Cartesian binary upside down - the body continues to exist ('live' so that death is not what is feared) while the mind is eaten away.

Paura concerns the small Midwestern American village of Dunwich. After the Dunwich priest hangs himself, one of the gates of Hell is opened and the dead return to 'life', populating Dunwich with the living dead. The film does not have any more explicit reasons for the re-animation of the dead, nor does it apologise for this. It is a film in which rationality must be suspended. There is no supernatural event, or elongated explanations for such an event. The entire film is irrational in plot and for this reason, rather than estranging an unbelieving audience it demands a strange look, a look of belief just for its two hours. Where many films such as *The Exorcist* or Paul Schrader's *Cat People* (US, 1982) attempt to rationalise and historicise the supernatural rupture in the narrative, *Paura* gives its phantasmatic world not as rupture but as reality. This places the audience in a different position from the outset of the film and hence perhaps shifts their expectations of pleasure as coming from rational, identifiable sources, or even their expectation of an identifiable pleasure.

The most immediate equation, which comes to mind when considering the pleasure of a horror film that concerns itself, not with psychology or

⁹⁷ Fear as non-corporeal yet involved in an explicit relationship with body horror exists along similar lines as the secret of perversion, a non-corporeal concept that masks the confessions of the body incarnated in perversion.

supernaturality, but with the flesh, and various hyperactive states of the internal body, is that of pleasure/unpleasure. In *Paura* we are witnesses to the body in pain, a seeming synonym or at least relative of the term unpleasure. Both the bodies in the film and our watching bodies become strange. They lose any easy form of empathy or identification that traditional film theorists (and censors) maintain film encourages. They do not defy all identification however. The strange body in deranged⁹⁸ rupture elicits response, but the nature of this response is processual rather than an object to be mirrored, as a character is. The body as subject becomes unrecognisable. It is important to point out the delineation from subject to body here. The subject becomes almost absented as the body is taken further from a recognisable state. So subjectivity becomes arbitrary at best and completely absent at the extreme. For my purposes this is exactly what a transformative theorisation of the body requires. As long as the body is subject, alteration is from object to object and not a process. When bodies for identification are deranged, identification shifts. If the concept of simple comprehension of the bodies on screen is preferred over the traditional identification thesis of film theory then this also is disrupted. The bodies of the characters are no longer comprehensible. Any subjectivity present that allows the bodies of the characters their subjective signification becomes defunct. That is, the bodies of the film's characters are not mutilated specifically according to the matter of their flesh. The gender of the victims is equally distributed, unlike film's such as *I Corpi Presentano Tracce di Violenza Carnale* ('Torso', Sergio Martino, Italy, 1973) or *Terror Circus* (Alan Rudolph, US, 1973) which are classic women-as-victim films. The race of the zombies, also, is irrelevant, differing them from the invariably black Haitian zombies of older, more traditional zombie films. The bodies in *Paura* are not monstrous, a frequent device in order to vindicate gory deaths in films such as *Humongous* (Paul Lynch, US, 1981). Nor are the bodies 'perverted' by abject sexuality, like the body of the necrophiliac in *Lucker the Necrophagous* (Johan Vandewoestijne, Belgium, 1986) or the cannibal sex-crim in *Anthropophagus* (Joe D'Amato a.k.a. Aristede Massaccesi, Italy, 1980). Hence the murders in *Paura* are aimed

⁹⁸ A term used by forensic pathologists to describe the altered state of a body that led to its death.

at no one in particular and are perpetrated by zombies, who have no moral or pathological agenda, except perhaps the living are alive and the zombies are dead.

The most elaborate of the deaths in *Paura* are those of Tony (Michele Soavi) and Rose (Daniela Doria),⁹⁹ a teenage couple making out in their car.¹⁰⁰ The dead priest, now a zombie, converges upon their Jeep and stares intently at Rose. As a result of the stare she begins to bleed from the eye sockets and suddenly entrails pour from her mouth. Not for a moment but for a good three minutes the audience sees a myriad of wet, red entrails pour over Rose's lips.¹⁰¹ Questions such as how? Why? Are displaced in favour of the wide-eyed grimacing stare this scene elicits from the viewer. Character empathy may be felt, if the audience feel nauseous at the scene mirroring the nausea incarnate in Rose's performance (an unusual kind of empathy, but probably a common one in horror films nonetheless). Following Rose's projectile is the death of Tony. The back of his head, brains included, is squelched between the fingers of the priest and ripped away. A pleasurable scene? Is there pleasure in seeing the secrets of the body? What is the *matter* with and of these bodies? Are they interior? Are they entrails? Are they inside out? Or are we just *looking* at them differently?

Judith Butler writes of bodies and their formation through discourse;

The task is to re-figure this necessary 'outside' as a future horizon, one in which the violence of exclusion is perpetually in the process of being overcome... illuminating the violent and contingent boundaries of that

⁹⁹ Because the film has been released in so many different lengths under so many names, the names of the characters seem to vary depending on which country the video is from. These character names are those of the K and C Australian video release.

¹⁰⁰ Though in defence of the film, it came out *before* Sean S. Cunningham's *Friday the 13th* (US, 1981) and hence is probably not as predictable as this scene makes it sound, in terms of the teen couples making out equals death formula of many slasher films.

¹⁰¹ A point of interest is that these entrails are real lamb intestines, which raises the question of the performativity of the 'fake' interior of the body and how it differs from the 'real' (or semi-real, as in the case of the lamb guts). Though real, the intestines are highly coloured by a glossy theatrical blood liquid, and hence made more vivid (and 'fake') by this.

normative regime precisely through the inability of that regime to represent that which might pose a fundamental threat to its continuity.¹⁰²

It seems that in this particular scene of *Paura* it is the violence of *inclusion* that causes offence and pleasure. The necessary outside of raw flesh *without signification* is here performed by the priest, as in other 'meat movies' but our inability to ever see bodies without signification is evinced through our horror. These bodies presented in torn apart-ness express in image a language only our eyes can hear, which causes the eyes to spread, and our silenced mouths to gape, or to alter their discursive mechanics into a scream. The inside, that fundamental threat to the continuity of the sealed subject, is made linguistic, made expressive. Rather than take Butler's assertion that there is a level zero truthful flesh that exists outside of culture and discourse, *Paura* exhibits an already-there flesh that is pre-discursive for non-medical viewers especially but effective to all viewers. Despite the language available to talk about the 'necessary inside', it is still a terrain that seems to have indelible power to cause offence. Necessary not because the inside exists prior to language but because it exceeds language. The new bodies formed are sites of gruesome pleasure, of fascination and repulsion. Because the bodies are held static upon the screen, the subject can both expel them (the tension of unpleasure) and ingest them (the light image penetrating the eye, the brain, the wide eye/mouth/nostril expressing not a desire to seal but to open the body to the image); both repudiate them (it's only a movie) and desire them (the fascination of 'look at them'). The matter of these bodies is the flesh of their visible interior and exterior, the glass of the sealing screen, the vulnerable jelly of our wide eyes, the gall our nauseated stomachs make. New bodies, polyphonous layers are created from the rupturing of a singular subject's body on screen. If naming the pleasure of such a sight eludes us it is because we are not so much seeing Butler's future horizon of a subversive body but the body

¹⁰² Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York: Routledge. 1993, p. 53. The expression 'necessary outside', however, is highly problematic if one is attempting to achieve a re-figuring of an embodied self. It continues the phantasy that there is available to subjects a level zero truthful body that exists outside of discourse and culture that will eventually reduce difference (difference both culturally valued and invalid), to a simple matter of flesh.

as multiple horizons in itself, some of which matter less or more than others. The point here is, not which layers matter, but that these layers exceed a singular body matter. The body watching a body already calls into action more than one body in terms of defining one acting body (the screen character). When this body's seal is compromised and altered, the viewing body must necessarily be involved - the necessary outside of the screen (us) is necessarily complicit with the inside of the television.

This scene is obviously meant to elicit something that exceeds and compromises the pleasure of cinematic viewing. Is it simply offering unpleasure, where the end of the scene heralds the arrival of pleasure? This is a scenario which does not really hold in terms of the film's title - *Paura/fear* - whereby the audience is in constant fear of the next visceral scene and hence the pleasure of the absence of such a scene is sullied by the lack of knowledge as to when the next gory scene will arrive. Freud claims "Our consciousness communicates to us feelings from within not only of pleasure and unpleasure but also of a peculiar tension which in its turn can be either pleasurable or unpleasurable."¹⁰³ The constant tension of fear and expectation of gore may be where pleasure lies. And it may also be where the division between the pleasure/unpleasure equation fails. The pleasure of awaiting that which causes unpleasure (though the unpleasure of unpleasure is yet to be explored in terms of the film) is a deterritorialisation of the standard psychoanalytic terminology of the subject in unpleasure awaiting pleasure. This idea enables a revision of the 'equation' thinking of pleasure through the visceral. Equations of pleasure are not reversed so that pleasure is exchanged for unpleasure and vice versa but re-theorised. The rigid binarism which defines pleasure and unpleasure as positive and negative terms are constituted differently, the terms retain their meaning, but the potentials of the meanings are expanded beyond their positive/negative scope. Watching film enables a reterritorialisation of equations of pleasure, which are workable, yet unbound and unpredictable. New equations of pleasure are set up *in order to deterritorialise* at every

¹⁰³ Freud (1920) 1991, p. 267.

application. Where pleasure awaited causes, according to Jean Laplanche, a return to a neutral state (zero) ¹⁰⁴ what would be the outcome of the equation if the subject is in 'pleasure' (i.e. not being horrified) awaiting unpleasure? Pleasure according to the pleasure/unpleasure equation is a negative term, which brings the hyper-positive term, unpleasure back to zero. By beginning with a negative in subjectivity (the pleasure of not being horrified) and awaiting the hyper-positive unpleasure to attain zero, would not the subject be in unpleasure by being in a negative realm, by being in absence, in minus? Is the condition of wanting to watch, even that which is horrific, a condition driven by a feeling of negativity in subjectivity? Is it a condition of being too happy with the banality of pleasure and, especially in the case of horror films, striving for some unpleasure to either, in psychoanalytic terms, bring the subject back to zero, or cause an affect on a state of neutrality or apathy which may be (come) pathological? Laplanche is correct to point out that Freud underestimates drives towards excitation rather than drives only concerned with evacuation of tension. He states:

In relating to this level of the homeostasis of an *organism* we encounter the experimental evidence that a living being does not seek - as Freud would have it - only to evacuate excitations which would be perpetually brought to it from the outside: that organism depending on circumstances and on its internal energy level, can just as well be in quest of 'excitation' as desirous of avoiding it or evacuating it. ¹⁰⁵

Laplanche points to an element of drive that would seem clear but which Freud and Lacan both claim is the reverse. Psychoanalytically, drive is towards an unattainable something in order to unleash or reduce tension, rather than drive as an active force which unleashes transformation or unpredictable levels of pleasure that attain, not zero, but what is sufficient for now to call 'something

¹⁰⁴ Laplanche states: The *zero principle* is constantly identified with the following notions:

- (a.) free energy, tending towards discharge by the shortest paths;
- (b.) the primary process;
- (c.) The pleasure (or unpleasure) principle.

Jean Laplanche (1970) *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*. Trans Jeffrey Mehlman, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 116.

¹⁰⁵ Laplanche, 1993, p. 114.

else'. The capitalist desire for balancing payments is discarded for a force, which has no measurable volume. The drive for unpleasure in horror, that translates as pleasurable, ironically fits well with Freud's concept of pleasure attainment. Freud makes clear that drive is to get rid of excitation, drive is for a letting-go of something rather than an attainment or change. Drive, then, is to get rid of trauma, and Laplanche points out that in our drives we exhibit the "essentially traumatic nature of human sexuality."¹⁰⁶ Sexuality is trauma and pleasure is a return to 'nothing' or a lessening of tension/trauma. Drive for terror and other 'unpleasure' may well differ very little from the supposed state of trauma we are already in by being sexual subjects. The quality of pleasure may have nothing to do with the focus on getting rid of excitation that Freud prefers. Which is why Freud is so unsatisfactory here. Pleasure in Freud is purely quantitative whereas my aim is to point out a specific qualitative aspect of a kind of pleasure that seems an oxymoron. In order to theorise positive transformations of the subject a non-quantitative attitude towards pleasure and its relationship with 'balanced' embodied subjectivity, should be aimed for. For playful purposes I shall stay with Freud a little longer in order to see the potentialities of a positive reading of his concept of pleasure.

Ironically the attainment of pleasure to negate unpleasure is meant to result in this apathetic absence of feeling, as Laplanche quotes Freud;

Since we have certain knowledge of a trend in psychical life towards *avoiding unpleasure*, we are tempted to identify that trend with the primary trend towards inertia.¹⁰⁷ In that case *unpleasure* would coincide with a rise in the level of quantity or with a quantitative increase of pressure... *Pleasure* would be the sensation of discharge.¹⁰⁸

So to begin with a state of pleasure is (negative) apathy, to achieve pleasure in order to discharge unpleasure too is (level zero) apathy. In the film, to achieve pleasure is to achieve unpleasure upon a state of pleasure, presumably resulting

¹⁰⁶ Laplanche, 1993, p. 105.

¹⁰⁷ Laplanche's level of tension zero.

¹⁰⁸ Laplanche (1970) quotes Freud's 'The Origins of Psychoanalysis', p. 116.

in zero. If we give up the concept of pleasure and unpleasure being measured in precisely equal doses, as well as the idea that the terms are opposite, an idea, which becomes increasingly suspicious in light of the affect of horror films, what happens to the equation? If the viewer begins to watch *Paura* in a state of 'pleasure', that pleasure is necessarily going to be a nervous one. It is a pleasure which strives towards unpleasure, which relies on unpleasure to exist - it is a pleasure which anticipates and which is defined only in anticipation. If the unpleasure did not arrive, the pleasure would itself be unpleasure, and it is the arrival of the image of unpleasure which is the moment of most pleasure. So the equation is altered from (psychoanalytical normative) $\text{unpleasure}(+) + \text{pleasure}(-) = 0$ or (filmicly) $\text{pleasure}(-) + \text{unpleasure}(+) = 0$. But in horror films the equation is more like $\text{pleasure}(-)$ which is unpleasure in apathy $(+)$ desires unpleasure $(+)$ to achieve pleasure $(-)$ but the unpleasure *is the* pleasure. It is not a vehicle towards the pleasure or differentiated from it. So from the ideal state zero (pleasure plus apathetic unpleasure) the subject desires unpleasure which *is* pleasure. This pleasure is not the pleasure of discharge but the pleasure of attainment, of affect. This puts the subject into orbit away from zero rather than in relation to it. Watching horror films may somehow alter the subject in a manner that sees zero as an undesirable experience, instead preferring a hyper-subjectivity of affect. Awaiting and witnessing the zombie attacks that constitute *Paura* is the pleasure of the film. There is no 'narrative' beauty, no 'realist' empathy, just bodies, visceral tension and the release of tension by more (different perhaps?) tension. In this instance, the fear of *Paura* is as much about desire as about anxiety. Tension is at once for desired object (the image) and for unbinding of fear (fear of the image), for pleasure (through horror) and unpleasure (images of gore).

If we take this subject which exceeds zero as the subjectivity of film watching (as opposed to the stable subject always striving to attain and re-attain the stability of level zero excitation), there is already a film being 'watched' before the actual images of the screen appear. The film-desiring subject begins with a drive to become agitated, not only in horror films, or in other emotive film

genres such as porno and weepies,¹⁰⁹ but in the drive to witness that which exists as fake, and hence cannot travel a familiar cortical path of 'real' pleasure beaten out in childhood or adult life through experience. The drive for the aesthetic confounds the medico-biological idea that all pleasure is a.) The same or at least travels upon the same path, and b.) Stems from an actual experience of the subject which caused pleasure to occur (either as a foil for unpleasure or as an affect). In terms of the equation sensation + perception = affect, aesthetics exhibits an intangible form of 'sensation'. In *Paura*, sensation would be the television being on, playing the film, and the perception, of light and sound entering eye and ear. There is little corporeal stimulation that is recognisable in the same way as the flow of milk in an infant's digestive tract, or direct friction upon genitals. The situation demands either the body empathise with the sensations occurring upon the body-on-screen, or the body of the viewer be reminded of a pleasurable experience which occurred concurrently with watching the film. Both of these less than satisfactory scenarios would adhere to the idea that pleasure only follows already beaten out paths, yet both are deeply flawed in their mechanisms. In order for the body of the viewer to empathise with the flesh of Rose and Tony on screen it would have to be in excruciating agony, but the pain perception on screen is fictionalised, emphasised both in its hyper-performativity and its primary being as a 'story', a film. Scarry writes

Every act of civilisation is an act of transcending the body in a way consonant with the body's needs: in building a wall, to return to an old friend, one overcomes the body, projects oneself out beyond the body's boundaries but in a way that expresses and fulfils the body's need for stable temperatures. Higher moments of civilisation, more elaborate forms of self-extension, occur at a greater distance from the body:¹¹⁰ the telephone or the

¹⁰⁹ In 'Film Bodies', Linda Williams locates the three genres of weepie, porno and horror as the 'body genres', those films which elicit a bodily response, a "voluntary mimicry of the emotion or sensation of the body on the screen" 1991, p. 4. Her theory maintains the direct mimetic identification that traditional narrative/character identification film theory posits, however, and this is why Williams' theory here is not useful for my own evolution of a visceral response analysis.

¹¹⁰ While this seems true of most technological advancements, the Internet is a somewhat dichotomous version of the alienation of the body. Though the information received travels farther than most other technologies, at a greater and certainly more visual pace, the body is

airplane is a more emphatic instance of overcoming the limitation of the human body than is the cart. Yet even as here when most exhilaratingly defiant of the body, civilisation always has embedded within it a profound allegiance to the body, for it is only by paying attention that it can free attention.¹¹¹

The television would seemingly fit well into Scarry's definition of high culture technology, and even more so because, unlike the telephone, computer or airplane, the body's limits may be overcome in the phantasmatic world of corporeal rupture and transcendence on-screen, *without the viewer's body ever having to touch anything*. The viewer's body sits deliberately feet away from the screen, and feels the vulnerable tension acutely when this separated body leans towards abject imagery, as if something may jump out of the television. The danger of not doing so is evident in films such as David Cronenberg's *VideoDrome* (Canada, 1982) when Max (James Woods) is so seduced by the giant female lips on the television screen he reaches his whole body into touch them and is sucked through the television. Or the most famous scene of television consumption (literally) in Tobe Hooper's *Poltergeist* (US, 1982) which sees a child eaten by and lost within the television. Yet the imagery of gory conditions of the body in *Paura* affirms Scarry's insight into the impossibility of defying the body utterly. The viewer's body sits away from the images of violated flesh on-screen in order to be close to their existence. This screen disembowelling is the only kind the body can cope with witnessing, without trauma. The potential of the body for this kind of over-the-top rupture ignites a fascination by the subject for the images it both repudiates as 'storytelling' and fears as potentially 'real', as well as the interior surfaces it recognises as 'self'.

Cinematic empathy seems easier the more basic the condition of the body on screen. Linda Williams seems to claim implicitly in her book *Hard Core* that

implicit in the requirements of accessing the World Wide Web. The technology requires the hand to mesh with the mouse, and the will of the subject surfing to induce the hand to click on potentially abject or offensive images.

¹¹¹ Scarry, 1985, p. 57.

the function of pornography is to induce its audience to mirror itself. She cites male ejaculation (the 'money shot') as being of little interest to female viewers, and claims that in pornography aimed at women "Money shots are little in evidence."¹¹² Williams takes up the idea that there is 'truth' in the pleasure of the body, especially that pleasure, which, like the male orgasm, has visual 'evidence'. So, affect on screen correlates perfectly with affect upon the body of the viewer. The desire to watch and the pleasure, which travels down multiplicitous cortical paths, washing over hundreds of tributaries, is, however, ignored in this explanation. According to Williams, the primitive 'monkey-see monkey-do' effect is that which is working on the pornography-viewer's body. Effect returns because it is an act that fits with the pleasure/unpleasure return to subjectivity principle, not the subject-changed principle which constitutes affect. This mirroring effect idea has some very disturbing implications for censorship in terms of its ability to affirm that images of violence create mirror images, a theory that has little or no factual basis. But immediate affect-empathy in cinema obviously escapes horror film, even if it were a flawless argument for porno.

How does one's body empathise and mimic the body of Rose and Tony in this scene? More importantly, after this potential mimicry, which cortical pathways of previous affect is pleasure following? Biology is not an entirely lost theory in this instance. Harking back to Scarry, perhaps the pleasure caused by this gruesome visceral scene is following an earlier pathway and mirroring the affect upon the screen. To preclude this theory I will use Freud's explanation of repression in terms of pleasure. He states: "These processes strive towards gaining pleasure; psychical activity draws back from any event which might arouse unpleasure. (Here we have repression.)"¹¹³ The interior layers of our flesh, the secret folds of our entrails and the violent rupturing potential of our surface breed a phantasy of violence implicit in having a body with that very potential. This could be a consciousness of the flesh alone, or of a relationship between the flesh, its vulnerability and its abjection with the psyche that has

¹¹² Williams, 1989, p. 234.

¹¹³ Freud, (1920) 1991, p. 510.

been forgotten, or repressed. If neurophysiology is used, its suggestion that there are so many cortical pathways the number defies definition could support the idea that there are alternate consciousnesses which fleetingly appear and disappear. When culture teaches the infant that the body, and especially the ruptured body is unpleasure, there remains in the body the trace of the consciousness that existed before the prohibition of its existence - the pleasure of unpleasure. The body-in-bits-and-pieces which dismemberment brings to the surface of memory¹¹⁴ may be related to a consciousness of flesh and violence, a consciousness or subjectivity in bits-and-pieces that enjoys re-membering what has been squashed into repression by the sealed skin and the emerged subject whole. Such re-membering is not the pre-oedipal re-emerged infantile pleasure Creed explicates, but a more immanent, hitherto unknown pleasure. Repression may not be the correct term to use in reference to the visceral body, it is not so much a body that was once known, the memory of which is the repressed element. Rather this body is a body unfamiliar, yet still our own selves. The visceral body is a body that social subjects are forced to deny rather than repress. A visceral body is not a body remembered but a body disallowed. It is not an infantile body returned but an entirely new body not yet known. To know this multi-plateaued body, a true body-without-organs where material flesh, repressed or oppressed organs and intensity in pleasure are all points of interactive flow, means knowing elements of the traditional body un-theorised, theorised biologically or for a use (digestion, respiration) different to the use towards a body-without-organs.

Ingesting Pleasure; Ingesting Flesh

Transposing our eyes from the single scene of Rose and Tony to the overall themes of *Paura* and indeed, many, many other zombie movies, including Fulci's other zombie epics *Zombi 2* ('Zombie Flesheaters', Italy, 1979) and ... *E tu vivrai nel Terrore! L'Aldilà* as well as possibly the most famous series of zombie films, George Romero's zombie trilogy *Night of the Living Dead* (US,

¹¹⁴ See Grosz, Elizabeth. *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin. 1990, p. 34.

1968), *Dawn of the Dead* (US and Italy, 1979) and *Day of the Dead* (US, 1985), one particular feature stands out. It is the most obvious feature of the modern movie zombie (especially the Euro-zombie) of the latter part of the century, as opposed to the Haitian zombies prolific in such earlier films as Victor Halperin's *White Zombie* (US, 1932), *Revolt of the Zombies* (US, 1936) or even the more recent Hammer version of the myth *Plague of the Zombies* (John Gilling, UK, 1966). It is that Zombies eat people, frequently ripping, tearing and squashing various parts of their victim's anatomy into states of abjection before doing so.¹¹⁵

Zombies do not get much of a look in, theoretically, in horror texts. Carol Clover in *Men, Women and Chainsaws* calls the demons from *Demoni* ('Demons', Lamberto Bava, Italy, 1985) zombies, despite the name of the film, and Barbara Creed, in *The Monstrous Feminine*, similarly names the deadites from *Evil Dead* (Sam Raimi, US, 1983). Even including these pseudo-zombies, their studies are limited to a few lines in Creed to two pages in Clover. Gender in terms of zombies is highly ambiguous, the audience feels that even if these creatures did have concrete gender divisions in life, their gender specific parts have rotted off (film zombies are frequently in a badly decomposed state) and their reason for animation is a unified, non-specific hunger. Perhaps this is why their use for gender research in film is seemingly limited.¹¹⁶

In *Paura* the zombie 'cannibalism' is more a threat than an actuality, with the 'ingestion' of the living by the dead being carried out through ripping into the brains of the living digitally. This image, which occurs more than once in the film, seems not so distant as a metaphor for cannibalism, but a cannibalism that has intent, rather than the aimless direct chomping which occurs throughout *Dawn of the Dead*, or the openly fake ethnographic cannibalism of the mondo

¹¹⁵ The Romero zombies simply take great bites out of people, whereas Fulci's zombies encourage the audience to search harder for a motive for their violence, as they frequently eat their victims after rendering them unrecognisable, as in the case of the priest's treatment of Rose and Tony in the jeep.

¹¹⁶ Except perhaps for the zombies in Peter Jackson's *Braindead* (New Zealand, 1992), in which a female maternal figure and a male priest have sex on the dinner table during a meal that their charge is teaching them to eat!

cannibal genre of Italian horror, most notably the films of Ruggero Deodato (*Ultimo Mondo Cannibale*, 'Last Cannibal World', 1976, *Cannibal Holocaust*, 1979), and Umberto Lenzi (*Cannibal Ferox*, 'Make Them Die Slowly', Italy, 1981). Squelching your fingers through the back of someone's head to procure the brains is like the meat-eater which slaughters its own prey, rather than taking a bite out of something 'neat', in its distance from the cadaver which submitted the flesh. This digital evisceration is immediately an image for repulsion because of its suggestion of cannibalism, intentional abjection and of course, gruesome rupture of the body and subjectivity of its victim. But because cannibalism is the most prolific and perhaps the most forbidden act the zombies of *Paura* relish, this act may be a riper site for potential pleasure. In culture cannibalism persists as one of the stronger taboos¹¹⁷ despite the body being so orally driven. F. Gonzalez-Crussi describes it accurately as "Thanatos in pure form, the elemental and most ancient form of aggression".¹¹⁸

Crussi also points out the ambiguities of such an intimate act, which meshes disparate corporealities. He paraphrases Eli Sagan in explicating "'affectionate cannibalism', in which feelings of affection are manifested toward the object of aggression, in such a way that the boundaries of *eros* and *thanatos*, so neat upon superficial canvassing of their respective jurisdictions, lose their sharpness."¹¹⁹ In film cannibalism, especially zombie cannibalism which does not anchor itself on morality, taboo rupture or ritual, but only on desire and the attainment of its pleasure, the blurry lines between *eros* and *thanatos* are made doubly so with respect to pleasure and unpleasure. Immediately it seems easy to equate pleasure with *eros*, unpleasure with *thanatos*.¹²⁰ But using film as the topography for indulging violent phantasy changes the nature of the unpleasure

¹¹⁷ Made stronger in *Paura* as the dead Emily (Sarah Keller) comes back to life with a strong drive to eat the brains of her little brother John-John, insinuating, as well as cannibalism, incest and paedophilia. See also Andrea Bianchi's *Zombi 3* ('Zombie Horror', Italy, 1980) for a repetition of the zombie incest theme.

¹¹⁸ F. Gonzalez-Crussi. *Three Forms of Sudden Death and Other Reflections on the Grandeur and Misery of the Body*. New York: Harper and Row. 1986, p. 97.

¹¹⁹ In Gonzalez-Crussi, 1986, p. 97.

¹²⁰ The inextricable nature of desire and death will be discussed in the section on the death drive in the last part of the thesis.

of aggression, (both for victim and 'essentially moral' perpetrator)¹²¹ and the distance between the glass which separates viewer from viewed alters the pleasure of 'love'.¹²²

In *Paura* thanatos incarnated in images of brains being squelched between the fingers of the living dead exceeds its rudimentary nature as a basic act of injury. It grits the teeth of the audience in a grimaced snarl that is catharsis for the aggression the audience may feel towards some of the more annoying characters in the film, a catharsis of pleasure because of the surrogate aggressor performing the act for the audience (hence no guilt). It is also a vehicle for the pleasure of having something revolting squash between the fingers, of touching something forbidden, something soft and wet and visceral. This squelching of undefined matter carries with it signification of containment as life, and tactical union as death (we know that touching a real human brain would more often than not signify death). Remembering the surface or skin with which the brain is bestowed in neurophysiology, the act of grasping this surface-beneath-the-surface, is grasping the skin of intellectual subjectivity beneath the skin of corporeal subjectivity. The grabbing of the brain with disregard for the carefully beaten out paths mulches all pleasure into one unidentifiable mess, ignoring the imaginary privileging of certain pleasures over others which the image of the mapped brain-skin encourages. It also continues the imagery of violence, of puncture, scratch and beating that seems to adhere to the brain as the most actively victimised of body organs.

¹²¹ Even in terms of enforced cannibalism, such as that which occurred in the Andes in 1978 when a Uruguayan rugby team crashed and were stranded without food for weeks, there is a moral coda followed. Crussi points out their cannibalism was coupled with "their insistence in finding a theological justification for their distressing answer to the problems of survival." (Gonzales-Crussi, 1986, p. 95) The team equated the eating of dead team-mates with Jesus giving his body and blood for Christians to eat in order to be saved. One point that is not mentioned however is the ethnicity of cannibalism. The act of cannibalism is most often an act of shock (as in film) or an act to study (as in anthropology), either savage or ethnographic but always non-white. Zombies in living dead films, as opposed to Haitian zombies, are white but abject.

¹²² For want of a better word - eros means more than love, it is a meshing of love, drive, desire, pleasure and obsession, for which I shall use all these terms interchangeably, but mean them all at once.

In their most carnal reading, the audience grabs at thanatos, in its definition as aggression *and* death. They clutch in the tension of their hands their aggression *towards* death (clutching the hands seems a common reaction of tension, and the nail marks left are often used as visual 'evidence' of extremes of fear, anxiety, horror and aggression in film and novels). If the zombies, as perpetrators, are re-animated and unaffected by thanatos, they can afford to perform such an act. Audience fascination with gross things that cannot be touched, because they are gross and because to touch them means a death is signified, can be pleurably felt. Both the fakery implied in the fact of *Paura* being a film and the fakery of the dead not ever being dead, compromises the fear that could prevent the (pleasure of the) act.

In terms of the pleasure of eros, *Paura* addresses one of the greatest flaws of desire for an other corporeality. Bodies are located as separate, skin is an organ which keeps the inside in, and the outside very firmly out. The mouth as rare site upon the body for ingestion is also the site of cannibalism. So along with the pleasure of desire is the constant frustration of never being able to ingest the object of desire.¹²³ This problem is addressed in Antonio Margheriti's *Il Mostro e in Tavola* ('Flesh for Frankenstein', Italy, 1973).¹²⁴ Baron Frankenstein opens up the abdomen of his female zombie in order to feel around and thereby bring himself to orgasm, following the act with the line "To know death ... you have to fuck life in the gall bladder". His servant Otto tries later the same technique (unsuccessfully) all the while breathlessly uttering "I have to get *in* to her, must get in!". David Cronenberg's *The Fly* (Canada, 1986) which involves the use of teleportal pods to split genetic construction in order to transport matter, takes the desire for the interior surfaces of the lover to an even greater extreme. Seth Brundle is so keen to get inside the flesh of his lover he suggests a fusion of their two bodies into a single object. The use of terms involving eating to describe oral sex is a representation of the frustration

¹²³ This idea has implications for the theory that satisfaction is ultimately the death of the Other/object of desire, fully articulated in the 'A Brief introduction to Psychoanalytic Death' section of the Death chapter of this thesis.

¹²⁴ The authorship of this film remains contentious. American viewers know this film as *Andy Warhol's Frankenstein* and attribute directorship to Warhol acolyte Paul Morrissey.

of divided bodies and the desire to overcome the division. Maria Angel and Zoe Sofia point out the parallels between body and food, love and eating,

Important features of this symbolic/libidinal topography are outlined in various of Freud's papers on infantile sexuality and anality which trace the metaphorical associations between the penis and the 'stick' of faeces, the rectum and the vagina, faeces and babies, and between excrement, gifts and money. Other associations may be made between breasts and buttocks (as in the golden arches of the junk i.e. 'waste' food giant McDonald's) and between aliment and excrement.¹²⁵

The body under trauma in *Paura*, although it is eaten, does not so much represent a *metaphor* for food. It *is* food. Instead of metaphorically taking the flesh of the beloved into the digestive system through oral sex, the zombies actually take the flesh in through mastication and swallowing.¹²⁶ Not only do they eat the body of the object of desire with the mouth, they break it and knead it from outside to inside and back again with the hands in the example of the brain-ripping. The zombies 'take' a lover in the manner all lovers phantasise about, where there is no longer a separation between other and self, where the object is no longer external. The pleasure of eros (haunted always by the unpleasure of the insurmountable distance between inside and outside) is made acute by the repulsive unpleasure of gore, mutilation and cannibalism. The victims' screams, as the backs of their heads are torn away, emphasises the great amount of tactility; and metaphorical 'sexual' excitation being experienced. The rolling upwards of the eyes indicates a relinquishment of the

¹²⁵ Maria Angel and Zoe Sofia, 'Cooking up: Intestinal Economies and the Aesthetics of Specular Orality' In *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3, October 1996, eds. Rita Felski and Zoe Sofia, pp. 464-482, quote p. 467.

¹²⁶ Foucault explicates that for the Hellenistic Greeks the pleasure of eating and drinking was inextricable from the pleasure of sex with the desired object, which remains a prevalent idea in modern Western self-regulation. Although for the Greeks pleasure was pleasure despite the means by which it was attained. Today however, it is almost as if the desire to eat the love object cannibalistically is forced into a binary of food/drink versus sex/desire. This emphatic division is what makes me think that where for the Hellenists food and sex were along a similar path, for modern culture they are part of an identical drive, the desire to eat the love object. The taboo placed upon cannibalism is what drives them to opposite ends of a polar system. Both food and sex are seen as potentially pathological excesses but their inextricable relationship is rarely identified except in theories of addiction where a renunciation of one addiction (for example food) often leads to a new addiction becoming evident (for example sex). See Foucault, 1992, pp. 50-51.

visual¹²⁷ for the entirely tactile, but tactility not only for the body of the self, but for the body of the other inserted into the self and no longer divisible from it.¹²⁸ The shock of an unwanted (in 'reality') violence which brings about unpleasure is made indistinguishable from the fascination of wondering what the violence *feels* like. This question, once the object (victim) and subject (perpetrator) are fleshly merged, becomes a wondering at what the violence feels like which spans *both* bodies involved and no longer constructs the violence performed as an act of dominant aggression over submissive victimisation based on a matrix involving single subjects. The presence of perpetrator over the absence of (the subjectivity of) victim is compromised into a hyper-presence of a new body altogether. By reading the violence in *Paura* as a shifting of the borders between the single body's inside and outside, and the subject and object's bodies, violence changes from an act by one upon another, to a tactical fascination with the phantasm of visceral experience unattainable in biology external from the screen. The borders of 'self' and 'other' are affectively re-negotiated for the viewer. The limits of the viewer's body are redistributed through visceral response and tension. Hence the viewer is made aware of two things. First her/his own inter-corporeal borders; the stratification of the body, or the organ-ed body becoming the Body-without-organs through making visible a re-stratification where organs are privileged not for their function but they way they look and the place they are seen i.e. outside not inside. Second the viewer is aware of the rupture of borders of body and mind, object of desire and subject desiring. The breakdown of these borders so that the self encompasses its own others while the other is ingested literally into the self avoids trite versions of psychoanalytic infantile incorporation through *transforming* rather than reducing the viewer. Instead of the viewer yearning for the breast and the pre-symbolic body as a result of watching zombies eat

¹²⁷ Remembering zombies usually *look* bad.

¹²⁸ This differs from the insertion of an object into a body cavity because there is no signification of a rupture in the skin and hence the intact self indicated in 'normative' (i.e. not life-threatening) sex. The impossibility of ever being unified with the object of desire relies on the axis of living body versus seriously compromised body, as in the case of organ transplants, Siamese twins, conjoined twin myelomelia or the potential to ever become surgically grafted to the object of desire. Most importantly, ingesting into the body an other body is ingesting a multiplicitous subjectivity, not theoretically but in corporeal actuality, where the use of 'I' is halted entirely.

people and organs becoming spectacle, the viewer leaves previous ideals of incorporation - these are organs not breast milk, they are hardcore abject not nourishing - and becomes a re-stratified version of a desiring body. The mother is not the object of desire, non-specific flesh is the desired 'thing', no longer object because no longer recognisable as singular or specific to a person, kind of person or even fetish disembodied part of a person. The pre-symbolic body is not the viewing body because the body has been made multi-layered rather than formless; it is unbound not through a return to infantility but through a relinquishing of stratification, which begins by a turning-upside down of the corporeal strata hierarchy. For this reason the unbound body in horror must be a post-oedipal body rather than a pre-oedipal. But the post-oedipal body viewing is also post-oedipal in its repudiation of oedipal systems of desire because of the making other within the self and the object of desire being both unformed and abject.

Pleasure exceeds value, morality or singular forms of body because it defies those elements that constitute such in culture. Pleasure cannot be valuable or value-less if it cannot be predicted; it cannot be moral, amoral or immoral because each affect and experience demands unique and specific consideration, and may never recur; it cannot refer to any one kind of body or bodies, be they dominant or minoritarian because its specificity, in space and in the body's affective interaction with the world and itself, creates a version of pleasure unique to any one moment. Feeling pleasure as a continuum which encompasses both traditional versions of its effect and their binary opposites means that only specific consideration of pleasure allows its full theoretical potential to begin. These situatedly specific considerations exist as moments in time and space as lines of flight. When pleasure occurs as disgust, as an indication of the multi-plateaued layers of the flesh, even as a state of rest, it compels the subject to exist at a new point. Each new point could be a point of setting off along a line of flight. Horror films renegotiate traditional versions of pleasure, and of the body, without shifting the flesh into interaction with other bodies. For this reason, depictions of horror, violence and gore are purely affect-ive and do not compromise the ethical consideration of an other body.

Pleasure taken in them is a forced consideration of traditional versions of value placed on the nature of pleasure as being some beneficial 'thing', rather than a specific quality of motion or momentum, neither explicitly beneficial nor malevolent. At best these images force a consideration of the otherness of our own bodies and this itself is a line of flight upon which we may travel.

Perversion

No healthy person, it appears, can fail to make some addition that might be called perverse to the normal sexual aim. - Freud¹

The elements of a comprehensive definition of sexual perversion should include sexual activity or fantasy directed towards orgasm other than genital intercourse with a willing partner of the opposite sex and of similar maturity, persistently recurrent, not merely a substitute for preferred behaviour made difficult by the immediate environment and contrary to the generally accepted norm of sexual behaviour in the community. - P.D. Scott, Clinical Psychiatrist.²

In this chapter perversion will be posited as a tactic towards transformation - a line of flight which encompasses a particular space in becoming minoritarian. Within and beyond the parameters of traditionally aberrant sexualities and bodily manifestations, perversion is embedded in a history of the repudiation of the dominant. Any tactical use of perversion must remain contextually sensitive to the histories and bodies of the minoritarians it encompasses. Horror films,

¹ Freud, S. (1905) 'Three Essays on Sexuality, : I. The Sexual Aberrations. II. Infantile Sexuality. III. The Transformations of Puberty.' In Strachey, James, ed. *The Penguin Freud Library*. Vol. 7. Trans. James Strachey. London: Penguin Books. 1991, p. 74.

² Scott, P. D. 'Definition, Classification, Prognosis and Treatment.' In Rosen, Ismond, ed. *The Pathology and Treatment of Sexual Deviation*. London: Oxford University Press. 1964, pp. 87-116, quote p. 88.

their viewers and their makers represent a certain element of filmic perversion within the motion picture canon, but in this chapter perversion goes beyond evincing non-normalised objects of desire as perverse. The flesh itself and its innumerable ways of experiencing - film, pleasure, desire and the world - can be theorised as perverse in many incarnations. I will argue that the act of watching film itself may be construed as perverse, were it to exist outside of its sanctioned context. But because perversion insinuates a history of oppression and denigration of many kinds of bodies, I will first explore the traditional, psychiatric and biological manifestations of the threat of perversion. If pleasure affects the subject towards transformation, perversion may be a middle ground of politicised minoritarianism, another line of flight or at least a launcher for such.

Affect perverts the subject, however, the negative terminology of 'pervert' should be seen rather as transformative and hence positive. Perversion, a noun itself, is frequently taken as a means to making the noun 'pervert' rather than as a verb or, as I wish to utilise it, to describe affect. Because bodies are seen as finished once they exhibit adult sexual drives, the rigidity of the term pervert is affirmed upon intervention from other discourses; medicine, psychoanalysis, genetics. The open-ness and constant change of the body is a model I prefer, one which sees the self and the subject as being in permanent flux and re-figuration. For this reason all subjects are perverting, themselves and each other, but none are pervert, in an ontologically static sense. Linda Williams, in *Hard Core* states

It is this idea of the very dismantling of the very idea of the norm that I find most helpful for a feminist reading of, and defence against, contemporary film pornography... We must come back, therefore, to the question of the most effective feminist use of the notion of perversion. For since there can be no authentic, true, or normal position from which to resist the repression of the feminine as currently enacted in visual pornography, but only the hope of breaking out of the economy of the one, it seems to me that the most effective

strategy is to embrace the liberating potential contained in the very idea of an 'implantation of perversions'.³

Even for Freud, female sexuality was enigmatic enough to almost constitute perversion in itself, and in phallogocentric culture feminine sexuality is, by its existence in an isomorphic cultural structure, perverse to the single masculine aim.⁴ Considering this a strategy of positive perversion elucidates itself as an entrance point for feminists and all minoritarians interested in visually affective discourses.

Whether watching film, or in a sexual frenzy or in any other moment of pleasure, pain or affect, by the subject's very desire to feel something, or to feel different, it is clear that the subject will emerge altered. Similar to the idea that for something to be feminist, it must be 'different' to culture's dominant homogenised and homogenising structure, perversion is something different; reading a different way, comprehending a different way, and also, rendering the subject as different with each affect. Because this has a very definite history in medicine and psychiatry, I will discuss the different incarnations of perversion in such doctrines. Although this chapter is not about sexuality, it would be unethical to launch the subject into perversion without acknowledging perversion's history of power, control and oppression, similar to post-modernism's fetishisation of pure difference without acknowledging women's histories. The histories of various 'perverse' subjects locate them as objects of scientific research, their status of abnormal sexuality given to them by scientific and social ontology. By making perversion a line of flight I wish to allow those bodies, and all bodies, the ethical power to enforce their own perversion. Becoming minoritarian is an ethical tactic towards transformation as much as it is a subversive one, because it refutes the desirability of being accepted within dominant discourse, without refuting its own history or forgetting the accountability of the dominant. Becoming minoritarian does not know its own end, it does not become fixated with the rigid romanticism of

³ Williams, 1989, p. 118.

⁴ See my discussion of Irigaray in 'Visual Pleasure/ Visual Truth'.

marginals within a social system. Deleuze emphasises the difference between becoming minoritarian and romanticising marginality. He states,

I share Michel's [Foucault's] distaste for those who consider themselves marginals; the romanticism of madness, delinquency, perversion, and drugs is less bearable for me. But for me lines of flight... are not created by marginals. On the contrary, they are objective lines that cut across a society, and on which marginals install themselves here and there in order to create a buckle, a whirl, a recoding.⁵

Deleuze's anxieties express the importance he places on the flight of his lines of flight. The pervert, the mad(man) and the addict are all posited upon an axis at a single point if pervert, addict and mad is indeed what they *are*. (Below I will point to the importance of the verb 'pervert' over its noun use.) Deleuze is concerned that perversion is utilised as an aim or a final product of subversion, whereby perverts would *install* themselves along a line of flight. In this chapter perversion refers to a tactic, not a subjective mode of existence. To pervert one's static self is the aim, not to become pervert. Becoming has a lot in common with my use of the term pervert because both are a setting off of the subject without a final aim (but with an idea towards what one becomes, which in turn insinuates what one is perverted from). But I utilise the term pervert because it does not simply repudiate or forget the histories of minoritarians. Perversion continues, implicitly, to suggest history and accountability while forcing transformation and making desirable alterity. Considering women have been aligned with the perverted form of the hu-man, be it because they are castrated, reproductive or any other number of historical reasons, the ethical importance of a historically contextualised becoming seems urgent. This is why, although this chapter concludes with becoming, the multiple histories and eventually multiple accesses to perversion are the primary foci.

⁵ Deleuze, 1997, p. 189.

Perversion across Discourse – The Regulated Body

According to psychoanalysis, acts of sexuality that are not specifically invested in the primary genital hetero-erotic aims, are perverse. Perversion, though, seems to fall into two categories. First a 'clinical' category, where rigid rules are upheld in defining what is normal sexual behaviour and what is perverse, (this is what Freud refers to in the prefix quote). Secondly, a social category which is more lenient in its restriction of sexual subjectivity, but which often includes sympathy for a pathological sexed body (for example, towards homosexuals because 'they cannot help it'). The clinical definition of perversity is difficult, precisely because the clinical definition of normalised sexual behaviour is so brief, and all else is a perversion. I include the following definition in the prelude because it is something I shall come back to. P.D. Scott states:

The elements of a comprehensive definition of sexual perversion should include sexual activity or fantasy directed towards orgasm other than genital intercourse with a willing partner of the opposite sex and of similar maturity, persistently recurrent, not merely a substitute for preferred behaviour made difficult by the immediate environment and contrary to the generally accepted norm of sexual behaviour in the community.⁶

This definition, which is expressed similarly in the majority of biomedical and psychological texts on perversion, categorises potentials for perversion in multiple ways. To think perverse thoughts (sexual activity or *phantasy*) which are not normal thoughts with a hetero aim; to aim towards pleasure without entirely relying on a capital product i.e. orgasm; to have sex too much or not enough; or to prefer something else are all perversions. Before any object is inserted into the equation, one's own body in pleasure, by itself, is perverse - this is, the state at which the body was left at the end of the pleasure section. Sexually, a body must be defined by an object, which acts as partner. In the

⁶ Scott, 1964, p. 88.

'Pleasure' chapter, I discussed the potential for splitting the subject from the self in acts which transform through pleasure, without specifying what kind of acts. But even if we take this most normalised of acts - the hetero, same-age, orgasm oriented act - we are still faced with the sexual splitting of self.

Bataille, who does not specify sexual acts in 'Sexual Plethora and Death,' discusses the fragmentation of the sexual self in everything from single cell organisms to humans. Although Bataille sees this plethora as sacrificial and hence inextricable from a divine moral (and necessarily male) aim, the idea that through pleasure something is sacrificed is interesting. From a feminist perspective this does not hold such a threat, the loss of a whole, integrated subjectivity, is not possible for women who are not given 'wholeness' in being as male subjects are.⁷ From a cultural perspective it is not the entire being that is under threat of sacrifice, indeed it is the opposite of nihilism, simply an idea which includes some part of self being sacrificed - that something would be the subject who-I-was-before, or the idea of me-as-complete-organism. Bataille talks about the 'feeling of self' that accompanies being, but which is not consciousness, as "consciousness of self follows upon consciousness of external objects, only known in humanity."⁸ In sexual activity the internal self ('feeling' of self) and external objects are all externalised. Bataille states

Sexual activity is a critical moment in the isolation of the individual. We know it from without, but we know that it weakens and calls into question the feeling of self. We use the word crisis: that is, the inner effect of an event known objectively. As an objective fact of knowledge the crisis is none the less responsible for a basic inner phenomenon.⁹

This theory, though subversive to the integrity of subjectivity, is a nihilistic sacrificial one (and will be discussed most explicitly in the final chapter). It has

⁷ Or in the case of psychoanalysis where the woman exists in a state of primary sacrifice, where her difference is defined by the sacrifice of her penis in comparison to the male who is only and always under the threat of such a sacrifice.

⁸ Bataille, Georges. (1962) *Eroticism*. Trans. Mary Dalwood. London: Marion Boyars. 1990, pp. 99-100.

⁹ Bataille, 1990, p. 100.

as its central focus the idea of 'something to lose' that reiterates the value of the subjectivity it annihilates. Knowledge of this loss is also seen as integral to its study. For my purpose, however, Bataille presents, through the most normalised and presumably towards the most perverse (whatever these all may be) of sexual acts, a crisis as the aim, a split in perception of the most fundamental plane of stratification, inside and outside (me). What Bataille may be suggesting occurs in this crisis is an effect within the inner feeling of self and outside the objective event. Affect-ed presumably would be what the subject comes away as. In sexual frenzy then, we are outside the outside, and inside the inside, an 'inner effect of an event known objectively'. In the most acceptable acts according to texts such as Scott's, the dynamics of perception of the self¹⁰ are distorted and deranged,¹¹ effecting a somewhat psychical or gestalt violence upon the integrated self-image. This idea of damaging the self, almost deliberately, leads to a concept prevalent in psychological and medical theories of perversion, which is the supposed intrinsic inclusion of aggression and hatred towards the perverse object choice within the drive.

In his book *Perversion: The Erotic Form of Hatred* Robert J. Stoller posits the argument that all perversion is borne of hatred towards the object choice, or what the object choice represents. By taking it as a sexual 'partner' the object which is hated is mastered in order to surpass a moment of trauma from the past.¹² So perverse object choices are symbols of trauma, and by sexually gratifying oneself with them, their power to harm the 'pervert' is curbed and, presumably, eventually vindicated. He states

In order to begin to judge these ideas, draw on your own experience. Think of perversions with which you are familiar... In each is found - in gross form or hidden but essential in fantasy - hostility, revenge, triumph, and a dehumanised object. Before even scratching the surface we can see that

¹⁰ Considering all we are is a perception of who we are, whether it is Lacan's striving-for-completeness subjectivity, or Irigaray's female non-subject who only knows what she is not within phallogoc culture.

¹¹ Deranged being the term used to describe the ruptured conditions of damaged tissue in medical and forensic texts.

¹² Reminiscent of Creed and her use of the abject mother as the primary object involved in the cathartic practices of horror viewing by males.

someone harming someone else is a main feature in most of these conditions.¹³

In comparing Stoller with Bataille we find a self who, more than an object involved, is dehumanised. Before annihilation of a human, dehumanisation must ask the question 'What is human' and inevitably de-constructs the relationship between what is human and the subject. What is human is not opposed to what is not human but what is not a being at all, what is not an integrated object is placed in opposition to the human or a subject. Wholeness is implicit in what is human, and the crisis of transforming, shattering or changing subjectivity is adamantly indicative of something not whole and not-one. For this reason dehumanisation should not be taken in a derogatory context. The condition of being human, with the limits and boundaries of perception of self and object this entails, is negotiated so that the self can no longer look at itself and its partner and say 'I am human'. Rather, at a loss for language, the self shifts towards a depth beneath the (or one) surface, with a different 'feeling of self' and hence, 'feeling of object'.¹⁴ Stoller quotes a 1930s perversion expert, E. Straus, " 'the delight in perversions is caused by... the destruction, humiliation, desecration, the *deformation* of the perverse individual himself and of his partner.' (Straus's italics)."¹⁵

Stoller chooses this quote despite the tacking on at its end of 'and of his partner'. The destruction of the self is more pertinent to my discussion though less so for Stoller. And Stoller says nothing of the italicising by Straus of 'deformation' though it is a key element in relating the work of Bataille to this clinical theory. 'Desecration' and 'humiliation' are words that carry negative feeling, which are implicitly religious and juxtapose themselves favourably in

¹³ Stoller, Robert J. *Perversion: The Erotic Form of Hatred*. New York: Pantheon Books. 1975, p. 9. The majority of texts I found on clinical perversity are from the era 1965-1980 and not being from a medical background I am unsure as to any prevailing ideas on perversity. But because these texts are being used, not for their empirical information, but simply for comparative analysis, the beliefs held in them need not be beliefs currently held by medical sources.

¹⁴ Such a feeling of post-humanism has ethical implications for those who were never given the luxury of being considered as true human, the marginal and the minoritarian, including women. This will be more fully discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁵ Stoller, 1975, p. 8.

Bataille's work on transformation and death being essentially religious. But destroy and deform are ideal words in order to become something different; here, to elucidate the 'something different' the sexually changing body is becoming. Human subjectivity in this sacrificial/desecrated mode implies the greatness of humanity and finished 'manhood' that is divinely given. I do not wish to sidetrack my argument by engaging in-depth with the religious importance of complete and integrated subjectivity. However, the pinnacle of iconography, (white, male) represents, visually and conceptually, the complete and 'perfect' human subject.¹⁶ Juxtaposed against this image, all differing images are compared as examples of what is not complete, what is not perfect and hence the beginnings of what is perverse. I would alter Straus's idea slightly by stating that delight in all sexual activity, and all forms of pleasure, (perverse or not) rather than simply perversion, relates to their transformative affect.¹⁷ Traditionally, however, revelling in one's own de-formation and the de-formation of perspective (inside-inside/outside-outside), is easier to excavate when the object choice is markedly and identifiably different to the self.¹⁸ Object is easier to study than affect, which is perhaps why perversity traditionally focuses on object rather than affect. Psychoanalysis, like many of the discursive genres analysed in this thesis, follows equations. The most important quotient in the perverse equation is object. If the first quotient was instead affect, the act of sexuality, *any* sexuality, would no doubt constitute a perversion of the in-tact psychically 'well' self.

A further step from the perversion of the feeling of self which occurs during (among other things) sex, is the perversion of the subject. If the self is who we feel we are, the subject is who we think we are or the mode in which we

¹⁶ Incarnated most specifically as the Christ icon that is also discussed by Deleuze and Guattari as implicit in faciality, that which creates and performs subjectivity away from the body. See 'Death' section, *Faciality*.

¹⁷ Juxtaposed against the sacrificial nihilism of Bataille is the life-affirming (though not organism-affirming) becoming of Deleuze and Guattari, which will be developed later.

¹⁸ Keeping in mind that the number of human subjects who come close to the divine male figure of human perfection are fewer than those who do not. Also, this divine male is the object of ascendance meaning that, by its very nature, it is unattainable yet posited as needing to be attained.

perform and regulate our behaviour based on our idea of who we are.¹⁹ While sexual activity is frequently private, especially interior changes within the feeling of self, our 'out' sexuality, something demanded of us, is spoken, public and phantasmatically fixed. Gender and sex seem at odds here. Gay more often than not presumes masculinity, anal sex presumes a penis, and paedophilia presumes action rather than phantasy. Along with who we are sexually, or what our object choice is, lies certain presumptions about the body these suggest we have, and the limits of our activities.²⁰ But most importantly, everything that does not fit with what is currently accepted (and Scott's definition can be seen as the most restrictive version) is perverse - *one* term, *not* many specifics. What we find from clinical texts is that if unbound *desire* is privileged over maintaining the symbolic integrity of the subject, (implicit in this is choosing a good, subject-to-object conforming object choice) that subject is constructed as perverse.²¹ The subject is seemingly safely intact if its object choice is correct. Lacan states "What defines perversion is precisely the way in which the subject is placed in it... the pervert is he who, in short circuit, more directly than any other, succeeds in his aim, by integrating in the most profound way his function as subject with his existence as desire."²² A subject of function rather than being, and a subject with open desire flow (existence *as* desire not with desire) rather than desire with lack which demands object choice, drives existence into a system of process rather than spatial positioning (*a* or *the* subject, available

¹⁹ This is then followed by identity, that which we aspire to in order to be and to complete.

²⁰ Grosz states, in discussing Foucault and Butler's divisions of sex and sexuality: "With Butler and against Foucault, I want to argue that both sex and sexuality are marked, lived and function according to whether it is a male or female body that is being discussed. Sex... is the label and terrain of the production and enactment of sexual difference." 'Experimental Desire: Rethinking Queer Subjectivity.' *Space, Time and Perversion: The Politics of Bodies*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin. 1995, pp. 207-228, quote p. 213. Hermaphrodites are bodies that are forced to choose which sex to enact. It is because of the constant enactment of sexual difference, rather than sexual spectrum, that hermaphrodites cannot be the bodies they are, but must 'choose' (usually for operations on fully articulated secondary sexual organ hermaphrodites the male sex is chosen) which sex to 'be'. There is no space yet for the enactment of both (and neither).

²¹ Grosz explains "For Lacan, the symbolic refers to the social and signifying order governing culture, to the post-oedipal position the subject must occupy in order to be a subject." 1989, glossary p.xxii. Proper oedipalisation is hence vital to non-perverse subject formation.

²² Lacan, J, 1994, pp. 185 and 206. Lacan's pervert is very structuralist, which conforms to Lacan's idea that the unconscious is structured (like a language) and hence any aim towards 'tapping in' to the unconscious through threatening the subject's integrity may also follow a structure.

for clinicians as an object).²³ Clinically however to indulge in perverse activities is to re-negotiate one's power as a subject, to allow one's subjectivity to become pathologised as something 'other' - the pervert. Desire for act or object, singly or multiply performed, strives further than, and is in excess of, the subject. By performing a perverse act, one's subjectivity becomes only desire for that act, becomes the act itself. This is how perversity is constructed. But perversity is rampant in everyday activity, to watch too much, not to watch enough, to be voyeur to film, to be narcissistic of self. Psychoanalytic perversions conform and conflict with medical pathologisation of perversity, 'illnesses' of sexual drive. Legality comes in when the perversity is simply too much for culture to stomach. Foucault says of the history of sexual prohibition and the construction of perversity that "acts 'contrary to nature' were stamped as especially abominable, but these were perceived simply as an extreme form of acts 'against the law'."²⁴ The 'law' is applicable right across epistemic fields - from the normative regulating of the self in assuring 'healthy' psychical subjectivity in psychoanalysis, to the mandatory state which levels health within the physio/patho-logic of medicine. The 'law' is an intervention from the outside when the subject can no longer regulate itself from the inside (therapy, drugs and so on).

The law of organisms, which in science is the claim to know objects through analysis of their *a priori* state of being, right down the vertical genus ladder, is upset by affect concepts such as desire and pleasure because they are not so visible and hence epistemologically graspable. Science does not ignore these spheres when formulating the rigid knowledges that constitute natural objects. As if to shock itself, science often attempts to excavate less 'knowable' arenas, such as desire, at more base levels than 'the human' in order to formulate an epistemology of 'raw nature', pure biology untouched by culture. This aim to formulate a biological knowledge of desire, utilising a theory to elucidate the plasticity of bodies and their inextricable relation to desire at a bestial level, is

²³ This suggests a move towards the Deleuzian/Guattarian mode of existence that shall be more explicitly utilised below.

²⁴ Foucault, M. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*. (1977) Trans. Robert Hurley. London: Penguin. 1990, p. 38.

discussed in the article 'Biological factors in the organisation and expression of sexual behaviour' by Richard P. Michael and Doris Zumpe.²⁵ The study, which refers to everything from single cell organisms to cats, monkeys and guinea-pigs, is performed in order to prove the *essential* mutability of 'sex' (sexual morphological characteristics, from male with male behaviour, through effeminate male, 'neutral', masculine female to female with female behaviour) and 'sexuality' (male sexual behaviour in females; female sexual behaviour in males; bisexual behaviour in animals; with and without the intervention of hormones and/or androgens). Sexuality here is seen as the 'natural' version of what in humans would presumably be called desire or would be the vindication of the 'nature/nurture' debate in queer biological studies. Surprising results in Michael's and Zumpe's study include complete absence of sexuality in sexed bodies, and complete development of sexuality in bodies entirely void of any sex, both genitally and neurologically, (the hypothalamus, or 'sex receptor' in the brain²⁶) and void of any sensory organs at all.²⁷ What these kinds of studies *could* show is that bodies, 'sex' (or gender depending how determined sex is believed to be in each study) and drive are completely unpredictable and limitless in their intersecting indices at any given moment.²⁸ Their problem lies in the demand for knowledge and predictable repetition within scientific studies that would posit these indices, no matter how many, as eventually finite. An infinite number of interventions, experiences and species (bodies) could produce results which diverge from each other. What such results conclude, however, is that whatever 'perversion' occurs in humans, the perversion has also been observed occurring in 'nature', (as opposed to culture, though a laboratory does not seem entirely 'natural'). Hence, the behaviour is locatable

²⁵ Michael, Richard P. and Zumpe, Doris. 'Biological factors in the Organisation and Expression of Sexual Behaviour.' In Rosen Ismond, ed. *Sexual Deviation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1979, pp. 441-480.

²⁶ Michael and Zumpe, 1979, p. 461.

²⁷ Michael and Zumpe, 1979, p. 459. This from the rather disturbing experiment, "Heat behaviour can occur in the absence of the olfactory bulbs and neocortex, and after destruction of the labyrinths, the cochlea and after removal of the eyes," pp. 459-460.

²⁸ Similar to Deleuze's idea of singularities, endlessly intersecting other lines of being, creating entirely unique results for each individual intersection. In Deleuze, Gilles. (1969) *The Logic of Sense*. Trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale. New York: Columbia University Press. 1990.

to a source in the flesh or the earliest experiences of the pervert, suggesting its potential eradication via medical or psychological intervention. Yet another equation is formed, though this one goes backwards. Perversion is the last quotient, and by figuring out the first quotients which add up to a particular perversion, science can explain the reason for the perversion, eradicate it ('minus-ed') and the perversion, hence the pervert, will no longer exist.

Act, and subject performing perversity, are relative in terms of their degrees of perversity. What matters is that they are all 'other', aberrant behaviours, to be controlled, studied, created understood... or prosecuted. Aberration-ing of an act, in relation to the object-choice involved in the act, creates a subject which springs from the act, the subject who now *is* that act.²⁹ But what perversion really offers is more-than-one subjectivities simultaneously (which present themselves in opposition to the singular subject). Foucault uses Don Juan as an example of a pathologised pervert:

Here we have a likely reason, among others, for the prestige of Don Juan, which three centuries have not erased. Underneath the great violator of the rules of marriage - stealer of wives, seducer of virgins, the shame of families, and an insult to husbands and fathers - another personage can be glimpsed: the individual driven, *in spite of himself*, by the somber madness of sex. Underneath the libertine, the pervert... We shall leave it to psychoanalysts to speculate whether he was homosexual, narcissistic or impotent.³⁰ (my italics)

²⁹ This is similar to Butler's theories of performativity, her subversion of the act-creates-subject idea in *Bodies that Matter*, 1993. Butler theorises the subject as formulated as acting a certain way, while the way the body acts creates the subject, locating the power of subjectivity not through a monolithic demand but through a circular, multi-located process. However, although Butler reverses the act-creates-subject idea it still relegates each act with meaning which then effects the figuring of a subject, who is fixed by the act s/he performs, even if it is not permanently. Eve Sedgwick prefers act to represent only a performance rather than meaning - although this is a promising strategy it seems difficult to imagine act never indicating meaning. See Sedgwick, (1990) Introduction - Axiomatic, to *Epistemology of the Closet*. London: Penguin. 1994, pp. 1-63. It is the necessary relationship subjectivity has with act, privileged over desire, drive or pleasure, (all of which are elusive to language and hence meaning) that I wish to do away with. Sedgwick also locates the greatest problem with act equalling meaning as having. My focus on any definition of meaning would be its fleeting nature and its potential for multiple significations rather than any belief in a static meaning based on act and its necessary relationship with the subject who acts. Meaning will also come to offer a potential for mediation in the conclusion of this thesis.

³⁰ Foucault, 1990, pp. 39-40.

Foucault's point is not that Don Juan was a figure of sympathy for his 'sexual illness' but that his activity ruptured the order that stabilised and regulated sexual behaviour in culture. Don Juan then acted 'in spite of himself', he spited the idea of a fixed and finished subjectivity. While rupturing social law he ruptured also the law of the predictable subject, both in the feudal and the psychoanalytic sense of the word. He obeyed neither the law nor his idea of his own subjectivity, so before the acts of his perversion occurred, a rupture or perversion of subjectivity occurred. It is impossible to say whether the actions of Don Juan were deliberate. The argument for agency in sexual behaviour versus uncontrollable urge spurred on by underlying unconscious psychical drives is one that I do not wish to undertake. Sufficient to say that whatever *caused* it, (if it needs a cause, which it only does if the activity of the subject is read as a narrative or equation) the perversion of Don Juan perverted his subjectivity before it 'acted out' perverse activity. This happens every time a subject transforms (which it must continuously, with the attainment of new knowledges and experiences³¹) so perversion as a term becomes applicable to any non-stagnating subject.³²

Commonly, any phenomenon that engages with the subject and affects the subject, which in turn changes and hence 'perverts' the subject to become something new, takes the word 'pervert' used as a noun and emphasises instead its use as a verb. Janine Chassegeut-Smirgel states:

The noun has much in common with the law, considered as separation, division. It is a part of speech which names a person, place or thing, that is to say, which takes out of chaos and confusion and gives it definition. In fact, Genesis relates the story of Creation not merely as a time of separating and dividing, but - and in my opinion this comes to the same thing - one of naming.³³

³¹ I do not mean transcendence here!

³² Stagnation is a term impossible to apply to humans, because they are social, with concepts of self and other, with movement of 'mind' and flesh. Bataille states: "Death is the inevitable consequence of super-abundance; only stagnation ensures that creatures shall preserve their discontinuity, their isolation that is... Life is movement and nothing within that movement is proof against it." 1990, p. 101.

³³ Chassegeut-Smirgel, Janine (1984). *Creativity and Perversion*. London: Free Association Books. 1985, p. 9.

Our name is our 'I', and because our name does not change in our lifetime, perhaps this is why subjectivity is so adamant it should not either. Along with our given names and family names are our profession names, colour, race, gender and sexuality names. As Chassegeut-Smirgel points out, the law (which is as important a term in psychoanalysis as it is in the bible) relates directly to names. When our sexuality is in question, it is because during sex, unlike most other moments of our embodied lives, the division of ourselves from everything else is momentarily breached, a return to a form of 'chaos and confusion'. This division could be due to the loss of language that occurs in moments of pleasure, and also the inability to articulate pleasure sufficiently with language. Compulsory same age, non-incestuous heterosexuality enforces our 'separateness', momentarily forfeited in sexual activity when our subjectivity is joined with something else (and theoretically for religion as well as for most other genres of text this will eventually produce a third quotient - offspring). The 'something else' must conform with the self in order to prevent any 'perversion' of the self *after* the act - in order to confirm re-territorialisation. Hence, no matter what the deterritorialising affect of perversion, if reterritorialisation is the aimed-for conclusion, perversion is not a line of flight but a reaffirmation of acceptable axes of society. Because pleasure deterritorialises us, alters us from the moment before, the object we choose to be involved with during that change (the object of desire, or of sexual or any other interaction) must assure our reterritorialisation, some continuity to our being when, after the pleasure has ceased and we 'return' to our known version of self, it is able to reaffirm who we are. The object of desire must fit in with who we think we are in order that the re-appearance of the person we think we are can occur 'after the change'. The result of who or what the subject is after the act must be safely predictable in order to ensure the continuation of divided and proper, appropriately named, subjects. This theory ignores the change which sexual activity, or any self-losing language-defying activity, performs upon the body before, in spite of and no matter what the other (whether it be inanimate or one's own self, as in masturbation) in the equation is. The object of a sexual union is seen as the vehicle for pleasure, which represses

completely the body of the self during pleasure. Any limiting theory of perversion would continue within this schema by stating that a perverse object ensures perversion of the self. However, it is the perversion of subjectivity which occurs in the body during pleasure, or pain, or anything else that transforms, which is the most subversive element towards figuring a processual rather than fixed subject. The body-in-pleasure is repressed after the act, and the object choice is seen as the cause of pleasure. The cause of the pleasure is the body, is *in* the body and is experienced *as* the body. After a transformative affect has occurred, the object choice becomes stand-in for the body – ‘S/he caused me pleasure’ rather than ‘my body was/is pleasure’. So, even to utilise a perverse object choice as the only subversive element in a theorisation of different bodies limits the presence of corporeality implicit in and extricable from immanent self.

The lifeline of humans is read, like many social and biological phenomena, in a narrative sense; the subject develops from infancy (no or unformed subjectivity) into adulthood (sexual and completed subjectivity) and then deteriorates at the winding down stage of ageing subjectivity (imminently dissolving subjectivity). The subject could instead be read, not as one that develops, finishes and disappears, but as one that continually changes in order to exist, or ‘be’ in the world. This would refigure the idea of the perverted or perverting self, and induce the eradication of ‘I am being perverted’, the fear of one’s subjectivity becoming altered as an accusation of loss of self. The problem with this theory, however, is that the idea of the threat of the term pervert is not entirely within the self and its conflict with the ideal ‘I’, but rather as a sociologically comparative noun. One can only be a pervert when compared to that which is not a pervert. Like the term female, which, anacletic to the term male cannot exist without it, among many other terms, the use of the term pervert is isomorphic to the dominant term ‘normalised’ or non-pervert. There is no world of all perverts. Normalised behaviour is not what the subject in society must stay inside of, rather perverted behaviour is that which is pushed outside of normal *after* it happens. No one law states what is and is not perverted in order to prevent perverted activity occurring, and perhaps

prevent subjectivity from wandering into that other side of behaviour. It is only after the un-predictable occurs that it can be named perverted. For this reason normal behaviour in itself *does not exist*. Perverted behaviour exists in order to create normal behaviour.³⁴

The Essential Static of Flesh in Science

Scott's statement defining perversion could, and definitely would, be further developed and fine-tuned if a patient exhibited behaviour that could not under any circumstances fit in with Scott's definition of 'normal'. If psychical and biological excavation found nothing else to blame, the definition of perversion would not spread, rather the definition of normal would evolve. Normalisation becomes hyper explicit in order to maintain perversion as unarticulated, or broadly articulated. Compare how very simple and easy to identify is the psychoanalytic definition of normal sexuality, yet all psychoanalysis is about everything that falls outside of it. Thousands of words in texts articulate why, how and when people fall outside this definition. Rarely if ever do texts deal with model behaviour that is precisely and perfectly contained within 'normal' sexuality. Currently, there are so many cross referential terms psychoanalytically for perverted behaviour, that any thing which arises can be, with the help of multiple terms colliding, clinically 'diagnosed'. No paedophile is ever *just* a paedophile, but upon analysis is a paedophile with borderline delusional behaviour and a denial of his/her mother's castration. Change in subjectivity is the enemy of normality. The fear of change presumes a constant subject who was once base level 'normal' and who became a 'pervert'. The excavation of a pervert's childhood to find out what perverted the subject presumes a flat-line of normality with which all children are born, as if subjectivity is a blank canvass upon which perversion is heaped. Normality is there already and must, seemingly, be overwritten with perversion, in the same

³⁴ This activity works within a similar *modus operandi* as the creation of homosexual subjectivity in the seventeenth century that created meaning in the term heterosexual. Before the homo there could not be a hetero, which is Foucault's claim in *The History of Sexuality Volume I*, 1990.

way as femininity overwrites the blank model of 'man', and homosexuality overwrites heterosexuality.³⁵

In order to begin to theorise the subject who perverts at every moment and hence creates for itself a celebratory being of perversion, I wish to briefly point out another form of 'celebration of perversion'. At once an attempt to affirm 'perverse' or other sexuality, perversion is concurrently used to biologise and hence perhaps set up a cure for the formation of a gay body. In her introduction to *Epistemology of the Closet* Eve Sedgwick posits the two axes of sexuality, as a means of deconstruction rather than a suggestion for readings of perverted sexuality. She claims that along with the axes of race, nationality, sex (gender) and class is the dichotomy hetero/homo that creates meaning behind every act performed by a subject. Her elucidation of this binary of today's human sexuality is more an analysis of the potential acceptance boundaries of any notion of perversion in culture. Sedgwick points to the current frenzied studies of the 'homosexual' as both a means of making homosexuality visible, acceptable and eventually perhaps biological, while at the same time stating that any firm acceptance of homosexuality within a binary system of sexuality will further make strange the endless perversions the human body is potentially capable of. In the section titled 'People are Different'³⁶ Sedgwick begins to touch upon the multiple ways in which even identical acts may be read, and hence, rather than indicating a starter catalogue of perversions she merely suggests the infinity of sexuality that presents in the human embodied desiring subject. But what her discussion most immediately points to is culture's demand for a theorisation of homosexuality: as nature and nurture; as biological or cultural; whatever binary is theorised as at any particular moment, but always within this economy of hetero/homo (with the possible aberration of bisexuality), and never outside of this immediately comprehensible and studyable, from every discursive angle, system. Whether the figure of the gay subject is accepted or not, it is identified and biologically validated at the peril of any

³⁵ Even in genetics perversions are represented as extra genes - there is no 'straight' gene, or 'anti-criminal' gene, but there is currently in scientific research a search for the gay gene and the criminal behaviour gene.

³⁶ Sedgwick, 1994, p. 25.

other sexuality. This threat of exclusion was part of the need to begin a theory of 'queerness' rather than gay theory, not simply due to the masculine bias gay studies exhibited but also for the range currently articulated which the term 'gay' could not encompass. By biologising gay subjectivity, science both creates a fixed pervert (whatever falls outside of this is queerer than queer) and also a mode of behaviour normal for gay subjectivity. Thus by affixing a system of normalisation upon gay identity, it closes off any subversive power gay subjectivity might wish to utilise simply by speaking for itself, defining itself or indeed refusing to define itself.³⁷ Jennifer Terry has written extensively on 'gay biology' and the problems of both biologising sexuality and of biology itself. 'Gay' biology is embedded within a concept of potential truth, but truth defined traditionally by certain kinds of either hetero- or homo-sexual people, with identifiable levels of economic wealth and whiteness that make such a science conditional.³⁸ In 'The Seductive Power of Science in the Making of Deviant Subjectivity' Terry states

The argument for homosexual immutability betrays a misreading of the scientific research itself. Nothing in any of these studies can fully support the idea that homosexuality is biologically immutable; each study leaves open the possibility that homosexuality is the result of a combination of biological and environmental factors, and several suggest that homosexuality may be tied to a predisposition in temperament that could manifest in a number of ways.³⁹

Science desires the claim to immutability for two reasons, firstly it means knowledge has been located because the predictability of such knowledge exists as a constant, and secondly it means there is always an ease with which the deviant subject can be recognised (hence prevented, cured, avoided). Terry worries that those gay rights advocates who wish for a discourse of the scientific truth of gay-ness are closing off any potential for diversity and

³⁷ Hence genetics which naturalises and biologises homosexuality at the peril of everything else, and of gayness itself.

³⁸ Like all other science.

³⁹ Terry, Jennifer. 'The Seductive Power of Science in the Making of Deviant Subjectivity.' In Halberstram, Judith and Livingstone, Ira, eds. *Posthuman Bodies*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 1995, pp. 135-158, quote p. 155.

difference to be an acceptable cultural fact. By solidly valuing any single subjective axis, all others are closed off. Any normalisation, even of gayness, sets a standard from which other pathologies, even pathologies of the other, can emerge. Terry uses race in a similar way to argue that predictable differences are as dangerous as not recognising difference at all. Feminism also has, through all its varying incarnations, expressed anxieties towards biological essentialism. By gaining recognition homosexuals (and inevitably all 'deviants') lose as much, if not more, than they gain.

What would it mean if 'homosexuality as we know it today' [Sedgwick] became reduced in the popular imagination to a strip of DNA, or to a region of the brain, or to a hormonal condition? What would we lose in the defensive move to believe science to be our rational saviour and to base our politics in biology? What does science do *for* us? What does it do *to* us? And where can we turn for a new question of the self and new ways of *performing* - as opposed to biologically manifesting - deviance?⁴⁰

Pathologising non-normal bodies has reduced in size in material terms, within science, to the cellular genetic code. For some reason the miniaturisation of biological corporeality seems less offensive to culture than claims of large, visible and what will later be discussed as 'monstrous' differences. Dorothy Nelkin and M. Susan Lindee in 'The Media-ted Gene: Stories of Gender and Race' state "But the images of pathology have moved from gross to hidden body systems. Once blacks were portrayed with large genitalia and women with small brains; today the differences lie in their genes."⁴¹ Miniaturisation of corporeal knowledge 'found' in science mirrors the miniaturisation of access to knowledge, and disguises the responsibilities and powers of offensiveness, previously writ large, within claims to *essential* difference. This miniaturisation pushes the episteme of genetic differences into a hyper-elite realm that demands the right equipment and the right mode of reading the information.

⁴⁰ Terry, 1995, p. 157.

⁴¹ Nelkin, Dorothy and Lindee, Susan M. 'The Media-ted Gene: Stories of Gender and Race'. In Terry, Jennifer and Urla, Jacqueline, eds. *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 1995, pp. 387-402, quote p. 387.

The study of chromosomes and genes somehow makes statements that cement truth in biology as more truthful, less accessible and hence easier for the general populace to accept without question. Nelkin and Lindee discuss a narrative of stories of biological truth systems of difference that intersect all axes, from sex and gender to race, nationality, sexuality and beyond. They finish their article by saying

Scientific claims become a way to reinforce such stereotypes. While science is a form of cultural knowledge, it is often seen to represent a natural reality, an unbiased, objective approximation of truth. Thus to say that 'everything is assembled according to instructions in its chromosomes' seems more acceptable than saying 'blacks are less intelligent' or 'women cannot do math'. But explanations based on 'natural' or inherent abilities serve the same social purposes. They place people in desired contexts - women in the home, blacks in sports - and exclude them from other contexts - mathematics, departments or managerial positions. They are, in effect, a way to construct the body in ways that will legitimate existing social categories.⁴²

While Nelkin and Lindee are right to point out the seeming decline in offence that 'chromosomal' science posits over that of gross anatomical science they fail to suggest why. Why is the tiny, the exclusively microscopic and impossibly complex, hence specifically knowable by a small amount of specialised persons, the answer modern science turns to without questions of cultural difference? Is it harder for us to de-construct chromosomal science than it is to deconstruct gross generalised visible scientific claims of colour and sex because chromosomal science is so secretive and inaccessible? The body in chromosomal science seems to be a vessel of secrets, in the same way that Sedgwick theorises the gay body as a culturally constructed secret waiting to come out. The chromosomal body is waiting to 'come out' as it is, as patently exhibiting on gene strips its entire destiny in identity. Whether it be a sick body, a sexually deviant body, a black or female body all its 'secrets' are waiting on that tiny strip. This achieves two things - first, that there is after all *only the axes available to us in popular discourse for the human subject to*

⁴² Nelkin and Lindee, 1995, p. 400.

choose from - these can all be found and proven on that gene strip. Secondly by placing certain traits in acceptable positions it becomes very clear that there are only a limited number of positions in the world and therefore there are some behaviours (though science would say genetic sexualities) which there *is absolutely no place for in culture whatsoever*. Or, in terms of genetics, a limited amount of positions which are biologically possible, hence anything that falls outside is aberrant or diseased, which suggests an essentialised or biological truth. If Nelkin and Lindee are advocating the transgression by women to managerial positions or blacks to math departments what then would happen to a truly deviant subject that does not have a place (except perhaps a penitentiary) from which to transgress? In this respect I agree with Terry, Lindee and Nelkin who mistrust science, but I want to take their anxieties further by suggesting a refusal of any form of perversion, be it woman, black, homosexual and so on, that science accepts as potentially 'normal'. As soon as any perversion becomes normalised, both it and all perversions that fall outside it are constituted specifically 'within' and 'outside', creating yet more boundaries of specifically advocated behaviours and modes of being. As long as everything that is not white, male, middle class, normalised and phallogocentrically perfect remains in the realm of the perverted, it can remain outside the specific and increasingly naturalised scientific control of that system which deemed it perverted in the first place.

Sex is Natural, Sex is Good?

Following from these homosexuality debates is post-modernism's version of desire. Sylvère Lotringer, in his article *Defunkt Sex*, discusses the pitfalls of creating a new theorisation of sex based on post-sex sex or anti-sexual sex in terms of the means by which culture understands the ability to divide and create discourses around sexuality. In an argument seemingly ahead of its time Lotringer analyses the new perversions of sex (specifically acts rather than subjectivities or bodies, but inclusive of bodies performing acts) and their implications in terms of boredom. The most perverse sexuality of the modern era, claims Lotringer, is our obsession with talking about sexuality, making it

real without doing it, thus constructing a sexuality to model ourselves around. This is based implicitly on the post-Victorian idea that sex is now 'natural' and should become tangible through linguistic expression - Lotringer briefly advocates a return to ritualistic versions of sexuality before elucidating their 'defunkt' qualities. His point remains however, that naturalising sex places sexual pathology as the responsibility of the individual. Sex and sexuality, like bodies, are in the realm of *a priori* matter, which means that any time their limits are transgressed the subject is to blame because the body exists with a natural potential to be completely sexually functional, thus psychically beneficial. He states "We don't belong anywhere, especially in our own body".⁴³ Foucault's *Scientia Sexualis*, incarnated today in the biological as well as the psychoanalytic, claims sexual sex is natural and hence potentially exists outside of cultural bodies. Lotringer argues this is ridiculous considering all culture ever does is put sex into language. Instead Lotringer posits a future-sex. Much of his argument is tongue-in-cheek, he makes post-psychoanalytic claims such as "We have become voyeurs of our own sexuality. We don't hide anything, especially from strangers, we welcome public inspection... Our society is saturated with sex, but is our sex really sexual?"⁴⁴ Lotringer excavates the site of sexuality both perverse and normal as that which we perform in front of others, analysed by others, judged, created and destroyed by others. Sex becomes real only in respect to what others say about it. All forms of perversion are only perverse and hence powerful or transgressive if someone else can see them and recognise them as such. There is no such thing as asocial sex, even masturbation occurs under a Foucauldian panopticonic eye.

From Lotringer's article, I would argue that one way to move towards an asocial sexuality, something that falls more in line with his discussion of desire, is the becoming of watching horror. Lotringer divides desire from sexuality, but I wish to read these two terms as somewhat interchangeable, in order to introduce the asocial sexuality of being a body in horror. Why do I think this may begin to fulfil Lotringer's criteria for a potentially asocial sex? Because

⁴³ Lotringer, 1981, p. 272.

⁴⁴ Lotringer, 1981, p. 272.

there is no means yet by which to articulate the feeling of watching a thrilling film, thrilling both in terms of fright and of any other sensation that it may produce. I think the reason Lotringer claims there is no asocial sexuality is because sex is now, as he points out, all we ever talk about and something we feel we must talk about. The pre-linguistic feelings of pleasure that destroy the integrity of the truthful flesh the static subject inhabits have been over-signified linguistically with the mandate of speaking sex - as it relates to our bodies and 'who we are'. The feeling of horror from film is linguistically poverty-stricken which is why it may suggest asocial sexuality and also why it is attractive to me. Asocial sexuality is attractive because it cannot be sufficiently spoken and therefore cannot be known or closed off. Of course, I am here attempting to theorise the affect of horror film, in essence doing to its potential the exact thing that I am arguing against. But I will attempt to never state what the viewer may feel, only that the viewer may feel. The reason I think the television is an interesting vehicle for pleasure is why Lotringer calls it the vehicle of awe. He states [original capitalisation]

IF MASTERS AND JOHNSON'S BOOK HAD BEEN TRULY UNHUMAN AND NOT JUST OBJECTIVE, IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN QUITE EXCITING. UNHUMAN SEX AT LEAST WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT. EVEN HOLLYWOOD IS GETTING TIRED OF ROUTINE SEXPLOITATION: 'MOVIEGOERS WANT TO SEE SOMETHING SPECIAL, LIKE A SPACE SHIP COMING DOWN, AND LASER BEAMS' DECLARES AN ACTRESS FROM CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. 'THEY WANT TO EXPERIENCE FEAR AND MYSTERY'. ONLY TECHNOLOGY CAN STILL MAKE US STAND IN AWE AND EXPERIENCE ANEW THESE PRIMITIVE EMOTIONS. ONLY WHEN IT TAKES US SOMEWHERE ELSE, IN ANOTHER SPACE, IN ANOTHER DIMENSION - 'OUT OF THIS WORLD' - CAN SEX MAKE US EXPERIENCE FEAR AND MYSTERY.⁴⁵

I do not believe *only* technology can accord us this sexually invigorated fear and mystery but I do concur that it is a great way to begin to theorise a new form of sexual pleasure, a more perverse form when taken against all other

⁴⁵ Lotringer, 1981, p. 273.

forms of genital, spoken sexuality. Technology as a new object choice makes *us* experience, we are compelled into our own flesh and its viscosity – the television is a vehicle which refers us back to the otherness of our own flesh, not to a substitute nor entirely extricated from it. From here I move the pervert (not very far) from its own body, away from the sexual, and juxtapose it with that of the television, the video recorder and the horror film.

The Perversion of Watching Film

To gaze is perverse, *shaulust*,⁴⁶ the desire to see and be seen is perverse. Looking is given pathological names in medical and psychoanalytic texts, and if the presence of the activity does not constitute its perversion, then the degree of activity does. For women, who are structured to be *non*-visual, (though very visible) any gazing at all would psychoanalytically, be called a perversion. It would indicate that the woman was aligning herself with the male, or becoming pre-oedipal masculine.⁴⁷ Voyeurism, narcissism, scopophilia are all terms which encompass the desire to see, but which deliberately and only include the masculine. Women are constructed as not visual because their bodies present with nothing to see.⁴⁸ For women, wanting to look would constitute a double perversion – woman as perverted in phallogocentric isomorphic culture looks, at the peril of looking too much, a practice in itself a perversion.

Around this logic, however, is the fact that women want to look, and to see, but how they look and see will never be known, while their looking bodies are aligned with that of the masculine and hence perverted versions of visibility. This distinction between normal and abnormal looking suggests a normalised way of looking along with a normalised way of sexuality. If there is an idea of a totally normalised way of looking along with recognisable aberrations, I want

⁴⁶ This term is from Freud. (1905) 1991.

⁴⁷ For example, Laura Mulvey's 'Afterthought on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' She states: "I have argued that Peral's position in *Duel in the Sun* is similar to that of the female spectator as she temporarily accepts 'masculinization' in memory of her active phase." 1990, p. 35.

⁴⁸ See the discussion of Irigaray in 'Visual Pleasure/Visual Truth'.

to suggest this could be read backwards, especially in film theory. All looking is somehow perverse to the social constructs that prevent staring, winking, eye tics and other unacceptable occurrences in 'life' as opposed to 'cinema' when we can look how we please. If visuality is, as it is in Western culture, given primacy at the peril of all other senses, then this primacy is a perversion of the fact of having five senses and validating only one.

If we read Scott's definition, cited in the prelude, of normal sexual behaviour into cinema, we could come up with something along the lines of: "Investing with the eye alone, towards a screen, in complete belief of the activity upon the screen (suspended disbelief) and reacting only with the eye to the 'brain' without any further use of any other organs, senses or viscera, for a gratifying sense of (mental not physical) pleasure."⁴⁹ To watch a film and invest with more than, and away from, the primary normative looking organ, the gazing eye, would then be perverse. Traditionally, horror films are perverse, to watch and find pleasure in images of horror is also perverse. What makes the gazer watching the frightening fairy tale *Snow White* (Walt Disney, USA, 1932), or even a gory film such as *Zombi 2* any more or less perverse than the gazer watching *Fucked by a Dog* (Netherlands, 1996, Director unknown)? Legislation is what makes it more perverse, because the audience watching bestiality may be prosecuted, not for *acting* as a bestialist, but for *looking*, for performing the same act as any film audience. The film literally takes the place of the object choice in a traditional configuration of desire. Any acts the image represents come to indicate a performance of a real sexual activity. Of course, possession (of the illegal video tape) is the plea, but possession is not what encourages cries of 'pervert'.⁵⁰ The fact of desiring to *watch* images which are highly non-normative (or even un-perform-able to certain bodies) elicits this

⁴⁹ This pseudo definition is deliberately binarising all experience in keeping with the multiple binaries Scott sets up in his definition of sexual behaviour.

⁵⁰ This comes soon after Gary Glitter being jailed for four months for having in his possession images of child pornography on the hard drive of his computer. The judge and the jury expressed their anxieties about Glitter's dangerously paedophilic desires being loosed into society, yet earlier in 1999 Glitter was cleared of the physical act of sexually assaulting a young girl. The physical act did not cause as much panic or conviction in the 'public' as did the possession of the representative, purely visual, object of desire.

outcry. The Australian Board of Film and Literature Classification Legislation, 1999, *RC: Refused Classification?* states: "Films and videos will be refused classification if they contain gratuitous, exploitative or offensive depictions of;... sexual activity accompanied by fetishes or practices which are abhorrent...". In the glossary, gratuitous is defined as "Material which is unwarranted or uncalled for, and included without justification of a defensible story-line or artistic merit"; exploitative as "Appearing to purposefully debase or abuse for the enjoyment of viewers and lacking moral, artistic or other values"; offensive is defined as "material which causes outrage or extreme disgust to most people"; while fetish is "An object, an action, or a non-sexual part of the body[!] which gives sexual gratification. Fetishes range from mild to offensive. An example of a mild fetish is rubber wear. Offensive fetishes include abhorrent phenomena such as coprophilia"⁵¹ The television is taken as

⁵¹ The full text reads as such:

"As pointed out in the introduction films and videos must be classified. A film or video, which does not have the authorised classification symbols or the consumer advice, is either an unclassified film or video, or it has been refused classification. [Banned] Films or videos that contain elements beyond those set out in the above classification categories are refused classification. Films or videos that fall within the legal criteria for refused classification cannot legally be brought into Australia. The classification code sets out the criteria for refusing to classify a film or video. The criteria fall into three categories. These include films that:

- Depict, express or otherwise deal with matters of sex, drug misuse or addiction, crime, cruelty, violence or *revolting or abhorrent phenomena* (my italics) in such a way that they offend against the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults to the extent that they should be classified RC.
- Depict in a way that is likely to cause offence to a reasonable adult a person who is or who looks like a child under 16 (whether or not engaged in sexual activity), or;

Promote, incite or instruct in matters of crime or violence.

Films and videos will be refused classification if they appear to purposefully debase or abuse for the enjoyment of viewers, and which lack moral, artistic or other values, to the extent that they offend against generally accepted standards of morality, decency and propriety.

Films and videos will be refused classification:

if they promote or provide instruction in paedophile activity;

or if they contain:

depictions of child sexual abuse or any other exploitative or offensive depictions involving a person who is or who looks like a child under 16;

detailed instruction in: (i) matters of crime or violence, (ii) the use of proscribed drugs;

depictions of practices such as bestiality;

or if they contain gratuitous, exploitative or offensive depictions of: violence with a very high degree of impact or which are excessively frequent, prolonged or detailed;

cruelty or real violence which are very detailed or which have a high impact;

sexual violence;

sexual activity accompanied by fetishes or practices which are abhorrent;

incest fantasies or other fantasies which are offensive or abhorrent."

Legislation quoted from the Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification Internet site: <http://www.oflc.gov.au> pages 13-17 of the Adobe Acrobat document. Hit most recently 18 November 1999.

both object and instigator of desires which will spill into the 'real world', that are potentially disruptive if not properly signified and stratified into a hierarchical value system. It is interesting to note that even non-violent fetishes (coprophilia, urolagnia) are banned due primarily to their, like all banned references, focus upon the flesh and the non-signified or wrongly signified matters of the body (gore, piss, vomit, shit, etcetera).

My aim is to explicate that even the most outrageous of perversions that may appear on screen are matched by the perversion of watching, of looking, of corporeally reacting, of visually desiring. Even if the eyes shut, the body is reacting, hence participating in the 'being' of the perversion. All reactions to the visual depiction of perversity are perverse, whether they are consenting with the image or in conflict with it. The very act of unadulterated gazing is perverse, perhaps only more so when the pleasure this particular perversion affords is denied or repressed.

As I discussed in the 'Pleasure' chapter, watching constitutes a form of desire and pleasure, though what this is particularly remains unknown. Suffice to say such pleasure is neither necessarily good nor bad pleasure, desire for an object one lacks or any of the other more traditional configurations which involve the terms 'desire' and 'pleasure'. Audience-to-character identification has similarly been criticised for its cathartic, mirroring and hence fixed-subject reaffirming qualities. Watching can potentially allow the viewer to mirror in a number of other ways. Especially if the body on screen is made 'strange', through

That which is considered offensive is, of course, arbitrary, which is why this particular legislation affords the censors so much discriminating power. Buttgereit's *NekRomantik 2* is banned in Australia for, presumably, its necrophilia content, scenes of which in no way match the visceral violent necrophilia scenes of Antonio Margheriti's *Il Mostro e in Tavola*, a film which cheerfully chirps the line "To know death, you have to fuck life in the gall bladder" which follows a blow by blow example of the act. This film is available in nearly every local video store (but not unavailable for offence, only absent perhaps because of the age of the tape) and was one of the films to be released in the first batch upon the creation of the home video market in Australia. In 1996 I myself became the object of the censor's wrath after exhibiting two minutes of *NekRomantik 2* during a conference paper I was giving on the film and abject forms of female desire. The theoretical context of the paper was fully passed over for the fact that I had shown an illegal film (which, at that time, I did not know was illegal), despite the fact that the paper was about the prohibition of all female desire in phallogocentric culture. The abject desire of the film's female protagonist, as well as the desire of the female paper giver, were both too much for the censor to handle.

spectacular corporeal alteration or simply through non-logical narrative, the body of the viewer can become strange, perverted from its previous state. I do not wish to reaffirm character identification on a visceral though still literal level. I wish, instead, to open up a space for potentially 'strange' and hence transformative and new readings of film and the affect-image on the affected viewer in order to theorise the affect potential of disruptive and extreme, but eventually all, film. Film has been read as a mirror on reality which is why those films which defy this version are either 'art' (which uses symbols to represent reality on a figurative rather than literal level, yet still maintains a connection with that reality), 'science-fiction' (which predict future reality) or 'low art/trash' (horror and other illogical spectacles, whether the ill-logic is that of non-sense or of the ill-logical planes of characters, i.e. viscera). Horror is an under-theorised realm for its affect. It not only demands new modes of thinking that suspend logic, it also demands new modes of identification which may be on the most seminal level, such as affect. I do not wish to privilege certain parts of the body specularised in horror either. I am not advocating a specifically visceral mode of watching but simply envisaging those repressed planes of the body in order to create a more multi-planed,⁵² immanently experienced body which negates the sealed and stratified body that affirms subjectivity.

The pleasure taken in watching that which traumatises or discomforts the subject comes from two different sources; the horror which is unexpected (shock or fear⁵³) and that which is expected (yet still dislodges the subject). The

⁵² This body could be called a rhizomatic body, in the Deleuzian sense, which contrasts with the organism of the stratified body of fixed subjectivity.

⁵³ The nuances of these terms have their own life and could be given a thesis each. Brief divisions could however follow such lines as the following: Horror is possibly the most 'throw around' term of the terms terror, fear, horror and shock, because it is the genre term given defiantly to a particular filmic experience, namely that which is *not* desired, not art, not subtle enough in its address of emotion. It is defined from terror and fear as *unexquisite*, unenjoyable through lack of tension, a shattering of build-up and crafting for an all out climax. It is for this reason the most threatening to the subject of the three. It is the final and most shattering of experiences from which the subject no longer returns in one piece, but explodes into objectification, floating disjointedly. Terror alternately exists so that the subject may continue. It involves a cathartic release, a final confrontation that essentially must be so that the subject may relocate itself as 'other' from the anxiety, while still siphoning off the exquisite pleasures to be found in the identification with the terror. Between these two poles is the more unknowable fear, where trauma is evoked and played out without any concrete idea of threat or of result. There is no information to allow the subject to anchor itself and so it floats around,

first is the subject's inability to know what is going to happen, hence she/he does not necessarily choose to place her/himself in the situation of witnessing a traumatising image. For example *Cape Fear* (Martin Scorsese, USA, 1991) strolls along as a tense thriller. Max Cady (Robert DeNiro) romances a female lawyer, jokes with her, kisses her and suddenly punches her, throws her onto her stomach and bites out a chunk of flesh from her cheek before anally raping her. This scene transforms the film into a horrific and traumatising one: up to this point the viewer may have been expecting a pulpy Hollywood remake but s/he are now afraid of the film. Ironically, it *does* cruise along predictably before and after this scene (especially with the knowledge that it is a remake) but that single event in the film has altered the insides of the subject watching. Narrative, and the ability to predict plot, has no controlling effect on this single filmic moment to horrify the subject with what it represents, to arouse in the subject feelings of ambivalence; guilt for watching, blame for not have being able to predict what would happen and hence look away, pleasure at the genuine emotional and corporeal, visceral jolt the scene gave. This single moment 'shock' value pleasure at the horrific usually does not occur in horror films. This is due mainly to the packaging of horror films in the video market,⁵⁴ the tense build-up music that accompanies many scenes of shock, and the myriad gruesome scenes that may occur throughout the film. Non-horror film horror, by way of contrast, is almost destined to be a singular shock in an otherwise generic 'drama' film.

The second kind of traumatic pleasure is taken in explicit horror; films where the subject is quite confident about the nature of the film and its potential to arouse fear or horror. To come to the point where the desire for horror has been

helplessly lost and without knowledge of its fear, its threat and any longer, itself. The subject is not destroyed, it simply ceases to have ever been.

⁵⁴ An interesting example is Lamberto Bava's *Demoni*. As a video it comes with a fully reversible slick. One side is an ultra-gory image of a demon chewing on entrails surrounded by quotes from critics comparing it to other gory films. The other side is a stylish artwork design, very up-to-the-minute 80s cool, which resembles slicks for French thrillers such as *Diva* (Jean-Jaques Beineix, France, 1982). The first side is obviously horror, the second could easily be placed in the thriller or drama genre, in which case the subject who is expecting a stylish thriller *sans* grotesque gore would be in for a surprise. (The name Demons could easily be construed as psychological demons?)

accepted,⁵⁵ the gazing eye is faced with multiple perversions that refuse rational reasons for their drive. Perversion in horror film will, more often than not, confuse or exceed traditional definitions and forms of perversion rather than faithfully represent them. The subject looking for reasons and explanations behind the perversions of the protagonist of such films as *Lucker the Necrophagus* or the killer in *La Sindrome di Stendhal* ('The Stendhal Syndrome', Dario Argento, Italy, 1996)⁵⁶ will be frustrated and elucidate her/himself as having the same desire to pathologise as cultural, medical and legal faculties. In these films the subject will 'see' that which is unseeable (in everyday life anyway), gore, viscosity, (sex with) cadavers. And the motive, plot and rational normative desire that occur in the characters of other genres of film is notably and deliberately absent. Seeking the reason behind perversity is the desire to disclose a secret whereby the construction of the very being of a secret is more important than and exceeds the answer to it. In *L'Orribile Segreto del Dr. Hitchcock*⁵⁷ ('The Horrible Doctor Hitchcock', Riccardo Freda, Italy, 1962) the protagonist is a necrophiliac but his desire is explained away as he kills in order to inject new life into his long dead wife. He had reason and motive before desire. *Macabro* ('Frozen Terror', Lamberto Bava, Italy, 1981) is the story of a woman whose dead lover's head is fondled and used for cunnilingus, but it is not 'cranio-necro-philic' desire as much as a recreation of a memory of a subject.⁵⁸ In *Lucker the Necrophagus* and *NekRomantik 2* (Jorg Buttgerit, Germany, 1992) necrophilia is the means and the end of the

⁵⁵ This desire is discussed in the section of 'Pleasure'-Paura nel Citta Dei Morti Viventi - A Practical Application.

⁵⁶ Both these films are unavailable in Australia, I have no idea if they are banned or not (the list of banned material is unavailable for purchase, because the board requires the exact film title to be given before the censor will inform you whether it is banned or not). The means by which the Australian Film Classification Board bans films and then releases information about banned films is a secret which requires the enquirer to know the answer before they can ask about the secret; the secret (which film? is it banned? why?) is, in itself, secretive.

⁵⁷ Scriptwriter for this film Ernesto Gastaldi stated "[the producers] were afraid that Alfred Hitchcock would be upset if they used the same spelling, so they decided to change a letter. Almost nobody in Italy noticed the difference!" Quoted from Lucas, Tim, 'What are those strange drops of blood in the scripts of Ernesto Gastaldi?' *Video Watchdog* no.39. 1997, pp. 29-57.

⁵⁸ Incidentally, this film is available in Australia on (quite recent) re-release video with a very moody, art slick and re-titled as *Frozen Terror*. (Frozen because the woman keeps the head in a padlocked freezer to maintain freshness.) In both video stores the author has seen it the film is placed in the thriller or mystery section.

pleasure, the drive and the sexual gratification. There is no reason *why*, only perverse action to *do*. It may be explained away as 'fetish' in order to validate the use of a certain object for gratification, but there is no evidence the corpse is entirely object or subject. In *NekRomantik 2* Monika (Monika M) sits with her corpse-boyfriend on the couch, takes snapshots of it in domestic situations as well as having sex with it. To explain it as a fetish is to limit its use to sex only, rather than as an entity whose presence as companion exceeds simple sexual ('fetishistic') gratification. This logic of fetishisation suggests Monika does not choose the corpse as companion, but is rather driven by her uncontrollable sexual drives, which, in their excess, rob her of control and choice. She *does* choose the corpse, it is more than satiation for her libidinal cravings, it is a partner, a subjective object (or objectified 'subject') entity in her residence. Either way, the corpse's ill-defined subjective place in her life is as perturbing to viewers as its sexual function. If corpses are read only as objects, then the walking corpses of *Dawn of the Dead* or *Paura nel Citta Dei Morti Viventi* pose a more complex problem. They are corpses that exhibit anthropophagic desire; perverse (abject) object become perverse desiring subject.

The thrill-killer in many horror films is another pervert in terms of the abject pleasure taken in killing.⁵⁹ The killer's violence presents scenes, which for the audience, afford dual pleasure; that of the dying victim and the murdering perpetrator. An experience of cathartic muscular tension released in death meshes with the passionate surging of a nerve-tip through violence.⁶⁰ Rather

⁵⁹ In *Stendhal* the killer, like many other Argento killers, has no motive but kills only for an unnamed/un-nameable pleasure. A contemporary of Argento's, Sergio Martino, somewhat copied the Argento formula, with *I Corpi Presentano Tracce Di Violenze Carnale* yet his killer has a flashback at the film's end to a childhood event which becomes the motive for his killing drive. Flashback in Argento's films often is a device aimed at confusing the audience rather than explaining the killer's motivations; the prelude of *Profondo Rosso* ('Deep Red', Italy, 1975), and the opening scene of *L'Uccello Dalle Piume Di Cristallo* ('The Bird with the Crystal Plumage', Italy, 1969) are two examples.

⁶⁰ Many feminist theories of horror and particularly American slasher films suggest the male viewer always identifies with the killer and the female with the victim. Carol Clover devotes a whole chapter to a repudiation of this idea, not simply in order to reverse it or vindicate her interest in horror but to emphasise the fluidity of sexes, and of the sane/mad, and monster/human dichotomies which even traditional American horror represents. See Clover, 1994, 'Introduction: Carrie and the Boys', pp. 3-20. In the films of Argento, which are, to an extent, Italianate slasher films, the killer remains invisible as an important plot device for the

than identifying with the killer's character, a corporeal identification of both killer and victim - terror and aggression, pain and desire - could simultaneously be felt. In *La Sindrome di Stendhal* Anna Manni (Asia Argento) is a cop who trails a rapist/killer looking for his motive, trying to eviscerate the way his mind works, the elusive reason for his perverse drives. He kidnaps her and toys with her fear before she escapes and thinks she has killed him.⁶¹ She becomes so entangled in the construction of the 'secret' of the killer's desire that after he is 'dead' and the murders continue, Anna's chief officer takes her off the case to cease her (perverted) obsession⁶² with it. Finally, it is revealed that it is Anna who committed these murders. Following the killer's death, in her desire to solve the killer's desire she has become, not the killer, but that desire. If the audience look too hard for the plot construction they will become the fear and dislocation that the plot's absence arouses. If they attempt to foil, avert or repress their desire for perversity they will inevitably end up with an other perversity.

The desire to watch images of violence, of viscosity, on film, brings with it a fascination of disgust, a wish to disrupt the self through affect by these images. There is never any guarantee of exactly what the horrific pleasure will be, but there exists *before* the film a fascination by the subject to *see* what they would not wish to look at in the 'real'. The desire to see the unseen or unsee-able exists in everyone; it is being disgusted by watching the news stories of heinous crime, it is being more offended by a victim's decapitation or the dismemberment of a body than the murder of a living human. It is the game the seeing subject plays with her/himself to find out how much can be taken, how

giallo's success. In Argento's nine giallo, five of the killers are women, one is a child and two of the films have two killers. This makes it difficult to locate identification even if it were taken as a viable audience theory.

⁶¹ The scene where Anna kills the killer is an incredible one; she is a petite, very young woman yet attacks and violates the body of her killer with an anger-driven relish rarely seen in any film.

⁶² Argento said of the film "It's my intention to try and engender the same accumulation of weird sensations and unsettling emotions in the film that Anna is feeling. How can I do that without going to visually shocking extremes" from A. Jones, *Mondo Argento*, Upton: Midnight Media, 1996 p. 58. Anna's drive to know and her becoming killer coupled with her experience as victim does align her reaction with the audience more than the majority of horror film 'victim girls'.

much can be stomached? The creation of phantasmatic boundaries of 'what I will and will not/can and can not' watch pits morality against fascination. That very expression connects the fact of the eye watching to the visceral effect of horrific images. The subject is not looking simply for an image, but looking for a flesh reaction. To desire a reaction in the body is libidinal, it is the seeking of pleasure, even if the pleasure is derived from a gruesome site. Freud states "All comparatively intense affective processes, including even terrifying ones, trench upon sexuality"⁶³. Those who claim to dislike horror films because 'they make me sick' or 'I cannot stomach them' could be read as over-privileging their symbolic integrity while simultaneously experiencing their repressed corporeality. The inability to 'stomach' horror films is the inability to allow them in to the body, to ingest them, and be compelled by them upon a line of flight. What the horror-film-hater fears lies directly beneath the symbolic crust, the container of the body, and is *exactly* what the horror film shows: the arbitrary integrity of the body, viscera, vulnerable, foreign soft interiors and the subject's own abjection which these signs represent. The body's interior at once presents democratic unity amongst all bodies and pure difference from the body we know. Privileging the derma shows a need for corporeal signification in order to 'be'. The body opened up is not only an affect-ive line of flight but a line of flight from the stratified body and the signifying skin. A censoring viewer denies repressed terrains of the subject's own body exactly because s/he refuses to acknowledge those parts unsigned (as person rather than flesh). S/he will not look at them in horror films, s/he will not take any pleasure, even a basic cathartic one, in images of horror. It is ironic then that the subject uses the stomach to express disdain for horror, as if the very site of the horror, the interior organ, is expressing its own desire, but the subject cannot take pleasure in the stomach's expression and construes it immediately as illness. Not being able to digest the abject is another perversion, equally as perverse as desiring the abject.

A film with no regard for 'rational' plot and character identification technique, (such as a horror film) asks the audience to pervert their traditional means of

⁶³ Freud, (1905) 1991, p. 123.

watching. The process of watching a horror film with a mystery that dislocates the secret/answer dichotomy, and hence dislocates ('perverts') the subject, will be explored in the discussion of Argento's *Suspiria* (Italy, 1977) which will be followed by a brief side-tracking in which I wish to explore the idea of monsters.

***Suspiria*: Buildings and Becoming**

The eye is traditionally configured as the primary tool of filmic information, identification and image ingestion. It 'tells' the audience about the film. It is epistemologically constructed and morphologically imagined as leading directly to the brain, where the information it gleans is registered. This standard concept of the eye and its relationship with the screen sets up a situation which leads to direct character identification and rational plot narrative understanding, as explicated in discourses such as Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'.⁶⁴ The eye as primary ingestor of information is thus the dominant and normative tool in receiving visual pleasure. But the eye may be read also as internal organ, jutting from a red nerve that rises from a secret place within the body. When watching 'perversely' pleasurable images, the eye's relationship to the organs as they shift and rise uncomfortably in reaction to fear and disgust, is made more apparent than the eye's purely functional rational symbolic incarnation. The symbolic eye, that which leads to the brain (intellect) and 'tells us' what we see, is to film what the genitals are to sexuality - a primary, normative organ. Any extension of reaction to a film is that which exceeds the armoured symbol of the eye's gaze.⁶⁵ Freud states, in his study of sexual aberrations, "Perversions are that which either a) *extend*, in an anatomical

⁶⁴ Mulvey, Laura. 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'. *Screen*. No. 16, 1975, pp. 6-18.

⁶⁵ The 'armoury' of the eye may be seen in David Cronenberg's film *Scanners*, (Canada, 1982) where Darryl Revok (Michael Ironside) drills a hole in his head to let out pressure. To cover up the vulnerability this hole produces he sticks a drawing of an eye over the hole. Carol Clover sees this eye as a mask concealing and performing, 1992, p. 192, but I agree more with William Beard, that the standard symbolic imagining of the eye is "the seeing eye as a barrier to intrusion and the guardian of privacy". In "The Visceral Mind; the major films of David Cronenberg" *The Shape of Rage*, Canada: Canada Council, date of publication not given, p. 42. Also the eye as the penetrator of the image is another popular reading of vision, (when light is in fact penetrating the eye, and the organ itself is a giant aperture).

sense, beyond the regions of the body that are designed for sexual union or b) *linger* over the intermediate relations to the sexual object which should normally be traversed rapidly on the path towards the final sexual aim."⁶⁶ Reading back from this in terms of normative gaze theory, the primary organ of film is the eye. The eye, then, must be the only organ to ingest, react and invest in the film and the eye must tell the viewer about the film, answer the viewer's queries, quell their fear. It must not linger in pleasure or confusion over the intent of the film. As stated earlier, an overly corporeal investment to watching film, (borne of disgust or confusion) is constructed as perversity.⁶⁷ Feeling a sense of dislocation or fear that the eye, and its irrefutable symbolic connection to the 'brain' (mind, self), cannot 'solve' may then be perverse.

Horror films appear as a terrain of perversity not only in plot and image at the level of representation but also in the very physiology of audience ingestion. Through a study of the film *Suspiria* I aim to suggest the body, more than just the eye, identifies with non-human objects - structures, buildings - in order to re-negotiate theories of character-only rational identification. I aim also to explicate the notion of the secret in the film, that uncomfortable dilemma which causes fear when the subject is no longer able to rely on plot or narrative.⁶⁸ I will suggest that in attempting desperately to 'solve' the secret of 'what is causing the death/fear/horror' the subject becomes the construction of the secret, that is, becomes a body which *is* fear. Fear is hence the desired and

⁶⁶ Freud, (1905) 1991, p. 62.

⁶⁷ Linda Williams' article "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre and Excess", as I mentioned in the previous chapter, somewhat perverts the idea of the eye-only reaction to film by using three genres, the porn film, the weepy melodrama and the horror film, to explicate three different bodily reactions; orgasm, weeping and screaming. However, these are highly homogenised, specifically based on literal identification, both to the body on screen and that body's reaction. Williams claims *men* orgasm in porno, *women* cry in melodrama and *teen boys* scream in pleasure at horror films. This claim also insinuates the privileging of the *direct character identification*; he comes, I come, (but only if I'm a male); she cries, I cry, (only if I'm a woman or *as* a woman); she screams, I scream (if I'm a teenage boy in the throes of adolescent oedipalisation). Mine is a less direct, less clear cut notion of the body's reaction to images, a more secretive, internal reaction without the tangible capital evidence of semen, tears or voice.

⁶⁸ Films such as the Alfred Hitchcock thrillers develop a mystery *in order to* reveal a secret. Even other films which, to some extent, defy genre, such as Ridley Scott's film *Thelma and Louise* (US, 1992) have a tangible answer at the end; 'they jumped off the cliff'. I choose horror films to illustrate my point because many seem to follow a normative movie pattern; they are not art films which set out to defy what is traditional audience ingestion, though they *do* set out to get a reaction from the audience's stomach, gall and nerves as well as their eyes.

desirable result, minus resolution or closure. The seeing subject is not eye but body, is not watching story but becoming filmic⁶⁹ - a polymorphously perverse looking, to put it in Freudian terms. Once again I emphasise the identifications I am positing are exploratory and suggestive rather than prescriptive - they are an opening up of a space for play and not an analysis of a new true way of reading filmic affect.

"Secrets!" One of the first words hissed in Dario Argento's *Suspiria*. This word immediately engages, immediately begs for answers, or *an* answer. This word immediately troubles and dislodges the metonymic 'formula' standard to film narrative. Secrets interrupt and disturb the formula that causes us to ask what will happen next? Without this metonymic formula the comfort of the body being engaged with the images is disrupted, the concept of narrative is made redundant. Where there are secrets we cannot be the passive 'lazy' audience. Secrets buy into the notion of perfectly described action and reaction, query and solution. But in *Suspiria* secrets dislodge. The film sets up the question/mystery early but then refuses to answer or even to co-operate with the dilemma.⁷⁰ Even before the dislodging effect of the unanswered secret however the body of the audience becomes corporeally involved with the film. A jarring insane violin, evoking other unpalatable sounds, nails on a blackboard, foil in the fillings, heralds the opening credits. There are minimalist white-on-black credits but otherwise, nothing to see. Coupled with the wailing and violin are drums, many drums. The heart is drawn into the beatings, it is teased into beating erratically with the soundtrack even though there is not yet anything to fear. These sounds are unnerving because they are unrecognisable as 'music', the rhythm jars yet the exact terms of their offensiveness are unclear. They are mastering the rhythms of the audience's

⁶⁹ The concept of becoming action, becoming something else, especially something non-human is from Deleuze and Guattari's "Becoming Intense, Becoming Animal", 1987, in *A Thousand Plateaus*. It will be further investigated later in this chapter.

⁷⁰ To read this in terms of the eye/genital parallel, this frustration could be read as *coitus interruptus* for the gaze!

body before the image, before the audience is ready to invest in the film. The sounds *feel* traumatic, as the audience's body feels.⁷¹

Suspiria is a film set within a building that can be read as a body.⁷² It concerns Susie Banyon (Jessica Harper) an American who arrives late one night to enrol in the Tanzakademie Ballet Institute in Germany. She is refused entry into the building. When, the next morning, she is admitted we are introduced to a building with visceral walls and corridors. Red is the predominant colour, the rooms and the many hallways are claustrophobic and occupied by fairy-tale like strangers, a huge warty old woman, an unusually tall ogre of a man with huge fake teeth. Susie walks the red corridors for the first time and sees the old woman, sitting with a midget. The old woman plays with a crystal and flashes its blinding light into Susie's eyes. It irritates her. It irritates the audience too. Not only through the blinding of the crystal, which emphasises what we *cannot* see even though we are the all-seeing audience, but through the sharp object and the distasteful characters lodged uncomfortably in the 'oesophagus' of the building. The image is accompanied by jarring irritating music. The music is a brief screech, it may or may not be a word, which may or may not be 'witch!' If the audience is *listening* rather than watching they have just 'solved' the film's secret; the building is a coven for witches. *Suspiria* then gives away its secret in the first twenty minutes but by this time it has confused the audience's desire for a narrative into the desire for something else.⁷³ Here I forestall my

⁷¹ I have not seen *Suspiria* at the cinema but I imagine the effect the music would have on a grand scale in a cinema would make this affect even more extreme.

⁷² Tania Modleski states "Moreover if the text is an 'anagram for our body', as Roland Barthes maintains, the contemporary text of horror could aptly be considered an anagram for the schizophrenic's' body, which is so vividly imaged in Cronenberg's film. It is a ruptured body, lacking the kind of integrity commonly attributed to popular narrative cinema". Although Modleski here touches upon different modes of identification and feeling that horror offers a potential for, she is insistent on the like-performs-like, where only flesh can identify with flesh, even if the flesh is rupturing in a schizophrenic display. Here I wish to be even more adventurous by suggesting a building is a point of momentary identification for the viewer, not as a model for identification but a playful indication of the infinite potentiality of the body to be affected by anything. Modleski, 'The Terror of Pleasure: The Contemporary Horror film and PostModern Theory.' In Modleski, Tania, ed. *Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*. . Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 1986, pp 155-166, quote p. 159.

⁷³ See Morley, David. 'Television: Not so much a visual medium, more a visual object'. In Chris Jenks, ed. *Visual Culture*. London: Routledge. 1995, pp. 170-189. His premise is that if cinema is a stage for looking, television is one for listening. As a televisual version of the gaze

discussion of *Suspiria* in order to explore becoming - then I will suggest, upon returning to *Suspiria* how the viewer could become through film.

Affect-ion, Desire and Becoming

In the next section I am going to play with the idea of film, particularly film which is concerned with what Deleuze calls the 'affection-image', as being a vehicle towards becoming. There are a few reasons why this section is only a play and not a prescription, those reasons I will set out at the moments they appear as a result of the play. But before I begin my discussion I wish to emphasise that I am focusing on a use of Deleuze's terms in a specifically *different* way than the precise use for which they were intended. Deleuze, I will boldly venture to assume, like other film theorists is in the majority interested in the image unto itself, and of the correlation the image eventually has with the mind/brain of the audience. The audience therefore is not his primary subject, the image is. In the same way the discussions on Deleuze's cinema books currently being produced are, on the whole, marvellous discussions on Deleuze's explication of the image. They are concerned with the audience only on a secondary or fleetingly brief level. As one example, Patricia Pisters in her PhD dissertation *From Eye to Brain* uses both Deleuzian film theory and his theory of becoming to analyse film in a new way. For example, Pister explicates the affection image that supposedly

does not work on our sensory motor schema that leads to action, it does not work on our cognitive ability, it works straight on the affective nervous system that has its sensors everywhere in the flesh. This scene is not just a metaphor for victimhood or masochism, but also the becoming-animal of Elvira...⁷⁴

he coins the term 'the glance' which could be extended to the 'listening glance'. But I suggest that fear prevents the use of other senses. Because the wisdom of what our eyes tell us is so invested in our idea of subjectivity, in moments of fear all other faculties would fail, causing us to scream within, 'tell me what I see!' in order to conquer the fear.

⁷⁴ Pisters, Patricia. *From Eye to Brain. Gilles Deleuze: Refiguring the subject in film theory.* Academisch Proefschrift. (PhD dissertation). University of Amsterdam. 1998, p. 140.

Pisters commences promisingly enough by tentatively connecting the affection-image with the nerves of the body of the audience, hence setting the stage for a discussion of what the audience are becoming, how they are changing, affecting/ed. Then she immediately switches to a filmic character and her phantasmatic becoming, something interesting and valid as a theory but permanently condemned to the realm of 'that to be read' rather than something to be developed as a change, or a moment of qualitative fluctuation in the subject watching. Pisters begins her thesis with a very thorough reading of the ways in which the subject is constituted as becoming and continuum in Deleuzian thought. Her most promising statement comes as "With every encounter something happens and the subject changes. The subject becomes,"⁷⁵ a sentiment very close to my theory that with every moment the subject is perverted from the moment before. But beyond this discussion of the subject is always the proviso that these theories will be applied to the image, to the character and emphatically *not* to the audience. I could suggest many reasons for this, but for the moment I think there is an understandable fear in positing what happens to the subject watching because of the lack of empirical, data-based facts. I do not wish to theorise the actualisation of what happens however, simply the thought that something does happen. So, in order to theorise a Deleuzian watching subject, as Deleuze himself would vindicate, only possibilities are important, not actualisations.

Since I am primarily interested in the audience I may appear to be reading Deleuze's cinematic terms incorrectly but I am not claiming to explain their meaning, only to take the terms most useful to me. At their most basic definitional level I wish to apply them to the audience Deleuze does not talk about, but does not specifically exclude in his cinematic terminology. My introduction to most of his terminology will be brief and only in order to focus on the one term I find most promising for horror theory, the affection-image. Deleuze's affection image is a result of his discussion in *Cinema 1: The*

⁷⁵ Pisters, 1998, p. 34.

Movement Image and *Cinema 2: The Time Image*⁷⁶ on Charles Sanders Peirce's elements of firstness. Peirce posits firstness as an independent being, which is juxtaposed narratively with secondness relative to something else and thirdness, which is the mediation between the first and the second. D.N. Rodowick explains this use of Peirce thus:

According to Peirce, firstness is a conception of being or of existing independently of any other thing (quality), secondness is the concept of being relative to some other thing (relation), and thirdness is the concept of mediation wherein the first and the second are brought into relation with one another (synthesis or mediation).⁷⁷

The major division between Deleuze on cinema and his terms and my use of his terms is that Deleuze is always using the terminology to speak of the *image*. The reason why Deleuze's term of firstness, the affection-image, is so interesting and important for my work is precisely the way in which it differs from his other subjective-images; the perception image and the action image. Remembering back to the chapter 'Pleasure', 'perception' is the first moment when the subject is inundated, and hence must consequently re-act, which becomes the action image.⁷⁸ This narrative cohesion is in conformity with what other film theorists are interested in, in terms of images presenting to an audience a subject for a potential mirroring effect. The character on screen acts or perceives in order to act. The audience perceives and their thought or mind 'acts'. The movement of the movement image in Deleuze's *Cinema 1* is first for the image and then presumably for the audience. Movement occurs upon the screen and oscillates between screen and audience. A cohesive chain of events, even mind events, happens in the perception of the image - action, and then re-action. A movement from image to audience occurs at the same time

⁷⁶ Deleuze, Gilles. (1983) *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1988. And (1985) *Cinema 2: The Time Image*. Trans Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1989b.

⁷⁷ Rodowick, D.N. *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 1997, pp. 55-56.

⁷⁸ For an interesting interpretation of Deleuze on action versus re-action see Grosz, 'Experimental Desire', 1995, pp. 207-227 especially pp. 214-217.

along the frame of the screen and along the narrative story of the plot. The time image is concerned with the non-narrative, the still and the dis-jointed spatially, the moving temporally. The time image is more moments than narrative. The time image is also available in the world of fable and falseness, where characters are constructed as 'not yet'.⁷⁹ The time image would, I believe, aim more for a jarring effect between itself and the audience. There is something to be expected from the time image not in terms of what will go along with the film, but what is next; what relation does it have to 'anything'. Rodowick points to Deleuze's use of 'any-space-whatever' and the icon.

Any-space-whatever does not yet appear as a real setting or is abstracted from the spatial and temporal determinations of real settings...the icon expresses in itself the bipolar quality of movement, either quality *or* power as affect expressed in the image without being actualised there.⁸⁰

Based on the entire premise of her book, Pisters would say it is eventually actualised ambivalently in the subject watching, that being the connector of eye to brain, where images that express qualities become actual in the traversing or movement from eye to brain. Instead of the image telling our eyes what to think in a mode of truthful representation, Pisters suggests the mode of information from images goes through the eye directly to the brain, which, because of its rhizomatic configuration in her theories, is better able to comprehend an image as a qualitative flow or affect rather than a truthful simulacra. Although this theory of the audience alters prevalent models of representation in film theory, it seems to remain based in logic, comprehension and conscious thoughtful decisiveness on the reading or interpretation of images. Stillness, and, in a horror context, rupture *out* rather than *along* a line of movement, are both precluded from the movement image. In this respect certain horror films fulfil the time-image definition. I think especially of Fulci's ... *E tu vivrai nel Terrore! L'Aldilà* and *Paura nel Citta dei Morti Viventi*, as well as the more 'Hollywood' *Eraserhead* of David Lynch (USA, 1978), where there is no

⁷⁹ Deleuze, 1985, p. 275 and Rodowick, 1997, p. 83.

⁸⁰ Rodowick, 1997. p. 63.

narrative cohesion, no reason for the images to necessarily be connected and where, in the case of Fulci,⁸¹ the director himself states that the characters in his films are blind because no matter how hard we look we are not going to find any connective story in the film.⁸² Rodowick's reading of Deleuze's cinema theory is useful in its incorporation of other theories of Deleuze (and Guattari). But where Rodowick is most valuable is in his insistence on a corporeal reception of images. Unlike Pisters, Rodowick sees the affection-image as explicitly corporeal and even visceral - where thought relates to the flesh and not the brain. In the actual world where we can watch Fulci's *L'Aldilà* (rather than the world where we would believe its premise as possible, transcendental or truthful) the full potential of this film is its affect and transformative potential, not its ability to be comprehended and transcendental. Rodowick states "belief is no longer belief in a transcendental world, but a belief in *this* world and *its* powers of transformation. It is believing in the body, in its relation to thought, and in the potential of thought to affirm their powers of change and their receptivity to transformation."⁸³ Rodowick emphasises the unbound potential of the flesh and the viewing subject already in the world, which makes redundant any attempt to capture or illustrate a form of transcendental world in the image. He also affirms, with Deleuze, the futility of phantasing transcendence in an image or a marked division between the lived world and the 'created' cinema, claiming instead that the break between reality and representation is between the world and humanity.⁸⁴ It is the lack of break

⁸¹ It is interesting that in terms of Fulci's horror genre films those that would be termed time-image because of their disjointed image series' and their fabled, not yet worlds are the ones which receive the least criticism for claims of unnecessary violence towards children and women, while the more movement image films, such as *Lo Squartatore de New York* ('The New York Ripper', Italy, 1981) are touted as offensive. Perhaps they are offensive because they can be followed, and potentially read as translatable to the real world and real movement, while the others are too weird to be translatable to anything, they are a real 'any-space-whatever' but concurrently nowhere.

⁸² Lucio Fulci: "My idea was to make an absolute film... it's a plotless film, there's no logic to it, just a succession of images." in John Martin *The Seduction of the Gullible The Curious History of the British 'Video Nasties' Phenomenon*. London and Rome: Procrustes Press. 1997, p. 19.

⁸³ Rodowick, 1997, p. 192.

⁸⁴ Rodowick, 1997, p. 192. He quotes Deleuze from *Time-Image* "It is not we who make cinema, it is the world which looks to us like a bad film." 1989, p. 171.

between body and screen that I find appealing in both Deleuze and Rodowick's reading of him.⁸⁵

So, to return to the affection-image, it is probably more likely to be a time-image than a movement-image, and it is concerned with an individual isolated moment (eventually I will point out this is most often a moment of crisis) and hence 'firstness' than a narrative or connective moment. In order to continue though I must point out another problem these theories have in being applied to my work. I use the words 'isolated' and 'non-connective', both of which seem quite anti-Deleuzian ideas. I am not, as Deleuze is in *Cinema 2*, speaking of an image, that which can be isolated and non-connected to the next image. I am speaking of a watching body which cannot be completely isolated from the watched. Of course, there is a connection. The reason that I am applying ideas about an image onto a subject is because I am diligently striving away from any connection that can be linguistically or narratively connective. Even the basic image connecting to the subject watching is a problem for me, because it suggests a reaction that refers to the mind of the subject⁸⁶ which then suggests a reaction or affection that is able to be articulated and that remains firmly in a mind-over-flesh realm. This linguistic oscillation constructs an if... then equation which embeds film reception in a capital schema where there is an action, reaction and ultimately product, the product being that which the film theorist excavates and puts into language in order that we may know or 'comprehend' affect more clearly, thus investing the image with an immutable version of its affect. My application of the idea of the affection-image is about the subject watching, about the material flesh of the subject and *not* about the image. This is the main reason why I will be qualifying where my theories are a

⁸⁵ Rodowick's project in more than one way aligns itself with a feminist reading of film. For example, Rodowick claims, after Deleuze, that the break in reality is between the world and humanity and not between humanity and cinema. Feminist film theorists, especially anti-censorship feminists such as Linda Williams, contend that woman's representation in film is symptomatic, not of film's detrimental anxieties towards women, but of the world's ostracisation of women from being defined on their own terms. Corporeal feminists, such as Braidotti and Grosz discussed below, see the unbound potential of the body in this world as it is now as more than the world can cope with, rather than phantasising a different world with different bodies as the solution to figuring corporeality.

⁸⁶ As is Patricia Pisters main contention in her thesis - the 'eye-to-brain' theory of affection.

divergence from, rather than an affirmation of, Deleuze's cinema theory, although to use them as a tool for the theory of cinematic spectatorship is an indispensable project.

Finally, I come to the affection-image. If my primary contention in this thesis is that horror is valuable to the perversion of the subject because of its affect rather than perceived narrative and 'readability', then Deleuze's theory of affection-image seems an ideal beginning. His summary of it is thus

[firstness is] an immediate and instantaneous consciousness, such as is implied by every real consciousness which is itself never immediate nor instantaneous. It is not a sensation, a feeling, an idea, but *the quality of a possible sensation, feeling, or idea*. Firstness is thus a category of the possible: it gives a proper consistency to the possible, it expresses the possible without actualising it, whilst making it a complete mode. Now, this is exactly what the affection image is: it is quality or power, it is potentiality considered for itself as expressed. The corresponding sign is therefore expression not actualisation... The affect is impersonal and is distinct from every individuated state of things... The affect is indivisible and without parts; but the singular combinations that it forms with other affects form in turn an indivisible quality, which will only be divided by changing qualitatively (the "dividual"). [my italics]⁸⁷

The term '*quality* (of a possible sensation)' is a most seductive and tantalising term, and one which I think is implicit in the desire for horror images. It is never the image which is desired, it is the desire to feel sensation through singular combinations with horrific images, but more so it is the desire for this very quality of a possible sensation. Horror affords a quality of sensation unlike and unavailable from any other form of affect. Earlier I spoke of expected versus unexpected horror. Whichever choice is preferred by the viewer, both desire the quality of the possible. Horror films are all about the possible, the next but not the next in a series... simply the next possible. Like the time-image which has no next narratively, only the next, so the horror image, whether it belongs to the same film or the next film, is all about the possibility

⁸⁷ Deleuze, 1983, pp. 98-99. Cited also in Rodowick, pp. 219. n. 23.

of what will happen next - not what will happen next in the film but what will happen next *to me*. This returns us to Deleuze's important insistence that the affect image is impersonal and without parts, without actuality but always expressing potential for actualisation that never arrives.⁸⁸ There is, most importantly however, no demand or need for it to arrive. This is representational of desire as expression rather than actualisation. To actualise desire is to finish or satisfy it, which suggests that there was some emptiness to satisfy. Expression is not unreal or figurative. It is as actual and material as actualisation, but not within an equation, which demands satisfaction and comprehensive recognition. Affect-images are a desiring vehicle, they gear the body into desiring mode, they continue the already desiring body, they catch the body up in the indivisible and create the qualities of affect-ion. The best part about affect is whether it is negative or positive affect-desire it is always a teeming corporeal desire rather than more traditional modes of figuring desire.⁸⁹ To pre-empt this discussion affect is an already desiring, affect-ing/ed body desiring more. It is *not* a non-(moving/affecting/expressing?) or lacking body awaiting effect. That would validate the actualisation of the expression of affect that Deleuze explicitly argues against. Affection-images do not act upon but pull along in a flow of varying intersections and connections: quality and power intersecting that which already was quality and power but varyingly changes in its quality and power. It is not a body that begins without a quality that is aspired towards, without power to feel. The idea of the affection-image as being a continuation and qualitatively altered condition, rather than an enactment on a blank waiting body, is the most important feature which differentiates the audience of horror from the idea of the thrill-seeking identity, waiting for a shock to deterritorialise and then reterritorialise to its former still self.

Even though in *Cinema 1&2* Deleuze does not explicitly relate his affect image with desire, I wish to do so here. What desire am I speaking of? First to

⁸⁸ I cannot help but think here of what Deleuze says of masochism as not an affect or act but a 'waiting to arrive', in *Coldness and Cruelty*, 1989a. Masochism like affect image, is expression before actualisation and therefore desire without desire for satisfaction.

⁸⁹ The configuration which sees desire as lack and hence satisfaction as filling that lack.

examine the way in which a Deleuzian, following on from a Spinozian, via a Groszian discussion of desire is useful.

In 'A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics'⁹⁰ Elizabeth Grosz discusses the points of contention and the points of usefulness where feminism intersects with Deleuzian thought. As a by-product of her essay an incredible discussion of desire is presented. Grosz advocates Deleuze's explication of desire because it departs so violently from the traditional psychoanalytic definition of lack or idealisation of the Other as a motivation for desire. Both traditional theories present an abysmally empty or hole-y subject waiting to fill its holes with something that, especially in the context of this chapter, are 'fillers' which will be named perverse or normal. Grosz, following on from Deleuze following on from Spinoza, posits desire differently,

Instead of understanding desire as a lack or a hole in being, desire is understood by Deleuze - again following Spinoza and Nietzsche - as immanent, as positive and productive, a fundamental, full and creative relation.⁹¹

Grosz goes on to quote Colin Gordon as saying "Desire is a Relation of effectuation, not of satisfaction."⁹² In terms of the affected body effectuation is an ideal means by which to momentarily define what is happening to it or in what ways its desire is expressing. It is the notion that the body desiring horror is trying to fill a lack or satisfy a craving that is the reason why desire for horror is able to be construed as perverse in the most negative, derogatory sense of the word. Grosz's paper rapidly leads onto the next Deleuzian element of the looking body theorised; that of becoming. Grosz quotes Deleuze and Parnet to further her insistence that the body is to be

⁹⁰ Grosz, Elisabeth. 'A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics.' In Boundas, Constantin V. and Olkowski, Dorothea. eds. *Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy*. New York: Routledge. 1994b, pp. 187-210.

⁹¹ Grosz, 1994b, p. 195.

⁹² Colin Gordon quoted in Grosz 1994b. From 'The Subtracting Machine' in *I and C* no. 8, p. 32. Year not given.

analysed and assessed more in terms of what it can do,⁹³ the things it can perform, the linkages it establishes, *the transformations it undergoes*, (my italics) the machinic connections it forms with other bodies, what it can link with, and how it can proliferate its capacities - a rare affirmative understanding of the body: (quotes Deleuze and Parnet) 'Spinoza's question: *what is a body capable of?* What affects is it capable of? Affects are becomings'...⁹⁴

The question of what Deleuze's becoming is has been addressed many times by a variety and currently expanding gamut of theorists. I choose in my brief overview to focus particularly on what certain feminist Deleuzians have to say on becoming, because my project is feminist, and also because there can be found addressed certain problems with Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of becoming from a gender neutral starting point that many other theorists of becoming gloss over in their euphoria about the undeniably joyous configuration of becoming. This follows the re-theorisation of desire, discussed above as surging and connective rather than satisfying and completing. I will also in the course of my discussion point out my reasons for choosing becoming as a theory for reading spectatorship, with its pitfalls (where it does not 'fit') and its successes. The fact that becoming is an open-ended and continuous concept is one of the reasons for its divergent definitions in theoretical discussions. By its very nature Deleuze and Guattari's becoming defies ever being, being as an activity, being as a point to aspire towards and eventually gain, or being as a new state of being. Becoming is all these things in a way but for the same reason it is not any of these things because becoming is an aspiration for change in the material self that has no potential for cessation or completion. Becoming is an actual suggestion rather than a prescription for a new way, it is a suggestion for entertaining new ways. It is not a metaphor to be a new thing in one's subjectivity or thought, it is not a linear activity whereby one simply turns into an identifiable something else. They state "Becoming is certainly not imitating or identifying with something; neither is it regressing

⁹³ This idea is furthered by Grosz in 'Rethinking Queer Subjectivity' In *Space, Time and Perversion: The Politics of Bodies*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin. 1995.

⁹⁴ Grosz, 1994b, p. 194. Quoting Deleuze, G. and Parnet, C. *Dialogues*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, p. 74.

nor progressing... becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, 'appearing', 'being', 'equalling' or 'producing'.⁹⁵ Becoming is difficult to imagine because the capitalised mind is always asking 'what do I get, what do I become, what is the matter and the equivalences of this activity'? All these questions are the wrong kinds of questions and this is what Deleuze and Guattari preclude by answering these kinds of enquiries on what becoming is not. What becoming is *not* is evidently easier to conceive than what becoming is.

Rosi Braidotti makes an important distinction between Deleuze and Guattari's becoming and the discussion I raised earlier on the Bataillan concept of figuring desire as a radical change to the subject. She states

Deleuze's becoming is rather the humble apprenticeship to not being anything/where more/other than what one is capable of sustaining and tolerating. It is life on the edge, but not over it; [*or against its perpetuation, as Deleuze and Guattari point out in their discussion of becoming in the drug-addicted or suicidal mode*] it is excessive but not in the sacrificial sense (exit Bataille).⁹⁶

The positing of a subject up for annihilation is a problem in Bataille. By maintaining that pleasure and perversion are able to briefly destroy the integrity of the subject, the subject's valuation is overstated in terms of what can break it and how far it can be broken. Always with Bataille is the assertion that post-rupture will be followed by nothing (complete annihilation or sacrifice) or by a return of integrity, the subject changed but intact. What I think Deleuze and Guattari and Braidotti wish to emphasise is that becoming is about a different form/kind/articulation and species of subject. Nothing is killed off in favour of non-existence. (Deleuze and Guattari specifically point out that the becoming-annihilation mentioned above is almost antithetical to the reasons why becoming is *good for you*.) The subject is changed, perverted in the terms of

⁹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 238-39.

⁹⁶ Braidotti, Rosi. 'Meta(l)morphoses'. *Theory Culture and Society*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE. Vol. 14 (2): 67-80. 1997, p. 68. Parenthesis my addition.

this chapter. But in the best kinds of becoming there is no death, it is "life on the edge", but with the emphasis on life, not edge. Deleuze and Guattari emphasise, similar to Deleuze's cinematic machines, the temporal subject becoming in time ('life') rather than the annihilative spatial subject in the location of annihilation ('edge', also Deleuze and Guattari stating it is not movement - neither regressing nor progressing). Becoming is very difficult to sufficiently articulate, especially within the parameters of the specific becomings available in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. They offer becoming-animal, becoming-machine and becoming-imperceptible among others. These are all actual and irreversible conditions, as Grosz points out "One cannot become animal at will and then cease and function normally. It is not something that can be put on or taken off like a cloak or activity."⁹⁷ This is something I will return to.

Thus we ask what is the potential becoming of the viewer? Where does becoming fit with cinematic/video watching, and does it at all? The immediate but completely antithetical response to this question would be *representations* of becoming. Both Pisters and Braidotti utilise this aspect. Horror films spring to the mind of both theorists when they utilise becoming in cinematic terms, and even in terms of what Braidotti calls the "need to turn to 'minor', not to say marginal and hybrid genres, science-fiction, science-fiction horror and cyberpunk, to find fitting cultural illustrations of Deleuze's work on embodiment and becoming."⁹⁸ Horror is a marginal, hybrid genre. When we consider what Deleuze and Guattari say about hybrids, horror seems even more suitable: "Like hybrids, which are in themselves sterile, born of a sexual union that will not reproduce itself, but which begins over again every time, gaining that much more ground."⁹⁹ Horror films are seen as sterile artistically and ancestrally. Taking sterile as meaning not able to breed generations, or produce from the union, the relationship Italian horror films have with Hollywood can

⁹⁷ Grosz, 1994a, p. 174.

⁹⁸ Braidotti, 1997, p. 71.

⁹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 241.

only be described as a sterile hybrid. When Hollywood 'produces', Italy imitates in a unique way in order, not to breed further films, but only to create a hybrid form of the Hollywood film. Even those who would say that Hollywood horror of the thirties was a flourishing reproductive genre disavow the modern Italian horror film. Fans of the Italian horror genre are themselves quick to point out how sterile their objects of desire are.¹⁰⁰

Many Italian horror films indeed seem to be themselves born of sterile, as opposed to original and hence creative, desire. The phenomenon of the *figlia* is evidence of this sterility juxtaposed with originality. The supposed 'artistically lowest' of films from Hollywood (such as *Alien* (Ridley Scott, US, 1979), *Dawn of the Dead* and *Evil Dead*) breed unrelated films from Italy which claim to be sequels. These films are sterile because, rather than claiming originality and hence the generation of something new or 'fruitful', the *figlia* defines itself as a more outrageous imitation of an already successful film. *Suspiria* itself, though not a *figlia*, exists presumably because of the late-sixties to mid-seventies interest in 'devil-films' which was started with Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (USA, 1968) and reached a pinnacle when Friedkin's *The Exorcist* was nominated for the 1973 Academy Awards for best screenplay and best picture.¹⁰¹ Hybrid then may be the wrong word to use for the genre that seemingly re-births itself continuously. However the horror genre can never be seen as reproductive because it is seen as so many degenerative things; low-art, non-real, destructive, potentially traumatic. These are not terms that ordinarily align themselves with the reproductive. The sterility of the horror film is imagined not by its content for film history, theory and 'breeding' more films, but by its affect and the tone of the things it represents. At this stage it is sufficient to define the term 'sterility' as anything which capitalistically does

¹⁰⁰ See for instance John Martin writing on the majority of Fulci's films in a warmly pejorative way, 1997, also Alan Jones, in *Nekrofile: Cinema of the Xtreme*. London: Midnight Media, 1997 on a variety of films by Bianchi, Deodato and again Fulci.

¹⁰¹ The most famous sub-genre of Argento's horror films, the *giallo*, is also somewhat of a *figlia*. It comes from the yellow covered detective books which became overwhelmingly popular in Italy as a response to the more visible traditional detective writings of Agatha Christie, Daschiell Hammet and the other famous detective writers of the early twentieth century.

not produce 'good results'. As a genre the horror film is productive but as a concept horror films are ordinarily imagined as perverse forms of cinema that breed nothing but fear, misery and violence both in that which they present visually and in a more fundamentalist argument, that which they breed affective-ly in the viewer. So in this respect, they are hybrids. Horror films themselves are the monsters they often represent, a theory I will return to in the 'Watching Monsters' section of this chapter.

The point of divergence then between myself and theorists of cinematic-becoming like Pisters and Braidotti is the same point where horror is figured not as simply a filmic genre but a perverse hybrid that causes an affect in the viewer of non-productivity. Braidotti and Pisters both focus on the becoming of characters.¹⁰² This is a completely vital, valid and important focus for their projects. In terms of my project, however, I do not wish to theorise the potentialities, perversions and becomings of phantasmatic characters on-screen but of our own phantasmatic subjectivities while we watch those oh-so-already post-moderned characters and the worlds in which they circulate. Further, I want to annihilate these characters in favour of the affect-ion of the film itself, the evocations it presents, the sets, the colours and the very screen it performs upon. Character identification is, as I keep emphatically pointing out, not something I find a viably satisfying methodology for studying cinematic affect. So as well as, and beyond the characters, the actual filmic content, though the catalyst of a potential becoming for the viewer, is, nonetheless not the locale upon which I want to place Deleuze and Guattari's becoming.

The becoming (though at this point it is impossible to say becoming what) of the viewer, through horror affects and as a vitalistic denial of the necessity for affect to annihilate the subject entirely (madness), is what I hope to open up a

¹⁰² For example, Pisters on Elvira in *In Einem Jahr Mit 13 Monden* ('In a Year of 13 Moons', Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Germany, 1978) and Braidotti on such characters as the incredible shrinking man, the fifty foot woman and cyborgs/robots in such films as Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (US, 1982). Also most importantly Deleuze and Guattari themselves do it in their very first paragraph of 'Becoming-Intense; Becoming-Animal' when they use Ben and his inspiration for making a child become a 'rat-boy-becoming-rat' in *Ben* (Phil Karlson, US, 1972).

space for in this section. Horror films, and, eventually out of the specificity of this argument, all films, are vehicles that can encourage a becoming in the viewer, a changing of desire (away from lack and towards whatever) which then will become a changing of the desiring subject. Becoming is always about transformation, it is also indivisibly always about *desire* to transform. This is the reason becoming cannot be shed or disregarded like a mantle, after the change the subject is made different at the moment the desire to become is put in place. In terms of watching horror films, there is an immediate impulse to point out that it is indeed an activity, something Grosz specifically states is exactly what becoming is *not*. Becoming is transformation of the entire subject both in time and space; by this I mean as the materiality of the subject becomes, so too does the future. Once begun becoming cannot stop. At the same time becoming cannot clearly be begun as if it is an act to commence. To put it simply, one cannot 'become' in becoming. There is no finish as there is at the end of a film when the affects cease, the machine turns off and the image disappears. This is why film is a vehicle *toward* a mode of becoming, rather than a means by which to become. By theorising the body in a state of disruption, through pleasure or horror or whatever else, the subject must think of what it will be, not what it is. The corporeal subversion of film is not that which makes the altering body feel as if it is something, but makes the body wonder what will become of it, or rather, what is becoming of it. Becoming is the process, not the act, which is why it cannot be started, stopped or even predicted.¹⁰³

Defining becoming creates problems for theorising watching as a means toward becoming. Are there any resolutions that would not require the creation of a conditional or momentary interpretation of becoming? Part of me is tempted to emphasise the machination of the world which means that we watch representations on-screen daily as part of life, hence the act of sitting down watching is no different to functioning in the majority of the western world.

¹⁰³ Although the object one wishes to become can be predicted in order to think the process, the object is not what one becomes but what one is becoming. For example, if one wishes to become dog, one begins to become dog but never *is* a dog, while simultaneously never being what it was before.

But this does not begin to take into account the *desire* to sit down and be scared, to alter the subject in a two-hour slot. Viewers want to do it, whether they want to do it five times a day or once a year. The next option, also unsatisfactory, would be to say that experiences of fear, like those of sexuality, impinge upon every part of daily existence, that desire is about fear as much as about want and hence present in every activity. However this aligns too closely with the catharsis theory of horror film, that watching horror is simply a means to overcome and dominate in film that which may threaten in the 'real'.

My tentative suggestion, and it is only a primary one which hopefully will be expanded and bettered in the future, is that horror allows an experiencing of one's own flesh, indivisible from its fear, anxiety and all the other multiple affects of horror films. This may lead into new ways of daily experiencing of the body - a new way to live in one's own flesh, a mode of becoming non-Cartesian, a mode of becoming-corporeal at the same time as becoming phantasmatic, filmic and non-real. The body is itself more potential than articulate-able. There are more things a body can do than we can ever suggest, and certainly more than we are able to linguistically describe. Above Braidotti stated that becoming is the "humble apprenticeship to not being anything/where more/other than what one is capable of sustaining and tolerating". Beyond this is what culture sees the body as able (and sanctioned) to do. Grosz states "There is an instability at the very heart of sex and bodies, the fact that the body is what it is capable of doing, and what any body is capable of doing is well beyond the tolerance of any given culture."¹⁰⁴ Though Grosz is speaking politically of the creation of the subject of pervert, she also links this back to the potential limits of the body versus the limits which delineate what it is capable of doing within a cultural, linguistic and Cartesian experience of the body. I think Grosz is including the 'doing' of desiring in this theory. The body is capable of doing much more than it is theorised as capable of, in medicine, in cultural and sexual theory, in all discursive fields. Deleuze and Guattari are not asking the body to perform super-human feats of transformation but only to

¹⁰⁴ Grosz, 1995, p. 214.

attempt an encroachment on the limits of the body to push the body further out into its potentials. We do not need to become fantastic monsters to become. Only to traverse the rigid limits culture allows us to exist within and as our bodies. That is all, but at the same time that is mind-blowing enough. Becoming is harnessing the instability of the body, so whatever causes instability could be a useful moment of entry into becoming. Desire causes instability, so too does horror affect. So does the fact of sitting in front of any film watching a world of un-reality for two hours, where all essential-to-subject-formation concepts of reality, of good and evil, and of a million other legislation, are suspended. Perhaps then this is a means by which horror films can be a mode for becoming? These suggestions have many problems, not the least of which is the fear that by privileging the experiencing of one's own body in new and different ways a body-dominated dynamic is created, and the self is made irreducibly body, another form of limit and not entirely estranged from biological essentialism. This is neither clearly bad nor good as yet, but it highlights boundaries and limits which themselves are against the point of becoming as limit-less and boundary free. I cannot emphasise enough that the best part about theorising a potential becoming through film is that it could be used as a *point of entry* into experiencing the world differently and upon a line of flight, of transforming the way in which the self is experienced. That is the most I hope for at this time. So with this brave suggestion I return to *Suspiria*.

The desire for the body to feel something else, to transform, find pleasure and pained gratification in the language-exceeding terrain of fear, is in one way presented in *Suspiria* by finding a corporeal identification through the *connexion* of the building/body. By watching the film and yearning for the image in muscle, in nerve, in widened, gelatinous eye, the audience will 'become' what the film evokes; fear. Becoming does not involve imitation, which is why becoming in cinema seems so suitable, one cannot *become* celluloid¹⁰⁵. Instead the particles, the body's molecules, react differently and independently. The look no longer yearns for the picture, but the flesh yearns

¹⁰⁵ Though one may 'act' mimic or perform as if one were a particular character.

for the likeness of the fear the film evokes. It yearns for muscle to wind up, teeth to grit, rectum to tense, diaphragm to tighten, it yearns to become the fear Deleuze and Guattari maintain is only possible when the other to which the subject becomes is a molecular biological reality, i.e. an animal, type of human etc. The molecular version of a 'thing' however, emphasises its potentials, its specificities and its micro-levels of being as opposed to a molar object which is irrefutably fixed in time and space, and which is more signification than matter. Deleuze and Guattari state: "Yes, all becomings are molecular: the animal, the flower, or stone one becomes are molecular collectives, *not* molar subjects, objects, or form that we know from the outside and recognise from experience, through science, or by habit."¹⁰⁶ Film seems to fall into the category of what the subject cannot become - it is open-ended, and becoming filmic is entirely alien to becoming (a) film. It is a collective but not a collective object or 'thing' rather than a collective of disparate things, both in what it is and what it represents. But becoming filmic may be possible because film as a molar object is not easy to know, so the transformation from the molar to the molecular may already exist. The idea of a less tangible, abstract becoming, becoming an affect, in this situation becoming horror through real changes in molecular assemblage, appeals to me. Whether it works or not in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming is a point of varying relevance. Grosz states "Deleuze and Guattari suggest that becoming involves a mediating third term, a relation to something else, neither animal nor human, through which the subject enters into a connection with the animal."¹⁰⁷ If the animal is read as the film, then the implemented third term for becoming is the connection which the film and the audience becomes more 'like', namely the fear. But use of this mediating third term must be discrete, otherwise the action of becoming, an action which never ceases and is never finished with a new product, may be structured as somewhat narrative: first term + mediating third term = undefinable result. Rather the third term is a means toward something else or new, and the 'toward' never actually reaches something, but continues

¹⁰⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 275. My aim here is not to enter into dialogue with this idea, but to play with its elasticity in order to evince a new form of subject who watches in fear. For this reason I will leave the intricacies and problems of this concept relatively unspoken.

¹⁰⁷ Grosz, 1994a, p. 174.

indefinitely. This may explain why becoming is so unnerving, not only is the previous subject lost, but a new one never arrives.

Suspiria continues in 'secret', even though the real secret, that the institute is a coven of witches, has been disclosed. A former student is found slain, the same student who Susie sees at the film's opening screaming "secrets!" The institute's blind piano player is killed by his own seeing-eye dog. Susie's friend Sara (Stefania Casini), who is getting close to the secret, is killed in a room of barbed wire, the presence of which is entirely irrational and unexplained. The rooms in the building exist as certain organs exist within the body, for purposes we know nothing about but which are there nonetheless, explained or not - rooms of barbed wire, the roof of maggots, bats in the windowless bedrooms. Before Sara dies however, the girls glean their information about the murders by listening to the hallways, listening to footsteps. Trying to map out in their heads the anatomy of the building, they want to explore but are afraid, as the subject is of its own body. The corridors are the keepers of the secret, they swallow it, ingest it like a virus and the building must be eviscerated in order to find the answer, to repel the fear of the film. It is an evisceration that is necessary but disdainful, like anatomy, like surgery, a tearing away at the tender parts to find knowledge, but being disgusted by the act. Exploring the building for Susie is *painful*. It curls the toes of the audience with the anticipation of what will be found. *Suspiria*'s architecture provokes audience identification not with character as much as body with internal flesh. The film plays out almost entirely within these plasma walls, things are amiss, disturbing feelings of suspicion and fear occur within the building/body. The 'answer' to the mysteries, the cure for the body, is within the hidden chambers of the building. We are dislodged more and more by the events which give no answers to the 'secret', no cure for the illness, but which only disturb more uncomfortably and violently as the film progresses. It is as much an itching within the body, a feeling of the discomfort internally brought about by the action within the fleshy building, as a guarded visual discomfort that occurs.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Buildings as rotting bodies are a prevalent theme in horror films. Even not including haunted house movies, which are less visceral and more ethereal. Fulci's *L'Aldilà* is a world of

Even the audience's armoured gaze is not protected. *Suspiria* was the last film made with special tri-colour celluloid, a film that relies heavily on basic hues of red-yellow-blue.¹⁰⁹ These are also primary colours of the internal body, blood, pancreas, vascular system. Red is the predominant filter, it is garish and almost a strain on the eye to watch. Red is a colour one can indeed become.¹¹⁰ It is a condition of firstness. In his breaking down of the meaning of firstness, secondness and thirdness Rodowick states

Peirce refers to firstness as 'feeling'... Consciousness requires time to experience effect, action, or relation as well as to interpret... As a quality of the image it refers to the *experience* of 'red' rather than taking colour as the effect of something else (secondness: I find I am bleeding from a paper cut) or as a conventional symbol (thirdness: red as the colour of violence, patriotism or danger).¹¹¹

Of course the red of *Suspiria* is a symbol for danger and violence but it also simultaneously encourages its audience to *feel red*. If red were simply a symbol then the exact reasons for why *Suspiria* is such a discomforting film would be easily articulated and its power to disrupt closed off by interpreting its effect. This is why I prefer the word affect when discussing the feelings of such films. If the effect of red is... then the *affect* of red is exactly the opposite. It is entire corporeal *feeling*, the body feels red without being able to close off or interpret how or why. The watching subject is discomforted, disrupted and all that can be (irrationally) said is *I feel red*.

The film reflects images which are not quite true, their lines blur, their borders fuzz, skin reflects blue and the walls could almost drip in their gory deep red.

zombies and putrefaction indistinguishable from the rotting putrefied house it is set within. Fulci continued this theme with *Quella Villa Accanto al Cimitero* ('House by the Cemetery', Italy, 1981).

¹⁰⁹ This kind of film was used for Walt Disney's *Snow White* and lends both films that nightmarish fairy tale feel that tantalises, victimises and then horrifies the child in us watching.

¹¹⁰ Pisters on p. 203 discusses the use of colour in *A Year of Thirteen Moons*, and relates it to Bacon's use of red and blue in order to encourage affect.

¹¹¹ Rodowick, 1997, p. 56.

So the unadulterated penetrative stare one may use in order to 'master' a film that disturbs, is foiled. The eye squints and reels back each time it tries to penetrate the image. The body is lured into the image because the eye cannot rely on the 'truth' of the screen. Lacan states "One can already see, simply at the perceptual level, how the screen re-establishes things, in their status as real."¹¹² *Nothing* in this film is trustworthy as real. To establish this film as 'real' the audience must change in some way, become unreal, become less dependent on what is real. Because the film does not look real but more importantly because it does not act like a 'real' film (in colour, in character, in plot) *Suspiria* attacks the nervous system, gall, the bile in the stomach, the borders of the subject watching, *before* it attacks the eye as 'not quite right'. Many of the clues in the film are aural, there are no visual answers. The only effect which looking has is violence. The soundtrack builds intensities of terror and death before the image of death occurs, it also holds clues to the action. We watch the movie, *as* an architectural structure, *with* the ears - this is what *Suspiria* asks.

Suspiria sets itself up as a film that creates binaries in order to blur them; secret/answer, building/body, real/fake, gaze/visceral response. The active viewer, the plot-solver, finds her/himself feeling nauseous, tensing nerves because of the fear they experience without knowing what it is they are afraid of. They are still wondering what the secret is. While their eye grapples with the image, their body is becoming the fear. They blink away at images rather than penetrate them. The building with which their body identifies is an uncanny site. Laura Mulvey sees the following as a standard film experience, "As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events(!) coincides with the active power of the erotic look".¹¹³ Aside from the fact that there is no male protagonist in

¹¹² Lacan, 1994, p. 107.

¹¹³ Mulvey, 1975, p. 12 (my exclamation). I realise that Mulvey here is talking about narrative cinema however despite the influence of this most important work, I find that her choosing to perform an analysis of a narrative already buys into the symbolic binary world so much it leaves little room for a more thorough or positive re-interpretation of gaze theory.

Suspiria,¹¹⁴ to identify with a building through the body, to watch with the ears and to invest the erotic look upon that which horrifies and shatters the power of the onlooker, creates not a feeling of mastery but that which is, in certain ways, *unheimlich*. In *The Uncanny* Freud states "the uncanny is the class of frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar."¹¹⁵ The environment of *Suspiria* is a building/body, it represents the internal flesh of the body which we are familiar with yet repress in order to save our 'wholeness', our symbolically enclosed, sealed selves. To watch ogres and witches trail like infections along the hallways, corpses and maggots in the attic, secrets swallowed by the basement, is to watch some sickness or disease infect our corporeal being. The building is our own internal self. It is not the womb we are from, it may be the gory death we plummet towards in films which horrify the eye and the belly. It is familiar but uncomfortably so. "The uncanny would always, as it were, be something one does not know one's way about in"¹¹⁶. The building is not a return to infantility or fetalility but an un/familiarity with our own othered flesh. Becoming-*Suspiria* is a becoming our own viscera which has been violently and irrefutably ripped from our signified bodies. *Suspiria* is uncanny like our own bodies are uncanny. Susie wanders about the ballet institute looking like Snow White¹¹⁷ lost in a forest. She should be at the institute, she should be comfortable there, but she feels uncomfortably, *uncannily* alien. She is lost when she is *inside* just as we are lost when we have to look at or listen to our insides. The internality of the viewer is reacting in a way we cannot articulate. The organs shift and various liquids are ingested and expelled as a result of the film yet even though it is *my* body and has been forever, still I have no idea what is going on inside it. Susie is at *her* school yet its gleaming corridors and the secrets it ingests and expels are completely foreign and frightening to her. If the school represents our own

¹¹⁴ Or indeed many other horror films, see Clover's *Men, Women and Chainsaws*, 1994 for more detail of why men fare very badly in horror cinema.

¹¹⁵ Freud, 'The Uncanny' (1919) *The Pelican Freud Library*. Vol. 14. Trans James Strachey. Middlesex: Penguin. 1985, pp. 335-376, quote p. 340.

¹¹⁶ Freud, (1919) 1985, p. 341.

¹¹⁷ The comparisons between Snow White (as fairy tale and film) and *Suspiria* are quite abundant. See M. McDonagh *Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds: The dark dreams of Dario Argento*. New York: Citadel. 1994 and A. Jones *Mondo Argento* for some examples.

foreign/familiar body, then the lost character wandering through it is an insipid itch, a disease that reminds us how lost we are inside our insides and why we turn away at gore. Because our own eyes are organs with potential for gore,¹¹⁸ they sometimes refuse us the grace to look away. The sealed self is forced to interact, however superficially, with the internal self during the film. It is forced to become the feelings it denies or else walk away from the image, both of which involve a change in the physical self, and a co-operation with the intemperance of perversity.

Watching Monsters

In this section I am going to very briefly mention a sub-genre of theory in body theory that fits with the theories of watching I am positing; that of the monster. In this section however I am *not* talking about on-screen monsters in film, and the ways in which monsters are posited in certain film theory as a mode of identification for the female spectator (found in Williams' 'When the Woman Looks' and Creed's *Monstrous Feminine*). I am stating that the viewer is monster, something that is akin to pervert and also to a becoming, as well as particularly useful for a female/feminist spectator intervention (woman as already monster). This viewing monster is not a monster that is in any way identifiable with the on-screen monster. It is a monster for the reasons I have identified earlier that constitute film watching as non-stratified, perverted and hence the viewer as pervert. I have already pointed out that the desire to be perverted is positive only in so far as it resists the formation of the noun 'pervert' adhering one form of perversion onto the subject as the being and essence of its desire. But the term monster is used strategically and comes in through a very definite theoretical framework. Everybody knows that horror films are frequently about monsters, be they the pervert-killers¹¹⁹ of *giallo*, or

¹¹⁸ Consider Freud's story of the Sandman in 'The Uncanny'. For a standard reading of eyes and their gory fate in Argento's films see Ray Guins 'Tortured Looks' in Andy Black, ed. *Necronomicon* v.1, London: Creation Books, 1996, pp. 141-53.

¹¹⁹ In both senses of the term, a perverted killer and a killer of perverts. For example in Argento's *Tenebre* (Italy, 1982) the first killer, Christiano Berti (John Steiner) slays the lesbian couple Tilde (Mirella D'Angelo) and Marion (Mirella Bianchi) after hissing "Pervert! Filthy little pervert!" at Tilde on the telephone. The purifying angel theme of many stalk-and-slash

one of the four monsters Stephen King reduces all horror to in *Danse Macabre*¹²⁰. I do not claim that all horror films are about monsters but would bravely go so far as to say all horror films include monstrosities (including our own bodies) which makes them horror films. Even the most 'subtle' of horror films, which I am primarily *not* concerned with in this thesis, include elements of monstrosity, be they mental illness, forgetfulness or transient consciousness(es).

What is monstrosity then? For a theoretical definition I am going to use Braidotti's because not only is she concerned with theorising the monster in western capitalist culture, but because she has been argued against for doing so. She writes: "Monsters are human beings who are born with congenital malformations of their bodily organism. They also represent the *in between*, the *mixed*, the *ambivalent* as implied in the ancient Greek root of the word monsters, *teras*, which means both horrible and wonderful, object of aberration and adoration, (my italics)." ¹²¹ Although Braidotti focuses her argument on the monstrosities of the historical past versus the modern monstrosity of science, her insistence on monstrosity as a site of wonder and of horror is an important axis in any definition of monsters. Even if modern scientists are seen as monsters in their determined drive to see further, pathologise more rigidly and adhere normality to the integrity of an organism, they are themselves enough of an object of wonder for Braidotti to include them in her argument. The axis of wonder/horror is integral to monstrosity as a, if not the, primary site of ambiguity. Following from Mary Douglas¹²² and Kristeva's use of Douglas in the formation of theories of the abject, Braidotti goes so far as to suggest one of the more positive means of becoming is that of monster, something popular culture already demands of its 'radicals'. Without wishing to utilise the specificities Braidotti offers of those monsters we could locate as the site of

films is an interesting one in its alignment with a killer (social pervert) believing his/her murderous purification of the world is in order to get rid of perverts. Probably the best example of this in the mainstream is Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (US, 1976).

¹²⁰ King, Stephen. *Danse Macabre*. New York: Berkeley. 1981.

¹²¹ Braidotti, 'Mothers, Monsters and Machines.' 1994, p. 77.

¹²² Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the concept of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge and Keegan and Paul. 1966, especially her section on Leviticus.

becoming-monster for the future (for which she has been criticised), I want to emphasise her use of wonder in 'reading' the monster. At the primary level of monstrosity, the very first departure from the white integrated subject is the woman. In this way, any woman is a monster to begin with, and has been for as long as can be historically traced. The body of difference, while being (especially in a compulsory hetero normative culture) an object of fascination, is simultaneously that of disgust. Like the abject the monster is that which pushes us outside symbolic integrity, either back, in psychoanalytic terms to the primary monster, the mother, or in a more Deleuzian sense that which pushes us away from what we think we are, subject and self. Returning for a moment to the concept of desire as urging rather than lacking, in order to really accept Braidotti's suggestion to become monster we must desire monsters. One cannot want to become what one does not desire, something made clear in Braidotti herself writing on Deleuze. So if we read desire in this abundance mode, the desire for a monster *changes* both the subject desiring and the monster of desire. In a Lacanian frame, in order to desire a monster one cannot be monster. One is fulfilling the monstrous lack in the hitherto normal subject. That is why woman is the primary monster because man is the primary non-monster and desires only what he lacks. If we read desire for monstrosity without or after Lacan it is clear that there is less of an enforcement of otherness in the desire for monsters. The monster is not necessarily any longer the complete antithesis of the self, rather monster simply becomes a category which wilfully refuses desire within a system of normal *versus* monster. To become monster in Deleuzian/Guattarian terms is necessarily to begin at a point in repudiation of any anxiety about a loss through monstrosity (loss of subject, loss of power aligned with subjectivity). It is also to begin already with a certain monstrosity.

To want to become monster in itself is monstrous enough. It is already refusing the value of an integrated subject lost in the desire to become. For a feminist reading of monstrosity it is vital to remember that women are the first monsters already so what do we lose by becoming (or embracing our already existent) monstrosity? Two problems arise here. The first is that by naming ourselves monsters women are in a way accepting the terms of their bodies given to them

by phallogocentric culture. It may be mimetic, it may be to utilise phallogocentrism's weapons against itself. But it is still affirming a condition for women (and all subsequent monsters) that was not chosen by women or even in consultation with women. The second problem is the glamorisation of conditions of subjugation in society. It is well to claim that becoming monster is a good way to radicalise the place to which the term monster commits such monsters. Gail Weiss takes up Braidotti on this, in her book *Body Images*. Weiss firmly plants her arguments against Braidotti within the context of Braidotti's anxieties about reproductive technology and the scientist-monsters mentioned above. I do not wish to take up the arguments in the socio-political context, the 'real' context for want of a better term, because I am not arguing for a strategy of becoming monster within a purely socio-political framework, but instead within a frame that first deals within the minute politics of personal subjectivity and bodily experience. A redistribution of the politics involved in being such a bodily subject will be the first stage towards becoming new bodily subjects and hence valuing other different bodily subjects. The formulation of a becoming body is not without negative implications, especially from a feminist perspective where a re-negotiation of subjectivity is occurring in post-structuralism before the subjectivity to be negotiated has been sanctioned for subjects of difference, such as women, non-white races and others. This flaw only emphasises the importance of feminist intervention in new ideas about being and becoming in order that post-subjects, perverse subjects and other subjects of post-modern difference, rather than traditional difference, will be ethical as well as culturally transformative. Such a formulation of an ethics of corporeal affect-being/becoming will be most specifically addressed in the conclusion.

My project may not seem as important as a purely socio-political one, but it is nonetheless important in the primary experience of one's own body and therefore may be useful in the future as a mode of furthering one's experiencing of one's own body *into the world* (instead of only in the lounge-room). I am using Braidotti on monsters as an intimately momentary strategy, intimate because it is relevant to a moment of cinematic viewing and

momentary because I do not want to make any claims about the activity of the transformed subject once it leaves its couch. So my discussion of Weiss' arguments against becoming monstrosity will be limited to the last two of the five she posits. These are:

4) Is this mixture of horror and fascination advantageous for those who are its objects, that is, is this a mixture of passions we want to privilege? 5) Does this fascination and horror in Braidotti's corresponding reification of these passions, serve to intensify, in oppressive ways, the monstrosity of the monstrous?¹²³

I take first Weiss' fourth question to which she answers a resounding 'no'. In the context of reducing monsters to those who we are while watching images of horror, I would have to argue that in order for old monsters to be replaced by new monsters there will always be a form of monstrosity devalued beyond all others.

I return momentarily to Terry's article on the monstrosity that science is, for queer theory; both seductive in its search for embodied biological validation of queerness and simultaneously repulsive because of its claims to truth and hence a means to fix and control the gay subject, perhaps inevitably to cure it of its 'malformation'. Terry uses the same words to describe the very discourse of science that Braidotti uses for her discussions of what constitutes a monster. While Braidotti claims science is making monsters Terry claims science itself for post-modern queer theory is a monster, somewhat of a horror film; it cannot be taken as truth but we cannot stop watching nonetheless. Terry goes on to discuss the monsters that gay biology studies; the gay 'monster'. She states

Hence lesbian feminist [lesbians being the monsters of even gay (male) discourse] discourse took on some of the same questions raised earlier by medical and scientific discourses that conflated homosexuality with

¹²³ Weiss, Gail. *Body Images; Embodiment as Incorporeality*. New York and London: Routledge. 1999, p. 108.

pathology. This time however these questions provided the means for explicitly generating a counter-discourse which replaced scientific authority with a new authentic thing called 'personal experience' in order to claim that homosexuality was healthy. Any pathology surrounding it was caused by social prejudice and homophobic and sexist hostility.¹²⁴

If homosexuality is not so immediate as monstrosity in terms of malformations of body organism, one simply has to look at the subsequent studies Terry, among others, has made on physical anatomical readings of homosexual flesh¹²⁵. Terry is rightfully suspicious of any claim that personal experience is somehow implicitly more valid than science but at the same time states the exact opposite, that science cannot speak for bodies in which culture has invested so much in its attempt to create the abnormal, in order to validate and fine-tune the normal. Her most useful point for this argument, however, is the importance of the 'monster' speaking for itself and emphasising that one is only a monster because of a social pathology of prejudice rather than a true biological flaw in a subject's body. If the monster articulates itself and the conditions by which it is named monster it changes the meaning of the re-appropriated term. If Weiss' suggestions were followed perhaps monsters would remain handled with kid-gloves and go from outcast bodies to being accepted with still exoticised bodies which can only be spoken of in sympathetic terms.

What exactly constitutes a 'real' monster, that appropriating the term monster will harm and make light its pain? Are not women and especially lesbian-feminists already monster enough that to call themselves the new monsters will constitute an ownership of the derogatory term given them? I am reminded of possibly the most important appropriation of a monster for feminist theory, that of Cixous' Medusa.¹²⁶ Is the re-appropriation of the Medusa a 'safe' monster

¹²⁴ Terry, 1995, p. 145, my parentheses.

¹²⁵ See for example the many anthropological and medical anatomy studies of deviance presented in the various articles in Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla's *Deviant Bodies*. 1995.

¹²⁶ Cixous, Hélène, (1975) 'The Laugh of the Medusa'. In Marks, Elaine and DeCourtivron, Isabelle, eds. *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*. New York: Schocken Books. 1981, pp. 245-264.

because she was never 'real'? The medusa is affect-image. She exists as image in order to change the viewer to stone, which could also be to not-monster, in juxtaposition with her own image. The Medusa is visual image, not material monster. Her power is in the way she looks, both actively and reactively, not in the matter of her body. She is a visual monster we are kept safe from, because she is not 'real' in the sensuous, material sense of the word. How do we recognise a 'real' monster then? What would Weiss define as a real monster? What Terry says, and what Braidotti also, in different ways states, is that we are only monsters in reference to those who call us monsters. I think Braidotti juxtaposes the self-proclaimed monsters, be they culturally evident as monsters, *against* the monsters technology creates and names precisely because of the problem I pointed out above, *that monstrosity is devalued in terms of that who names the monster 'monsters'*. Weiss discusses the use of the word monster as metaphor and the way in which metaphor devalues the meaning of terms. Monster then loses its necessary subversive potential. I do not think Braidotti is advocating using 'monster' as metaphor. I think she means it as a literal becoming, in the same way Deleuze does not want us to act like a dog but be a dog. And in a similar way that inspired me to read the monstrous audience rather than the represented monster on screen. This leads to Weiss' final problem with becoming-monster, the importance she places on the intensification of the term monster through the passions of fascination and horror. By intensification I think she means some form of othering, the thing we call monster and the desire for it. If Braidotti is advocating a becoming-monster, or a proclamation of monster then the first desire we must have for monsters is for our own 'monster-isation'. Weiss' point is an important and valid one which comes from the anxiety, I think Braidotti exhibits herself in her theorisation of monsters, that becoming monster is fraught with the threat of being named monster by someone else in the wrong terms, as the wrong kind of monster. But what becoming monster does successfully achieve is the emphatic refusal of phallogocentrism's categories and boundaries that have been set up for monsters, semi-monsters and the rare normal subject. Judith Halberstam points out the place of monsters is most important to being monster, "The monster always represents the disruption of categories, the destruction of

boundaries, and the presence of impurities and so we need monsters and we need to recognise and celebrate our own monstrosities."¹²⁷ While I think Halberstam is advocating an un-real or temporary monster-isation different from Braidotti's becoming-monster, which cannot be placed on and off like a mantle, her focus on the *activity* of monster-isation rather than the subjectivity of monster is interesting. Monster for Halberstam is an action of disruption rather than a statement of subjectivity that may or may not disrupt. Is becoming monster then entirely separate from being monster by the very fact that becoming monster is necessarily an act of disruption through transformation while being monster is simply a reaction to being named monster, a state which could change historically? Hence the status of monster is not assured historically, in the same way as the activity of monster-ing or becoming-monster always means disrupting whatever moment the becoming takes place in. When returning to the concept of character identification in horror film I see the affect of disruption as a necessary part of the pleasure in watching such films, conditional upon the activity of becoming monster over identification with a monster. Who is to say the monster in the film; killer, giant creature etcetera is not going to be a non-monster from one period in time to the next. When affect is privileged over identification in film theory then the status of the monstrosity of the film, and hence becoming-monster of the static safe subjectivity of the viewer is assured.

There is, it seems, no 'safe' concept of monster that does not threaten to slide back into more traditional exercises of naming as power. Whatever the joys of becoming-monster, the risks are great, both towards our expectations of what becoming-monster will mean in a 'real' sociological context and also the risks we take by appropriating a concept that, like woman, is dangerously linked with a degrading and power-embedded practice. This reflects a similar argument Braidotti, among other feminists, poses to Deleuze and Guattari's theories of becoming as always having to first become-woman. In the same way that to become-monster means an appropriation of the lives of 'monsters'

¹²⁷ Halberstam, Judith. *Skin Shows; Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 1995, p. 27.

which reduces the pain of being monster to a momentary transition in order to be subversive or transformative, Deleuze and Guattari have been accused of reducing and ignoring the material lived reality of women in posing a becoming-woman as a transitory practice towards becoming a presumably better something-else. Also that woman, like monster, is a level easier to attain than higher levels of subjectivity, any man can 'become-woman' but no woman can become a man. The argument against becoming-woman is not one I want to go into here - it will be addressed more thoroughly in the thesis conclusion - but it is reflected in Weiss' argument against Braidotti sufficiently for me to remain focused on monsters rather than feminism's suspicions of becoming-woman.

There are three things that are supposed in becoming-monster. First, to become monster implies something to lose by becoming monster (in the same way that becoming-woman is something to lose for man). But what is lost? How valuable is it? Within a Deleuzian/Guattarian frame what is lost in becoming is that which anchors the subject indefinitely to the very world from which becoming is a line of flight. Wanting to become is in this instance desiring the loss of that which culture values. The restraint culture imposes on normal subjectivity is the very thing becoming disavows. By shedding these restraints, or 'taking flight' from them, becoming expresses a deep suspicion of them. Someone who wants to become monster could already be seen to disavow the system that has pushed monster outside of normal subjectivity. Becoming here is a means to get 'outside', which is perhaps what Deleuze and Guattari meant in their insistence of becoming-woman. Monster and woman are specific groups but intersectional specific groups that refuse a solid definition, in opposition to the definition of man. The terms themselves *are* ambivalence, in the same way as Braidotti's passions are ambivalence and Douglas' seminal work on the concept of purity, danger and the scripture of Leviticus are all about ambivalence.¹²⁸ Normal subjectivity is *not* ambivalence nor ambivalent, and its very existence is through its separation from everything it is *not*.

¹²⁸ "We can conclude that holiness is exemplified by completeness. Holiness requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong. And holiness requires that different

Reading becoming as actual in its aspirations toward (monsters, woman) is to suggest there is a literal, non-ambivalent definition of these 'other' terms. There is not. Becoming something is an actual becoming but the reason certain terms are preferred for becoming over others is their ambivalence. Most precisely their ambivalence is juxtaposed against the very non-ambivalence of the models they take flight from. In returning to the spectator it is the ambivalence of the passions inspired by horror films - the perversion of body image, of corporeal sensation - that create the viewer as monster in *juxtaposition against what monster is not*. It is as ambivalence that I wish to use monstrosity. Of real monsters, or historical monsters, there are real dangers in representing them as objects of horror and fascination, and where Braidotti uses real, literal historical monsters, I would prefer to use the historical definition she posits of monsters as mixed, in between and most definitely non-phallogocentrically-normal.

Two key terms are essential in my reading of monsters and becoming-monster. The first is desire and the second is pleasure. Desire has been discussed above as a forward surging of body as self, and pleasure in the first section of this thesis as that which affects and changes the state of feeling corporeal. How do these terms relate to monsters? In the context of my argument and juxtaposed against the first definition, included in the prefix, of perversion given by Scott as anything outside genital, same age, hetero sex, all perverted sex is monstrous. All perverted desire is monstrous as well as all pleasure felt outside of acceptable structures of sex or alternatively pleasure as structured into its own binary of sexual/non-sexual pleasure (a division I, like psychoanalysis, most emphatically do not recognise). Remember that which constitutes perversion is almost everything compared to what constitutes the tiny realm of normality. The monster is the site of ambiguity, difficult perhaps because it

classes of things shall not be confused. Another set of precepts refines on this last point. Holiness means keeping distinct the categories of creation. It therefore involves correct definition, discrimination and order... Morality does not conflict with holiness, but holiness is more a matter of separating that which should be separated than of protecting the rights of husband and brother." Douglas, 1966, p. 53.

aligns itself enough with the normal to be a monstrous version of the normal, rather than a completely alien other that holds no potential for examination (the fascination part of the repulsion/fascination duality of monstrosity). The normal in monstrous perverse desire and pleasure is the most dangerous part of normal sexuality; that everyone of age (and according to Freud, children also) is within the boundaries of 'sexuality'. That everyone desires certain forms indicates the potential of forms to easily slip from the beautiful to the monstrous. Judith Halberstam states "monsters not only reveal certain material conditions of the production of horror, but they also *make strange* the categories of beauty, humanity and identity that we still cling to".¹²⁹ This is why she claims the term monster itself is a tricky slippery term because of its historicity rather than universality.

How are we to know if today's desires are to be normal tomorrow? The slippages in desire, concurrent with the slippages in object choice that make beauty strange and humanity ambivalent from one historical period to the next means that whatever we avow as normal sexuality, even non-sexuality, could be tomorrow's monstrosity. There is no such thing as asexual without it being juxtaposed against an extraordinary obsession with what it disavows, even celibacy exists only in terms of that which it refuses. All sexuality then has the potential to 'slip', and far more easily than other axes, those of race, sex, class. Because sexuality in my definition encompasses all desire, it is whatever is thought, whatever is felt, outside of identity and even of language. All desire is sexual but sexuality is *not* always or even ever genital, orgasmic or various other constitutive elements often conflated into the term sexuality. Sexuality is hyper-ambiguous not only in what it desires and what pleasures it affords, but in its very definition: what is meant by the word sexuality?

To return to Lotringer, I wish to discuss his concept of asexuality, a very different definition to that most popularly imagined - the asexual as the *nonsexual*. When sexuality remains in the confines of a Scottian definition then asexuality according to Lotringer is almost the same as what I call desire and

¹²⁹ Halberstam, 1995, p. 6.

pleasure. It means "experiencing sexuality in non-genital ways. Its potential is truly infinite."¹³⁰ While Lotringer points out the dangers of asexuality, specifically the potential for asexuality to become a nihilistic form of desire rather than life-enforcing, his faith in it is as a means by which to transform or restore sexuality to a fuller form, to "fullness".¹³¹ But how is asexuality monstrous? By its very conformity to monstrosity's number one rule of ambiguity, as Lotringer points out

Asexuality is a symptom of decadence [what falls away - *de-cadens*] and like other symptoms of decadence it is ambiguous by definition. Ambiguity is not such that it requires an elucidation - even less a critique: some elements simply need to be 'forgotten', others mobilised. Once the focus on genital sex is removed, a new 'polymorphous sexuality' comes into being.¹³²

Two points about Lotringer's suggestion must be clarified. First he does not advocate non-genital sex, only the death of the primacy of genitals over and in ignorance of all other forms of pleasure. Second, the term polymorphous is specifically the *new* polymorphous he mentions, not the traditional polymorphousness of Freud. The main characteristic the two have in common is that both involve a usage of a non-stratified body that has not broken into a system of primary, secondary and tertiary organs of sex and organs of pleasure. Lotringer is encouraging the use of the very body Grosz indicates is beyond the tolerance of any given culture. The body we have is already a monster if it is not curbed into non-perverse sexuality and desire. It has immediately the potential Braidotti encourages us to utilise in order to become-monster.

Brian Massumi takes up this very idea of becoming monster as a form of desire and hence of pleasure. In 'Normality is the Degree Zero of Monstrosity' Massumi discusses the real effects, the material results of becoming and most importantly, he points out, that in his reading above and beyond Deleuze and Guattari, all forms of becoming are monstrous. Because a real becoming

¹³⁰ Lotringer, 1981, p. 286.

¹³¹ Lotringer, 1981, p. 286.

¹³² Lotringer, 1981, p. 286, my parentheses.

involves a transformation from the molar of two points (for instance molar man becoming molar dog) without ever attaining the molarity of the second point, the resulting transformations are monsters, freaks, half-and-half molecularities "He resolves the bodies into two bundles of virtual affects, or bodies without organs, and then actualises a selection combination of them. What he comes up with is neither a molar dog nor a molar man, but a monster, a freak."¹³³ All becoming is becoming monster, even the desire to want to become is monstrous, because all becoming is about becoming an ambiguity between, but never attaining either of, two points. Massumi recognises becoming as desire "Becoming begins as a desire to escape bodily limitations."¹³⁴ However I do not think becoming is about escaping bodily limitations so much as escaping the limitations placed by normalising culture upon and within the stratified, signified body. We can, of course, only live the body we have access to. But I think in order for there to ever be a potential for actual becoming, the potential of the body we are now must be recognised. Our body seems to me to be enough of a potential for change, transformation. Perhaps Massumi means the limitations our cultural and biological body represents, the so-called already perfect subject body, or scientifically described and hence 'finished' body. Becoming is embodiment at last in the first few becomings of Deleuze and Guattari: becoming-woman, becoming-animal etcetera. Indeed, Massumi goes on to state "The goal is not to develop a general idea (model) that would stand out and above (transcend) the bodies it subsumes; it is to create a new body at ground level."¹³⁵ Our bodies are enough to start our line of flight, our aim is corporeal but not the same as the body we have now. The body we have now, however, is important as the primary vehicle to change and of change. From here the potential is limitless. The line of flight does not fly off into the distance but rather flies inside our own bodies in transformation, spatially static we fly from what we were before and become something new.

¹³³ Massumi, 1996, p. 93.

¹³⁴ Massumi, 1996, p. 94.

¹³⁵ Massumi, 1996, p. 98.

To align the gaze with concepts of narrative cohesion and character identification is to dismiss the very perversity of unadulterated staring. It is not that which we watch that is perverse, but who we are while watching. Is pretending to watch for sympathy and emotional mirroring with on-screen figures an attempt to bring into the rational world of the symbolic the most obvious loss of self for pure pleasure? 'I cannot be me, I am busy *watching*.' The fact is, the subject who watches has no idea what is happening to the body, it is reacting and retching secretly, affording a pleasure difficult to name or know - the subject being, the horror of voyeur.

Different kinds of film enhance the possibilities of different ways to look, and eventually different ways to read the act of looking. Perhaps an acknowledgement that some pleasure is perverse, and to accept it as such is to accept its existence outside symbolic discourse? Then, such an 'ordinary' western pop pleasure as watching film, being re-figured (or exposed) as the act of a pervert asks also for the re-negotiation of 'pervert', of the fissure between watching and being, on-screen and off-screen, and the limitless potential of our own bodies unbound. The residue of theorising a gazing subjectivity in this way has the potential to lead to a new form of theorising film, for pleasure, and for a becoming outside the single-normative coda.

Death

"... Our existence, of its own nature, projects itself, with all its forces, unto its death..."¹

In this section I wish to discuss the multiple incarnations and affects of the concept of death. The viewing body in this chapter is no longer simply watching horror films but any and all forms of visual death - in textbooks, in news footage, in mondo films among other visual representations of both real and fake death. Death conflates visually diverse genres into the horror genre because death is always about horror. For this reason, the following chapter does not include an in depth analysis of one film but will refer instead to the particularities of different visual forms of death and their affect-ive potential. A brief outline of the traditional psychoanalytic theorisation of the death drive through those 'nihilistic' theorists of death who see death as aggressive and/or annihilative, will move towards my own aim: a hopeful use of death as a tool for an other consciousness - an other consciousness which brings death into line with the other terms important to this thesis; perversion and pleasure.

Death is the climax of what I have earlier discussed as the body in states of alteration, through watching, through pleasure and through perverse desire.

¹ Lingis, Alphonso. *Deathbound Subjectivity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1989, p. 109.

Death is the ultimate change of the body but of course can only be experienced in emphatically 'un-real' ways; through the death drive, through the desire to annihilate the self, through representation. Despite their annihilative signification, in many ways these concepts are a positive useful series for my aim. They are potentially useful in an affirmative and progressive way that I will explicate by using them differently from the way for which they were intended. I choose to alter their intended application because of their very grave potential to become tools of regression rather than progression. I do not mean progressive in a capital, developmental and therefore value-increased way. 'Progressive' here is intended to be a force for alteration of the traditional subject, progression as transformation rather than linear value-increase. Regression could mean a backward trail towards infantilism, which of course is overwritten with an adult subject, that is not so much an infant but an infant-driven subject, or a subject driving to return back rather than become different. Or it could mean an annihilative drive towards nothingness, from the anorexic drive for non-being, to the male hysteric drive for the mourning of his subjectivity or a drug addict's drive for becoming something self-destructive.² I include also as a regressive term the aggressive drive which seeks not only to encompass the subject but others, so that the death which the subject incorporates with aggression is manifest outwardly to include violence towards others, a forcing of the death drive upon others. Implicit in all these so-called regressive incarnations of death however is the affirmation of life as not polar to death but a force, which compels death, or covertly the death drive evolves because of the very being of life. I will explain further on that life is not a thing or an element that is constituted in any material or ontological way. Life is, rather, force and that force is compelled by the death drive, by the presence of death itself as a force and so the circle repeats where life drives death and death

² In reference to the anorexic I am thinking most specifically of Lacan's concept of a death drive as becoming *rien*, as discussed in Ragland, Ellie. 'Lacan's Concept of the Death Drive'. *Essays on the Pleasures of Death; From Freud to Lacan*. New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 107; the male hysteric which occurs in Lingis, 1989 and is most prolific (and will be discussed further on) in Kroker, Arthur and Kroker, Marilouise. 'The Hysterical Male. One Libido?' In Kroker, Arthur and Kroker, Marilouise, eds. *The Hysterical Male; New Feminist Theory*. New World Perspectives, Cultural Text Series. Houndsmill: Macmillan Education Ltd. 1991, pp. ix-xiv. The 'bad' form of becoming as drug addict or suicide is from Deleuze and Guattari, 'Becoming Intense, Becoming Animal,' 1987, pp. 286.

makes clear the force of life. This convoluted idea will become clearer in the next section, sufficient to say here that death is not the opposite of life in terms of force, drive or transformative effects. Life and death feed off each other and so my aim of transforming the subject towards other consciousness harnesses these drives within the subject. Because the context of my thesis is limited to the subject and a singular relationship it has with the television one concept of death is too limited. Any version of the term 'death' will indicate a particular catalogue of definitions and in this section I will force a viewing, desiring subject into those situations which refer to death, sometimes contextually expected, such as death film, and also unexpected, such as viewing forensics with a non-'scientific eye'.

How does this section relate to the entire work? It is easy to fathom a subject in or with pleasure, and a subject perverting, but where do we locate a subject in death? The reason death is so valuable here is because it is so volatile and ethically problematic. Ethics demands we consider a specific other, not simply an anything outside ourselves, while justifying all claims we as subjects make.³ Death is a demand to consider both and others as one collective - because death is one experience which escapes no-one. One death and mass death become collective signifiers for action or re-action at the least. Death is what indicates world permeating news and the most intimate and emphatic personal loss. It is a concept that both conflates and emphasises individual lives at once by being considerable as a rupturing social event (genocide) or as a micro tragedy (the death of one life) or both at once (as is evident in many news reports of one death among many during war). Death always demands a consideration of the Other even in its most insipid form as a reflection of the fears of death embodied in the self. The form and the time death takes are often what forces us into consideration of an ethnic or sexed other through violence. Death is the final call to action for the self when it effects an other; death is what makes the self listen to an other only after the other is deceased. Death is what unifies every individual while also being the catalyst for individuals to consider each

³ This definition of ethics is mentioned in the introduction and is inspired by Seyla Benhabib's writings on ethics which will be discussed in detail in the conclusion.

other after a lifetime of ignorance. It is the most emphatic signifier to take notice of, whether in film or in politics or in consideration of 'real lives'. All discourses that argue disparate theories of pleasure and perversion, while arguing differing incarnations of death, agree to its inevitability, its finality and its terrible, irrefutable affect. So the only means by which I can utilise death for transforming subjectivity is not through theorising a subject-in-death but a subject in the affect-of-death. This term means a subject effected and irrefutably changed, hence affected totally as a corporeal subject, by a consideration of death. Such a consideration may be of images of death, but due to the volatility of the term it must also include any consideration of the concept itself and what it may mean to subjectivity.

This project also involves excavating the concept of the death of subjectivity when a subject of value (white, male etc) is not the subject referred to. Subjectivity figured as embodied being is also necessarily different to the death-of-man idea because the corpse is one of the most abject yet simultaneously pure-body states of human-ness, if not being. So before a consideration of death is utilised for transformative subjectivity, these versions of non-dominant subjectivity must engage with 'death', an engagement that until now has not been commonly described. Positing the subject without overvalued subjectivity-to-lose, in front of images of death, will hopefully create a simultaneous affect on the embodied viewer. The relationship between subject and death-image will mimic or become the catalyst for the 'death' of the static and stagnant subject through its affects of horror, disgust, fear, sorrow and a demand for (ethical) consideration. It will change the subject from the moment before, due to the abrasive nature of its imagery and the response it elicits. Death imagery traverses the real and the fake in a way that images, which confound the boundaries of perversion/normalcy and pleasure/unpleasure also, perform. But death imagery includes the demand for a grave, ethical consideration alongside its rupturing affect. These required implications ask why these particular images make such demands. Through a discussion of positive versus annihilative and other unethical versions of death (both unethical to the subject in transformation and unethical through ignoring

any concept of an other), as well as the 'real' versus the fake, the progressive affects of death imagery will begin to emerge alongside urgent questions the horror of these images ask.

My theorisation of death contrasts strongly with the concept of the Other, which is never attainable, and which Lacan sees as constitutive of the death drive.⁴ At the same time it fits perfectly with Deleuze & Guattari's becoming because it is within the self and is about transformation rather than assimilation, incorporation or satisfaction. A transformative death has implications for theorising the corpse in death. Death is usually constituted as a capital end, a cessation where the flesh becomes product, but to see death in this way does not work for my argument for two reasons. First, the corpse can never be theorised sufficiently as a conscious subject who is transforming, for obvious reasons. Only its potential for affect can be utilised. Following on from this, when the corpse is used transformatively its supreme status as the most abject and most used-up waste material is denied. Rather than using phantasmatic drive for death as psychoanalysis does, I am using material, immanent death, the abject dead that is detrimental to the psychoanalytic subject.⁵ Rather than giving death a traditionally nihilistic, regressive, 'dead' aim or drive I am giving it a transformative, vitalistic aim, and so rather than see the corpse as a capital waste-product I will bring in many different genres of discourse to theorise the very nature of death in the flesh. This approach is necessary to elucidate the difficulty any one discourse has in agreeing with an other as to the definition of, not only death, but the seemingly symbolically reduced and basic entity of the dead body.

The breadth spanned between empirical discourse on the 'truth' of the grave finality of death, and the playfulness with which the unreal world of aesthetics and representation, specifically the filmic, treats the subject of death, is a chasm which seems un-spannable. These disparate discourses were probably never

⁴ It is part of Lacan's formation of the nature of desire, where desire equals lack and the attainment of the lack will inevitably lead to death.

⁵ Cf. Kristeva, 1982, the most explicit theorisation of the corpse's detrimental effect on the psychoanalytic subject.

meant to become referents to each other.⁶ They certainly appear, both visually and linguistically, completely foreign. Both medicine, in particular for this discussion forensic pathology performed both for disease research and suspicious circumstance investigation, and films, specifically horror films, deal with death and the corpse. In many ways, the signifier 'death' common to both is their only commonality. Death to the forensic pathologist is something to read, to investigate and to unravel. The corpse is the textbook, the palimpsest of clues and solutions, the topography or map of narrative events. The corpse in horror film, despite the reputation of film as 'lower', less cultural and less intellectually demanding than forensics, is the object of the personal horror of death - subjective, immediate and visual without the clinical definitions or significations of science. The corpse in film is materially and spectacularly horrifying, an affect the clinical language of forensics never seems to read it as being. The corpse in film is also horrific due to its relationship with subjectivity, with self, with mortality and with life. Death in horror film is the fear of dying, the terror of being killed and the horror of the body's fragility. In forensics death is epistemological king, and the shadowy lives which inhabit the forensics texts of flesh are subjects of fading memory and relevance. Death comes *first* in forensics and last in film. That is, within a narrative system, the death of the flesh is the inaugural moment of forensics while the compulsion towards the horrification or annihilation of the body, specifically as container for the self, is the ultimate spectacle of film.

If medical and filmic discourses of death occupy polar opposites, an in-between position would seem a strange place to be. Yet there is already a place that demands the subject oscillate in orientation - this important in-between technological object of desire is the Internet. The Internet may be treated as a facility by which one can read forensic textbooks *or* have some gratuitous fun with curiosity. Only on the Internet (to my knowledge) are actual forensic pictures posted alongside a teenager's wise-ass comments, intended to offend,

⁶ Though some horror film special effects persons have used past medical experiences to assist the 'realness' of their work. Tom Savini, make-up creator for *Dawn of the Dead* among many other films, worked in Vietnam during the war photographing the wounded and killed for medical texts.

to fascinate and then to alleviate tensions with comedic comments.⁷ Here the discourses of forensics and aesthetic representation are made strange bedfellows in much the same way as I am attempting to merge and compare them. The result is unpredictable, but the merger may be useful in alleviating the shock that often occurs when a fan of hard-core horror films, such as myself, becomes frightened, nauseous and jaded towards the fragility of life upon investigating the equally hard-core world of forensics.

A Brief Introduction to Psychoanalytic Death

In this chapter I am concerned, with the *image* of death, the presentation and re-presentation within different discourses that death visually presents to a viewing audience, a forensic reader, a film watcher and an observer of social terrorism. Although Freud's death drive and the death phantasy spoken of by Lacan precede my discussion, my point about death is its phantasmatic image and the complete unavailability both of a knowledge of death or an expectation of it. Indeed, true to Lacan's concept of the Real, the subject may fantasise its own subjective idea of death and the relationship death has to the self, only as an idea and therefore not an image of the body in death or the corpse as the body of or as death. Freud's theories of the death drive have been pointed out continually as sketchy, exploratory and deliberately suggestive rather than empirical, not in a negative way but simply due to the revelatory quality of any concept that sees the self-preserving subject propelling itself towards death, 'driving' for it as such.⁸ Lacan sees death as the only potential for the subject

⁷ The most famous of these sites is rotten.com, but others such as goregallery.com are easy to find.

⁸ See especially the works of William H. Gillespie, In Sinason, Michael D.A., ed. *Life, Sex and Death. Selected Writings of William H. Gillespie*. The New Library of Psychoanalysis 23. London: Routledge. 1995. Gillespie repeatedly emphasises the difficulty psychoanalysis has with Freud's death drive primarily because it was formulated as a theory but never fully explicated. Ernest Jones thought the death drive antithetical to life force in *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, (3 volumes) London: Hogarth. 1962. Serge LeClaire (1975) *A Child is Being Killed; On Primary Narcissism and the Death Drive*. Trans. Marie-Claude Hays. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1998 and Jean Laplanche's *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, 1993, both express anxieties about the independence of the term 'death'. Each of these analysts juxtapose the death drive against another term in order to make sense of it as Freud himself did by having the death drive spring from the pleasure principle. In itself the death drive seems not only difficult to define but difficult to make sense of as an isolated drive.

who cannot ever experience a 'life', or only a version of striving towards 'life' through language and the symbolic order. Ellie Ragland summarises Lacan's concept of the death drive as altering over three theoretical eras. These are 1: Alienation from the world through the symbolic order, therefore constant frustration when drives are not met with Real satisfaction. This comes directly from Freud and is quite a literal interpretation of 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'⁹ mediated with Lacan's primary focus on the symbolic order as the only means by which experience occurs.¹⁰ 2: Language as a castrating element, which also castrates the subject's potential for jouissance (here I use Lacan's idea of jouissance as meaning 'life' or 'vitalistic drive', which implies desire/pleasure. Ragland interprets it as Lacan's direct definition of Freud's term 'libido'.) This castration by language is, according to Lacan and explicated by Ragland, the 'second death'; the death of the subject through the mortification of the physical body by the symbolic order is a form of alienation from any potential jouissance.¹¹ The psychical subject fears the death of 'me' although death *only* occurs through corporeal derangement. So in a way the subject is already dead and the drive for death is actually a drive for life, or a drive for not being already dead, which leads to the third phase. 3. Objects of desire/drive as always lost, or about to be lost, which also includes Lacan's *objet petit a*. This includes an object-ive to be satisfied where satisfaction means loss. Lacan and Ragland point to the implicit void of "language, being and body"¹² which from Lacan I would interpret as a void in *body because of 'language and being'*, the already-dead body as such. Ragland claims all drive is apparently because of this void and so the level zero of being is empty, something like a voracious abyss. This stands in great conflict with Freud's idea that the body is always hyper-full and needs satisfaction of drive to unleash the permanent tension found in being in order to attain a level state.

The idea that death *unto itself* is drive enough is rarely entertained and I will use it against other drives and against differing versions of itself later in this chapter. There are also feminist anxieties about the death drive, as well as some anxieties about feminist death drives (I am thinking especially of Klein) which are closer to my own opinions and hence will also be referred to later.

⁹ Freud, (1920) 1991, pp.218-268.

¹⁰ Ragland, 1995, p. 85.

¹¹ Ragland, 1995, p. 86.

¹² Ragland, 1995, p. 87.

However Lacan's lost object is the drive for life, not for a material 'life' which may be grasped and attained satisfactorily, thus curing the already dead subject, rather the idea of life is perpetuated and driven towards because of the irrefutable unattainability of the object/permanent satisfaction.

Loss drives life but nothing concrete is or constitutes life. This leads to an idea both Freud and Lacan touch upon which may be a single connector of their theories to my own about death. That is, life in itself is a force not existence, being or consciousness. Freud juxtaposes the death drive against the life force, and points out that they stand not diametrically opposed but the drive for death is a drive first for abundance, procreation and development. Death itself, in a negative sense, is more closely aligned with the dead corpse, that is stagnancy, inertia and a cessation of life-drive. In 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' Freud paraphrases Hartmann by stating "Hartmann does not regard the appearance of a dead body - a dead portion of the living substance - as the criterion of death, but defines death as the 'termination of individual development'."¹³ Repetition plays an important role in this development because Freud begins by claiming continual repetition constitutes death through stagnation yet later goes on to admit "repetition gives pleasure by reducing tension or conflict."¹⁴ Raglan points out the contradictions between the importance of repetition for

¹³ Freud (1920) 1991, p. 253. From Hartmann, M. *Tod und Fortpflanzung*. Munich, 1906, p. 29 (publication company not given). Freud like Lacan himself seems to observe the changing phases of what a death drive may be. He states "We might suppose that the life instincts or sexual instincts which are active in each cell take the other cells as their object, that they partly neutralise the death instincts (that is the processes set up by them) in those cells and thus preserve their life; while the other cells do the same for *them*, and still others sacrifice themselves in the performance of this libidinal function." (1920) 1991, p. 256.

¹⁴ Freud paraphrased in Raglan, 1995, p. 88. The earlier rendering of the annihilative quality of repetition remains the most frequently utilised however, for example in *Jaques Lacan; A Feminist Introduction* Elizabeth Grosz describes the death drive: "the compulsion to repeat emerges and threatens to engulf the subject, to reduce it to the inertia of non existence." 1991, p. 151. The use of repetition in masochism is where this idea becomes most complicated and most useful. In masochism the repetition is the most important element, which constitutes the drive to keep going yet never affirms or denies that the satisfaction awaited will always be the same despite the fact the act presumably is. Masochism is pleasure before the act and hence before satisfaction so the death Lacan explicates that arises after satisfaction actually occurs *at the moment of satisfaction*. Life and vitality are found in the moment of expectation, which would be most usefully satisfied if the satisfaction never actually came. For this reason masochism is about waiting for life, a third death perhaps or a pre-birth. This idea is most clearly expounded in Deleuze, 1989a.

subjective stability and the vitality of change which also posits itself as necessary in order to avoid death. She states

Yet one cannot satisfy desire for the new - for change - by repeating the known, for this grounds individuals in something they value above all else: the consistency of the expected. This is the death that drives us all in our daily lives.¹⁵

Lacan uses the term *jouissance* instead of the life drive but in the most basic of understandings his idea amounts to one similar to Freud's. That is, the life drive, the pleasure drive or the desires for *jouissance*/to desire are all elements which constitute the death drive in psychoanalysis rather than defy it. Desire for *jouissance* always ends in non-satisfaction and hence 'little death' but the drive never stops and never kills and hence the desire for satisfaction continues. If satisfaction was achieved for Lacan this would mean that a) the symbolic order had been broken out of (as in psychosis) and b) attainment of satisfaction would lead directly to death. Pleasure satisfaction equals death, therefore, the drive towards satisfaction that never achieves its aim assures continuance. Ragland points out that "Psychosis is the true death state where *jouissance* prevails over the law, which is simply the law of exchange."¹⁶ Death is attainment, which defies the law and hence defies all three of Lacan's preventatives for satisfaction that constitute his version(s) of the death drive. Laplanche's reading of the very title of Freud's death drive essay fits with this idea that satisfaction equals death, he states

The displacement of the term 'pleasure principle' should not mislead us: the pleasure principle, insofar as, throughout the text, it is posited as being of a piece with 'its modification' as the reality principle, is henceforth situated on the side of constancy. It is 'its most radical form' or its '*beyond*' which, as the Nirvana principle, reasserts the priority towards the tendency towards absolute zero or the 'death drive'.¹⁷

¹⁵ Raglan, 1985, p. 90.

¹⁶ Raglan, 1985, p. 104. Exchange here being the exchange of 'raw' drive for symbols and ritual, which assures entrance into and prevention of any existence, experience, satisfaction or knowledge outside of the symbolic.

¹⁷ Laplanche, 1993, p. 117.

By focussing on images of death, both forensic and filmic, I am veering away from any drive towards death by the subject, rather concentrating on the relationship between a viewing audience and an image of death they may be unfamiliar with. I think the *image* of 'real' death and the psychoanalytic drive towards death through desire are very different. Freud's death drive and Lacan's explication of the phantasmatic relationship the subject has with her/his own death, imperceivable because the subject is a "superabundance of knowledge"¹⁸, seems to relish the existence of no image of death. Psychoanalytically death is all about phantasy, desire and an absence of being that is explicitly unattainable and henceforth un-image-inable, it is a theoretical death, a death in theory. If there is a moment in which to point out the giant fissure between Lacan's Real and a generic use of the term 'real' it is here. Lacan's Real is the relationship produced by the subject's consciousness butting up against certain elements outside of it that react against it, the 'lack of a lack' being the most quoted definition. It is the unknowable that is outside subjectivity and hence necessarily always and only mediated through it. The world for a Lacanian subject is all phantasy and no embodiment except the idea one has about its own embodiment. This is not suggesting that there is embodiment outside the subject's own phantasy about it, however there are moments of experience where the body expresses its foreign-ness to subjectivity which elucidate that the subject's body, though only known through subjectivity, is in no way controlled by it. Lacan's Real may be experienced during one of these moments - from a violent wound, through illness to a stomach rumble. The idea that the Real is 'outside' and the subject knows it from the 'inside' is not a satisfactory figuration when considering an embodied subject, where the independence of the organs constitutes a facet of the Real. Death is the most Real experience of the real because it occurs when the body succumbs to the Real, or rather, when the subject succumbs to the Real-ness of the body.

¹⁸ Lacan, 'The Subject and the Other; Aphanasis' in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. 1994, p. 223.

Both Lacan and Freud are explicitly talking about a subject, about a phantasmatically wholly psychical person, an idea rather than flesh. I do not wish to suggest that there is an other means by which to know the Real, or that Lacan was incorrect in asserting that reality may only be known through the subject and language. Neither am I saying Lacan's version of the Real is the only and best way to imagine that which exists outside consciousness, or that in this line of thought consciousness is the primary and perhaps solitary means of being that will be eradicated at the point of death. But by placing theories of death in the mind, the mental states, development and imagination of the self, the subject as the idea of the self (precisely that which is eradicated by death) is fiercely protected from and repressive of any fleshly form of death. The flesh that presents itself as a subject-free body is an alien carriage, for Freud, as for Lacan. It is no longer the image of death or representative of death, it is representative of the abjection of the corpse only¹⁹, and is rarely mentioned except in cases of psychosis.²⁰ For Freud and Lacan the mind/body Cartesian split is perhaps most evident in their discussions about death. Discussion of cadavers, of death imagery are overwritten instead with discussions of psychical demise, of a drive for death where the subject compels itself phantasmatically towards death, but never an image of death only an absence of being. It is a dilemma, which exists almost as a trophy of becoming a whole, mentally healthy individual - that only when we have our subjectivity stable and firmly in place can we fear death, the loss of our finely cultivated subjectivities. The further away we get from infantility and from our bodies the more we fear the loss of our subjective selves, that which keeps us separate from our bodies. This may be one reason why the death drive seems so anti-flesh, so flesh-less.

¹⁹ Cf. Kristeva's comment, where the horror of the abject is a means by which the subject can lose itself by confronting abject matter outside of itself and incorporating it or never fully expelling it, however for Kristeva the corpse remains the *most* abject of objects. in *Powers of Horror* 1982, p. 3, 25 etc.

²⁰ For example, Freud's patient President Schreber who believed himself a decomposing corpse was analysed as someone whose psychical subjective 'death', his psychosis, was causing a phantasy of becoming dead or being dead. The imagery of the corpse, of being corpse is not discussed. The President's flesh is not discussed. Freud, Sigmund. (1910) 'Schreber'. *Case histories* 2. Trans. Alix and James Strachey edited by James Strachey assisted by Angela Richards and Alan Tyson. 1979.

Following from this argument is Melanie Klein's idea that the death drive is a part of forming the subject rather than enveloping the subject after it is complete enough to be able to cope with it. Jacqueline Rose, in her use of Klein's work, states:

If Klein was objected to, it was precisely because she was seen as bringing the death drive under the sway of a subject, as making the death drive constitutive of a subject, who is not yet enough of a subject for death to be mastered or controlled.²¹

The subject has to exist for the death drive to form as a secondary or tertiary qualification of subject-hood. Covertly, according to Klein and Rose, the 'death instinct', a primary function in the terminology of Freud, exists within the infant, evolves with the subject and becomes a drive, as do other instincts of infancy (eating etc.) when it is overwritten with desire as the subject evolves into itself. This extremely brief 'history' of the concept of death is deliberate because I do not wish to set up too many ideas about death only to have to re-explain why they are not what I wish to focus on. The psychoanalytic field of death and its implicit relationship with the subject is useful in order to talk about death historically, or archaeologically. It is also an interesting 'bridging' discourse; psychoanalysis is a 'scientific humanism' or a 'human science' that traverses both fields I am most interested in: the visual in film (historically humanistic) and forensic science (archaeological excavator of the body, a knowledge-seeking science). But my main reason for not wishing to utilise psychoanalysis and its traditional explications of death is the very place in which it differs from both the visually aesthetic and the forensic-scientific. Psychoanalysis is concerned with what I would call the 'invisible' part of death - the desire for death; the psychical dilemmas caused by death and the actuality of the subject no longer being. I am interested in a desire for visuals of death, representations of corp(se)oreal death and most importantly, the transformative affect of these upon a subject. A death drive perhaps, but one which is entirely

²¹ Rose, Jacqueline. 1993, p. 150.

different from and could not be further from the 'reality' of complete absence of subjectivity. To repeat myself from above I wish to explore the visual because I do not think there is *any means* by which to know death, no matter how much therapy the subject is willing to go through in order to understand its relationship to death. That is all anyone can really ever discuss and is all anyone ever claims to do - discuss the relationship between the self and the (unknowable) idea of death.

Regression and Aggression

Traversing the psychoanalytic theoretical realm of the death drive to what I call the corporeal version of the death drive is the next area I wish to discuss. Here I will take some very common psychoanalytic terms, such as aggression and psychosis, and look at the ways in which these terms are themselves death drives pointed away from the subject and hence, although they are corporal death drives and therefore beneficial to my argument, they represent the regressive and a-ggressive externalised drive for a transformed flesh that continues the nihilism of the perfectly-formed male subject and psychoanalytic theorist. Regressive and aggressive affects have a far more horrific incarnation in the schema I am evolving of a creative utilisation of death. They do not take into account vitalism - a force towards rigorous life (though not existence, being or any other life that insinuates static), an essential factor that is necessarily involved in formulating an ethics of somatic death. Within such a vitalistic formulation of the utilisation of death is the affirmation of the value of existence (force or Deleuze and Guattari's haecceity) both within the self and within but not extricable from others. The force of the self is only one force amongst many that give each moment of force a certain unique intensity. Without this vitalistic formulation a nihilistic version of the affect of death creates a self introspectively obsessed, and completely unaware of the haecceity of the self or of others, but only aware of the loss of the supremely valued object of its own subjectivity.

One version of utilising death as a transformative concept has been that of the destructive, aggressive and psychoanalytic psychotic subject. This version was evinced originally through psychoanalysis but continues through the popular emergence of serial killers as side-show subjectivity for analysis in novels and film. Such a form of subjectivity poses a problem for my theories because of the grave ethical implications of 'becoming' destructive and aggressive in order to transform. Although aggression and psychosis both antagonise normalised subjectivity and are processual without necessarily becoming fixed modes of being, they are regressive due to their privileging of the id and pre-symbolism, and destructive due to the reverberations of the actions which come from the aggressively affected subject. Aggression has particular problems that have been both repudiated and embraced in psychoanalysis. Melanie Klein exposes innate infantile aggression as basic to desire while Freud suggests that aggression is always written over with desire. But what both indicate is the necessary something which is infantile about aggression, which relates to the id, immediate satisfaction and demands which are not possible and, eventually, ethical. Aggression is, at its most basic level, desire that is supremely self-oriented in a different way to the self-orientation I am advocating through watching film. Aggression is the suffering of others, or the Other, as a means to achieve satisfaction and as a by-product of the demand for immediate satisfaction. For example, murder, which is an aggressive satisfaction of a desire, or robbery, an aggressive by-product which harms the other because of the fulfilment of the self's desire regardless of its implications. The focus in my theories on a singular self as opposed to a social or communitarian subject, primarily concerns introspective corporeality and consciousness, *not* those drives and transformative feelings which necessarily impinge upon others. For this reason aggression and psychosis do not possess the ethical potential that a positive form of ruptured or processual subjectivity would have implicitly. Aggressive and psychotic embracing of externalised death represents the very emphatic divide between representation and viewing and the closest one could ever get to a Real affect, that of causing a certain event which sees bodies and beings destroyed. Even at the most crucial point in the causing of death by one

person of another, representation is still all we have²² and it does not take away from the visceral gravity of the situation. But this gravity cannot be opposed to 'only' representation, either fake or filmed, because even the aggressive act of murder still faces a representation of 'death' at the moment when the person becomes corpse.

Mark Seltzer in *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture* addresses the dilemma of representation.²³ Seltzer's argument focuses around the inability of the new American subjectivity of serial killer to differentiate the fissure between reality and representation, or rather, between the self and representation. The serial killer comprehends and fulfils (him/her²⁴) self through reading about what a serial killer is. The public serial murderer of FBI profiles internalises the maker of death in order to become the means by which to understand and be the self. Further the fascination by the 'public' (and always *in* public, either in the home or in the street but never in the self) for torn bodies is similarly internalised by the killer to be a part of the self. However the self of the serial killer, Seltzer suggests, is murky territory which seems un-formulated. The killer is called the minus-man, the one-in-ten or person-next-door invisible man-who-performs-man man.²⁵ So two interdependent features constitute the killer for Seltzer; his not entirely formulated independent self, and his inability to comprehend this murky self divided from representation/technology/fantasy/architecture and a whole gamut of other twentieth century symbols. In summary either the killer has not entered the (proper) world of symbols or rather, he has entered it too whole-heartedly. I am going to avoid this basic Lacanian interpretation without entirely doing

²² As in the Lacanian Real where the real is only ever a representation of the world to the subject by or through consciousness.

²³ Seltzer, Mark. *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture*. New York: Routledge. 1998.

²⁴ I will from hereon use the pronoun 'him' to refer to the serial killer subjectivity creation because Seltzer prefers it and statistically the FBI profiling department maintains profiles are only relevant to the great majority of serial killers who are male.

²⁵ Seltzer uses all the above terms, and he cites them as being used in FBI profiling of serial killers also. Anyone familiar with films that deal with serial killers or even talk shows about them will also be familiar with these terms.

away with psychoanalysis for the moment. Seltzer states "... the sex crime, more generally, is routinely experienced in terms of the violent passage of fantasy into act, private desire into public spectacle."²⁶ The serial killer has private desire that becomes public spectacle. Seltzer says that the killer cannot differentiate between any form of public spectacle and private desire. The killer *internalises* violent spectacle, yet later Seltzer states he *externalises* private phantasy. This confusion is not, however, a contradiction. Rather it is evidence of the very fluidity of what constitutes inside and outside in all its many binaries for the subjectivity of serial killer. Which posits two problems. First Seltzer points out

there is the permanent *branding* of potentially dangerous people: the formation of a permanent class of the stigmatised person, a brand of person, marked and identified for all time by his criminal acts. This enters the law despite the fact that rates of recidivism (that is, the rate at which acts reconfirm identities) are in fact lower for the high-risk offenders required to register themselves than for any other groups. (About 19% compared to about 22%).²⁷

Seltzer rightly points to the difficulty of making a certain subject-type conform to a type that is being constituted by its non-divisibility from 'everything else' in culture, but he is also suggesting that the problems in creating serial killer subjectivity be rectified through empirical and 'truthful' statistical numbers. By doing this Seltzer enforces a very traditional concept of subjectivity, that acts in many cases create/affirm subjectivity (even if it is only 22%) and therefore produces a non-profile of the serial killer, albeit a fairly rigid one. By non-profile I mean, he is stating that a serial killer cannot be placed into a conventional subjectivity mould, yet it is because 81% of serial killers do not fit into such a mould that they should not be 'typed'. Is Seltzer succeeding in creating his own anti-subjectivity mould for serial killers, suggesting that at least 81% are the same, fixing his model into a real, quantifiable representation

²⁶ Seltzer, 1998, p. 3.

²⁷ Seltzer, 1998, pp. 3-4. The statistic comes from Michael Taussig's *The Nervous System*. New York: Routledge. 1992, p. A19.

of the negativity of death? One of the largest problems of psychoanalysis performed on anything less than a one-to-one basis is that it affirms various slots of pathology each psyche may be fitted into. In this respect both psychoanalysis and the serial killer that embraces a 'real' death drive over a psychical one, deny the *potentials* of death as a transformative concept, even before the most important question of ethics is addressed. Both affirm a type that conforms to behavioural rules even if they are the rules of non-conformity. The second problem is the pathologisation of a fluidity of interior/exterior and its related binaries towards an explanation of serial killers closes off the potentials of fluidity as well as those of a re-figuring of death by assuming a body extricated from or before 'culture', overlaid with the outside world.²⁸ By using the serial killer (or the psychotic) as the pathological subject of non-differentiation between inside/outside a presumption of *a priori* matter of the flesh, knowable before and as a level zero of being is assured. Covertly the serial killers inside/outside dilemma in Seltzer could be seen as ignoring the body altogether and focussing instead on psychic pathology, where representation, desire and subjectivity are all located explicitly in a Cartesian mind field, a process of mapping the mind. While the killer only ever 'kills' a body, the death of the subject the killer does not know or consider is what causes outrage at murder. No subject knows their own body enough to prevent its derangement causing death, except perhaps surgeons on a superficial level (what the surgeon wants for a body is not necessarily what the surgeon will be able to achieve). Flesh in the analysis of serial killers is completely repressed despite its use as an artefact of crime. *All* a serial killer does is destroy the flesh. This is enough to constitute ethically unacceptable behaviour. Culture, however, only focuses upon the dead-subject, which both fails to address what the killer has done and hence fails to comprehend death on its basic pure-corporeal level. Culture is affected by the corporeal but represses it, in order to focus on the subject, who might offer a potential site of study or knowledge.

²⁸ This idea has been most thoroughly discussed by Judith Butler in *Bodies That Matter* and also Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook in 'The Haunted Flesh; Corporeal Feminism and the Poetics of (dis)Embodiment' *Signs* Vol. 24, no.1, Autumn 1998, pp. 35-68.

The most immediately repressed point is that there is no subjectivity or even potential for subjectivity extricable from living flesh.

The subject 'serial killer' and its relatively new pathologisation fit well with psychoanalytic psychosis theory. Where the two fields merge produces a good example of the regressive version of the uses of death. Regression is the backward facing form of transformation that necessarily traverses familiar realms, while progression is the forward facing process that aims towards difference, unfamiliarity and the rupture of integrated subjectivity.²⁹ Both progressive and aggressive uses of death utilise violence but where the progressive violently transforms the singular self, the aggressive effects (the) Other(s). It is destructive in the most negative sense of the word. The aggressive drive is present in most psychoanalytic analyses and is most explicitly theorised by Melanie Klein. Jacqueline Rose appropriated the theories of Klein within a wider context, from psychoanalysis to sociology and particularly war, Seltzer has taken both Klein and Rose as a theoretical basis of his serial killer theories. This seems to be an easy evolution for this form of regression – murder of individuals and murder *en masse*. Implicit in Klein's work is the infantilism of the aggressive impulses. And indeed, instead of an oedipal child that desires the (usually opposite sexed) parent while feeling aggressive towards the Other, Klein posits the proximity of the child to its closest parent as "something which devours".³⁰ Aggression in Klein is the level zero of impulse and desire and in the infant is dangerous because the infant knows no differentiation between phantasy and act. This theory of Klein's is evinced in exactly the same manner that Seltzer explicates the serial killers lack of differentiation between the world and the self, which leads on from a lack of differentiation between phantasy and 'real' action. Anxiety, which leads to aggression, is implicit in the lack of differentiation in an infant. Rose states, "Thus the child's anxiety becomes the foundation for the first experience of 'as if': 'We surmise that the child feels as if'; 'He behaves as if', to my mind, is the

²⁹ Although in Deleuze and Guattari becoming is anti-progress because it is not linear, progressive is here a term used tactically in opposition to regression and aggression rather than as ideal goal.

³⁰ Klein paraphrased by Rose, 1993, p. 140.

same thing as saying 'He has phantasies...'.³¹ Both the child and the serial killer are unable to experience phantasy as distinct from action, or, both experience phantasy so effectively they behave and feel in a manner suggesting the phantasy impinges upon their actions and reactions, an effect not necessarily appropriate for 'real world' behaviour. This may suggest that I am over-differentiating the inside and outside, that I am pointing to an essential division between act and thought. I figure this relationship, rather, as one which regulates the subject, both corporeally and experientially, as able to experience drive, phantasy and pleasure introspectively, without the need to experience a capital act or separate product from such phantasy: locating the phantasy of others in and of the self. The ethically experiencing corporeal subject thus regulates action, which comes after this primary experience of others in the self. Phantasies and visceral strata of the self are considered as others - the self is constituted through many connections on many levels of foreignness and familiarity, and considered as such. That is, a subject who has already identified its own self's others will, in a social situation, exist as a continuum of how they already exist, rather than consider others based only on what is outside the self. Considering others of the self forms a fluid mode of consideration of others, both their specificities and their potentials, but not limited by such specificities. Consciousness of an other is here based not on the interior/exterior model of thought but on the ability to consider every moment as a certain quality with all its haecceity, be it only within one self in front of an image or in a social situation where the others within the self are part of the consideration of all others.³² By demanding the subject be figured as corporeally embodied the inside/outside division can not survive. Flesh is the stratum, which traverses and potentially annihilates inside/outside,

³¹ Rose, 1993, p. 149.

³² This theory is admittedly rudimentary, but my purpose remains to theorise in detail only the self and its potential others within the scope of this thesis. A theorisation of this self in a communitarian situation would require much more space and a larger consideration of the juxtaposition of real lived lives with concepts of potential modes of being. This project will be introduced in the conclusion in order that any real benefits of such a theory are not only phantasmatic and self-obsessive, but are benefits towards breaking down difference as hierarchical. It will remain introductory however, to be further analysed and critiqued in the future.

phantasy/action and psychical/Real because flesh is the subject (inside) and sensations of ex-istence (outside) indivisibly and simultaneously.

Relating back to the first section of the thesis which posits a theory of a pleasure as a desire to change the subject and to experience the self differently, the problem with the regressive serial killer and the infant lies in the inability to experience the self differently because the self does not exist as such. Even if we take this non-differentiated body which could have its own potentials for subversion, we cannot take a body that demands action and effect in the 'real' world as subversive because of the real capital desire-act-effect equation which this mode of figuring phantasy demands. No matter where the body is located in this equation, it is still an equation with a recognisable aim towards a 'product'. In the case of the infant the product is mastery over the world, which involves a separation of the self from the world in order to rectify what Rose calls Klein's "fundamental negativity which [Klein's] papers put at the base of subjectivity".³³ For Seltzer's killers it is the activity of murder, actual forced death as opposed to death as concept or representation that demands the corpse exist as capital waste (hence outrage at the act as one of reckless wastefulness).

Both the infant and the serial killer represent a relationship to death as regressive and re-enforce a capital transformation with a definite aim/end. In returning these theories for a moment to traditional psychoanalysis, it is the very notion of the Real, which here could be seen as the production of capital (symbols, language), over phantasy or representation which desires affect more than product that destroys both life and the death drive. Earlier, I discussed the non-polar relationship between life/desire and death drive. Serge Leclaire, in his case study of a woman unable to desire because of the early death of her parents, discusses the material power of phantasy as vital in asserting the formation of desire. His patient 'Thérèse' experienced the death of her mother and father at the Kleinian moment in her infancy when she wished for their death. Hence her aggressive drive was actually satiated, and thus all the

³³ Rose, 1993, p. 149.

elements implicit in the non-satisfaction of phantasy, namely continuation of desire, were absent. She actually experienced a satisfaction and closure to Lacan's eternal dissatisfaction of drive constitutive of desire. Leclaire sums up the importance of the death drive as dissatisfaction thus,

It is the death drive that in and through the figure of the tyrant to be killed, and the primary narcissistic representative to be destroyed, defines the place of the unconscious representatives as both one's native land of exile and lost paradise to be regained. It is the death drive that ensures, in a word, the presence/absence of the Other, without which there can be no speaking and desiring 'I'.³⁴

Paradise is that which can never be regained so as to ensure the continuance of the death drive and hence the life force which is inspired by frustrated desire. I have pointed out earlier the limits which psychoanalysis has in its insistence on a formulated subject that desires the Other, yet in this instance it is useful in explicating the necessity of having an other. For my theories it is the other(s) within ourselves that tends us towards potentially different consciousness. Why the other(s)? Because an/the other(s) assures the maintenance of an ethics by assuring a non-satisfaction of actual death drive phantasy, which is the dissatisfied death drive. This ethics addresses the sanctity of the existence of others, assuring the Other is considered in relation to the drives of the self so that the self, in attaining satisfaction, does not destroy others. By first locating others within the self, the self need no longer recognise a concrete barrier between the 'I' and 'everything else'. Situations of desire and drive can occur within the self transforming as they can occur in contact with others, so that satisfaction does not mean death for the object of desire and the desiring subject, but change for the self and potentially for other selves. The problem of the death drive driven outwards and satisfied is the aggressive violence of the serial killer towards the undifferentiated self that has no other. The murderous death drive of psychoanalysis must remain a drive and not a reality in order to affirm the life/desire or libidinal drives. While desire for death (of self or other)

³⁴ Leclaire, Serge, 1998, p. 43.

is a drive it is affirmative; when it is satisfied it changes to nihilism and the death drive is simply reduced to death.

Something is killed when phantasy is satisfied; in the case of Thérèse it was the life drive of desire, in that of the serial killer it is others. The death drive which assures the presence/absence of the Other always assures an other while the serial killer assures the annihilation of anything other by conflating the self with everything around him. I am not suggesting here that the maintenance of a rigid barrier of self is the answer, exactly the opposite. What I aim towards is the deconstruction of the self as object in eternally frustrated situations with other objects. The self should not be killed off, neither should it be maintained. Transformation as a strategy is a refiguring of the barriers of self and experience, rather than an annihilation of any concept of self, such as the serial killer exhibits. By exhibiting a disregard for boundaries of inside and outside, the serial killer engages with and reaffirms the importance of this binary. In Seltzer's argument, the inability to conceptualise self outside of environment becomes pathological, while I wish to do away with such dichotomous concepts all together. Going beyond the Cartesian split, the primary inside/outside binary, means going beyond those forms of pathology, which maintain its importance. The binary of inside and outside is a further evolved form, a macrocosmic version, of Cartesianism. The pathology of the serial killer as undifferentiated is a further articulation of Cartesian-driven pathologies like addiction, where the 'body' has an addiction the 'mind' cannot control. The serial killer is an aspect of the environment that cannot be controlled from the 'inside'. In this chapter the relationship of the subject to death must go beyond the division of both mind/body and inside/outside because the aim of the thesis is to theorise a new consciousness based on an exploration of horror, viscosity and other un-theorised consciousness implicit in and not divided from daily experience (which includes phantasy and does not define experience as capital act). These are not privileged sites but starting points and the body of new consciousness is not an end but an ongoing process. A process by definition must progress, yet like the phantasy of psychoanalysis it never attains. Unlike psychoanalysis, however, it never has an object or level

of attainment in mind. Death in its representation unnerves the subject and hence it is from here that it shall be used as a means to begin the processual transforming (but never transformed) self.

Death and Representation

Where psychoanalysis discusses the self in terms of the psychical my concern is with that of the visual. I choose this area not simply because my interest is in cinema, (many articles exist about the psychical relationship between a frightening narrative and the fear present in the 'mind' of the audience) but because my interest is also in that which has been 'invisibled' in the world but is made most explicitly visible in horror film and forensics. It is perhaps wrong of me to choose to use only those discourses concerned with the visual; it may embed me in the very discursive bias that I have argued against in terms of visual economies when science and phallogocentric language tries to 'capture' knowledge through what is visual. But, as I have also stated in the chapter on pleasure, the visual is, of course, not implicitly phallogocentric; what has been made invisible, or is never seen in languages of science, is the element or focus that elucidates the idea of an entirely visual economy as problematic. This chapter will hopefully present a certain alternative image of the shock of the visual aspect of death, (as opposed to the fear of death, or quiet respect for death, the concealment of death) a discourse which itself has remained relatively invisible and indeed has been overcoded with an enormous amount of prohibition and sanctioning in terms of what is 'suitable' and 'unsuitable' for which discursive representation. My main question is where is death in the visual when it is divided so violently into the discourses of the aesthetic and the scientific, yet *seems* to be representing the same, or a similar, image? In terms of my emphasis on the visual, there is no other sense that arouses such sanctioning and prohibition. In my chapter on pleasure I quoted Braidotti discussing 'medical pornography'. Is forensics to the forensic scientist or coroner the same as that which is pleasure to the horror fan? Is it death porn? What is the pleasure in such confrontations with death and the

almost ceremonial activities that surround both (special processes to follow: for the coroner, legal processes and even surgical processes; for the film fan, the rating system, the viewing/borrowing system; and both trying to find the ultimately outrageous spectacle)? Is the overwriting of vision for pleasure with vision for knowledge an attempt to prevent pleasure being 'outed' from unsuitable arenas? Pleasure is kept a secret. It is one of the invisibilised aspects of any science, such as forensics, which works within a visual economy. The scientist as such is invisible and hence any drive or pleasure he may exhibit is invisible. Are we to believe that any confession of pleasure from the empirical scientist is proof of the subjectivity of knowledge that feminist theory has already and anyway confirmed (though of course the sciences are yet to catch up with feminism in agreeing with this)?

Truth and knowledge are supposed to be available in the visual. Even psychoanalysis is an attempt to visualise the psyche through language. Is the visual such a ripe territory for being misconstrued because it is always pornography? What is wrong with pornography? Implicitly nothing, until it is given a moral or, in this case, subjective value judgement, where the images signify only one meaning.³⁵ One meaning is fine only in synthesis with other meanings, but when one meaning becomes *the* meaning the image then signifies *truth*. Perhaps the prohibition on the representation of 'real' death in horror films/mondo films/snuff films is that truth, when it affords subjective pleasure, is no longer 'true'. Paul Virilio quotes Walter Benjamin as saying "cinemagoers have become examiners, but examiners having fun",³⁶ then himself states "If we turn the phrase around, things look a bit less promising: what we are now dealing with is an audience for whom the investigation, the

³⁵ The pornography debate is a huge one that is outside my field, however it, like my work, raises important questions about the nature of representation itself. Two important texts for this debate are Williams, 1989, and Williams, 1991. Another two interesting feminist articles are Berkeley Kaite's 'The Pornographic Body Double: Transgression is the Law'. In Kroker, Arthur and Kroker, Marilouise, eds. *Body Invaders: Panic Sex In America*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1987, pp. 150-168 and Barbara Creed's 'Pornography and Pleasure: The Female Spectator.' *Australian Journal of Screen Theory*. No 9-16 Issue 15/16. 1981-3, pp. 67-88.

³⁶ Benjamin, Walter. *L'Homme, le Langage et la Culture*. Paris: Denoël/Gonthier. Year and page reference not given. In Virilio, Paul (1988) *The Vision Machine*. Trans. Julie Rose. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1994, pp. 34-5.

test, has become fun... Nothing is sacred anymore because nothing is now meant to be inviolable. This is the tracking down of darkness, the tragedy brought about by the exaggerated love of light".³⁷ Virilio's anxiety about excavating everything visually is about the falsity that all knowledge can be discovered if we keep looking. I would, however, at this moment in history argue with Benjamin that cinemagoers are not examiners, because the 'look' of the examiner is kept fiercely distinct from the look of the audience. Certainly the audience can examine, but only so long as the pretext of 'light' or un-serious examination is maintained, the darkness of the cinema being a forced form of darkness that is meant to remind the audience that the 'truth' of the film being examined is entirely artificial. This environment juxtaposes with the hyper-lit autopsy room where by illuminating everything, an environment specifically aimed at discovering knowledge by expelling darkness is presented. The darkness Virilio nostalgically longs for is artificially forced into the cinema. When this darkness is removed, along with the ultra-light of the coroner's room, and the image is placed in a lounge room, where 'real' news death sits alongside 'fake' death, the role of the examiner and the viewer-for-pleasure is entirely conflated. Virilio points out that all examiners are audience, an observation that conforms to post-modernity's stripping away at science. Audiences are disembodied eyes collectively viewing. Like scientists, they tend to watch without being, to be situated as observing and hence objective to that which is watched. Herb Blau, in *The Audience*³⁸ continues this idea by studying the audience in theatre, where 'real' bodies onstage collide with 'real' bodies in the audience. He writes of the making visible of the audience as a slow, painful and redoubling process, where being made visible is still an act of being watched and being seen by an other. He states: "At the level of the primary process, what constitutes the representation also seems to produce its witness. Which breeds the redoubled enigma: *What can look at itself is not one.*"³⁹ Blau emphasises the disembodied viewer that cannot look at itself because it has no

³⁷ Virilio, 1994, pp. 34-5

³⁸ Blau, Herb. *The Audience*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. 1990.

³⁹ Blau, 1990, pp. 54-55, original italics.

self to look at while engaging in viewing/examination, and points to the bodily potential of the theatre, where viewing bodies are made actual and double by being viewer and viewed. These ideas stand in opposition to the examiner in cinema and forensics who need never 'become' body. Traditionally without an other to look at the self there is no potential to be subjective - the 'live' audience and players of theatre have such potential, but in the cinema the emphatic disembodiment of celluloid affirms the non-embodiment of the audience. Similarly, the forensic pathologist works with a dead body, who can no longer look in order that the examiner may be subjectively constituted by being looked at. As soon as the dead person becomes corpse, subject transfers to object and potential gazing other is irrefutably object of the look by a disembodied subject (ob-server). Although both cinematic audience and forensic pathologist are constructed as objective observers, their situatedness remains important. When both arenas are conflated into a lounge-room, and autopsy videos are available to be viewed alongside film, the disembodied subject's 'appropriateness', constituted through its arena, is no longer clear. While all audiences may be examiners, their examination is constituted as much by their place as what they watch. Watching both subject matters in a lounge room on video at one's leisure (and pleasure) strips away the vestige of professional subjectivity that makes an image correct for one person (coroner) to witness and entirely incorrect for an other (everybody else).

Andreas Huyssen points out that "Vision as pleasure and desire has to be subdued and manipulated so that vision as technical and social control can emerge triumphant."⁴⁰ This is exactly where the idea that the scientist has no pleasure emerges. It is also the realm of medical pornography - when to look is to control and not to desire without domination. The matrix of power, to be found in excavating and knowing the mechanism of death and the body literally inside out, would become void if there were any suggestion that the coroner actually enjoyed his work in an 'inappropriate' (i.e. non-scientific) manner. But that forensics is enjoyable and indeed to be enjoyed is glaringly evident in

⁴⁰ Huyssen, Andreas. 'The Vamp and the Machine'. *After the Great Divide; Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1986, pp. 65-81, quote p. 76.

popular culture: *The X-Files* hides forensics behind monsters so that those who enjoy it do not feel like they are 'really' enjoying death. The victim and the narrative of death become monstrous so the audience does not have to. The body in murder mysteries is made inorganic, transformed into a series of clues when the image of the body is just as desired as the narrative that creates it. The image of the body alone is one that seems highly contentious as a site for pleasure in culture. The repression of the desire for the image of the body in death, (something radically different but often misconstrued as desire for the dead body) leads me to the first post-psychoanalytic exploration of the idea of death I wish to discuss, that put forward by Alphonso Lingis. Death, when it is not evoked and used as a vehicle for pleasure (an ambition still to be fully theorised, both in the body of this chapter and in the desires of audiences of forensics and film), becomes the key term in a form of male hysteric nihilism. In order to begin to suggest a potentially positive, even *jouissant* representation of a way in which to read images of death, outside of this dominant male nihilistic reading, a brief exploration of this nihilistic view is necessary.

In the introduction to the uniquely named *The Hysterical Male; New Feminist Theory* Arthur and Ma .ouise Kroker evoke a moment in history - already arrived, or what I would be less suspicious of, that to come - where the phallic signifier is at the point of failing and falling, and the male subject is left flailing as a mutant subject. The Krokers make some outrageous claims in their introduction to some essays by some not-so-un-hysterical male theorists in the book. For example, "Power, fleeing its basis in sexuality generally and male subjectivity specifically, becomes now a viral power, a power which speaks only in the previously transgressive feminist language of absence, rupture, plurality and the trace."⁴¹ At this point I must emphasise that through the next sections I will be using the term 'male' and 'male hysteric', 'male philosopher' and other 'male' prefixed words. By 'male' here I mean that which is embedded essentially in a fixed phallogocentric discursive structure, that values the integrity of the fully formulated, complete, rational subject above all

⁴¹ Kroker and Kroker, 1991, p. ix.

else, and hence represents the phantasy of what it means to be a 'male' subject. The term is representative, it is a notional *not* a literal use of the term and it stands for an ideal not for an actual. What I do wish to make firm with the use of the term 'male' is the notion of an idealised subject that is of enough value to affirm the phantasy of a *loss* of value in death. The loss of being presumes always the presence of being and in phallogocentric capitalist culture, where presence equals male subjectivity (specifically white, with an identifiably desirable class and non-diff-abled status) this value structure excludes everything else. Braidotti states

Only a subject who historically has profited from the entitlements of subjectivity and the rights of citizenship can afford to put his 'solidity' into question. Marginal subjectivities, or social forces who have not yet been granted the entitlement of symbolic presence - and this includes women - cannot easily relinquish boundaries and rights which they have hardly gained yet.⁴²

In order to even begin to explore different methods of imaging and imagining death I must first get through popular anxieties about the loss of this ultra-valued subjectivity of masculinity and point out why it fails as a satisfactory means of analysing the anxieties about death which plague every individual, valued or not. The Krokers, by suggesting masculinity is so threatened its anxieties are now comparable to those of feminists, are suggesting that popular masculine theorists and their theories are able to be taken on board with feminist discourses. This seems too much too soon to me and I maintain that whatever a 'feminine' or 'feminist' version of death is, including its threats, drives and such, it is always going to be different to those of the established dominant (hence only) subject position. I am *not* going to locate and articulate the feminist differences, but only begin to tease out the suggestive spaces, which I see as ripe places for beginning to think about death as something other than mourning the loss of the ultimate capitalist product of subjectivity. To

⁴² Braidotti, Rosi. 'Nomadism with a Difference: Deleuze's legacy in a feminist perspective'. *Man and World*. 29: 305-314, 1996, p. 310.

isolate one single 'feminist' theory of death is, of course, to limit and close the discursive potential.

While most post modern theorists with a feminist slant would sympathise with the halcyon⁴³ view of power being located in the absences, the fissures, slips and traces of discourse, few would agree with the Krokers that it has already happened. Their affirmation, or in patriarchal terms, their re-affirmation that the feminine/ist is always and easily identifiable as 'absence, rupture' and so on is a little problematic in its veering towards an idea that something is essentially a feminine/feminist/non-male language when it addresses these adjectives. They are almost mimetically re-speaking the key words or catch terms of feminism/post-modernism hysterically themselves, deliberately perhaps, but these mimetic hysterics risk becoming anti-feminist by taking on feminist language in the same manner feminists took on the oppressively isomorphic language of phallogocentric power. 'Too soon' is the cry I am again tempted to utter. The Krokers' opinion on hysterics seems ambivalent; they claim Freud's Dora as a modern existential heroine yet the male hysteric is neither clearly heroic in a post-modern way nor pathetic in his wielding of the new 'innocent' symbol of the erect penis. But where they are useful for my purpose is where the Krokers make visible the language of many masculine post-modern theorists who themselves are faced with the conceptual death of their (male) subjectivity. The massive and ambitious claim that paradigms of power are already post-masculine and embedded firmly in the realm of the feminine/ist represents, for my purposes, not the post-phallic social corpus that the Krokers believe their work locates, but the idea that the crumbling male subject, *post*-ed by modernity and post modern discourse, is one which hitherto has been expressed most clearly in the discursive nihilism evident in earlier male theorists' discussions on death. There is no moment or event of post-masculine subjectivity and hence no sudden rupture of the male hysteric. The male hysteric has existed potentially for as long as any threat to male subjectivity has occurred.

⁴³ And somewhat Derridian.

The 'apocalypse' of phallogocentrism is an effect, a gradual transformation or process, but the Krovers' desire to make it into a marked event is seen with grave suspicion by Brian Massumi who writes,

Apocalyptic visions are... suspect. If the apocalypse is already as here as it will get, there is no need to keep on announcing it (Kroker and Kroker). Apocalypse is the non-event of the millennium... But in the end the idea, the very concept of the cause may have to go, in favour of effect and their interweavings (syndromes).⁴⁴

'Apocalypse for whom?' is one of the more urgent questions the Krovers' theory begs.

Death has always been and always is the apocalypse - the apocalypse of every subject is death, and for every subject the idea of their own singular death apocalyptic.⁴⁵ Theoretical apocalypse, the death of the integrated male subject, is a luxury apocalypse compared to the anxiety expressed at the annihilation of the subject altogether, of consciousness altogether or of whatever any one particular theorist believes is that which is annihilated at the point of death. Annihilation anxiety breeds this nihilistic theoretical approach. The Krovers are useful for identifying the becoming visible of the hysteric male, the male whose subjectivity is changing its solidity, and, I will agree with the Krovers here, always being threatened, if never actually ceased or robbed of power. Their final statement is the one I find most useful, "[their book] nominates new feminist theory in light of the inverted world of the male hysteric. What results is an intense, provocative and creative theorisation of feminism under the failing sign of male hystericisation - the death of the privileged ideology of the unitary male subject."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Massumi, Brian. 'Introduction to Fear'. In Broadhurst, Joan, ed. *Deleuze and the Transcendental Unconscious*. PLI Warwick Journal of Philosophy. Warwick: Warwick University Press. 1992, pp. 175-215, quote pp. 208-209.

⁴⁵ The relationship between the event apocalypse, as favoured by the Krovers and the non-event preferred by Massumi is discussed further on, in terms of forensic narrative equations and the difficulty in ever comprehending something such as the moment/event of death.

⁴⁶ Krovers, 1991, p. xiv.

Hysteria seems in certain instances particularly suited to the male. Not only at the threat of death but by being a male subject, especially in a Lacanian post-mirror stage where every moment of subjectivity following the first vision of the 'ideal-I' is spent striving towards re-capturing that ideal image, the subject is always idealised but never safe. Masculinity is in this sense *more* prone to the institutional power matrices that codify it than any fantasy of a feminine/ist 'subject'. Not only does the masculine subject rely on the system to maintain its privileged position, but also, it relies on the system to keep the subject in line; to keep it 'normal' and hence within the boundaries of what constitutes a desirable subjectivity. Policing of the masculine subject is a desirable state for the maintenance of such a subject. Because power is a relativity that changes in order to encompass or repudiate whatever faces it as a new other, the subject too must shift concurrently. In her discussion of Foucault's theories of subjectivity, Braidotti places the subject within this fragile context;

[Foucault] argues that the constitution of the fragile, split subject of the post metaphysical era is in fact a process of culturally coding certain functions and acts as signifying, acceptable, normal, desirable. In other words one becomes a subject through a set of interdictions and permissions, which inscribe one's subjectivity in a bedrock of power. The subject thus is a heap of fragmented parts held together by the symbolic glue that is the attachment to, or identification with, the phallogocentric symbol. A heap of rabble calling itself the centre of creation; a knot of desiring and trembling flesh, projecting itself to the height of an imperial consciousness. I am struck by the violence of the gesture that binds a fractured self to the performative illusion of unity, mastery, self-transparency. I am amazed by the terrifying stupidity of that illusion of unity, and by its incomprehensible force.⁴⁷

The cause of male hysteria is this very fractured product that masculine subjectivity enacts. Braidotti is right to call this forced binding of the subject violent. Violence comes from terror and the terror that haunts the subject as to its fragility - its imminent loss through splitting apart or becoming unglued - is

⁴⁷ Braidotti, 1994, p. 12.

the result of living within a phantasy of unity in the first place. Stupidity is not necessarily how I would envisage the phantasy of unity. Perhaps a severe and almost universal pathology of repression as to the subject's phantasmatic state of being, perhaps a conscious stupidity covering over a very definite hysteria-causing anxiety of dis-memberment of the self. What the Krollers may be articulating then is the 'coming out' of the *phantasy* of unity by masculine subjectivities, something which seems to have little to do with feminist theory and more to do with the performance of masculine anxiety, a catharsis. But returning to death, Braidotti's analytic dismemberment of the subject that is already dismembered is an anxious condition that death may transform, by altering the goals of subjectivity, rather than pushing subjectivity towards a complete annihilation of the subject phantasy. When theorists exclaim and mourn the nihilistic absence of consciousness that death imminently threatens, they are simultaneously exclaiming, asserting and once and for all capturing the concept of *something to lose*. Any anxiety about a fractured self is entirely void at the moment of threatening nothingness. By its very threatened loss, the masculine subject is re-created and affirmed. So the fear of death for the idealised masculine subject is also an affirmation of a unified identity. Death theory may become a tool of self-delusion for the masculine theorist who insists on focusing in upon the great being of unified consciousness. This is why I am going to avoid using these types of theorist in any positive kind of way for this chapter.

Alphonso Lingis suggests

No induction from the demise of all men so far - that rigor mortis I can observe in the stillness of being - leads rigorously to the certainty of my death; no deduction from the laws ever in force enables me to conclude to the certainty of my coming reduction to definitive impotence. It is the certainty of my imminent death, which is the way the certainty of non-being comes to me, that makes doubt about the present beings, and consequently the quest for empirical certainty, first possible.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Lingis, 1989, p. 118

Irony that amongst discourses of science which strive for empirical knowledge, and discourses of deconstruction which strive to prove the futility of the concept of truth, death, stands as the only potential truth amongst all other suspicious theories. As Lingis points out, the philosopher will attempt to theorise the potential non-beings that surround her/him in order to re-theorise the unshakeable truth of imminent death. Post-modern theory attacks the concept of truth in general, and rightly so, but from Lingis' words are distilled a more insipid inquiry; that behind the quest to disprove truth really stands a male hysteric quest to disprove the absoluteness of death. A form of articulated repression perhaps, made easier by the division between philosophy and images of death and its democratic reduction of all subjectivities found in forensics. Here emerges the one moment where stands most clearly the male hysteric. If the female is the traditional bearer of symptoms of repression then death is the moment when repression and becoming-hysteric transcend gender, or perhaps swap gender. It is difficult to theorise a female anxiety about loss of self when culturally for a woman being of self is still in a process of becoming, despite the abundance of representations of aestheticised female corpses in all manner of art, literature⁴⁹ and, of course, horror film.⁵⁰ Bodies, especially those of male theorists, are theorised as teeming with their own being, hyper-being subjectivities with the potential for transcendent consciousness. Their flesh is repressed while the integrated body-container, which is phantasised as visually representing the subject, is filled with every nuance of being in conscious existence. Corpses are rarely theorised. The mind rules over the face, which rules over the torso and limbs when subjectivity is theorised.⁵¹ Lingis, with his philosophy of nihilism, hurtles himself through a hysteric re-writing of death, writing at one moment that death is all and anything we ever strive towards and at the next stating that he remains entirely unconvinced about the imminence of the absence of being. The words 'definitive impotence' sum up a peculiarly phallogocentric anxiety, which begins by overvaluing the integrity of the

⁴⁹ See Elisabeth Bronfen's *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 1992, which discusses the aestheticised female corpse from nineteenth century forensics, through to psychoanalysis, art and literature.

⁵⁰ Especially Argento's *Tenebre*, the ad campaign of which relied on the backward hanging head of a woman with her throat cut for video covers, posters and soundtrack albums.

⁵¹ This is faciality which will be discussed in depth further on.

subject in life (where integrity is valued over life). Why? Is it to increase the armoured resistance to its annihilation in death? To know death theoretically and ontologically so well that by knowing one's subjectivity inside out its annihilation seems impossible?

Out of male hysteria (before the hysteric of the Krokors - the backlash male hysteric who was frightened at the state of his subjectivity), comes the male subject who is frightened at his absence. There is no body in the nihilistic hysteric. Lingis speaks of the mind, the existence of the self, the force of the subject but not of the flesh that is left before or after death. The relationship between the flesh and the hysteric philosopher is forced. He represses the flesh because it's not the death of the flesh he is worried about but the death of the force of the self. The flesh is denied *or* it is changed into ecstatic (ex-stasis) plethora, as in Bataille's 'Sexual Plethora and Death.' Here to die is really to procreate and to exceed the single self, similar to the reproductive life of single cell organisms. At the other end of the scale, death is becoming higher. Sexual plethora attains (religious) transcendence which itself is plethora for Bataille, leading to a moralised sacrificial self. In order to sacrifice the self, of course, it must be more valued than is anything else. Once again the philosopher agonises the absence of subjectivity. The phantasy of death being essential, and hence, desirable due to procreation and species assurance, is present and important as a feature also in the work of Freud and Lacan. Preceding Bataille, both psychoanalysts claim that there is some kind of instinctual drive for death that takes on a somewhat suspicious, even Christ-like 'nobility' in dying so that the species may survive. Lacan states;

We know that sexual division, in so far as it reigns over most living beings, is that which ensures the survival of a species... Let us say that the species survives in the form of its individuals: Nevertheless, the survival of the horse as a species has a meaning - each horse is transitory and dies. So you see the link between sex and death, sex and the death of the individual, is fundamental.⁵²

⁵² Lacan, 1994, p. 150.

Aside from the problem of inherent and compulsory procreative heterosexuality in this comment, the idea that there is an (natural) aim towards death contradicts both the overvaluation of the subject in life and the anxious refusal of death that plagues every subject despite any unconscious drive towards the concept of death. It also suggests that the instinct towards death is not, in human animals, overwritten by drive which, especially for Lacan, should not sit comfortably. The nihilistic philosopher is in this way closely related to the psychoanalyst, the former fears in death the absence of consciousness or being, the latter locates a drive for it in consciousness of being (which is not the same as conscious/unconscious but is a juxtaposition between consciousness and flesh). The nihilist however seems defiantly a-moral in his stance on death by suggesting some kind of purity/nothingness in absence, while the psychoanalyst almost suggests a morality in dying for one's species, albeit a biological morality (Freud's use of A. Weissman's work on germ cells⁵³). Though I do not wish to suggest these works are inherently moral, a-moral or immoral, by pointing out the potential to read them as such I wish to indicate the rife over-signification of the concept of death always within any 'other' realm than the flesh. Death is ecstatically religious (Bataille), biologically obscure (germ cells), sexually overloaded (Lacan) or simply nothing (Lingis). The terror of death, the fear of what being dead means seems strangely suppressed in the writings of these and many other theorists. Why? Is creating a definitive knowledge around death a means of overcoming it? One thing remains constant; whatever meaning death represents it remains defiantly difficult to speak about without theory being inherently lacking. But can death represent anything? Over-investment in life is an over-dependence on meaning (the meaning of being a subject and the meaning in being which contradicts the un-meaning of death). Perhaps this is why theory must lack when speaking of death. Death as an *it* does not work. Death is not a thing, it is not a process, dying is but death is not. Something which is not a being cannot have an ontology so theorising death is necessarily impossible while speaking within a

⁵³ In 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), 1991, itself quite a nihilistic text for Freud.

system of ontology. Dead may be represented, death cannot. This could be another reason why the male nihilistic hysteric genre of discourse focuses upon the non-visual, the theoretical and the sacrificial – all of these strategies invest death with meaning, despite the clear indications that there is no meaning in something that has no 'being' or material incarnation.

Forensics and Fun?

Before beginning my discussion of forensic scientists and coroners I want to make a point about my focus in the following section. First I am *not* talking about criminal investigators, those people who desire the formulation of a subject of crime. I am deliberately not talking about them even though they are the investigators who discover/uncover/create (I prefer the last term) the subjects who cause death and hence perhaps the subjects who desire death most. Though that may have been a useful angle to take, it is fraught with the hazards and the very repression I have previously accused the psychoanalytic and philosophic discourses of producing. That is, the criminologist is simply another version of the male hysteric who represses the body in order to uncover a phantasy of consciousness. At the death scene the criminologist is s/he who looks for who the killer is, who the accident perpetrator is, and who the deceased was/is. The flesh of the deceased remains in the realm of the repressed and because the criminologist continues a narrative structure around the deceased post-mortem - the deceased's last actions, people they knew, places they went - the death itself seems to be repressed as if the flesh never stopped moving. The criminologist is another form of *inorganic* scientist. The reason I felt the need to point this out is largely inspired by an article by Stephen Pfohl and Avery Gordon entitled 'Criminological Displacements: A Sociological Deconstruction.'⁵⁴ In this piece the authors aim to locate the pleasure to be found in criminology, exactly as I query the pleasure to be found in forensic pathology. The three pleasures of criminology that Pfohl and

⁵⁴ Pfohl, Stephen and Gordon, Avery. 'Criminological Displacements: A Sociological Deconstruction'. In Kroker, Arthur and Kroker, Marilouise, eds. *Body Invaders: Panic Sex In America*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1987, pp. 224 - 252.

Gordon explicate are: Sadism - the excavation of the potential criminal with violence and exerted power; Surveillance - the gaze of the law upon the subject (object) of suspicion; The truth of the normal subject, Himself - the insurmountable divide between he who identifies crime and 'the criminal'. The criminologist, using corporeal violence, locates and excavates 'the criminal' and "he rights, he writes, he rites - three rights and nothing left: the rights of man, the writing of a science and the ritual construction of an imperial order."⁵⁵

The criminologist is embedded in a science of subjectivities and linguistic power, his pleasure is unavailable without the distance between the subjectivities he studies and himself, which is far removed from the forensic pathologist and the anti/non-subjectivities he dissects. There is certainly power implicit in the minute dissection of a body to be read by a forensic pathologist, but it is not the implementation of a phantasmatically truthful structure of subjectivity gone awry versus subjectivity at a level of normality. Criminology resembles psychiatry and a therapy of deviant behaviour more than forensics despite its close narrative relationship to the latter. Its narratives speak value and power through creating subjects. The most important feature of the criminal subject is that s/he is *not* like the subject who creates him/her. It is harder to value judge a corpse than a person. The forensic pathologist is interested in the flesh and *only* in the flesh. All power structures found in the reading of the flesh are passed on to legal or criminal theorists and prosecutors. The power of the forensic scientist is a very tangible and visible power but it is always tainted and tinged with the fact that what the forensic scientist structures his language and modes of power around is a non-subject, a flesh text. So the forensic scientists' pleasure could be sadism, surveillance and it is always necessarily juxtaposing himself, the normal (living) subject with the non-subject in front of him, but the fact lies still at his hands, a corpse. A corpse is not a subject to manipulate, to create as deviant. The forensic pathologist de-creates a body and re-creates its habits, but at the most carnal level I wish to question where the pleasure of the flesh of forensics lies, and

⁵⁵ Pfohl and Gordon. 1987, p. 230.

here is where I hope to analyse the idea of the forensic scientist as sanctioned pervert.

Philosophy represses the imminence of death by articulating consciousness around the corpse, around the body, never through, in or even near it. Forensics, however, reads death only through the corpse, and makes the reader wonder if the forensic pathologist represses the memory of life ever being within the corpse at all, especially the individuality of each corpse that Lingis points out is the drive behind the concept that all other subjectivities are not 'me' and hence not real. In the comprehensive volume *Forensic Pathology* by Bernard Knight, the text is introduced by a preface. It reads

The subject matter of this volume... is solely concerned with the examination of the dead body for medico-legal purposes. The subject matter follows a fairly conventional pattern, but the treatment of each topic is designed to offer practical advice... that leads the doctor to analyse and question the interpretations drawn from physical findings.⁵⁶

What follows is a series of lists useful for the pathologist, from the procedure to follow at the scene of the death, to the equipment "ready to take to a scene of investigation at a moment's notice. Most forensic pathologists have a 'murder bag' in their car and though every expert has his own choice of equipment, the following is a reasonable inventory:

1. Waterproof apron and rubber gloves

... 3. Autopsy dissection set, including hand-saw

... 7. Plastic bags, envelopes, paper, spare pen and pencil...⁵⁷

This list is topped by a half page black and white photograph of the scene of a rape homicide, where a woman (corpse, body, woman-no-longer?) lies (has been left? - verbs become defunct when talking about 'a body') almost naked by a road. Her (its) head is severely battered and slashed, yet is facing back away from the torso almost looking at the camera. This inclusion of such an horrifying image atop the casually worded list of 'death bag' equipment is a

⁵⁶ Knight, Bernard. *Forensic Pathology*. Second Edition. London: Arnold. 1996, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Knight, 1996, p. 4.

shock to the non-forensic reader. The body becomes another form of 'death bag', a bag of information to be opened and rifled through before being discarded. The excruciating absence of the body, either dead or alive, in philosophical discourse on being and non-being, is matched in effect by this inclusion of a 'body' surmounting a list of objects used to further objectify the body by reading it as text rather than subject. There is, of course, no reason for subjectivity to figure in this book because of the nature of its task, however the absence of subjectivity nonetheless brings to light the investment of horror which culture, (except forensic pathologists perhaps) has in the dead body. The body is violently negated, because traditionally it is the most empty, abject and capital-ly useless object. To admit the most useless of all objects was once subject creates a need to either keep the body (an actual pathology, a form of necrophilia which will be explained further on) or simply to deny its existence, which means denying its image and its material being as corpse. The 'use' of the body by a forensic pathologist forces the need to discard into question, without re-investing the body with its former subjectivity, which is why the result is a feeling of horror from non-forensic witnesses.

The forensic image and its absence of subject also elucidate the difficulty in ascertaining what exactly death is. What defines it in flesh from living flesh and the subject-memory within the flesh, most especially in the stagnant frozen images of photography, where fakery, death and life are almost indivisible?

Between the bodiless state of being and un-being in philosophy and the pure-body-as-evidence, as fact-of-event state of forensics, there lies subjectivity which is contained within and because of a body, and hence perhaps there lies the potential for a non-Cartesian whole-er death, not just body, not just being. Neither forensics, which pieces together the narrative of the cause of death and events leading to it, nor philosophy, which attempts to posit the self around death, before it and in a negative/absence construction, after it, seem to be able to pinpoint precisely what death is, what it is made of and what it makes us. Unconsciousness condemned to eternal nothingness is the mind of death, while the declaration of an individual as brain dead is the body of death. What

becomes clear is that any definition of death is more slippery than its irreversible result would suggest. No subjectivity can say from the 'inside'⁵⁸ (i.e. being and consciousness) when death exists, and this quote from DiMaio and DiMaio proves that even the death of the body from the outside is a matter for bureaucracy and not medicine.

An individual may be pronounced dead, yet may be maintained on a life support system for two to three days after pronouncement. This has sometimes resulted in confusion in the documentation of the date of death.

This is more a problem of bureaucracy than science, however.⁵⁹

According to medico-legal discourse, death exists at the point of time that the coroner *pronounces* death.⁶⁰ Subjectivity cannot speak of its demise; the coroner must speak for it, which means death becomes a delayed pronouncement from the mouth of another rather than an event in and ceasing the life of the self.

Bodies in some ways stay 'alive' after pronouncement of death. Knight, in explaining the indications of pathophysiological death gives three main signs:

- a.) Unconsciousness and loss of all reflexes occurs, and there is no reaction to painful stimuli. Rarely, there may be *post-mortem co-ordinated muscle group activity for up to one hour after death*, possibly due to surviving cells in the spinal cord.
- b.) Muscular flaccidity occurs immediately upon failure of cerebral and cerebella function. All muscle tone is lost, though *muscles are physically capable of contraction for many hours*.

⁵⁸ With the dubious exception of those who claim to have died and seen the bright light of 'God', or those who claim to have lived before.

⁵⁹ This medico-legal definition of death is agreed to be problematic by the profession due to the potential for life support in order to harvest organs. DiMaio, Dominick and DiMaio, Vincent J.M. *Forensic Pathology*. New York: Elsevier Science Publishing. 1989, p. 2.

⁶⁰ Quigley, Christine writes: "A corpse becomes official when a death certificate is completed by the attending physician, coroner, or medical examiner, and filed with the local government." In *The Corpse: A History*. Jefferson: McFarland and Company. 1996, p. 2.

c.) Eye signs include loss of the corneal and light reflexes leading to insensitive corneas and fixed, unreactive pupils. *Though the iris responds to chemical stimulation for hours after somatic death...*(my italics) ⁶¹

The body ignores the 'death' of the subject by corporeally performing for some time after the subject is pronounced dead. Because the body is only observed and not experienced, how can any discourse predict what the body *is* at this dead-alive time? Dead flesh re-animate, living flesh breathing its last? The autonomy and independence of the dead body and its parts is a surprising reminder of their autonomy and independence from the subject in life, despite the fact that the subject in this post-mortem activity stage is un-locatable if not absent. A body completely void of internal organs may remain 'alive' if necessary mechanisms are supporting it. Michael Brown, in describing organ harvesting from a brain-dead subject states:

[the nurse] knows they are being kept alive artificially when they come to her. They have to be declared dead beforehand. Still they have a good blood pressure that she maintains with the appropriate drugs: their hearts are beating, vital signs normal. Then the kidneys come out and the heart comes out, lung, bone or ear tissue, and corneas. Then [she] turns everything off and they die.⁶²

Medicine's ability to maintain a pronounced-dead person 'alive' and then, by turning off the machine, making them 'dead' is another illustration of the plasticity of the moment of death. Culturally death seems an event, which ruptures into and terminates the lesser events that have speckled an individual's existence. But death here is shown to be slow, occurring within a not entirely pin-pointable period of time, it is an evolutionary narrative whereby the harvesting of the vital organs progresses the body towards corpse without giving it the grace to be corpse until the nurse is ready. In the quote, Brown explicates a person who dies twice. Declared death, as already explained, is what constitutes a corpse in medico-legal discourse, yet in the quote Brown

⁶¹ Knight, 1996, p. 52.

⁶² Brown, Michael, *Nurses: The Human Touch*. New York: Ivy. 1992, p. 207, quoted in Quigley, 1996, p. 201.

maintains the 'corpse' remains alive, without organs, until it is 'turned off'. There is no indication as to how long the cadaver could be maintained as 'alive' without its organs, but the very concept of an organ-less, eyeless, earless subject being maintained on life-support insinuates that even the empty corpse has 'life', while we are reminded that the pronounced dead corpse contains within it a cornucopia of functioning, 'living' organs not quite ready to die.

Earlier, I discussed theorists such as Freud and Bataille speaking of the death of a single cell. They suggested organisms avoid a 'true' death by splitting into two, using this as a form of immortality or creative death. This leads to the concept that reproduction in more evolved forms of animal life (including human) somehow ideologically 'defeats' death momentarily, yet ironically creates a drive towards death due to the desire to reproduce. Bataille writes, "The moments of plethora when animals are in the grip of sexual fever are critical ones in their isolation. Then fear of death and pain is transcended, then the sense of relative continuity... is heightened."⁶³ In regards to a transcendence of death through sexual plethora and the imaginings of reproduction, what of the harvested self? Is there to be a new phantasy of being harvested and living for another lifetime?⁶⁴ Could there be a desire to imagine consciousness in organs? Of course this is highly phantasmatic, however the fact that certain people have taboos associated with the harvesting of organs, either personal or social, indicates the amount of the 'self' invested in the sentient 'other' flesh of the viscera. Throughout life the viscera is repressed, it carries on with its function without our ever quite knowing or understanding what it does and how it knows what to do. But at the (many) point(s) of death, the subject is suddenly imagined to be entirely sentient over its own viscera, a complete contradiction to what occurred in life. Those who invest their dead relatives' viscera with

⁶³ Bataille, 1991, pp. 98-99.

⁶⁴ This idea is common in horror movies where a transplanted body part inevitably of a death row executed killer causes the transplant recipient to 'become' or enact the killers murderous wishes. For example *Body Parts* (Eric Red, US, 1991), Tobe Hooper's story in *Body Bags* (John Carpenter and Tobe Hooper, US, 1991) *The Hand* (Oliver Stone, US, 1981) and the various incarnations of Maurice Renard's novel *Le Mains d'Orlac* (1920), which include *Orlacs Haende* (Robert Weine, Austria, 1926), *Mad Love* (Karl Freund, US, 1935), *The Hands of Orlac* (E.T. Greville, England and France, 1960) and *Hands of a Stranger* (Newton Arnold, US, 1962).

untouchability and those who refuse to contemplate organ donation are investing in the corpse a consciousness of ownership, need and control. Ironical that after pronounced death it is the organs and not the subject (as far as we know of course, and until we hear otherwise) that retain their sentience and hence their ability to function inside another body, another subjectivity. So the cadaver lies as a dead covering (except for the potential skin graft corpse) maintaining flourishing potentials for life within it, and juxtaposing the concepts of filth, decay, disease and bacteria which surround it.

Death in the forensic text, like terms defined by other scientific texts used in this thesis, is made up by an equation. Death is stripped of its being as a rupturing event, and instead occurs with many quotients over vast amounts of operative procedures. The equation for death common in forensics consists of Cause, Manner and Mechanism of death. Each forensic text has this equation put into the author's own words, but it is seemingly universal. DiMaio & DiMaio kindly sympathise with their future forensic scientists by adding "Clinicians, lawyers and the lay public often have difficulty understanding the difference between cause of death, mechanism of death, and manner of death."⁶⁵ I would suggest this is due to the prevalent construction of death as a rupture, as a single and volcanic event which arrives, occurs and is over all at once. Where the philosopher sees death as future and forensics as past, for the subject experiencing it, it is a phantasy of pure presence, occurring for the briefest possible time imaginable. Such phrases as 'slow death' are really slow narratives that lead up to death. Is there not one instant in which life ceases to be, where before it existed no matter how tenuously? However, the fact that DiMaio & DiMaio preclude their discussion of the equation of death with such a statement indicates the far-reach of the phantasy of the very essence of the moment of death.⁶⁶ Basically, the cause, manner and mechanism according to DiMaio & DiMaio are as follows:

⁶⁵ DiMaio and DiMaio, 1989, p. 3.

⁶⁶ And in a certain way forensic pathologists too believe in this moment. In most forensic pathology texts, a great deal of time and space is given to the accurate measuring of the exact time of death for a corpse. There are multiple means of measuring, from rectal thermometers, to insect activity in the body cavity.

The cause of death is any injury or disease that produces a physiological derangement in the body that results in the individual dying. Thus the following are causes of death: a gunshot wound of the head, a stab wound of the chest, adenocarcinoma of the lung, and coronary atherosclerosis. The mechanism of death is the physiological derangement produced by the cause of death that results in death. Examples of mechanism of death would be haemorrhage, septicaemia and cardiac arrhythmia... The manner of death explains how the cause of death came about. Manners of death are usually considered to be natural, homicide, suicide, accident and undetermined.⁶⁷

These features which constitute death are all in the hands of the forensic pathologist to decide. The idea that forensics is a god-like state which reads the passive body of the dead, in order to have power over the democratic culling of death, is made quite clear in the formulation of the equation 'what death is *made of* (cause, mechanism, manner)' by the forensic pathologist. Knight reveals the self-knowledge forensics has to his own power in his discussion of the obscure autopsy, where cause of death is unascertainable.

No cause of death can be extracted from these negative findings [in the case of a 22 year old male who literally dropped dead] and the case must be recorded as 'unascertained' - or as Professor Alan Usher of Sheffield points out, as 'unascertainable'⁶⁸, *if the pathologist is feeling particularly omnipotent!*⁶⁹

The omnipotence of the pathologist occurs not only because of their evidence being constructed legally as truth, but because there is some kind of social awe given to those who are able to excavate a corpse without being affected by the abject signification it is embellished with. A forensic pathologist in this respect is equivalent to a socially accepted necrophiliac, as evinced in this strange quote from Edna Buchanan

⁶⁷ DiMaio and DiMaio, 1989, p. 3-4.

⁶⁸ i.e. if I the pathologist cannot find the answer, no-one *ever* will!

⁶⁹ Knight, 1996, p. 47, my italics.

A corpse has no privacy. Until you are dead you are usually a total stranger to homicide detectives. Then with a single mindedness matched only by that of a jealous lover, they must know all about you - everything - even details your sweetheart or your spouse does not know. Secrets you would not tell your best friend. Particulars you didn't understand about yourself. Nothing is sacred. They want to know what you ate, what you wore, what you read. Your drinking habits and your sex habits. They will read your diary and your mail and scrutinize the contents of your safety-deposit box and your stomach. They are there, examining every nook and cranny of your corpse, once they begin to disassemble it at the morgue.⁷⁰

Forensic pathology is, in a way, the strangest of sexualities. Pathologists are faced with the corpse not only as an object, but also as an object that has within it, multiple other objects, layers and facets. If we consider that what we do for a living, especially at a highly specialised level, might supposedly reflect one way in which we achieve pleasure, then the forensic pathologist must achieve pleasure through a unique definition of the term. The body can no longer be taken as an object, of desire, of repulsion or anything else, when it is rent so it no longer resembles a body. But read within the context of our culture which sanctions and prohibits pleasure so vigilantly, perhaps pleasure in the corpse is redirected towards a more traditional version of what is a 'good' cause of pleasurable feeling. In this instance it may be knowledge. Earlier I mentioned forensics reading the body as a text, and this rings true even on a literal level. The contents of the body are sliced into fine sheets and placed between slides in order to read them for different things. Even if the forensic pathologist is read as some form of necrophiliac, this would represent a desire for a body that is in its most minutely perfect and yet dishevelled state, or as DiMaio & DiMaio stated earlier, 'Physiologically deranged'. What kind of reading is going on through forensic eyes? It certainly must be different to the non-forensic eye and of course between the eyes of different pathologists. But how does one see the living human body after one knows the unchangeable potential for its condition as sliced and contorted into files of flesh, its ability to be read

⁷⁰ Edna Buchanan, *The Corpse has a Familiar Face*, New York: Charter. 1987, p. 125, quoted in Quigley, 1996, p. 115.

after death when it could never read itself during life. Or indeed, could never be read by anyone else - Knight states "Several surveys in various countries have shown that where a physician offers a cause of death without the benefit of autopsy findings, the error rate is of the order of 25-50 per cent, even in deaths in hospitals."⁷¹ The body speaks louder in evisceration than it ever could during its integrated, sealed life. Similar to the speech of disease, where a subject is frequently only made aware of an organ because it is in pain, the speech of cadavers is a 'coming out' and a making not only visible, but through slicing and eviscerating the organs, the organs within the organs and so forth, making ultra-visible, ultra-textual, the flesh of the subject. Is there a phantasy that the subject speaks what it could not speak in life? Is the autopsied body a shadowy echo of the voice the subject could not use during death? Or is it the voice of the flesh unmuted by the demise of the subject's voice? Rather I would suggest it is an articulation of the flesh itself. No longer are speaking subject and flesh divided. The flesh finds language in autopsy.⁷² It speaks the narrative, the manner of death (what happened to the subject). The mechanism and the cause remain inarticulate, and possibly unknown by everyone, until the body is removed from its shell.⁷³ There seems a suggestion that within the science that desires truth - here forensics - the body opened and splayed is the sight of this truth. It is the most abject of objects yet it speaks most articulately about the final moments of the life of the subject, rather than speaking only as a representation of the subject's permanent absence.

David Heilbroner, a young D.A., remarked on his first sight of a photographic homicide file: "At first I found the photographs a little disappointing. There were no gaping wounds in the body or pools of blood... If you did not know he had been murdered you might have thought he was daydreaming, but knowing the man in the picture was dead - or, as I soon found out, stabbed to death -

⁷¹ Knight, 1996, p. 47.

⁷² This idea appeals to me because language as being embodied by dead flesh eradicates the supremacy of the subject. It is important to make clear, however, that the actuality of the autopsy procedure involves the forensic scientist giving language to the corpse, speaking for it, which is an exercise of power granting absolute supremacy to the scientific subject.

transformed an otherwise unremarkable image into an object of fascination."⁷⁴ The context of the image of the corpse is vital not only in creating the reaction towards it, but in defining it, and hence in defining death. Looking at a photograph tells the viewer only what the eye sees, which is never enough to name the image as it 'really' may be.⁷⁵ The title of an image or of the book it appears in creates its reality or fakery. So does title also create the context of what death is? Death to the philosopher is consciousness and un-being in the future, to the film fan it is a surmountable state that can be re-run over and over, repetitious presence. And to the pathologist it is a past presence, death is a long forgotten state, and only 'the dead' remain to define what it may have been. The corpse is the relic of death but not a representation of what death is. The glamour of the body in shock and in pain upon a television screen represents a death that is so far from the head-shots of victims in forensics texts they are not even recognisable as belonging to the same cultural genre. Or are they different? Is this 'observation' simply an incarnation of my anxieties about that which I am told is 'real' and 'fake'? Being told a photograph is 'real' and is 'unreal' (filmic or faked) seems necessary in order to ascertain whether one is witnessing an after-death or a performance of its result. The forensic shots present in Knight's and DiMaio & DiMaio's books are those I will focus on, while being aware that there are numerous other forensic texts available which are similar both in the sheer dynamics of what they depict and the blasé commentary which is stuck over them.⁷⁶ Upon opening a forensic text the foremost concept in the mind of the non-forensic reader must be - 'This is real'.

⁷³ This is especially true of certain victims of such things as car accidents, where the subject dies without a scratch or flaw on the body's exterior, yet upon excavation certain internal organs are completely ruptured, or the entire inside of the torso has haemorrhaged.

⁷⁴ David Heilbroner, from his book *Rough Justice: Days and Nights of a Young D.A.* New York: Pantheon. 1990, pp. 135-36, quoted in Quigley, 1996, p. 37.

⁷⁵ For example the *Piss Christ* of photographic artist Andre Serrano, which does not look like or unlike a crucifix in a bucket of urine until the title is read. It appears a yellowish, quite ethereal image of a crucifix in nothing in particular, and the outrage it has caused as a blasphemous image must be attached to the title more than the image for this reason. Its exhibition in Melbourne in 1997 inspired vandal attacks of the artwork as well as protests and near-riots in the National Gallery of Victoria.

⁷⁶ I focus upon these two books because there is real fear in an uninitiated person opening and turning the pages of an unfamiliar forensic photographic text. I actually did not want to use any more than I had to because I did not want to look at any more of the pictures therein.

In using the terms 'real' and 'unreal' over the next section of this chapter I am going to relinquish the urge to use the Real in Lacanian terms. I do so not because it is a different real, but because, if there were any kind of circumstance which presented the Real in its most universally affective state, (as opposed to the Real being which each subject can only interpret in their own psyche) it is staring into the faces of corpses, ex-subjectivities who are 'real'. Perhaps this tactic examines my own anxieties about death by presuming they are universal, but reading these forensic texts as a person who has come from a discourse where death occurs glamorously, no matter how gorily, in film, the shock of staring at the eyes of a cadaverous face which is absent in self is a point where the Real converges upon everyone, everything and the viewer (at least I) is shocked at the tactless universality of death's reaping.⁷⁷ Death is imbued with choice, with discriminating power by subjects. The grim-reaper fantasy is protection for the mind to the fact that death is not a being, is not a sentient choice-maker, but an occurrence as everyday as sleeping, eating or defecation. It takes less time than the nine months of birth, and remembering the unascertainable case from Knight of the twenty-two year old man who literally dropped dead, it gives no warning and shows no answerable remorse. The pronoun used for death becomes noticeable when speaking of it, the use of 'it' further affirms the figure of a discerning reaper. But death, whether a narrative or an event, is very difficult to 'capture' linguistically. Using the equation cause-mechanism-manner, the noun death is not even needed anymore, which further complicates what death is in relation to the subject and to the body. This complication is where the context of the imagery of death

⁷⁷ This is a particularly effective statement in its time context, as the death of Diana, Princess of Wales still remains relatively fresh in the popular mind. The idea and the actuality of a very wealthy, very famous and pervasively known public figure such as Diana being killed is the shock of evidence at the non-discriminating nature of death. Despite the rationality of death being potentially around every corner, in the popular mind death chooses, is given some kind of sentience (hence the grim-reaper figure) and consequently it is expected death will 'choose' appropriately. Additional to the shock of Diana's death is the ability for her corpse to be viewed on the world wide web - Diana being a corpse is so invested with the 'Diana' part over the 'corpse' part that the act of photographing her in the wrecked car was seen as some kind of blasphemy, and proclaiming one has seen the corpse on the Internet is frequently met with the same reaction. This photo has since been proven a fake but rotten.com lists on its website the incredible debates, media interview offers and opinions the photograph elicited.

becomes important. Modes of reading, or being the proper 'subject' who reads, despite the fact that scientific texts masquerade their claims of knowledge as if there is no author and no reader, only a 'learner', becomes the most important feature in making the 'death' of the individual visible. 'Real' death in forensics texts is displayed for a didactic purpose, to be looked at only in order to learn. When such an image is looked at as if in a picture book, for aesthetic purposes, its signification seems to alter. If the word 'forensics' appears in a title then not only does the signification of the image change from 'image' to 'real' but the mode of reading changes with it, from 'pleasure' to 'learning'. The forensic text is not meant to be 'read' as such, but exists almost as a non-text, a series of images and words that exist only to push the reader from novice to professional scientist. It is a *purposeful* text, where purpose dominates text. When it is *read* as a text only its intended signification alters. When opening up a forensics text book for the first time, and being stunned at the photographs which adorn the pages, we can almost point and say 'That's what death is' and add 'I do not want to be there'. Death in forensic books is usually exemplary of the dynamic, the unusual or the violent.⁷⁸ The prevalence of mainly black and white photographs adds a grainy seediness to the images,⁷⁹ enhancing the sense of the ingloriousness of death, and especially of being propped up before a camera with the flesh in various deranged conditions.

The forensic scientist has what could almost be termed a talent in the ability to see death as historicised, and the corpse as an object no longer invested with life, and hence in no real need for validation or respect.⁸⁰ The language in the

⁷⁸ Two examples from Knight's book are a photograph of a man run over by a bus; the bus did not break his abdomen but instead pushed his digestive system out his rectum, p. 290, and a photograph of a suspected homicide where a man had his penis and scrotum cut off, his eyes stabbed out and his entire throat hacked at right around the 360° circumference of his neck all done with scissors. The forensics team later discovered, to their shock, the manner of death was suicide, p. 238.

⁷⁹ As a filmic example of the texture of different types of filmed material signifying what types of images are being watched Joel Schumacher's *8mm* (US, 1999) elucidates that a snuff film will necessarily have a grainy quality, it will be in eight millimetre film and it will be short, while the film which tells the story of the snuff film masquerades its 'filmness' by being clear, invisibling its pixels, it is long (two and a half hours) and a standard cinematic width.

⁸⁰ For example, Lamberto Bava's *La Casa con la Scala nel Buio* ('A Blade in the Dark', Italy, 1983) in the scene where the dead Katia is dragged up a flight of stairs and the bump-bump-bump of her head against the steps which is aimed at causing the audience to flinch at the pain despite the fact she is dead.

texts often hints at the forensic pathologist's awareness of his/her⁸¹ lack of tact/a.k.a. rationality when it comes to treating and discussing the corpse, especially in reference to those who knew the corpse as a subject. Little asides such as the following insinuate a certain attitude among the forensic pathologist 'community' that seem to indicate some things are best discussed only by them and not the lay community:

Many mistakes have been made in the past, with *adverse publicity*, *embarrassing enquiries* and even legal consequences. Autopsies on the wrong person, incorrect causes of death, relatives attending the wrong funeral and even cremation of the wrong body are regularly reported...⁸²

To the forensic scientist the corpse has no subjectivity at all, identity mix up is only a consideration with respect to its potential consequences. Considering the things the forensic team *do* to the body before they place it in readiness for the funeral mortuary, it seems a little strange that the post-autopsy corpse would hold any symbolic value to the relations. As Quigley points out, "The autopsy is a humane but mutilating procedure, which would devastate loved ones if they were allowed to witness it."⁸³ The use of the word 'humane' is important to the cultural phantasy of what goes on during the autopsy, but it seems irrelevant that something which may be in the autopsy room due to astonishing violence being wrought upon it, something which in death only resembles human, requires humane treatment. Humane would be expected to apply to human-ness, which a corpse does not have. The corpse shows its threat to the living and the living duly respect it out of fear as much as love. We fear the dead – "To avoid their return we ensure that the dead are buried in ceremony."⁸⁴ We fear the images of real corpses in forensic texts where we laugh at the 'dead' in films.⁸⁵ Real corpses despite their lack of 'presence' and subjectivity, bore into

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⁸¹ Though all the authors on my search term results were 'him'.

⁸² Knight, 1996, p. 8, my emphasis.

⁸³ Quigley, 1996, p. 116.

⁸⁴ Quigley, 1996, p. 93.

⁸⁵ Though not even a horror film, Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (US 1994) has a hitman (John Travolta) accidentally blow away the head of a passenger in his car with a handgun. The scene is deliberately played for laughs and is quite amusing. However the marked difference in seeing such a corpse in grainy black-and-white post-laughs in a forensic book would entirely

us and encourage feelings of guilt for looking, of a dutiful outrage for the violence done to this body (the violence not only of the mechanism of death but the violence of being wrenched from life) and a fear of our own potential to be the image we see while simultaneously not being anything. This is especially true of those with face frontal and eyes open (usually an indication of violent death such as strangulation). Death in these pictures is almost virally infectious, the longer we look the more we are afraid it will happen to us. And after looking the forms of life we see no longer have their immortal sheen, but every living body is a body teetering on the brink of being in a forensic photo, our own included.⁸⁶

Faciality

In forensic photography it is the face more than the broken thorax which seems most unnerving. Fascination with unusual and bizarre mechanisms of death is only foiled when the picture includes a staring eye, a swollen tongue from an open mouth. What is it about the face that makes us invest so much of the 'self' in it? Deleuze and Guattari write of faciality in their chapter 'Year Zero: Faciality';

Although the head, even the human head, is not necessarily a face, the face is produced in humanity. But it is produced by a necessity that does not apply to human beings 'in general'; there is even something absolutely inhuman about the face.⁸⁷

The face is produced in humanity because it is the very mechanism of signification.⁸⁸ It 'makes sense' of the rest of the body, and the facial machine

alter the nature of the scene. Similarly seeing the scene in a mondo or snuff film would also prevent its comedic reaction.

⁸⁶ After seeing so many flayed pedestrian car accident victims in forensic texts I became paranoid for a while about crossing at the lights, imaging in my head my own flayed legs and the abject interiors therein.

⁸⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 170.

⁸⁸ Deleuze and Guattari on faciality stand in almost direct opposition to Levinas on the face. Where Deleuze and Guattari see the face as representative of the inhuman machine of pure signification, Levinas sees in the face consideration of pure alterity and of God, and the face is

is what makes sense of the world, the face being the machine that indicates recognition and hence primary signification. The face is also inhuman for this reason, faces are representative of humanity but are not confined to it, and do not demand a 'humane' treatment, but often the vindication of inhumane consideration, depending on whether or not a face passes. Faces inhumanly overwrite the human with a system for comprehension, whereby a human face may encourage either humane (pass) or inhumane (does not pass) treatment. The face is an abstract system that indicates and signifies but not anything in particular, simply systems of what may or may not be, whom may or may not 'pass'. The significations of the face are what creates subjectivities which are embedded firmly within Cartesian mind fields that use the 'body' but here only the flesh and folds of the face, to signify the 'person' or thing within, human or inhuman. Deleuze and Guattari state:

The faciality machine is not an annex to the signifier and the subject; rather; it is subadjacent (*connexe*) to them and is their condition of possibility... It is precisely because the face depends on an abstract machine that it does not assume a pre-existent subject or signifier; but it is subjacent to them and provides the substance necessary to them. What chooses the faces is not a subject... it is faces that choose their subjects.⁸⁹

The significations of the face are empty according to Deleuze and Guattari because they rely entirely on a made or formed meaning that revolves around a reason-er or marker, "Facialisation operates not by resemblance but by an order of reasons."⁹⁰ The reasons of the folds of the face are independent of its flesh, and depending on the axioms of intersection which occur upon a face, these reasons and meanings are liable to alter. Faciality in Deleuze and Guattari is a very difficult concept to grasp because it is what the face indicates that is comprehensible, and the order in which the face operates; that of signification

therefore the prime site of ethics. See Levinas' *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. 1979 and *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*. Trans. Richard Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press. 1985. For pointing out Levinas on the face to me, thanks go to Margaret Gibson, and her paper *Facing Death: The Ethics of the Face and Cinematic Death*. Presented at the *Thanatographia* conference, UWS, October 1999.

⁸⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 180.

and meaning within arbitrary reason. What the face is to the viewer is an essence of a marked signified subjectivity that is entirely antagonistic to a being in corporeality and any potential for a becoming because the face removes the head and creates the 'person' away from the body. The face mimetically performs who and what the body is or stands for in the future, thus closing off any potential of the body and any ethical consideration of the other. The 'condition of possibility' is the hardest concept to understand because it is completely mutable based on systems of value at work in society, and hence so is its meaning. As a possibility one would think faciality indicates a potential for subversive, subject altering effect, but its possibility is one of allowance and disallowance of faces that 'pass' and faces which do not. It is a possibility of prohibition and control, a possibility of patrolling and eventually encompassing the 'un-passable' as its reasons alter with accepted forms of faciality at any one time. This is what is meant by the term 'biunivocalisation'. The face as a single unified entity is supposedly representative of the subject, but, because it is actually a connexe rather than an annex, faciality chooses from binaries which indicate gender, race, etcetera in order to create the unified passable or un-passable face. The individual(s) face is a series of units which represent choices from binaries. Deleuze and Guattari state: "Concrete individuals are produced and transformed on the basis of these units...".⁹¹ The biunivocalised face, limited to binary options that form a unity, is antagonistic to the body and its potentials. Deleuze and Guattari point out that the head is part of the body but the face is something else, a territorial marker that indicates what one is and whether one will 'pass' in the world. The body becoming which is speed, possibility to transform and dismantled-face is challenged by the monolithic, Christ-inspired image of inert man. Deleuze and Guattari advocate a challenge to this monolith by reterritorializing faciality through deterritorializing the body.⁹²

⁹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 170.

⁹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 177.

⁹² Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 181.

The photographed face is a most fixed face. In it is the stagnation needed to 'read' the subject, to find in the inhumanity of the significations of the multi-holes in a head the meaning of the 'human' beneath, inside or inscribed upon the face. The face is, as Deleuze and Guattari claim, a most produced topography driven by the desire to see the psyche or the self upon the flesh. Camille Griggers discusses Deleuze and Guattari's theories of faciality, staking the white face of femininity as the 'despotic' face that over-represents everything yet simultaneously represents nothing, blankness. Faciality itself deterritorialises simple signs, binary signs, by being biunivocalised, representing binaries in one, singularities in many, all on one plane or territory. The face reduces all to one plane yet expands a single surface into multi-layers of signification. According to Griggers and to Deleuze and Guattari the face is already teeming with a confusion of over signification and masquerading 'open' readability. The face performs a readable plane(s) of what Griggers calls

multiplicitous proliferation. Is she white or coloured? Straight or Lesbian? Sane or Mad? The face will tell. And if she is something else entirely the social process of facialisation will capture her in one aspect of a categorical binary or its other, even if it has to do so by making a third term... Does the individual face conform to socially intelligible limits? Are its deviations intelligible? Does it *pass*? Faciality serves a policing function. Moreover, if the face can proliferate redundantly while expanding its borders into new territories, it is, by definition 'despotic'. Its imperialism is materialised in the mimetic demand it places on anything that comes into its expansionist sign-flow.⁹³

The death face, or the dead face which comes to 'represent death' is at once a most despotic and yet a most arid sign-free face. To take Griggers ideas one at a time in order to work through the teeming emptiness of the significances of the dead face, the first point of faciality in death - whether she is white, black, lesbian, straight sane or mad - now becomes that which may affect the evocation of sympathy in s/he who looks at the dead face. No longer is an affirmation of subjectivity contained within the face relevant. The corpse's face

⁹³ Griggers, Camilla. 'The Despotic Face of White Femininity'. *Becoming-Woman. Theory Out of Bounds*. Vol. 8. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1997, p. 4.

performs what Deleuze and Guattari would consider a regressive form of reterritorilized faciality. Whatever is created by the gaze upon the face, or reading the face, is immediately redundant. The face itself in a way no longer *exists*, its potential for a *connexe*-ion with signification does not have any effect. What is in there? Nothing and yet not-nothing because here the dead face sits, staring out through the portrait. It seems the term 'dead' is the ultimate third created term, or perhaps it is the one binary to all others: white or - dead; sane or - dead; lesbian or - dead. The dead face is redundant signification. The binary opposite term does not matter any more despite the first statement of the coroner who affirms and creates that the body was, 'A white, middle age female'... etcetera. The identity and habits of the corpse are all meticulously discovered, in the flesh and no longer through the face, and recorded and even stand for a reason, excuse or vindication of the death, as if to be in a certain way or a certain self will encourage one's death. But when faced with the face all it is, is dead; if it is anything else it is firstly and most importantly, dead. What is so striking and terrifying about the dead face is that it is despotic. It encroaches and reterritorialises without any further potential for de-territorialisation of the object it represents. It strikes fear like a virus as if death is catching. It cannot see, it cannot stare but to stare at the dead face is to be confronted with the question 'what is the mimetic demand in the face of this face?' Its effect on the viewer, however, is exactly where its deterritorialising effect takes place. The dead face is all redundancy, the very proliferation of redundancy; its sign-flow is empty because it can never deterritorialise what it represents, yet it is a teeming flow nonetheless which inflicts its deterritorialising effect on us. It means nothing while encroaching on everything.

The face speaks, sees, hears and understands, so it is there the human being resides in the cultural imagination. But the photograph of the cadaver's face problematises this false investment. It is a face still; it has the potential, when taken out of its highly specific context, to be 'mistaken' for a living face. When placed within its context the cadaverous face, worse than mistaken for living, exhibits the phantasmatic 'life' of the dead. It looks and its look signifies a

power to draw the looker into its death, representing the horror bouncing from the glossy image onto the viewer and back again, especially in the case of the strangulation victim who will be presented in photography with eyes wide open, mouth open in a 'scream' revealing a swollen tongue and a general visage of fright. In the cadaverous face we cannot read death. And this is what the curious will be seeking in the face of the dead. When the page is turned the squinting eye and clenched mouth awaiting the shock of another vile murdered face will see the repulsion of violent death. The blots and tracks of blood tributaries navigate the face (new black holes of signification upon the white plane of nothingness according to Deleuze and Guattari's faciality). The differences between the living face and the dead face will be read or imagined. The viewer will look for differences between the living face and the dead face rather than find them easily or immediately in most cases, but nowhere upon the face of the dead will there be the 'evidence' of what death is, of where the subject now resides or even of the absence of the subject from the staring cadaver. The signifying black holes of the face are replaced by the black text beneath the photograph, which states 'dead' as the univocal signifier. Regardless of whether the photograph is of someone dead or not, photographs still stare back, they still signify 'human' (i.e. living human) if they include a face, and they indicate self-consciousness at being stared at. In *The Object Stares Back* James Elkins discusses the difficulty in extricating a face from meaning, expression from intent and life from image. He states, "It seems to me that we have no choice but to continue to assume that expressions are intentional, even when we have evidence that is not so."⁹⁴ Over-investing in faces is something Elkins points out has an immediately terrifying effect. He claims the relationship between the viewer and a face is a necessarily terrifying one, and that which is most terrifying must have a face,

So is a face a source of power? Something that transfixes, or petrifies? Something that gives us orders not to move? That entices us to follow? Is it the unanswerable engine of seduction or destruction? Certainly it is, and it must also be more. A face is a terrifying thing, perhaps *the* terrifying thing -

⁹⁴ Elkins, James. *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing*. San Diego: Harvest Books. 1996, p. 186. Elkins' expression.

the very idea of terror itself... Anything I can think of that's scary is a face or has a face.⁹⁵

Elkins is not clear as to why he finds the face so terrifying but the images he includes in his book - deformed faces, a spider's thorax which has a facial machine, twin faces and the not-yet face of an embryo - are of Deleuze and Guattari's black hole/white wall systems. They represent the basic signification of black (potential meaning) - here and white (plane of nothingness) - there which signifies the topography of a face. But the 'faces' are cannot be read because they are not invested with the binaries that allow a face to 'pass' or to be marked as other. In their univocalisation they are not entirely unified faces but they are undeniably facial machines. They represent *one* image, a singular icon in the most basic rudimentary sense of the term, for which they do pass, but all further reading of these faces make them strange. Perhaps the terror Elkins discusses is in the faces he presents pictorially which evade binary choices. These faces most emphatically do *not* 'pass' but whether their terrifying potential is because of their representation of a different face that is neither/nor or because they are examples of a reterritorialized face is difficult to decide. To be reterritorialized would involve a face that did not resemble a face, yet the faces in Elkins' book are more bodies that resemble faces, so bodies that do not resemble bodies. They are almost hyper facial-machines without having any faces. They are photographs of particular things which, because of their static capture, are forced into being facial machines devoid of movement, speed or subjectivity, so neither in agreement with, nor antagonistic towards, traditional faciality.

Two chapters before his chapter entitled 'What is a Face?', in a chapter entitled 'Looking Away, and Seeing Too Much' Elkins discusses a physical transformation which occurred as a result of looking at photographs of 'death'. The chapter includes a series of four photographs showing a form of Chinese execution called 'death by division into a thousand parts'. The grainy series of

⁹⁵ Elkins, 1996, p. 170.

photographs show a woman tied to a tall pole apparently having pieces torn off her. The quality of the photographs is bad, they are not clear and hard to comprehend. At least one of the photographs could be seen as similar to forensic photography, although the social rather than laboratory topos of the shots belies this potential. Elkins states, "The last frame is gruesome, but it too can be seen: it is meat, a carcass in a butcher shop. It is the middle two scenes that are hardest to look at. The pain in those scenes is enough to cause physical changes in my body."⁹⁶ The final image, the 'butcher shop' is almost unintelligible, no clear form is discernible. The second image shows a waxy cadaver-ish woman being flayed, perhaps because her head is back and her mouth is open she may appear to be moaning but this is pushing the signification of her expression. The third image is the most like a forensic photograph, it shows the woman with head falling forward, possibly unconscious, perhaps dead (Elkins himself tries to predict in which photographs the woman is alive and in which dead) with the executioner's hand tearing flesh from her. Elkins claims it is the pain in the photographs that changes his body. Perhaps he is more sensitive than I am but there does not appear to be pain. How am I reading this? I am guessing Elkins, like most people, reads pain in the face. The victim has no expression, she seems more unconscious or severely drugged than pained. Elkins tries to force a visual personality into the body of the woman, even to the extent that in the third photograph when she may already be dead he still calls what he is effected by, her 'pain'. Elkins differentiates between carcass and pained person precisely because of the presence of a face. And it remains that the face is the most unnerving element, most especially in death because of the intense despotism of a face which, even if it is subjacent to signification, meaning and reason, makes redundant all of these *connexes* by making the body, in the sense of 'dead-body', the facial machine. It is also of paramount importance that Elkins chose as the site of his affect-ed anguish what is essentially an ethnographic image rather than an image from his own Eurocentric culture. There is an abundance of forensic photography of executions available in most Law

⁹⁶ Elkins, 1996, p. 110.

libraries. Yet in order to cope with an image of death, embellished by his confession of being most affected by the face, Elkins has chosen a face that does not altogether pass due to both its race and its gender. If the face for Elkins is the site of *identificatory* pain, where he identifies with the victim, then he has chosen a face very un-like his own.

If death affects the viewer due to the difficulty in articulating precisely where the body and subjectivity divide during death then the face as representative of the process of death is where most people wish to locate the pain because that is where they locate the subject. Pain is not a by-product of facialisation, but pain indicates life is still present and so identifying pain in the face is re-investing the face with the subject-in-pain. When the face ceases to be subject the body would no longer seem to need a face for the reasons that culture values facialisation so greatly. In death then, the machinery has shut down but its image or its affect of facialisation remains. Its function is reduced to nothing but the trace that stares from the page continues to signify.

In this respect all photographic faces are despotic because while overloaded with signification they are the unreal flat faces upon the paper plane. Staring in horror and curiosity at the corpse's face is felt as an intrusion, a guilty fascination that invades the privacy of the death of the individual despite the actuality of the photo being a multiply-copied piece of paper and nothing more. This is similar to the witnessing of filmed death, however I do not find filmed death to be nearly as unnerving primarily because the image, unlike photography, is not fixed. In film the eyes of the audience may shut, the head turn away and the scene be missed, whereas in photos the image remains in front of the eye determined and immutable.

Ethno-Faciality

I turn here for a moment to film, and pre-empt a fuller discussion of mondo and snuff for an analysis of race in faces - those that do not 'pass' in dominant white, western representation. The extreme of horror films, the mondo film,

deals with alterity in the use (and abuse) of ethnicity to refer to the 'anything goes' other, the other without civility. Mondo claims to 'film reality', a claim that remains, for the purposes of this section of the thesis, suspect.⁹⁷ Until *Faces of Death* (Conan LeCilaire, US, 1978) and *The Killing of America* (Sheldon Renan, US, 1981) most mondo films relied heavily on the ethnic alien-ness of their images in order to validate their authenticity. In this system the absolute other of biunivocalisation, he or she who does not pass, represents pure alterity and truth in such alterity. We cannot know this irreducible other so we gullibly believe what we see to be true. Or that is what the white, European and American filmmakers would have us believe. In reference to racial and cultural alterity the face is passed over for the whole body. The repetitive forced imagery of nakedness or near nakedness in the spectacle of the racial other at once makes the entire flesh a machinic signification of alterity, reducing the naked face to the level of the naked body. Uniqueness or individuality is eradicated through the focus on the lack of a marker where clothes end and face begins, occurring within the representation of tribality as teeming or always plural. Simultaneously the racial other becomes at once facialised over the full dermis, with tribal markings and practices such as hunting becoming signifiers for new binary univocalisations - those who hunt, we who do not, those who scarify and stretch the skin, we who (on the whole) do not. A whole new set of biunivocal corporeal systems come into play in these pseudo anthropological exhibitions in order to enhance the authentication and fascination of pure otherness. Mondo films are also responsible for the executions on screen of much wildlife. The conflation of 'native', signified by nakedness with the exposed nakedness of animals, and the sacrificial carcass is repeated over and over again. Even in titles such as *Ultime Grida Dalla Savana: La Grande Caccia* ('Savage Man... Savage Beast', Antonio Climati & Mario Morra, Italy, 1975) an immediate correlation to the full-bodied faciality of the native and the animal to the slaughter is forced. There is a disturbing suggestion that the natives, although value-less as individuals in the eyes of the filmmakers and presumably the audience, cannot

⁹⁷ For a full discussion of mondo see below, 'Death Film: Mondo, Necro and Fakes'.

simply be slaughtered to capture 'real' death onscreen. Instead the slaughter of animals is interspersed to assure the fascination of otherness is always reduced to the fascination of the unknowability of death. Kerekes and Slater point out however, that such killing of natives does occur in such films as *Africa Addio* ('Africa Blood and Guts', Gualtiero Jacopetti & Franco Prosperi, 1966). They mention the shooting of a black citizen at the hands of a group of white mercenaries: "Allegations arose that the filmmakers actually encouraged the unlawful killing of the man for the sake of powerful documentary footage".⁹⁸ The emphasis on race distribution in this event cannot be forced enough, but there are instances in mondo films where the 'barbarity' of the 'natives' vindicates the phantasmatic passive voyeurism of the supposed documentary camera. The final image of the film *Executions* (David Herman, Arun Kumar and David Monaghan, UK, 1995) is an example of such.

The Sacrificial Face

The face in filmed death, especially in the forced 'hand held' shaky look of mondo films, is often fleeting or obscured, escaping the audience and close examination. A photographed face, in a forensic text or a film like *Death Scenes* (Nick Bougas, US, 1989) becomes the image alone, without even background to dilute the staring visage. A major and completely horrific exception is the final scene in the mondo documentary film *Executions* (also an exception because the filmmakers David Herman, Arun Kumar and David Monaghan are from Britain, a rare source of mondo film making). A man is beaten and persecuted by members of his village, and then shot in the face. With his face spliced in two, and a section blown away, the man is given a single (camera) shot close up in which to die. He now looks monstrous, yet he still breathes in massive gasps, his eyes are not quite shut, and it takes approximately four minutes of this close up for him to die. It is one of the single most horrific scenes in any film, due to its contextualisation as 'real', due to its shameless single close-up shot (which resembles photography), due

⁹⁸ Kerekes, David, and Slater, David, *Killing for Culture; An Illustrated History of Death Film, From Mondo to Snuff*. London: Annihilation Press. 1993, p. 176.

to the fact that the man looks as if he should be dead, the audience want him dead because they do not want to look at his death or at the broken mess of his face. Once again the importance of this shot as representing death is in the ethnicity of the man. The majority of images sending a moral message against the barbarity of capital punishment in *Executions* occur within such an 'ethnic' context. The barbarity of death is seen as inextricable from the supposed barbarity of other races. The audience witnesses the diminishment of life and is made monster for their feelings of disgust at the way the man *looks* despite the fact that he is dying. (This film is available at most video stores in Australia, though its banning was attempted when it was first released straight-to-video in 1995.) Griggers locates the purpose of the sacrificial face as the opposite of the despotic face discussed earlier:

The social function of the sacrifice is to keep violence appropriately contained within the margins of the majoritarian social body... Whereas the despotic face incarnates difference as sameness, the face of the sacrifice incarnates difference as difference... the body of the sacrifice by definition is perpetually *losing face* - undergoing a process of effacement, a trial of humiliation, exile or victimization...⁹⁹

Nowhere is this literal loss of face more evident than in the final *Executions* scene. Binarily opposed to the majoritarian despotic (white) face in forensic textbooks which apparently represents 'us', (which especially in Australia, conceals such social problems as Aboriginal deaths in custody, sexual violence against women and police violence towards minorities) the sacrificial face represents the majoritarian inability to ever be or become other. It is for this reason that improper use of forensic textbooks, looking for interest rather than for learning, is frowned upon, yet watching the supposedly didactic scene from *Executions* is made available for all video store patrons. The dying man in the scene literally loses the face that in a lesser manner was already lost in his de-contextualisation in a mondo film as permanent and irrefutable other. In terms of Deleuze and Guattari's facialisation machine, the broken, shot face of the

⁹⁹ Griggers, 1997, pp. 15-16.

execution victim represents a corporeal reality in extreme what the face that does not 'pass' already represented in signification. Breaking the face to reveal flesh and a torso-like quality of gore in the racially other does not break its flow of signification as does the breaking of the white majoritarian face, where subject is transformed into meat. Through the presentation of such ethnic alterity as already meat, interchangeable with slaughtered beasts, this face becomes a spectacle of fascination rather than the despotic potential dead self of forensic textbooks.

Even in less ethnographic mondo films, the racially minoritarian sacrifice appears. *The Killing of America*, in many respects worthy of Kerekes and Slater's judgement as "a superior production",¹⁰⁰ exhibits as one of its most disturbing scenes, the murder by General Loan of a Vietnamese protester. Many of the scenes of 'white death' in *The Killing of America* are still photographs, such as the suicide who split his head in half with a shotgun held between his knees. But the live action footage of the Vietnamese protester (who goes nameless) being shot in the head, spurting blood and collapsing on the road to die at the hands of General Loan, remains the most shocking scene. The protester, unarmed, manhandled and executed, loses his own face to become the face of the enemy in war in order that the General is vindicated in his defeat of the enemy. The general's face becomes facialised. Loan becomes the supreme example of a face that passes, not only for representing the face of a white American victor, but for eradicating the minoritarian face that opposes his majoritarian face, hence making natural, victorious and palpable only the face of the white male majoritarian 'human'.

The face in film and photography, be it real or performed, does not represent 'us' in an identificatory way. It is that which allows the possibility of us, through racial and sexual alterity but also through the alterity of death and pain. In horror images the pain and destruction of the face, although diametrically opposed to the gore of the torso, is that which tells us, not only what has

¹⁰⁰ Kerekes and Slater, 1993, p. 198.

occurred, but what enables the human to exist before death eradicates the flesh. Yet the face presents the opposite of humanity, it presents the flesh forced into symbolisation and socialisation. Death and pain, as well as racial and sexual alterity, are presented in faciality then not as differentiating from the human, but from the social majoritarian, and from society itself. "A horror story, the face is a horror story" according to Deleuze and Guattari¹⁰¹ which may be the reason why the horrors of forced alterity and violence toward the other and towards the self are found so readily in the significations of faciality.

One of the more colourful autopsy procedures, used when examining the head and brain involves the slicing of the scalp across the apex of the head from ear to ear across the very highest point on the skull. The two flaps of skin created are then pulled quite rigorously down over the front and back of the head. This exercise, in the majority of autopsies, must be specifically requested by the coroner. In the film *Basic Autopsy Procedures* (director unknown, US, 1961) an educational film for medical students, the scalp flap is pulled down so far at the front it nestles comfortably under the chin of the corpse entirely covering the face and creating an 'inside-out-head' character, as if the corpse is wearing an eyeless balaclava of the interior of its own scalp. The skin of the scalp, turned inside out covers the face and a whole new plane of head-surface is revealed. The head's interior is then examined. This procedure is quite rough due to the toughness of the skull bone and the layers of dura, which cover the brain. There are facial autopsies occasionally performed, but information on the procedure is difficult to find in great detail. It is enough to discover that the standard collection of vitreous humour is performed by inserting a hypodermic needle into the eye! The face seems void of its cultural 'humanity' to the forensic pathologist, or perhaps the repetitive nature of objectification which accompanies the work dulls the pathologist to its nature (accompanied by the pleasure received by the work which is mentioned earlier). For the layperson however, the ease with which the faceless cadaver in the fascinating state of wearing a scalp balaclava may be examined juxtapose sharply with the faced corpse. The face is true signification in this procedure, because it can be peeled

¹⁰¹ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 168.

off and replaced, it becomes black through bruising, marbling and simply death, and it is always univocalised as its despotic signified - death. Ordinarily any photograph that includes a face will be a less gory or unusual one, due to the importance of the inclusion of the face. (With the exception of the machete wound victim in DiMaio & DiMaio, p. 205.) This inclusion makes the almost 'unrealness' of the very lurid gory images more pronounced, while the 'reality' of the face pictures is enhanced. Black and white, which is used in the majority of the books probably to save costs, adds to this 'reality'. Colour pictures seem more polished and staged, especially due to the colour of the viscera - garish blues, greens and the fatty yellow beneath the skin. They could be photographs from a make-up artist's guide to gore effects. The 'reality' of black and white has been theorised¹⁰² and its filmicly mythical 'truth' as opposed to the fakery of colour is every bit as evident in the forensic text.

Death Film: Mondo, Necro and Fakes

The desire for the corpse is a sexual pathology, according to psychological discourse. It is never spoken of to my knowledge in the forensic texts, despite the fact that the pathologist bases her/his life around the desire to touch, excavate and appreciate the value of the corpse. Thwarting desire for the corpse in society involves both a massive investment in the creation of a rigid discourse around the corpse as filth, while simultaneously retaining an irrational respect that invests the corpse with the subjectivity that is no longer animate within it. According to psychiatrists Louis Franzini and John Grossberg there are three broad categories of necrophilia:

- 1.) *Violent necrophiles*, who kill to obtain corpses for sex acts, or get a charge out of mutilating dead bodies.
- 2.) *Fantasy necrophiles*, who imagine or play-act sexual contact with corpses, often without direct physical contact

¹⁰² And used filmicly, as evinced by Steven Spielberg in his 1993 film *Schindler's List*. Interesting that Spielberg is primarily a horror or thriller director and producer, yet his most horrifying film perhaps, which is *Schindler's List* concerns itself, like forensics texts, with the 'real' and the importance of contextualisation within reality.

3.) *Romantic necrophiles*, the bereaved who because of their extreme grief cannot bear to be separated from their loved one, and continue to relate sexually to their beloved much as they did in life.¹⁰³

The authors go on to recount the case of a violent necrophile, not a killer but a digger, who is also cited as a case study in Krafft Ebing's famous *Psychopathia Sexualis*.¹⁰⁴ The necrophile, Sergeant Francois Bertrand, was seized with the desire to tear apart the corpses of females. Franzini & Grossberg state

Although his hands were bleeding, he continued to dig in a frenzy until the corpse's abdomen was exposed. He tore it to pieces, then neatly refilled the grave. After this episode he proceeded to mutilate and destroy the corpses with his sword or pocket knife... he masturbated several times while touching the corpse's intestines.¹⁰⁵

Though the inclusion of masturbation places the act of Bertrand's necrophilia entirely (and safely) within the realm of the primarily sexual, the rest of his actions - the mutilation, the careful focus upon the intestines as well as his display of neatness in refilling the grave - aligns him with the modern day performer of autopsy, despite Bertrand's necrophilia being performed in the 1840s. His use of more than one 'tool' for evisceration and his desire to dig (which mirrors the pathologist's relentless desire to dig into the body for information) at the cost of his own flesh makes us wonder if he also had a 'murder bag' for the scene of his crimes? Though Bertrand's sexual psychopathology is 'true'; it sounds as if it could be a filmic tale. *Il Mostro e in Tavola... Barone Frankenstein* is the story of a doctor, the familiar Baron Frankenstein, who 'comes out' as a necrophile. The revelation that this

¹⁰³ Franzini, Loius R. and Grossberg, John M. *Eccentric and Bizarre Behaviours*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1995, p. 219. The first statement in this wonderful book is "Nothing is as inspiring, as tragic, as sensational, as captivating, or as powerful as *real life*," p. vii (original italics). The importance of contextualising the book immediately is evidence that in books which deal with the 'inhuman'ly bizarre, whether they are psychology books or forensic photography books, a level of disbelief could be created to cope with the subject matter were its reality not spelt out. Franzini and Grossberg's statement sounds as if it could as easily be on a poster advertising a mondo film as in an academic text.

¹⁰⁴ Krafft-Ebing, Richard Von. (1906) *Psychopathia Sexualis: The Case Histories*. London: Velvet Publications. 1997. Case study 23, pp. 37-39.

¹⁰⁵ Franzini and Grossberg, 1995, p. 220.

scientist, who works with corpses all day in order to create, investigate and re-animate, is a necrophiliac comes as little surprise. Baron Frankenstein (Udo Kier) lovingly unpicks the neck-to-navel scar of his female creation (Dalila Di Lazzaro), inserts his hand and later his penis into the wound, and as he fondles the entrails coos "spleens [sic], liver, kidney, gall bladder!" He promptly orgasms. The Baron's tactile knowledge of the organs within his female zombie, and his arousal at their feel relies entirely on the fact that he is a doctor and hence familiar by touch with these organs. The necrophile here then, *must* be a doctor, not a crazy layperson, as the sexual psychopathology text would have us believe. The urban myth that those who work with corpses (though doctors of all kinds are pristinely avoided in this generalisation) are often those who take sexual favours with them is not entirely apocryphal. Quigley points out "Those most often suspected of acts of necrophilia are those with easy (and private) access to the newly dead, including hospital orderlies, morgue attendants, and funeral home and cemetery workers."¹⁰⁶ It could be suggested that the reason these people are suspected of necrophilia is their desire to work in the field, without wishing to excavate truth in the corpse, their non-aversion to being around corpses and their repudiation of the cultural investment in the abjection plus remnant subjectivity of the dead body.

Doctors are notably absent in this equation. Is this because their work is seen as 'scientific' or because the fondling of entrails, the fine slicing of flesh is not seen as sexual - is the necrophile only she or he who genitally derives pleasure from a corpse? The necrophile ironically is here constructed as completely sexually normative in act and in sexual preference *except* that the object is now deceased.¹⁰⁷ The fascinating pleasure of slicing and dicing for 'al' that is performed by forensics seems repressed, and only the slice-and-dice movie (or

¹⁰⁶ Quigley, 1996, p. 299.

¹⁰⁷ This is evident in a number of films dealing primarily with necrophilia. Freda's *L'Orribile Segreto del Dr. Hichcock*, Margheriti's *Il Mostro e in Tavola*, Jorg Buttgerit's *NekRomantik* and *NekRomantik 2* (1988 and 1991, Germany), and even *Lucker the Necrophagous*. Other films which could be termed necrophiliac films but are not because the desire for the dead is not entirely sexual are Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* and *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre Part 2* (US, 1974 and 1984), Dario Argento's *Opera* (1988) as well as vampire films, Frankensteinian films and slasher films where the slasher spends a little too much time on the dead victim.

slasher film) is allowed to give pleasure. Films which include forensic details are objects of fascination - Jonathan Demme's film *The Silence of the Lambs* (US, 1991) was the first horror film in history to win an Academy Award for best picture, and the first horror film since William Peter Blatty's scripting of *The Exorcist* in 1973 to win best screenplay (by Ted Tally), which defines these movies' success from the more common Academy Awards won by horror films, namely best special effects or best make-up effects. *The Silence of the Lambs* depicts an autopsy (though it is quite a pristine affair) and it also marries the excavation of clue and corpse. As the F.B.I. agent searches for the serial killer responsible for the deaths of women, these women's bodies become sites of knowledge also to be searched.¹⁰⁸ The popularity of this film comes from mass audiences indulging in the pleasure of corpse excavation; a pleasure that I'm sure no forensic pathologist would admit was the prime motivation for career choice. The audience enjoys the fascination of disgust as much as the 'intellectualised encyclopaedic' body, but the combination of the two is entirely absent in forensic texts. Catching the killer by reading his psychological pathology runs concurrently with the reading of the cadaver, similar to cases of death through 'sexual misadventure' such as autoerotic asphyxia. Franzini & Grossberg cite the forensic pathologist's task, in one particular asphyxophilia case, of the " 'psychological autopsy' that augmented their traditional physical autopsy".¹⁰⁹ Clues in forensics, and hence in films which include forensics, traverse divided discourses and homogenise the texts of criminal artefacts,¹¹⁰ flesh files and the psychological profile of the criminal mind, itself in the process of becoming artefact.

¹⁰⁸ Other films that are included in this now extremely popular genre are: *Seven* (David Fincher, US, 1995), *Kiss the Girls* (Gary Fleder, US 1997) and the *Prime Suspect* series of telemovies, of which there are now five (Christopher Menaul et.al. UK, 1990-96). The makers of *Seven* however refused to allow horror fanzine *Fangoria* to shoot a photospread of the film for their magazine claiming it was *not* a horror film. Many critics are struck dumb also at the suggestion that the Oscar winner *The Silence of the Lambs* is a horror film. The sub-genre 'psychological thriller' seems more an attempt for the mainstream to avoid the horror tag than for an attempt at specificity of genre.

¹⁰⁹ Franzini and Grossberg, 1995, p. 116.

¹¹⁰ The parts of the body that are important to a criminal forensic investigation are themselves called artefacts.

Even in film, the way in which the text is read plays a vital role. In the necrophiliac film there is much more likelihood of offence being caused than in a film such as *Silence of the Lambs*. The body must be given, even in the non-real realm of cinema, the 'respect' not it, but we, require. To libidinalise a corpse is to take it for what it really is, an object which cannot say no, and repulsion is a mingling of offence at the defilement of the corpse as well as disgust at what the corpse is and sexuality's close proximity to that. There are, however, other kinds of corpse movies,¹¹¹ the mondo movie and the snuff film. The mondo movie is an exploitation feature masquerading as a documentary and is currently being masqueraded itself on prime time television in such programs as *Caught on Camera* and *When Animals Attack!* Mondo movies, of which the film *Executions* is one, document bizarre cultural rites, operations, animal slaughter and human death, though these deaths are 'caught' on film and not deliberate. Possibly the most famous of these in Australia are the *Shocking Asia* (Emerson Fox, Germany/Hong Kong, 1974)¹¹² series of films, which are relatively tame compared to other mondo movies not readily available in video stores or outright banned in Australia. Mondo films began due to a crossover in discourse. Though *Mondo Cane* (Gualtiero Jacopetti, Italy, 1962) is credited with being the first mondo picture, even films such as *Häxan* ('Witchcraft through the Ages', Benjamin Christensen, Sweden, 1922) which claim to educate the audience in the 'secrets' of the world by shocking and entertaining them, include elements of mondo. The mondo movie is that which hides behind the veneer of factual education. It only ever shows footage of a documentary nature, but the presentation of this 'factual' documentary encourages the audience to look at it for shock and entertainment value. While this automatically suggests a less than honourable technique of film making to the 'high art' critical audience, it also places massive emphasis on directorial (i.e. author) intent, a concept which was all but abolished by Barthes¹¹³ and post-modern theory's death of the author. Kerekes and Slater, in their definitive

¹¹¹ The corpses I am referring to in this section do not include the fantastical re-animated corpses of vampires and zombies.

¹¹² Though the actual director was probably Rolf Olsen.

¹¹³ In Barthes, Roland. 'The Death of the Author'. *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana. 1977, pp.142-148.

text *Killing for Culture*, point out that despite authorial intent and non-authorial intent being considered important in the contextualisation of these films, the claim of passivity by the production team is a necessary myth for the genre

For many people celluloid is the truth - whatever it shows and whatever it says is not an issue for contention. Which is why *Go, Go, Go World!* can smugly proclaim in its advertising, 'We didn't make the world - we just photographed it!'.¹¹⁴

The belief that celluloid exhibits that which was passively filmed, a concept that partners the documentary as truth idea, is not what mondo films are most outrageously provoking in their genre. It is true that the idea of the truth found in documentary is pushed when the sensational and 'unserious' is filmed rather than the serious or grave subject matter of other documentaries. But the mondo movie is also asking its audience to feel pleasure at sensationalism. Where a 'serious' documentary stays within its solemn discourse, begging of the audience a serious mindset, the mondo movie uses all the shocking things it films for *pleasure* rather than information. The corpse and the suspicion that forensics releases pleasure as well as information may be further examined through this form of film. The mondo movie could be compared to the forensic book which accompanies a photograph not with "... passage of the adjacent double [bus] wheel over the abdomen has extruded the intestines though the perineum"¹¹⁵ but 'can you believe the bus pushed the intestines out of the rectum?!'. In many ways this is what the forensic book is stating by including the unusual picture *for the pleasure of other pathologists*. Just as the mondo movie is a horror film masquerading behind a documentary purpose, so too the forensic text is an intellectual textbook hiding behind its dry discourse the pleasures it holds for a forensic pathologist with a passion for her/his work. Pedagogy, presumably, would be used as justification of interest, but when is interest only for learning and not for pleasure, and how is pleasure extricated from learning? As I have already stated pleasure insinuates a subject, while learning is about the transition from ignorant subject to invisible observer.

¹¹⁴ Kerekes and Slater, 1993, p. 106.

¹¹⁵ Knight, 1996, p. 290.

Taking 'serious scientific' images out of their intended purpose, where death strangely becomes science and not something that is irreducibly universal, claims that the scientific gaze or means of perception is sanctioned to see correctly. Similarly the documentary (rather than the mondo) is created by a director whose entire aim is to look and see but not to impose his look onto that which is filmed, an aspiration that smacks of all the same suspicious claims of objective knowledge upon which science founds itself. Documentary, like science, relies on what Virilio calls the "ineluctable progress of technology, in a *technically liberated cinema*. In August 1939 Grierson wrote that the 'documentary idea should simply enable everyone *to see better*'.¹¹⁶ The camera takes on the fallacious objectivity of the microscope, where to look claims to inject nothing of the gazer. Virilio quotes Paul Valéry in the context of his argument stating " 'Man has extended his means of perception and action much more than his means of representation and summation'.¹¹⁷ Scientists and documentary makers contract the furthest reaches of space and the most minute parts of inner space into their overwhelmingly overvalued 'objective'-subjectivities while all along claiming there is *no distinction between (their) perception and summation*. Pleasure is void because the viewer, like the scientist and documentary director is encouraged to simply see, passively, without any overlaying of subjective vision upon the image. In precisely this way death is imagined as being able to be known objectively in exactly the same way as natives in the African jungle or pathological cells under a microscope. According to science, because all *seem* to exist before the scientific observer, none can be overwritten with the observer's subjectivity. Knowledge lays waiting to be captured by the microscope or camera. Knowledge of death is simply waiting to be viewed but any pleasure admitted in the image by the viewer is seen as unprofessional, disrespectful of the empiricism of death and hence perverse. Ironical that the subject so overvalued in psychoanalysis and philosophy becomes an anti-subject, a subject who claims not to be there, in scientific observation procedures.

¹¹⁶ Virilio, 1988, p. 25. Grierson reference not given.

¹¹⁷ Virilio, 1988, p. 29. Valéry reference not given.

The suggestion that the mondo movie was somewhat 'invented' in the sixties by the Italians with *Mondo Cane* should be briefly placed in its social context. The Italian flair for producing violent film is not new and not even concurrent in its genesis with the civil violence that occurred in Italy most severely in the late sixties right through until the mid eighties. With the escalation in social violence, however, came the hard-core escalation in represented (fake) and real (documentary-type) violence. The riots of May 1968 were followed in Italy by the so called 'civil war' between the government and the Red Brigade, street riots in which the Italian police were sanctioned to shoot anyone who appeared to be causing civil discontent according to the 'Reale Law'. This resulted in a general environment of terror and terrorism. Streets displayed 'real' corpses for citizens to see, something which, coming from the urban streets of an Australian city seems un-real. So with this proliferation of visible real violence came the escalation of the violent mondo film and pseudo mondo film, or masquerading snuff film, of which Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* is possibly the most famous. With a social climate of terror the body in dismembered and ruptured states represented, not the disharmony of the broken and defiled subject as it does in countries such as America, but the political violence of a *polis* in crisis. This is a warring city where the enemy is not deviant subjectivity - the murderer, the serial killer. Rather, secret armies of terror challenge the political and corporeal freedom of expression of the specifically political body, and the armies are one's own government or one's own side. All violence then represented at this time a political action, reaction or a malady of the social corpus as well as the single corpse. The violence, which ruptured the flesh, was the same that ruptured the body of state. Body parts were a means to shock the state into fixing itself while at the same time enforcing the futile ridiculousness of a state who kills its own citizens for political actions. The main point I wish to make here is that at this time for some Italian citizens to a certain extent there was a necessarily different mode of separation between violence, death and politics than for a modern, non-Italian viewer. The films were particularly concerned at this time with representing real, and often outrageous in a human rights context, activities of violence. For example the cliterodectomy scenes in *Africa Addio* are replayed

obsessively while the narrator (performing the 'objective scientific' observer) cites them as proof or evidence exemplifying the barbarity a culture can afflict upon its *own* people. This scene is an early example of the Italian citizen at a boiling point to represent anger aimed at a communist country hell-bent on capitalism. Or *Cannibal Holocaust* and Umberto Lenzi's *Cannibal Ferox* where 'lost' cannibal worlds are infiltrated by western documentary makers who themselves turn far more savage than the cannibals, raping murdering and destroying the towns of the 'less-civilised' worlds. The theme of cannibalism too is important in pointing out a culture who eats up its own, who stares its citizens in the face before consuming them. It is not essential for my discussions on death to have these Italian films contextualised in this way. To mention this point, however, is to keep at the back of the reader's mind the lack of a definite distinction in the Italian cinema's ontology at the time between the 'really real' death that was available on the street and the faked death that is all most of us in western countries will ever see. I do not wish to venture what pleasure there is for an Italian to contextualise and mimetically re-present the violence s/he sees on the streets. But I am pointing this question out deliberately in order to show the massive disparity of pleasures that may be sourced by those who represent violence. In the broadest sense the Italian who represents violence in film is achieving a different kind of pleasure to the American who does the same because the violence is implicitly different.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ A comparable but different example of the Italian version of horror compared to that of this antipodean viewer is, not only the representation of gore and bodies in the street, but also the mummified or skeletal body. When first visiting Italy I was struck by the amount of crypts and churches, the most famous being the crypt of the Capuchins at the Church of the Immaculate in Rome, which presented corpses, either skeletal or still fleshed in mummified remains, as tourist attractions cum sacred places of meditation. If Italian culture includes the presence of such artefacts in everyday life, then certainly the 'discovery' of such cadavers by film characters must be staged for non-Italian, or non-'crypt familiar' audiences. For example, in Lucio Fulci's *Demonia* (Italy, 1990) the archaeologist Liza discovers the ossuary beneath the monastery of the nuns of Santa Rosalea. She gasps in terror at the mummificious cadavers and skeletons. Her character is Canadian, so her familiarity with such arenas may not be that of Italian audiences, but she is an archaeologist so presumably she is familiar with such spaces. The effect however is obviously not aimed at presenting a rational reaction from a particular character but an encouragement for an audience unfamiliar with such a scene. She gasps, we gasp, without character identification, (because she is Italian in an Italian movie, or because she is an archaeologist it would make no sense for her character to gasp as we do) simply with a visceral or emotive reaction. It would be interesting to survey Italian viewers and compare how those familiar with such scenes from culture react compared with viewers who have no experience of such spaces. Italian familiarity with such spaces is evident also in Michele Soavi's *Dellamorte Dellamore* (Italy, 1994). When Francesco Dellamorte takes his lover into the ossuary after she

There is little difference in watching a mondo movie to borrowing a forensics book and utilising it for un-forensic purposes, and thus the offence that a mondo movie may cause, before there is a corpse in sight, is that of the untamed discourse. The very high wall which separates the 'real' from the 'unreal' or filmed, is made gelatinous by the mondo movie. The audience only trusts, as with forensic texts, that what they are seeing is real because they have been told it is real, in a prologue or on the video cover. But this knowledge changes the audience and almost breaks the contract between audience and film of mutual trust at the unreality and un-believability implicit in the meaning of the word 'movie'. The reasons for renting a mondo movie then could be because of the promise of the 'real', the desire to break the bond of eternal phantasm on the screen. Or it could be because a film which promises the 'real' sets itself apart from all things filmed, a claim it can never achieve by its very being as filmed footage. So the audience denies the claim of 'real', and whether the footage is 'real' or 'unreal' (filmic or faked) it will always be safe because it is set behind the glass of the television set.

The corpse and death in mondo movies is an unusually vindicated object. Where films such as *NekRomantik 2* and *Macchie Solari* ('Autopsy', Armando Crispino, Italy, 1974) are unavailable or outright banned in Australia, the mondo movie is freely available. The tamer ones at least are available at most video stores, though even one of these, *Africa Addio*, available in Australia as *Africa Blood and Guts*, shows a man actually being shot. The less obscure *The Killing of America*, a film most Australians would be able to pick up at their local video store, depicts real death - murder, suicide, execution - ad nauseam.¹¹⁹ Many obscure, mainly European films which deal

has repeatedly begged to see it, the majority of Australian viewers with which I have watched this film, have asked "what is an ossuary?" Presumably many Italians (and Europeans, ossuaries being popular tourist attractions from Paris to Kutna Hora in the Czech Republic) would know what it was.

¹¹⁹ Mondo movies are *not* included in the horror aficionado's bible *The Aurum Encyclopaedia of Horror Films* ed. Phil Hardy. London: Aurum. 1993. Nor are suspected snuff movies, with the exception of the film *Snuff* (Michael and Roberta Findlay, US, 1974) which is *not* a snuff movie but a movie which wanted to cash in on the curiosity of gullible film-goers. The reason for these non-inclusions is not given in the introduction, but mondo as a genre of its own and

phantasmatically with necrophilia and cadavers are suppressed by the censors in Australia, yet mondo films, which are also primarily European produced are available freely. Is there a belief that the 'real' cannot be helped, its existence cannot be suppressed because it is 'real' despite the fact that it is still, by virtue of being filmed, on a screen? A film from an imagination that depicted the most diluted of the forensic images discussed, would undoubtedly lead to an outright ban. What, then, is the 'real' corpse? Is it an unshakeable symbol, whereas the faked corpse is something we are able to prevent before its existence? Is preventing the depiction of faked corpses on screen borne of a desire to keep intact our delicate repression of death and our own potentially cadaverous subjectivity? The availability of the mondo movie could be constructed almost as a conspiratorial move which severs our desire to see faked death (hence we would make no complaint towards censorship) by illustrating in garish doco-style the grainy, sensationalised real deaths of people. This aim towards reality misses the point of the phantasy of death. The examples included in this chapter have already shown that the faked death in film is often glamorous, clean and quite potentially erotic in its over-performativity of a state no one can actually phantasise. Perhaps if context were entirely absent, a condition that could not exist but hypothetically shall for now, the audience may wonder at the lack of colour or sheen upon the corpses of a mondo film, put it down to a low budget or lack of imagination. But more likely they would not know the difference. Death image, like death itself, is impossible to pinpoint, is difficult to define and is as tentative being 'real' as it is performing the real.

The film *Men Behind the Sun* (T.F. Mous, Hong Kong, 1987) caused a censorship uproar in Australia for the violence it depicted. What seemed to cause less of an uproar is the suggestion that real cadavers were used in the film's many scenes of autopsy, experimentation and mass graves.¹²⁰ Upon its

also as a fuzzy edged crossover genre (horror/documentary/anthropology) may be a consideration. Among some horror aficionados however, the mondo film is seen as seedy and unworthy of inclusion in the genre, despite its primary desire to shock and repulse.

¹²⁰ The suggestion that real corpses have been used to represent corpses in film has also been levelled at Aristide Massaccesi's (Joe D'Amato) necro film *Buio Omega* ('Blue Holocaust', Italy, 1979).

very quiet subsequent video release the cover claims no sensationalist use of corpses in the film. Was this 'serious' film, about the atrocities performed on the Chinese by the Japanese during World War II, above crossing discourses to include a curious form of entertainment alongside its 'social moral' message? Why then were real corpses used? It is clear that those audiences who know about the real corpses would watch the film differently, yet frequently audiences are found saying 'that corpse looks real' in high-camp films such as *NekRomantik 2* when those who have actually seen a 'real' corpse are probably few. The real corpse itself does not resemble itself. In university medical morgues, where embalmed bodies lie for the educational purposes of the students, the age of the bodies since death, usually about 18 months to two years, gives them a waxy sheen and a stiffness whereby they cannot be imagined as ever being alive. They could be described as looking like dummies or dolls. In the documentary on Tom Savini *Scream Greats* (Fangoria, US, 1988) a crew-member who posed for a decapitated rubber head recalls placing the head (whose mouth gaped open and shut by mechanical mechanism) on his bed. His mother found it and went into shock, because she did not even contemplate it being 'unreal'. Fakery and the contextualisation of images as 'real' are the prime features of the next form of death film - snuff.

The snuff film is as mythical and as prevalent as urban mythology itself. What is a snuff movie? It is supposed to be a film where a human is killed for 'real' for the purpose of being filmed. Unknown amounts of films have claimed to be snuff, despite the threat of criminal prosecution this carries. By claiming to be a snuff film, the film guarantees its own success. Fascination with the corpse and the mechanism of death drives the snuff audience. This may relate back to the idea that death is not a moment, not a substance that may be seen or known in present time but that is always retrospective, futuristic or fake. Perhaps the idea of the snuff film is not, as many believe, taking pure pleasure in the suffering of another, but a desperate attempt to 'know' death by watching it in the 'real'. To know that one has watched a 'real' death is almost to harden oneself to death by falsely believing that by seeing one knows. The pleasure then in watching a death film in the 'real' is compromised by the driving desire to somehow

overcome the fear of nothingness that accompanies the fear of death. We fear death because no one knows what it is or what happens so by watching it maybe we will know. Lingis states "It is this death that makes our surfaces appear to one another not as contours enclosing chunks of subsistent substance but as surfaces of exposure to one another, *surfaces that are afflictions upon one another.*"¹²¹ Like amateur forensic pathologists, we hopefully watch the purported 'snuff' film to see the exposed surfaces and perhaps in them to 'see' death - what it is, what it feels like, what happens after. But the opening of the flesh of another, instead of offering information, offers only affliction. To the non-pathologist the opening of another's flesh, on 'real' film or in three dimensions, is the opening of our own body's potentiality for becoming pure (and only) flesh. This may be the reason the layperson has such an uncomfortable problem with the task of forensic pathology - why does the pathologist's subjectivity not suffer the affliction of the surfaces of the corpse's flesh as we do? Even the face of the strangulation victim in the forensic text acts as an interior surface (interior because it was always there but only opened up after death) which afflicts, most powerfully. It is defacialised in the sense that it tells us not who that person is but how that person suffered. This perhaps is the 'face of pain' that James Elkins claimed to see. It is the moment when faciality actually admits to telling us what we believe we see, rather than faciality being the despotic signifier that claims to tell us truths about who we are looking at. By watching snuff we are not made sentient about death but only about our potential to die. "Whenever death can be designated as 'soon' the dying has already begun" states Elaine Scarry, "Ibbieta [from Sartre] is dying not because he has yet experienced the damage that will end his life but because he has begun to experience the body that will end his life, the body that can be killed, and which when killed will carry away the conditions that allow him to exist."¹²² Death in film, in forensics texts, in front of our eyes, exists only as something that happens to others, to those who have bodies, which have been reduced to pure body. The idea of death encroaching is the moment when the body finally makes its supreme power over the mind, the psyche,

¹²¹ Lingis, 1989, p. 180, my italics.

¹²² Scarry, 1985, p. 31.

subjectivity felt. It is the moment that the subject realises *it is nothing but body*, and it is subject to its own body, that its subjectivity may only be an idea, never a reality. The snuff movie focuses upon the body of subjectivity, rather than the body of the character, the fake model or the accidental victim. It is a purposeful annihilation of a subject by victimising it to its own body's supremacy (over whether the subject lives or dies) and vulnerability (to everything outside and inside).

Whether snuff movies actually exist, the idea of them being real is what creates their appeal. The fact that they are defended and prosecuted reveals the fear of the existence of a desire to purposefully cause the death of another within a film that may be exposed to the eye. By watching one becomes a participant, a crony in this ordeal. Like looking through a forensic book, the guilt of watching a snuff movie is the sickness felt at violence towards the body borne of a sickness at the body's potential for violence and breakdown from it. Both the victim on-screen and the viewer are victims and perpetrators of violence: violent representation of death on-screen, violent digestion of disruptive image off-screen; the victim as victim of on-screen death stands against the viewer's breakdown off-screen. Though I do not claim to have seen any 'real' snuff movies, those I have seen which have since been proven fake still positioned me, at time of watching, witnessing a real death. *Faces of Death 1-4* (Conan Le Cilaire, US, 1978-1990) were famous for a time as snuff films until they were meticulously proved fake by a multitude of articles, in books such as *Killing for Culture*, but especially on the net, which took each scene and described its various flaws. But by 'proving' their 'untruth', these theorists were buying into the idea that truth may exist on film. Whether a snuff film ever depicts a 'real' death or not, it would be virtually impossible to tell. The deaths in *Faces of Death 1-4* range from obvious fakes to real deaths, which are actually taken from stock news footage (such as US State treasurer R. Budd Dwyer blowing his brains out on television). Autopsies are also shown. Other films such as Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* claim to have footage of real murders 'found' by filming primitive tribes in South America to avoid claims of murdering in a 'civilised' country. This film is also a fake snuff, admitted by

the director himself. In an appearance at the Eurofest Horror film festival in London in September of 1998 Deodato relayed his idea of reality. He claimed that the natives he used for *Cannibal Holocaust* were not 'native enough' in appearance so he asked them to wear wigs that fulfilled his idea of what a native cannibal look like. The film series *Guinea Pig* (Kazuhito Kuramoto, late 80s Japan) was investigated by the US F.B.I. as a real snuff film.¹²³ Actual snuff films no doubt exist due to the proliferation of home-video cameras and murderers. There are film footage files of various serial murderers who taped their victims, but this is a situation, as with child pornography, where it is the crime that is primary and the recording of such is a secondary and almost irrelevant feature. The common fantasy is that snuff movies are an industry made mainly for the *filming* of death and not the murdering of someone with a camera handy. Linda Williams states

Even after the hoax was revealed though, the idea of snuff continued to haunt the imagination. For many the horror shifted from the bloody content of the film to the spectacle of the viewers who would pay to see what they thought was the ultimate orgasm. 'Going all the way' in hard core could now encompass the possibility... of the perverse pleasure of witnessing the involuntary spasm of death.¹²⁴

The fear of making death into a capitalist commodity haunts the disgust behind the concept of snuff movies while also being a driving force in wanting to watch one - to 'own' death, to grasp it, have it, experience it and hence no longer fear it - an aim which is as phantasmatic as the existence of the films which drive it. The body is continually bypassed for the person - is s/he dead yet? The fact that only the body is able to dictate the divide between life and death is often ignored (as opposed to will or autonomy, traditionally part of the Cartesian 'mind' and usually robbed of the necessary relationship any version

¹²³ The man who was investigated for importing the film, Chas Balun, has written extensively on the case, the media mania it created and the seeming desire to believe there is a snuff movie 'industry'. See Balun, Chas. *Deep Red Special Edition*. New York: Fantaco. 1991, pp. 90-94 for a good introduction. This film is, incidently, available for rental in the Netherlands at local video stores.

¹²⁴ Williams, 1989, p. 193.

of will or autonomy would have with embodied subjectivity by being incarnated through the embodied self). While 'death' remains a phantasmatic concept to grasp through witnessing 'it', 'the dead' have served their purpose and are redundant. Hollywood film continually represents death but not 'the dead' - the murder of an other never becomes the affect of the self when confronted with the corpse. The glory of death is not the gory dead, a material death is always bypassed for a conceptual death. In annihilative death it is the death of the phantasmatic subject, in regressive and aggressive death it is the killing off of 'some thing', not acknowledging that while we were bodies in life we continue to be bodies in death, regardless of whether we are embodied as subjects. The repudiation by culture of the corpse (as corpse and not simply as a series of clues) is perhaps simply a continuation of the repudiation of the body in life. A particular kind of subject stands as the most valuable subject and hence the least susceptible to its own body (and bodily signifiers). If this subject is a white, youthful male it is only such a subject because culture refuses to focus on the significations of its body when compared to bodies of difference who become all body - through colour, through sex and so on. The corpse both represents subjects as purely susceptible to their own bodies, and demands a confrontation with many ideas culture actively negates in order that living subjects may 'be' (Kristeva's abject).

People do not want to know about the details of forensic or funereal work because they frequently find those who 'work' with death disdainful. However, there are currently huge numbers of students enrolling in forensic science streams, and representations of forensic work are more popular in film and on television than ever. The most important element in this seemingly unbalanced equation is, however, the emphasis on 'work' when we speak of those who work with corpses. The clues, the knowledge and the pedagogic purpose of the dead body, remain its only 'attractive' features. Its capital ability to produce answers is the only way it redeems its being as the supreme symbol of capital waste. The corpse is repressed or re-repressed by its transformation from waste symbol of abjection to a 'working' object that 'tells' us scientific truths. Science is further justified in its search for truth by pointing out that the most

useless symbol in culture, the corpse, is extremely useful in excavating truths, and even more so because in death the corpse is hyper-object-ive. It cannot lie because it no longer exists as such. For this reason any theorisation of desire in forensics must focus on the materiality and meaning of the corpse and not the meaning of those truths its microscopically filed flesh supposedly offers. Similarly the marketing of the idea of snuff also involves dirtying one's hands by working with death and hence inspires horror and revulsion. The passivity and absence of death is muddled by the active workings of those who focus on the body post-or in-mortem. The cadaver and the present absence of the subject are made past tense, repressed by forgetting the existence of the corpse. To focus upon presence, to work towards answers in the future by using the monumental symbol of past tense which is the corpse not only crosses discourse but time and body space. The image of the corpse is suppressed because it is death as presence rather than subjectivity passed. We say 'passed away' not 'now we are corpse'. Death and the corpse remain an objects of abject-ed imagination which divide discourses - of the scientific and social, the real and unreal - while giving up in their signified absence, concepts of self, truth and falsity.

Conclusion

There are three main areas which need ethical qualification if this thesis is to stand, not only as an exploratory exercise in transformation through film, but as a valuable addition to feminist, and even post-structuralist, canons. The first is the implications for the transforming subject in being or remaining an accountable, communitarian or at least social self. The second is the potential uses of horror towards transformation in relation to its historical connection to madness and war. Finally a further consideration is how my project utilises horror towards a different result, that of transformed subjecthood.

I am not interested primarily in inter-subjective relations, or a prescription for practices that foreground these relations as 'pure feminist' or other supposedly or implicitly 'good' modes of behaviour and thought. Inter-subjective relations, however, can not be excluded from my research if it is to posit any theories, which are considerable as ethical. My theories stand at a point where a re-figuring of the self is necessary, and therefore a re-figuring of inter-subjective relations will necessarily be altered as a result of new, different and more 'ethical' (affirming of difference, and of transformation in subjecthood) ways of being.

There is a prevalent fiction in Western Americanised culture about watching horror film. It is a fiction in the same way that the law is a fiction, and Lacan's

symbolic is a fiction, because it is a structure that exists arbitrarily, but constitutes an outraged response if it is broken, a pact society has amongst itself. There is nothing real or unbreakable about such a fiction, but to properly be in culture, subjects are required to obey the fiction and behave according to it, despite the fact they can break it or disregard it at any point.¹ When analysed in the lounge room on the couch in front of a horror film, the scenario reads thus: A pubescent boy, not a child but not a man, watches horror films over and over for a 'thrill'. This thrill has been theorised as a catharsis of castration anxiety of which the adolescent male is still in the throes (Clover²) and the conflation of sex and death (Creed³) among other things. Such a youth is learning at a seminal and vulnerable phase of his development that sex is sexier with (female) death, that castration is nothing to be scared of because women will always be more castrated. Horror in this scenario is usually accompanied by laughter at the ridiculousness of the film scenes. They do not make much sense, they are 'gross' and not to be taken very seriously, even such a young boy knows this. And they are silly, especially compared with the moody silent German films and the incomprehensible French films that his parents watch before trundling off to lecture at film school. But this is why horror films are so dangerous. They are infective. The boy laughs and simultaneously incorporates detrimental ideas about horror, sex and death. What if the wrong person watches the films? Mentally awry people? Impressionable people? What if the viewer does not read the film right and goes out to re-perform it? What if a woman watches? She will be offended of course, but may 'do' a feminist deconstruction of why the film is so bad. The viewer needs to learn how to *properly* read the horror film so it does not get out of control because horror films always breed violent desire, right?

Why is horror film not read as detrimental to the self first? Why is the idea of rupturing the self always overwritten with desire to rupture an other? How can

¹ My idea of the social legislative phantasy of watching horror relating to the fiction of criminal law and Lacanian symbolic law was inspired by Renata Salecl's "Cut in the Body: From Clitoridectomy to Body Art" in *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics*. Number 35: 'The Ethics of Violence'. Autumn 1998, pp. 28-42, especially pp. 36-7.

² Clover, 1992, pp. 6-7 and 113-119 in particular.

³ Creed, 1993, p. 128. These ideas have been explored in the introduction.

horror be ethical when it only causes such suffering among others? Conversely why is the horror film silly, ridiculously un-academic unless it is available for deconstruction? Why is horror film, either way, trash?⁴ It must be either thrown away as stupid or diligently prohibited as trashy for the self in reference to how the self will interact with others after watching. How can we theorise an ethics of anything when the self can only be figured violently as enforcing upon others? Why is the self so adamantly not a site for violence upon the self? Success in Western culture is how much we can create or build up a self and maintain it as such. But horror films affect the self towards something in consideration of others in the self, a consideration that spreads to others outside the self and completely repudiates any desire to pass as successful subject. Horror's bad effect is seen as detrimental to the forming boy, who must soon cement as a subject. Any incorporation will, by bouncing off this cemented subject, inflict upon others, presumably violently, so adolescence is the last time enjoying a horror film can be allowed. But even horror film is cemented into a subject.

To the majority of people, both academic and not, horror is either slasher and hence American (*Friday the 13th* (Sean S. Cunningham, US, 1981, and its many offshoots) or arty and (old) European (*Das Cabinet Des Dr. Caligari* ('The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,' Robert Weine, Germany, 1919) *et al*). Any horror outside this binary is 'specialised', obscure or in another way unworthy of filmic analysis.⁵ Often it is too offensive. As long as violence towards others is

⁴ Jack Stevenson claims that something is trash because it cannot be subsumed, "Here was Trash the critics could not co-opt." Stevenson, 'Trash Ain't Garbage: Analysing a New Aesthetic in Cinema'. *Blimp Film Magazine*. Issue 35, 1996, pp. 59-64, quote p. 63. Trash is trash only because it is unable to be subsumed or co-opted, by legislative law fiction, by film law fiction (what is art and what is not) and even by everyday television watching fiction (do not watch that, its trashy – from soaps to talk shows). Because Australian media is so Americanised, the capital-ly useful, desirable or unattainable (intellectually or otherwise) is that which should be watched. That which exceeds such demands is trash, not simply because it is not capital-ly 'good' but because it is capital-ly excessive or useless, but pleasurable nonetheless. Trash insinuates more than something to be thrown away. With the word trash comes the prohibited legislature of 'do not touch it, it's dirty' or infective. This fear of trash masquerades behind laughter about it, a feeling of supremacy over it and a violent drive, not simply to ignore it, but to adamantly throw it away immediately.

⁵ Although this is changing. Euro horror of the type I discuss has usually been relegated to the realm of fanzines, such as *Delerium*, written by people (although on the whole usually men) with a genuine interest in the subversive aspects of such films. The fanzines have, more than

the only ethical consideration that comes to mind when considering the television viewer of such films, then the subject itself can never be refigured, and the incredible affective potentials of these films will go untheorised. I have demanded in this thesis we come to such a theorisation, and from it, an ethics can and will, in the following section, be theorised. My work then, is a de-realisation of the phantasmatically real effect of the banality of watching a television. It is a de-realisation of the power of the fiction of the law of watching horror that takes, despite being a fiction, the real as the produced result of its transgression. But such a banality is the very thing that will allow the seemingly futuristic and sometimes unattainable theories of Deleuze and Guattari to be potentially available to all subjects.

Subjectivity and Lived Bodies

Benhabib, and a potential Deleuzian/Guattarian Self

Seyla Benhabib's *Situating the Self* is a valuable and important set of ideas with which to close this thesis because it addresses some of the more urgent yet forgotten implications of the joy post-modern theories of subjectivity presume. Although many of Benhabib's premises for ethical subjectivity, which she calls 'self'hood are in accordance with post-modern and post-structural desires for new modes of figuring the subject, many of these modes are re-thought by Benhabib in order that they remain accountable and ethically interactive with other selves. Benhabib defines the 'self' as opposed to a subject in its potential for and being in a community. The self is the body, which is no longer simply alive but is implicitly interactive within a social context. The reason Benhabib demands a new word in order to speak of 'I' is against the Enlightenment idea

other fanzines, frequently crossed the line from simply blurb type reviews to highly theoretical writing, sometimes ending up as journals, such as *Necronomicon*. Few books have tackled these films however, with the notable exception being Kerekes' and Slater's *Killing for Culture*, 1993, and Brottman's *Offensive Films* 1997. These books are rather traditional in their analyses of the films however. The forthcoming Harper, Graeme and Mendik, Xavier, eds. *Violated Bodies: Extreme Film*. London: Creation Books, 2000, may be a welcomed addition to the study of the genre of what Brottman calls the unconscious of horror film, 1997, pp. 14-15.

of a disembodied and transcendent cogito to which the word 'subject' often refers. She states

I assume that the subject of reason is a human infant whose body can only be kept alive, whose needs can only be satisfied, and whose self can only develop within the human community into which it is born. The human infant becomes a 'self', a being capable of speech and action, only by learning to interact in a human community. The self becomes an individual in that it becomes a 'social' being capable of language, interaction and cognition.⁶

Although the human is humanised through social interaction, it is those humans whose bodies represent difference that are denied the luxury of being 'subjects of reason'. Only a subject who is able to escape oppression by being a passable (white, male) body is truly able to achieve pure social being. Those who are forced into interaction based on the specific minoritarianism of their flesh are those who also disprove the potential of any concept of enlightenment being for all humans. Enlightenment subjectivity insinuates a repudiation of the body, hence a repudiation of other bodies and the effects of the self upon them within a social, material and interactive context. This repression of the corporeal corresponds to those subjects within Enlightenment thinking most repressed or robbed of potential for thought by way of the being of their bodies; those racially or sexually different to the level zero body of the cognitive thinker. The popularity and importance of body theory is making something which has hitherto been invisible become visible, contrary to Enlightenment theories of representation in which the female and the racially other body has always been ultra-visible. Against this theory, body theory has been about making the male theorists' body visible as a particular speaking subject, a social being rather than a truth-giving transcendent 'cogito'. Body theory is also about pointing to the importance of specific bodies within specific contexts and the ways in which these bodies interact in order that the specificity of any moment is privileged over ideas of immutable universalism or truth. For this reason any theory of the 'self', although Benhabib does not specifically state this,

⁶ Benhabib, 1992, p. 5.

implicitly is a theory of the *embodied* self. Benhabib's self is a body within a community of other bodies. Her idea of the body however is against what she calls the two extremes of Enlightenment absence of body, and the pure body as "a bundle of impressions".⁷ Her 'community body' is indivisible from being but also from effect towards others.⁸ Through this figuration speaking positions are elucidated, along with privilege or historical lack of voice; and experiences which may (or may not) effect what is spoken. This occurs without insinuating fixity of subjectivity or a truth within or of the body that allows a prediction of future actions and effects by that body. Benhabib's embodied 'self' is historically and socially specific without being fixed or predictable, interactive playfully (actions and thoughts are not fixed with truthful meaning) but still accountable.

This thesis has continually posited a self alone, in relation to an other which is permanently and irrefutably object with no recourse to subject-hood - the television. This interactive matrix aims at transforming the self alone, creating and elucidating others within the self so that the self need no longer be theorised as one, as unity, and hence, as valuable or not valuable based on traditional concepts of the subject as immutable and representative of its corporeal self (according to race, sex and other binary, implicitly body-based oppositions). It is a particularly embodied self that repudiates logic and the subject as complete representative of pure reason. It is a subject in community with itself. Where Benhabib sees the self existing only within its community, I see a potential for a community to exist within the self, which takes further her idea of interactivity. The self in front of the television is implicitly within its community because no product of culture does not effect or efface the self with the culture it lives in. The television and what it screens is an explicit moment of community. My aim is to introduce the many selves which interact with each other in one body as a result of an image of community, be it an image for or against (but specifically against) communitative norms.

⁷ Benhabib, 1992, p. 5.

⁸ Effect as action, rather than affect as full embodied being active.

Benhabib introduces three suggested solutions to three problems which Enlightenment thinking presents. Although communitarianism, feminism and post-modernism have all addressed elements of the three problems, Benhabib points to certain areas yet to be addressed sufficiently in order that an ethical post-Enlightenment socially contingent methodology is produced.⁹ The three main problems Benhabib sees as essential to address if an ethical post-Enlightenment universalism is to be theorised are: 1) A move from legislative to interactive thinking,¹⁰ whereby notions of truth are engaged with and reformulated rather than aspired towards in an immutable and universally apparent context. 2) Recognition of gender difference rather than universal theories guilty of gender blindness.¹¹ This repudiates the great thinkers of the Enlightenment who insinuated subjectivity extricated from a body and transcendent of flesh. Abstract subjectivity masqueraded as a necessarily male ego is only able to think thoughts extricated from the flesh because the flesh is not what embedded the thinker in an abject realm. 3) Sensitivity to context, not indifference to the specificities of speaking position and contexts of life-situations.¹² Benhabib points to the 'concrete' and 'generalised' others that are opposed to the 'anything outside me'. Instead of an indifferent consideration of anything outside the body of the self Benhabib impresses the need to consider the specific other, either in individual relationships (concrete) or politically

⁹ Benhabib uses John Rawls' idea of the metaphysical versus the political here. The metaphysical stands for the universal while the political encompasses the socially contingent, in respect to both a moral consideration and within the self, seeing the self as contingent also. Benhabib, 1992, p. 7.

¹⁰ Benhabib, 1992, p. 3. The way in which Benhabib wishes selves to interact with truth is reminiscent of the way Foucault posits subjects interacting with power. Benhabib does not wish to eradicate any notion of truth as some post-structuralists aspire towards. She does wish truth as a fixed universal, or monolithic object, to become a justifiable suggestion with which selves interact and hence may alter, through their own different justifications for the validity of such a 'truth' so that truth is fluid and 'interactive'. So like Foucault's transformation of power as monolith owned by few to power as interactive between subjects, Benhabib's truth transforms from monolith owned by (usually) dominant subjects and not justified, to an accountable idea interacted with by all.

¹¹ Benhabib, 1992, p. 3. Although outside the scope of this thesis, the implications for race are probably comparable, though with their own specificities. Benhabib is focussed on a particularly feminist ethics and hence race is important for the third problem of sensitivity of context and speaking position within her argument.

¹² Benhabib, 1992, p. 3.

(generalised).¹³ She quotes Hannah Arendt's response to Kant stating individual formation of morality "needs the presence of others 'in whose place' it must think, whose perspective it must take into consideration, and without whom it never has the opportunity to operate at all".¹⁴

Thus far we can glean a subject which Benhabib posits as potentially ethical and which includes the following:

- An *embodied* self, which impresses with the cultural and historical specificity of its history and repudiates pure mind or logic.
- an *interactive* self, which interacts both with ideas and other bodies in order to be autonomous (or 'moral'), the necessary state of being in an ethical way by existing within interactive ideas rather than under the veils of truthful prescriptive or legislative modes of regulation of thought and behaviour.
- a self in consideration of a *concrete other* rather than anything which is outside my body, and which is regulated by sensitivity and interaction not simply differing.¹⁵
- a *sensitive* self which is both sensitive to the specific contexts and accountable for the ways in which it acts or reacts to these contexts, rather than acting under one mode of behaviour which sees the specificity of situatedness indifferently.

¹³ This is somewhat of a simplification of Benhabib's 'others' in order to express the basic nature of these definitions. The concrete and the generalised others are actually along a continuum, where a need to address both generalised others (in law for example) and concrete others (relationships) but not necessarily always separated from each other so succinctly. She states "... the standpoint of the generalised and the concrete other(s) are thought of as existing along a continuum, extending from universal respect for all as moral persons at one end to the care, solidarity and solicitation demanded of us and shown to us by those whom we stand in the closest relationship at the other..." 1992, p. 10. Benhabib points out also that relationship is both kinship and friendship as defined by the individual in relation to whom is closest to them, regardless of blood or legal ties. 1992, p. 19, n. 12).

¹⁴ Benhabib, 1992, p. 9, quotes Hannah Arendt 'The Crisis in Culture'. In *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: Meridian. 1961, pp. 220-1. Benhabib later states "there can be no coherent reversibility of perspectives and positions unless the identity of the other as distinct from the self, not merely in the sense of bodily otherness but as concrete other, is retained," p. 10.

¹⁵ Benhabib points to Derrida's idea about difference being the process and act of differing not just an appropriation or repudiation of an other, 1992, p. 15.

- a *justified* self which posits ideas (which formerly would be known as truths) the self justifies in order that others may interact with them, the self is hence driven by a sense of justice, but *not* fixity or law.

Within these modes of being there exists the recognition of specificities of race, gender and social position as well as a concrete aversion to all monolithic concepts such as truth and anything which is 'given', disembodied, non-specific, unchanging or unchangeable 'being' and law (without question).

For the purpose of this thesis and to encompass what I see as the most important points, which connect Benhabib's suggestions for ethical selfhood, the nature of subjectivity must be addressed. Subjectivity here refers to the post-Enlightenment version of an embodied self still in its epistemologically infantile phase, which is currently being re-addressed and transformed by post-modernism and which is one point of contention that Benhabib sees as antagonistic to feminism's goal of ethical being.

Feminist Problems with Post-Modern Subjectivity

Benhabib takes three elements of post-modern thought as problematic when formulating an ethics for selfhood. These are the death of the subject, what she calls *The Death of Man*, the excavation of the truth of history or *The Death of History* and the death of the desire to master the self and the world by knowing everything, *The Death of Metaphysics*.¹⁶ Although the second two deaths in post-modernism will be considered my main focus will be on the first death, which I will term the death of subjectivity. I see two major elements responsible for, or resulting from, the death of the subject. These are; the figuration of an embodied, corporeal self (as opposed to the transcendental or metaphysical) and the need for different types of subject (always housed in different types of bodies) to become viable and ethically considered in culture, particularly phallogocentric, white, capitalist culture. The idea of subjectivity is vast in philosophy but its ability to cross epistemes and indeed be the major

¹⁶ Benhabib, 1992, 211.

focus of almost every question asked in every field, namely 'who or what am I?', psychically in psychoanalysis, biologically in science and medicine, metaphysically in philosophy, elucidates the importance of being a subject in order to know what kind of subject one is. Many feminists, especially those who are suspicious of the representation (or lack thereof) of women in psychoanalysis point to the redundancy of the question "who or what am I?" when it comes to women. I have discussed in depth the construction of subjectivity within phallogocentricism in the section 'Pleasure', particularly addressing Irigaray, but my main and most basic point is re-articulated here when I ask the question - what does the death of subjectivity mean in postmodernism for those who never really had a self-defined subject to begin with? Many anxieties follow this question, such as whether the death of subjectivity by male theorists is an appropriation of any subversive potential women had by being not fully ingrained by that idea of 'something to lose', or whether the death of subjectivity means the wiping over of any history of oppression women may want to remember specifically due to their being women, an anxiety Benhabib explicitly addresses in her argument on the death of the subject. For in calling the death of subjectivity *The Death of Man* Benhabib points to an idea I addressed in the 'Death' chapter of this thesis, that only 'man' or male subjectivity has anything to lose through postmodernism. By situating the post-modern post-subject within the two primary locations of corporeality and difference, postmodernism is giving women what they have always and already been condemned to - entrapment within their own flesh that precedes any concept of self and is spoken for and about by others, and a terminal 'othering' from normalised axes of acceptability. The desire of post-modern subjectivity in many ways is a desire to 'Become-Woman'.

Becoming-Woman and Other Male Phantasies

One of the most promising and contentious elements of the Deleuzian/Guattarian theory of becoming is becoming-woman. It represents the pinnacle of Benhabib's anxieties about the death of subjectivity, where the death of man has the potential to be the appropriation of 'woman' by men.

Such a strategy enhances the subversive qualities of being oppressed and disdainful to dominant, desirable 'male' subjectivity without being accountable for this oppression or aware of the realities of living in a perhaps subversive but more pertinently often painful, marginalised and most remarkably, male-given, male-articulated body. From fighting for equality, safety in our bodies and the ability to articulate our own selves the idea that our bodies are now fashionable theoretically, and ripe for assimilation by the logic that marginalises us in the first place is the current trend in post-modern theory. Any desire to transform subjectivity potentially fails to address these problems, because of the speaking position the thought presumes no longer exists, may still exist or be important (hence post-modernism which, when espoused by male theorists, potentially believes 'female' is a position no longer implicit and hence no longer pertinent). The importance of becoming-woman is twofold for this thesis. First where does the specificity of a lived woman's body and history go when the desire to become process, non-fixity and becoming replaces the idea of an historical embodied self? Second, does the creation of a constantly altering transforming self relinquish concepts of accountability, ethical responsibility, and include responsibility for history? My response to these questions is thus: The activity of locating and transforming through 'others within the self' produces an active engagement with:

- 1) Concepts of other not limited by and not entirely deposing of the borders of the flesh; an embodied self which actively desires others as molecular *not* molar, either the other in the self or other bodies which themselves have their own boundless others, such that all specificities of all concrete others are actively engaged with at every moment; a self which identifies the borders of the flesh and its histories but does not see them as indicative of wholes or organisms for the future due to such borders.
- 2) Concepts which deconstruct, sometimes violently, any notion of the sanctity and integrity of a subject created to resemble a valuable capital commodity, be it over-valued male subjectivity or objectified female biology.

- 3) The nature of *what* is being deconstructed so that history and accountability are always in process with transformation - we can transform to something else but we transform *from* whenever we transform *to*.

Becoming-woman as a strategy, not a prescription, by Deleuze and Guattari has potential in that it elucidates the hyper-constructivism of the term 'female'; to be male is simply to be while to be female is to be something in particular. Both men and women need to actively become woman because to become woman is unbound, while to be woman in culture is highly bound. This is why Deleuze and Guattari state the need for women also to become woman, because the concept 'woman' is never necessarily where actual lived women are. They point to the molar woman, the little girl robbed of her own body's potential, who could have become woman molecularly, piece-by-piece with indeterminate specificities. Through phallogocentric intervention, regulation, or as Grosz calls it, "culture's most intensified disinvestments and recastings of the body",¹⁷ this little girl ceased becoming and is now being as stagnant, as molar-woman. Woman, according to Deleuze and Guattari

is defined by a relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness, by a combination of atoms, an emission of particles: haecceity. She never ceases to roam upon a body without organs. She is an abstract line, or a line of flight. Thus girls do not belong to an age group, sex, order or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts, ages sexes; they produce *n* molecular sexes on the line of flight in relation to the dualism machines they cross right though. The only way to get out of the dualism is to be-between...¹⁸

What Deleuze and Guattari fail to express is that this constant un-being of woman, who promises so much for becoming, exists at a place or a be-between that woman neither made for herself nor resides in willingly. Feminism has attempted to re-appropriate the in-between and abstractedness of woman's representation in culture in order to affirm female being and take away the power of naming-her-there, which phallogocentrism exercises. Feminism's re-appropriation of woman's other-ness is as much about a will to power and

¹⁷ Grosz, 1994a, pp. 174-75.

¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 276-277.

attaining a voice as it is a making valuable of any position woman finds herself in. What Deleuze and Guattari do is make desirable the position without acknowledging the importance of speaking and valuing the position in the process of its becoming desirable. Woman needs to speak her own subversion, as much for the speech as for the subversion. As Rosi Braidotti points out

The problem for Deleuze is how to disengage the subject position 'woman' from the dualistic structure that opposes it to the masculine norm, thereby reducing it to a mirror image of the same... To put it in more feminist terms, the problem is also how to free 'woman' from the subjugated position of annexed 'other' so as to make her expressive of a different difference, of pure difference, of an entirely new plane of becoming, out of which differences can multiply and differ from each other. Here the focus is more on the experience and the potential becoming of real life women, in all of their diverse ways of understanding and inhabiting the subject position 'woman'.¹⁹

The idea of 'real life women' is one which both postmodernism and philosophy in general see as somewhat trite. Reverberating from the desire for transcendental enlightenment and affirmed by postmodernism's desire for a body and self undefinable and continually in process, is the intolerance both have with any idea of 'real life' in comparison with cultural structuration, textuality or representation.²⁰ What this elucidates is postmodernism's

¹⁹ Braidotti, 1994, p. 115.

²⁰ Some Derridian feminists have a problem with any sort of recognisable division between real life and representation. For example, in 'Sexual Signatures: Feminism after the Death of the Author', in *Space, Time and Perversion: The Politics of Bodies*, pp. 9-24, Elizabeth Grosz expresses deep suspicions of any extrication of real living bodies from textuality. She continues to express this anxiety in her criticism of Braidotti and Alice Jardine in 'Ontology and Equivocation: Derrida's Politics of Sexual Difference', in *Space, Time and Perversion*, pp. 59-82. I agree with Grosz's argument that "real women are themselves the product and effects of discursive practices," p. 63, but I think she misreads Braidotti's anxieties about post-modern men speaking for real women. Grosz suggests that Braidotti's argument anchors on the assumption of truthful exteriority. Grosz states "At the same time, however, it is also the case that any assumption of the independent existence of 'real' women outside of or before representation, able to rise against it, must be invested in certain unnegotiable essentialisms," p. 64. I think Braidotti is instead advocating a context specific consideration of women, context referring to bodies and not to appropriated or colonised post-modern ideas of 'woman', as experiencing the world, pain, oppression and subjugation. Woman's experience of the world is not necessarily extricated from representation, but is unique in relation to it, in comparison with that of the 'post-modern man', including Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari, who use the representation 'woman' to explicate ideas which are not necessarily always corporeal, historical or phenomenological. It is in these three senses that Braidotti may mean 'real', rather than meaning the truth of a woman as opposed to the representation by a man. Post-modern

adherence to an element of Enlightenment philosophy - that of real life experience being irrelevant and even detrimental to the formulation of a self that is beyond material immanent experience. Enlightenment is against privileging body over mind within a system of cogito. It affirms transcendent truth for all 'man' against a micro-experiential formation of existence. Postmodernism is resistant towards too much meaning being read into experience and hence affixing meaning (against 'performativity' where there is no real agency behind the 'mask'²¹) to action. When referring to bodies which may have experienced pain or oppression, to read only the performative value of their experiencing as acts of signification or monolithic expressions of power versus 'no power' or a different matrix of powers interchanging, is to once again bring experience, the body and the relationship between history and the immediate lived self forward, away from 'real women' and into the arena of philosophy, discourse or at its worst, ideas towards transformation of the male philosophical subject. Brian Massumi states

The added exhortation for women to lead the way by first 'becoming-woman' themselves has the rings of the all-too-familiar gesture of abstracting an essence of 'femininity' and exalting it as a state of grace that all women should occupy, in blatant disregard of the real conditions under which real women actually live.²²

philosophers run the risk of simply continuing to represent women. Representation here does not oppose women as existing outside of it, but the representation women become in post-modernism threatens to reduce them to an idea or strategy rather than a corporeal, tangible human. I think a continuing mediation between the two versions of representation is necessary, and although, Grosz rightly points out that a feminist analysis does not always mean a good or beneficial analysis, feminist analyses of post-structural theory are vital in order to assure that a promising or exciting theory, for example in this thesis becoming, does not get left unanalysed simply because of its promise or potential.

²¹ See Benhabib on Butler, 1992, p. 216. Sedgwick has also been cited in this thesis as preferring performance over meaning when considering action. The most important element in her theorisation of performativity is its replacement of meaning hitherto only being read in consideration of an oppressed subject, be it within female, homosexual or racially different body. Performativity does not necessarily mean relinquishing accountability but it does potentially transform dominant subjects into those no longer necessarily attached to their 'former' dominant selves and hence not necessarily able to account for their dominance due to its 'past' relevance.

²² Massumi, 1996, p. 86.

Deleuze and Guattari are potentially guilty of either making women trivial by affirming their difference, based only on their difference *in respect to men*, or phallogocentric culture, or dominant systems of power, or they are using the lived experience of real women constantly being differed as a philosophical strategy. Deleuze and Guattari's suggestion that women first become-woman is a most problematic element because it insinuates that beneath phallogocentric repression of the potential within female bodies is some kind of residual memory of how to be 'woman unbound'. So while the male subject may lose his subjectivity while being made explicitly aware of that which he has oppressed through becoming-woman, woman is leading the way by setting out the true unbound mode of being. Women are re-differed through the suggestion that we might know better how to unbind ourselves, albeit after being told as much by two male philosophers. Unbinding ourselves makes us forget our lived history while setting up some kind of mystical innate path for others to follow. No matter how literal Deleuze and Guattari wish becoming to be, they are still positing the experiences of a group of bodies they have never been as the ideal bodies for 'not fitting in' or for representing a line of flight.

The positive of their strategy is a fluidity of gender and flesh based not on a binary but on a dominant versus 'everything else' system where the dominant position is no longer necessarily the most desirable position. The gaps in reference to the consideration of being a real lived female body in this current culture makes their consideration of a potentially feminist strategy seem a little too much like admittedly corporeal but nonetheless male philosophical transvesticism. At this stage however, I do not believe Deleuze and Guattari's 'becoming-woman' should be relinquished because of its inherent problems, I would suggest an appropriation by the very real women it addresses could pose more useful modes of women becoming-woman. Not so that men may follow but in order that the masquerade theories of performativity and the real lived experiences of women's bodies can formulate a philosophy which goes beyond masks versus meaning and creates accountable yet still transformative subjects. Benhabib concludes with this very idea when she states

Yet we have reached an important conclusion: the issues generated by the complex interaction between feminism and postmodernism around concepts of the self and subjectivity cannot be captured by bombastic proclamations of the 'Death of the Subject'... To embark upon a meaningful answer... involves not yet another decoding of metaphors and tropes about the self, but a serious interchange between philosophy and the social sciences like sociolinguistics, social interactionist psychology, socialisation theory, psychoanalysis and cultural history among others.²³

Deleuze and Guattari's theories of becoming are hopeful because they demand corporeal being, a version of real, social matter, in philosophy and vice versa. The socially lived body becomes the actual material of philosophical transformation without being extricated from it or subordinated to it. In one way they are addressing the bodies of real women by emphasising the bodily nature of lived women's experience when it is juxtaposed against the anti-immanence of the transcendental male philosopher. Against the death of the subject is the making visible of an other subject in history, that of the woman, because, as stated explicitly in the 'Death' chapter, the death of the subject can only occur when there is a subjectivity to lose in the first place. Deleuze and Guattari shift their becomings towards less, and eventually un-identifiable aims, such as becoming-intense and becoming-imperceptible. Becoming-woman is what they see as a necessary first step in order to escape the dominant term of culture's prime binary by choosing, more than to become-woman, to become not-man. The genealogy of becomings in Deleuze and Guattari is mirrored in this thesis, beginning with the broad and simple launching, becoming-anything through pleasure, continuing with the literal becoming filmic and leaving off with the potentials of becoming-horror. Like becoming intense, becoming horror offers a becoming in a series where there are more and less literal becomings based on the stage of becoming we are at. Becoming woman, like becoming-through-watching-television, is a stage that does not fly too far too fast from the culture it flies from, hence, not representing an impossible halcyon practice.

²³ Benhabib, 1992, p. 218.

Perhaps becoming-woman is an easing into losing subjectivity for the male-with-something-to-lose. But perhaps it is simultaneously not wishing to be rid of a subjectivity fully historicised into sanctioned or disallowed subjects, such as man who must be accountable for the oppression of a certain form of subjectivity, 'woman' by first living her in order to ever transform into anything else. Guattari explicates an important point, which he sees as a problem in getting out of the idea of a fixed subject. He states:

There are singular incorporeal constellations which belong to natural and human history and at the same time escape them by a thousand lines of flight. The moment mathematical universes start to appear, it is no longer possible to act as though the abstract machines which support them had not always existed everywhere and for all time and as though they do not project themselves onto future possibilities.²⁴

This may begin to explain why Deleuze and Guattari chose a concept, 'woman', which suggested a line of flight within our existing abstract machine. They utilise something they can think within the existing system which already projects itself into future possibilities and they hope to change the outcomes of those possibilities through a re-negotiation with the value and unbound potential of this concept. Woman is a line of flight as a singular while simultaneously escaping her system through her permanent differentiation (and subjugation) in history. Guattari points out that it is impossible to imagine such systems in operation have not existed always and everywhere, which does not posit that such attitudes towards women dominant today have always existed identically. But Guattari could be suggesting a need to retain a concept of the past when that past has been volatile, and often terrifying. I do not think Guattari, in his hopes for a transformed future, is advocating forgetting the old systems, but that is what many feminist have an anxiety about when it comes to both the death of subjectivity and the concept of becoming or transforming. The best possible hope is one which recognises such singular constellations but within these singulars would remain the memory of historical intersections with

²⁴ Guattari, 1995, p. 27.

dominant current culture - assuring both accountability and a consideration with the other as the entire system of singulars (generalised) and with each intersection the self crosses (concrete).²⁵

I have deliberately played devil's advocate in considering the argument of Deleuze and Guattari despite the fact that I find their theory hopeful. I believe that they begin the project Benhabib advocates for a merging of philosophy and being real bodies in society. They are explicitly against the nihilistic versions of the death of the subject I argued against in the 'Death' chapter. But their problems are ones which need to be discussed within feminist terms rather than simply describing, at best a mode of being something else instead of simply a dead subject, and at worse a re-differing and hence re-defined version of woman by male philosophers.

Thus far I have discussed the need to create subjects in process, which are both accountable and not simply fashionable within existing modes of what is other and what is dominant. From considering 'real lived women' I will now turn to the other most contentious point in this thesis, which is the differentiation of 'real lived horror' that effects those oppressed subjects I am so adamant to make visible and historical, with the horror on-screen, affect-ive horror.

Becoming Horror

An ethics of becoming horror takes horror, not as good or evil, but as intensity which forces the self into movement, new intensities and modalities. Becoming horror will, eventually, be a jolt of *the body*, as prime site of signification and conceptual vessel of consciousness, towards *flesh* as undifferentiated from others or from consciousness but fully sensitive of the specificities of each moment, movement and juncture with any other intensity, movement or thing. The body, as embodied self, not prime materiality, is forced through horror into new intensities. This moving, transforming self is, however, an ethical

²⁵ The idea of singularities is introduced in Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense*, 1990.

being/becoming. It is a moving entity which, through *intersectioning*²⁶ with others in itself, will be sensitive to intersectioning with others traditionally posited as exterior to its own sealed body. Specific consideration of what Benhabib calls interaction and Deleuze calls mediation, is the only mandate action of the becoming (horror or anything else) self. In this concluding section, reading Deleuze and Guattari into Benhabib's criteria for an ethical post-modernist subject will create an ethical becoming being - defined not through what it is but through what it can do. This will then become specifically a being becoming horror, where the ethics of traditional horror (non-ethics or bad ethics) will be the catalyst for a new becoming. Becoming horror involves using the affect-ive jolts of horror, aimed at integrated subjectivity, to set into motion or launch into a line of flight, a becoming something else for the self. Horror remains after the initial jolt, as it demands continued consideration of both the self as flesh (opposed to body) and the disruptive (for bodies, for culture) in representation. Where catharsis shocks and stabilises, horror launches the self into momentum. The being becoming horror is both sensitive to specificity (of all others, its own and outside its flesh) and sensitive only because it has been thrust into a becoming through horror, traditional concepts of which claim it to be *a priori* unethical. As I stated in the introductory remarks on Kristeva, traditional concepts of horror appeal to a higher order such as God, language and the law of the father. Such an appeal creates a being unaccountable due to its continual appeal to another order, and a being unable to consider others without its own integrity being irrevocably harmed. The horror of becoming woman is comparative with the horror of gore due to the appeal to a higher law and the juxtaposition of becoming with the higher order valued (male, white, non-violated or wounded) subject. My formulation of horror sees it only as disruptive affect. Initially, however, in its representation, horror is disruptive to a higher order in my reading as well. Horror exists in much cinematic theory as that which destroys

²⁶ I use the word *intersectioning* here because intersecting insinuates a single crossing point between two axes. I am speaking about many plateaus, where intersections occur on many levels, by many axes simultaneously, more in terms of many intensities, rather than simply two axes meeting at one point. For this reason the syntactically awkward 'intersectioning' will be used to describe the process of such multiple intersections with specific intensities.

the watcher by representing the destruction of an on-screen body which is supposed to mirror the viewer's body, thus horror performs a vital action in a theorisation towards ethical post-modern subjectivity. It destroys the valued body of representation that is the integrated subject, commonly white, commonly male but also, as theorists such as Clover has pointed out, female, commonly middle-class and in a large majority of academic texts on horror films, commonly American. Working with horror in a non-capitalist schema, this subject destroyed is both hopeful and an unsatisfactory investigation of the limits of what horror can do. Horror is so much more about the flesh of the viewer when horror film represents the flesh of the represented body on-screen. It forces the viewer into action, movement and becoming because it is not about the characters on-screen but about flesh.

Both traditional formulations of horror as a higher order evil, and my theories are explicitly about the body (becoming flesh) and its relationship with being. Traditional theories of horror as a *thing* take as their primary symbol, the law of the integrity of the solid, sealed body as vessel for consciousness (the human phallus) and the destruction of the symbol made human. That symbol, the valued body, is representational of the valued subject and reminiscent of the valued phallus, (having a phallus but also being sealed and smooth like the phallus) the destruction of which is against the (Lacanian) Law. My retheorisation of horror as affect values only transformation, presumably away from the configuration of the sealed body as vessel for consciousness. This is a Deleuzian/Guattarian project because it configures being only in terms of movement and the specificity of intensities. Horror is one (and many) of those intensities, which can create innumerable results when intersecting with other intensities, here most particularly our own when we sit in front of a screen.

Benhabib takes as the primary requirement for an ethics towards a feminist post-modernism the concept of interaction, as opposed to legislation. Deleuze, in his interview 'Mediators' suggests a similar approach to *any* new ideas, which necessarily come from an old episteme, from philosophy to science, literature and sport. He calls such an approach mediating. Mediation is an

interesting strategy for feminism and for ethics because it does not 'come from nowhere' and address nothing that exists now. Feminism and ethics potentially figure as new world orders which could come from out of nowhere and simply implement themselves on a culture wiped clean in order to 'fix' it or change it. Deleuze however suggests that only in the tightest places, the least giving areas, can new ideas, in fact *must* new ideas, be thought, because of their very forced mediation with unsatisfactory and cloying ideological situations. Deleuze sees value in an idea only if it is true in terms of its necessity and its relevance. He states

That's why arguments are such a strain, why there's never any point arguing. You can't just tell someone what they are saying is pointless. So you tell them its wrong. But what someone says is never wrong, the problem isn't that some things are wrong, but that they're stupid and irrelevant. That they've already been said a thousand times. The notions of relevance, necessity, the point of something, are a thousand times more significant than the notion of truth.²⁷

Within this logic, feminism and an ethical interlocation on anything can only be successful according to its relevance and necessity. It is because feminism is so relevant and urgently needed at this moment in cultural history that it can be at all. Feminism, like all ideas for Deleuze, is nothing unto itself except in the ways it mediates with what falsifies it, what makes it necessary and what demands its urgency. It exists as qualities of the contexts it is placed in, and in our time in this Western culture its context is absolute in its necessity. Similarly, horror stands traditionally as that which is 'wrong' according to Deleuze. Higher order law states simply that horror is wrong and that horror films are pointless (except that this statement of pointlessness masks an urgent panic of there perhaps being a point or effect). For marginalised persons horror has been the point for some time, the being of a marginalised body is the sanctioned horrific body of culture - beginning with woman and travelling through many marginalities to the current AIDS body. The rupturing of the valuation of an isomorphic dominant body is particularly relevant at this time,

²⁷ Deleuze, 1995, p. 130.

especially because of the relationship feminism and post-modernism have with 'horrific' bodies. In this way, both horror and feminist ethics demand mediation with culture, in spite of and because of the impossible space there is for such creativity. Deleuze says, "A creator who is not grabbed around the throat by a set of impossibilities is no creator."²⁸ Feminism finds simultaneously in culture the impossibility of marginalised bodies being valued, and the impossibility of the necessity for only one kind of body to exist. Impossibilities are the cause, the action and the aim of feminism. For this thesis becoming horror is mediation with a mundane activity, watching television, in order to create the interstitial within the impossible.

An important feature of Deleuzian mediation is its lack of origin and lack of completion. Although Benhabib does not specifically voice this anxiety she does point to the ways in which origins and completions have hitherto fuelled phallogocentric culture across all epistemes from history to science. Most commonly this desire resulted in 'truthful' accounts of what exists, what has happened and what will happen in the world to the exclusion of women and all other others. According to Deleuze's mediation, in order to interact or mediate, a "putting-into-orbit"²⁹ of the self is required. Putting-into-orbit stands against the enlightenment desire to reach pure truth, the philosophical desire for eternal re-action and return, but also against the scientific desire to find absolute genesis (all of which cross-pollinate their respective discourses so that science also desires absolute truth and philosophy a recognisable genesis). Deleuze sees both beginning and end as detrimental to the concept of mediation, as much as he sees mediation itself as important to unbound thinking. Mediation is something akin to movement in that it is a refusal to know, statically or truthfully, without being caught up in the motion of knowledge, without acknowledging that motion is already a process which we can only be caught up in at a moment and not at the start or towards the end. We are in essence, according to Deleuze, existing always at the in-between. Deleuze's most

²⁸ Deleuze, 1995, p. 133.

²⁹ Deleuze, 1995, p. 121.

emphatic question then becomes "What happens 'in-between'?"³⁰ Benhabib continually points to the detrimental effect of a philosophy that fails to take history into account because history inevitably refers to his-story and hence to unified phantasies of the hu-man. She states "Until very recently neither did women have their own history, their own narrative with different categories of periodization and with different structural regularities."³¹ In her section on the death of metaphysics, Benhabib quotes Jane Flax on post-modernism,

For post-modernism this quest for the Real conceals most Western philosophers' desire, which is to master the world once and for all by enclosing it within an illusory but absolute system they believe represents or corresponds to a unitary Being beyond history, particularity and change.³²

What Benhabib sees as two of the most urgent elements of a feminist ethics are the acknowledgement of history and the repudiation of a desire to see truth, which is the same as seeing the end of a system or structure of knowledge. This directly correlates with Deleuze's putting-the-self-into-orbit of movement. The matter or meaning of specific ethics is not the most important point of consideration in order to formulate an ethical theory; it is the movement of the ethics within the world that must be considered. Deleuze states, "But if we're so oppressed, it's because our movement's being restricted, not because our eternal values are violated."³³ To move or mediate or interact within a time frame, caught up simultaneously in past and future, works sideways also. Deleuze points out that "you're always working in a group even when you are on your own."³⁴ Mediators are not only mediating with their past, their future, but with themselves and everything around them, "real or imaginary, animate or inanimate".³⁵ Deleuze here sets up a situation in conformity with his and Guattari's theories towards both a schizoanalysis and becoming. If we are

³⁰ Deleuze, 1995, p. 121.

³¹ Benhabib, 1992, p. 213.

³² Benhabib quotes Jane Flax's *Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Post-Modernism in the Contemporary West*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990, p34. In Benhabib, 1992, p. 211.

³³ Deleuze, 1995, p. 122.

³⁴ Deleuze, 1995, p. 125.

³⁵ Deleuze, 1995, p. 125.

forced, in constant movement hence presumably in constant change, to mediate with everything in our past, future and laterality, we are forced to mediate with our own parts, flesh and de-territorialised selves. I have discussed, throughout this thesis, the potential to formulate others in ourselves, which demands a de-territorialisation of subjectivity, but also through horror images demands a de-territorialisation of our own bodies, whether they are integrated bodies or on the way to becoming bodies without organs. This demand is only a demand for action, or for movement through affect. It does not predict a result, or close off potential due to the traditional configuration of horror as 'bad' and hence any affect by it will not automatically be correspondingly detrimental.

Both Deleuze and Benhabib are suspicious of reflection through the direct influence of, and on others, be it a philosophical influence (re-active philosophy) or a real-life corporeal influence (bodies outside ourselves mediated only in terms of what we are anterior to everything else, the 'anything-outside-me'). Deleuze states "You'll get nowhere by latching onto some parallel movement, you have to make a move yourself. If nobody makes a move, nobody gets anywhere. Nor is interplay an exchange: it all turns on giving and taking."³⁶ By becoming a parallel version of something, be it a real-life ethical situation or a philosophical discussion, there is a danger that the other is either simply assimilated and hence may be spoken for (the other becomes an 'idea', whether it was an idea to begin with or a body), or else the self and the Other will become involved in an economic exchange, the 'give and take' of Deleuze, which works within a rigid backwards-forwards space that is limited and limiting. This second potential hurls the other into a factual space 'outside me', where the only truth is that of what is 'I' and what is not. Latching on to another's movement is what Benhabib sees as the repudiation of a concrete or generalised other, produced by simply ingesting and expelling ideas, considerations, situations and experience while retaining the truth of everything outside me. When the 'me' of this concept itself becomes split in its movements, when conversations and mediations begin within a singular 'me' in

³⁶ Deleuze, 1995, p. 125.

order to conceive of mediations with self(ves), then anything outside me becomes a defunct concept. That holiest of divisions in Lacanian psychoanalysis between me, either corporeal or psychical, and everything else (which can only be known through the holy me) begins to splinter within the 'me' itself. The divide between consciousness and flesh historically has continually referred to a split in the self in all epistemes, from science to philosophy. However, this divide has neither resulted in a consideration or interaction between potential multiples of being, nor a corporeal configuration of subjectivity, where flesh and consciousness, although divided, fold in on each other to produce specific qualities at each intersectioning. This chasmic split has resulted instead in a traditional hierarchical configuration of, not mediation but a binary. One term is taken as irrevocably other and subjugated: this 'other' term is inevitably the body. It may be repressed, as in psychoanalysis, it may be repudiated as in philosophy, or it may be taken as an example of an absolute given and hence completely knowable entity, as in biology. A formulation of an embodied subject, which addresses constant change within any phantasmatic cultural border of what is 'I, would renegotiate the sanctity of the body which is at once subjugated and significant as the border of 'me'. Any consideration of 'the body' as an entity unto itself has the potential to subjugate, repress or biologically fix it. An embodied becoming subject does not extricate any concept of 'body' from being. 'The body', in relation to and as opposed to, 'the other' is a defunct concept when movement and quality or specificity replace the Cartesian dualism of being. This is not, however, a new Cartesianism conflating body and self/psyche/consciousness where movement and specificity replace any thinking of a body or of flesh. Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook point this out in their article 'The Haunted Flesh: Corporeal Feminism and the Poetics of (dis)Embodiment'. In a discussion of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* they state that

The body is no longer a vehicle for consciousness, nor is it a privileged site of meaning of primary materiality. On the contrary, Deleuze's

'transcendental empiricism' (143) posits a univocity whereby bodies, consciousness, actions, events, signs and entities are specific intensities.³⁷

Bray and Colebrook emphasise two ways in which cultural configurations of the body have been detrimental for feminism. As a vehicle for consciousness, where consciousness is a traditionally masculine realm, the body for women has been a vehicle affirming the realms she is relegated to, that of the reproductive vessel. When the body becomes a *vehicle* for something, then it is only a vehicle for a valued thing based on the very image of such a vehicle. Only when the vehicle carries no undesirable signification can it refer to such a transcendental concept of 'consciousness'. When the vehicle is harder to transcend, through its hyper-signification of sexual or racial difference, then a covert operation of valuation occurs. When feminism could not (and did not want to) extract women from their bodily signification a new valuation of materiality was theorised. As Bray and Colebrook claim, valuation of any *concept of the body* makes or affirms the body as "locus of meaning and identity".³⁸ The body is still extricated from any formulation towards transformative selfhood. According to Bray and Colebrook, for Deleuze the body is another intensity, specific and transforming at every intersectioning with any other intensity. I take this further by highlighting the specific intensities of flesh, as differentiated from the body or a body. Bray and Colebrook exhibit similar anxieties about the body, singular. They state "To think a 'body without organs' is to refuse any single signifier, such as the phallus, that would enable an organisation or interpretation of the body".³⁹ The term flesh insinuates non-signification. It at once refers to living body part, both interior and exterior, as well as ruptured or dis-organised body part. Part here does not mean recognisable organ or piece but simply a part of the body, either minute or vast.

³⁷ Bray and Colebrook, 1998, p. 56. Bray and Colebrook quote Deleuze, (1968) *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press. 1994, p. 143.

³⁸ Bray and Colebrook, 1998, p. 55.

³⁹ Bray and Colebrook, 1998, p. 56.

Lateral putting-into-orbit of the self refers also to Deleuze and Guattari's plane of consistency. Like the mediators putting-into-orbit, the plane of consistency is not reactive and not self-reflective. Becomings and multiplicities, which create the plane of consistency, exist at the moment of movement. Deleuze and Guattari state

Although there is no preformed logical order to becomings and multiplicities, there are *criteria*, and the important thing is that they not be used after the fact, that they be applied in the course of events, that they be sufficient to guide us through the dangers.⁴⁰

As with being put into orbit, becoming involves a movement of now, not a reflection of then or a paralleling of another's becoming. It is the quality of right-now that becoming describes by virtue of what becoming aims towards, which is an irrefutable alteration at every moment. Becoming cannot be retrospective or after the fact. Every moment produces a new, specific quality, what Deleuze has referred to as haecceity. In the introduction to this thesis I discussed the importance of dividuality between epistemes. These are larger scale versions of haecceity, where intent and the specific reader-ly context of certain images (the forensic and the filmic of the death chapter, for example) are related to their particular quality within their episteme. Epistemic division predicts and produces the readings of such images, rather than encouraging the particularity of an image to be felt. We as reading subjects, however, must become multiple in order to cope with such demands. The particular quality of an image is regulated by its contextual intent based on its episteme, but we, who are phantasmatically always the same, become certain qualities when we oscillate from episteme to episteme. Unfortunately, the epistemic intent protects us rather than encouraging us to transform. Horror films we know are 'just films', the ultra-gore of forensic texts are not revolting because they are 'seriously scientific'. If the epistemic divide is broken down, we no longer oscillate between various epistemes, but the images force an internal oscillation, engaging with the multiple qualities of any picture at any time in

⁴⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 251.

mediation with ourselves. Moments and qualities are no longer legislated by epistemic intent, but become a broader haecceity that is unpredictable for any given moment. We also become quality(ies) and specific intensity(ies) at each moment. Mediation with our own multiplicities, and with that which we wish to become similarly involves an haecceity of the mediation we take with the moment and the movement we are involved with. The plane of consistency describes the situation we find ourselves in as multiple and in becoming. The plane of consistency describes a plane of time, and laterally of space as well as of movement. Every intersection on the plane creates a new, specific combination. Deleuze and Guattari emphasise that "the plane of consistency is the intersection of all concrete forms".⁴¹ Concrete forms need not refer to, nor exclude, whole bodies or selves. But they do include the concept of undifferentiated flesh, because the quality of any whole or thing is available at many intersections or points along the plane of consistency. Hence any whole is also simultaneously sections, pieces or qualities of the whole and a whole may be a piece or pieces of a greater.

Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook use the anorexic as an example of a body "being otherwise".⁴² Bray and Colebrook point out that the reading of anorexic bodies has primarily been about the body as representative of something, as a result of something being read within a phallogocentric order, albeit as a protest against that order. The anorexic body becomes an object of pathology, a representation of a desire for non-being, and a symbol of the detrimental effect phallogocentric law has on women's bodies. Even if this is seen as an attempt to subvert the supremacy of the phallogocentric, Bray and Colebrook emphasise the disastrous effect of reading a body before its production, hence all bodies, whatever their particular intensity, become aligned with something eventually. These representations stand as the means of recognising such a body, and hence recognising its protests, its actions and its functions as fulfilling already established criteria of pathology. For feminism, even a body which resists phallogocentric incorporation through anorexia is

⁴¹ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 251.

⁴² Bray and Colebrook, 1998, p. 58.

detrimental to a refiguring of bodies as intersectionally different, that is different at each active encountering intersection with anything else. A body that resists specifically the Law of the Father is still appealing to such a law in its resistance, based on the me/everything else outside of me dichotomy. Bray and Colebrook state: "As a site of representation the subject is perceived in terms of its relation, negation, recognition or encounter with an outside world".⁴³ A theory that involves interaction with horror will always be a 'bad' theory while the body remains readable in terms of the ways in which it interacts with monolithic structures outside of it, for instance, represented as a textual object conforming with a theory of material existence that precedes it, and which it will be forced to fulfill. The body comes into being only when it is recognisable as fulfilling a theory of what a body is - anorexic or any other type or kind of body. Like the anorexic, the body in horror is read before it arrives as traumatic and as able to subsist based only on those representational capacities which exist before it in order to encompass it. When I use Bray and Colebrook's idea of 'being otherwise' applied to becoming horror as a result of watching traumatising images, the body can be refigured as not suffering under the monolithic and detrimental effect of something bad, but as a bundle of movement affected towards being something other than what it was the moment before. On-screen horror itself must be figured as a plane or plateau, *not* a concept, or monolithic effect. For Deleuze and Guattari plateaus are a "continuous region of intensity constituted in such a way that they do not allow themselves to be interrupted by any external termination, any more than they allow themselves to build towards a climax."⁴⁴ Representation of a concept is potentially an example of what Deleuze and Guattari name an external termination. Representing the body as traumatised, or horror as evil or bad for the self, not only ceases the flow of intensities and the potential intersections to come, but it pre-creates whatever body or horror it seeks to represent in order to fit into some schema elucidated by the adjective which precedes the term. No prediction of what the body in horror may be can be included in this thesis

⁴³ Bray and Colebrook, 1998, p. 55.

⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 158. Deleuze and Guattari credit Gregory Bateson for this particular use of the term plateau.

because the creation of such a schema would close off the becoming body. My theorisations of the body in horror have been vague, suggestive and deliberately evasive because the only certainty for such a theory is simply the affect, or action, or movement. Such a body in horror resists being 'good' as much as my theory is opposed to the traditional being 'bad' of horror, because for an ethics towards becoming horror, what matters most is the specific consideration of every intersection and intensity of the body in horror. Bray and Colebrook elucidate this point. They state:

The question that organises many feminist ethical debates - Is a practice repressive or liberatory? - relies upon the possibility of a free consciousness that could precede, and be revealed beneath, its representations. If, however, signs and actions are seen as positive, then the ethical value of an act is determined by evaluating its force within a network of other acts and practices, and not in reference to a putative origin.⁴⁵

The similarities between this statement and Benhabib's formulation of a context-specific ethics encourages an application of Deleuze and Guattari's theories of becoming and its focus on specificity, intensity and unique intersections, within an ethical and 'real-life', social context. Watching television may be a microcosmic, minute version of 'real-life' where the term real becomes more contentious than in other circumstances due to the conflation of television and bodies within this situation. However my aim for this thesis was to apply the very complex theory of being differently in the world - becoming, launching into a line of flight, mediating or putting the self into orbit - to a situation which did not necessarily need a hitherto pathologised body, a terminally differenced body, (although those who watch horror have been othered terminally on a quieter scale) but a body every person with a television finds themselves as on a daily level. I actively wish to conflate the body who watches horror with the body who claims not to. By including concepts of unpleasure as pleasure, everyday perversions and death, which is the horror of all living things but which presses down on culture in every

⁴⁵ Bray and Colebrook, 1998, p. 57.

textual form, I have driven out the aberrant terms and structured everyone who watches as a potential becoming being.

Moira Gatens states "This is one way in which the social body can absolve itself of responsibility for the acts committed, since between 'the criminal' and 'us' a distance and a difference has been created."⁴⁶ Any pathological body creates a site for the representation of culture as a group of bodies whose actions carry with them specific meanings, rather than figuring culture as a body. The anorexic and the criminal are more specific pathologies but essentially within the same realm as the woman, and the racially other. If bodies are differenced in time, for a moment, and in space for an action - the now watching body - the signification of corporeally dermic differences are made redundant. The aim towards movement and differentiation from the moment before makes not only pathological bodies redundant but also all signified bodies. All that matters here for an ethics of a body in horror is that a body in horror must be a body forced into movement, into differentiation from *itself* from the moment before, into mediation with something in order that it be propelled into orbit, into a line of flight. Why would horror do this? Perhaps because the person who watches horror is blamed in order that the structures of culture that promote and provoke certain forms of 'real-life' horror are passed over for the aberration, be it horror film or horror film watcher. For an ethics which demands transforming corporeal subjects, horror is both specifically aimed at the horror of challenging the single model of the desirable white male middle class middle aged subject, and at acknowledging that for a lot of subjects (women, racially other) there is a concrete feeling of such a horror in everyday existence. Such a theory of becoming horror is applied to everyone, whether they are marginalised and made horror in everyday existence or not. However becoming horror is also specific and different for everyone in order that the oppression of the other is not colonised. Such colonisation is reminiscent of the male-hysteric, and the appropriation of the suffering of the

⁴⁶ Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*. London and New York: Routledge. 1996, p. 121.

other in order to be 'post-moderned' from traditional culture.⁴⁷ This horror is not radically destructive, indeed such feelings that accompany images of the destruction of the sanctity of the human could be seen as a comforting enactment of the being of woman or black or poor. This line of theory, however, takes horror into a prescriptive realm and I adamantly do not want to formulate what horror could always mean or always be. When addressing the use of the term horror we should ask the question 'horror for whom?' Moira Gatens states

So long as the law continues to treat the criminal as an 'aberrant individual' or a 'monster' and as the sole locus of responsibility, our civil body will continue to structure human relations in ways which systematically encourage violence... The 'spectacular' cruelty of such crimes only serves to mask the underlying banality of a largely unchallenged violence which structures our social relations.⁴⁸

Images of horror can be no more implicitly good or bad as images of women or racially other bodies. Only representation that fixes meaning and does not mediate can dictate such a reading. In order to formulate an ethics of becoming horror, outside of such fixed meanings of what horror and the watcher are, the mediators of Deleuze, and the interactive of Benhabib should be applied directly to a body becoming.

When we compare the involvement of becoming with mediation we find that Deleuze's formulation of movement fulfills all three criteria of what Benhabib describes as mandatory for a feminist, post-modern ethics. Benhabib demands: 1) interaction not legislation; 2) cognition of gender difference (and hence all difference) not gender blindness; 3) contextual sensitivity not situation indifference.⁴⁹ Becoming describes 1) not only the interaction of the self with others but also of the self with its own others; 2) it is about the specificities of the self at each moment, but includes what it was in order to aim towards

⁴⁷ See 'Death' chapter.

⁴⁸ Gatens, 1996, pp. 120 and 122.

⁴⁹ Benhabib, 1992, p. 3.

something else that it may be. Even if we ignore Deleuze and Guattari's 'becoming-woman' for the moment, being put into orbit, or heading off on a line of flight in order to become, never eradicates the places from whence the self has come. Indeed in order to be something different that which the self was before must be acknowledged. We can only be something different based on a comparison with what we were before and the residuals which adhere from that former self as we become; 3) within the plane of consistency the specificities of each moment, their haecceity, is the most important element of the places we inhabit from one moment to the next on the plane. Mediation is a constant consideration of concrete specificities as they intersect, not economically but in terms of quality and movement. Situated indifference is a problem Deleuze recognises when he points out that mediated writing should become liquid or gaseous, "Not becoming unearthly. But becoming all the more earthly by inventing laws of liquids and gases on which the earth depends."⁵⁰ Benhabib's legislation, Lacan's law and Bray and Colebrook's putative origin are all unearthly because they refer to a higher order. Through this statement, Deleuze points to the application of theories of becoming and mediation as directly affective of real bodies and real situations in movement, not philosophical or reflective conceptual versions of becoming. Here he points again to becoming as a real, embodied, cellular alteration, which takes into consideration effects upon real cellular bodies of others (real though not necessarily unified, singular or integrated). And it is here, rather than in his and Guattari's theory on becoming-woman, that Deleuze begins to formulate a feminist theory of becoming. He begins to encompass what I quoted Braidotti earlier as stating "Here the focus is more on the experience and the potential becoming of real women in all of their diverse ways of understanding and inhabiting the position 'woman'."⁵¹

Deleuze and Guattari theorise an absolutely radical new way of being in the world, possibly the most radical theory the West has seen for centuries. Often it

⁵⁰ Deleuze, 1995, p. 133. When Deleuze says 'laws' I think he refers to new laws which mediate with dominant laws in order to bring about new movements. I do not think he is inferring a new constitution of what Benhabib calls legislation.

⁵¹ Braidotti, 1994, p. 115.

seems too radical, it is a theory of being that still has no beginning, or suggested beginning. Although it exists within and is only available through our immediate culture, the question we ask is *where*? Where can we find it, where can we fly from, where can we put ourselves into orbit? This microcosmic world of watching offensive films on television that I posit as a transgressive site is, for me, an ideal place, a one space, to suggest for lines of flights. This space conflates the space(s) of phantasy in our bodies, and the phantasies of representation. Many plateaus overlap and fold in on each other in this humble space. A lot happens already in this space, despite the seeming banality of such a practice. My suggestion for the space for going into orbit is deliberately meek, inspired by my own pleasure at these films and the situation of watching them, and by a suspicion in any search for the ultimate or grand space and time for becoming to happen. Becoming is as tiny and as banal as it is radical and enormous. It is, after all, molecular. Each tiny point that becomes is as valuable as a large, visible and obvious plane of becoming. I do not know, and I cannot predict, what process becoming horror will take in each instance. But the availability of the television/video/horror rental scenario for many persons,⁵² and society's absolute anxiety about horror films combine to make transforming embodied subjects a tangible potential. Horror exists not only through what it stands for but for what it stands against. All that it represents as detrimental for culture's valued subjects is everything I want it to stand for as positive for the transformation of bodies and selves.

⁵² A thoroughly capitalist, Western and classist suggestion, but valid because we Western single-subject capitalists valuing such commodities (and we who are most colonising because of them) are most able to become changed by them through horror films.

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Filmography

Titles in parentheses are English language release titles. They refer primarily to the Australian releases of films, but where American or British titles vary from the Australian, both titles are included.

Television

Caught on Camera

Jonathan Miller's The Body in Question (BBC 1978)

Prime Suspect 1-5 (Christopher Menaul et.al. UK, 1990-96).

When Animals Attack!

Films

...E tu vivrai nel Terrore! L'Aldila ('The Beyond, Lucio Fulci, Italy, 1981)

8mm (Joel Schumacher, US, 1999)

Africa Addio ('Africa Blood and Guts', Gualtiero Jacopetti & Franco Prosperi, Italy, 1966)

Alien (Ridley Scott, US, 1979)

Anthropophagus ('The Beast', Joe D'Amato a.k.a. Aristede Massaccesi, Italy, 1980)

Basic Autopsy Procedures (director unknown, US, 1961)

Ben (Phil Karlson, US, 1972)

Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, US, 1982)

Body Bags (John Carpenter & Tobe Hooper, US, 1991)

Body Parts (Eric Red, US, 1991)

Braindead ('Dead Alive', Peter Jackson, New Zealand, 1992)

Buio Omega ('Blue Holocaust', Aristide Massaccesi a.k.a. Joe D'Amato, Italy, 1979)

Das Cabinet Des Dr. Caligari ('The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari', Robert Weine, Germany, 1919)

Cannibal Ferox ('Make Them Die Slowly', Umberto Lenzi, Italy, 1981)

Cannibal Holocaust (Ruggero Deodato, Italy, 1979)

Cape Fear (Martin Scorsese, US, 1991)

La Casa con la Scala nel Buio ('A Blade in the Dark', Lamberto Bava, Italy, 1983)

Cat People (Paul Schrader, US, 1982)

Curse of the Crimson Alter (Vernon Sewell, UK, 1968)

Dawn of the Dead (George A. Romero, US and Italy, 1979)

Day of the Dead (George A. Romero, US, 1985)

Death Scenes (Nick Bougas, US, 1989)

Dellamorte Dellamore (Michele Soavi, Italy, 1994)

Demoni ('Demons', Lamberto Bava, Italy, 1985)

Demonia (Lucio Fulci, Italy, 1990)

Diva (Jean-Jaques Beineix, France, 1982)

Eraserhead (David Lynch, USA, 1978)

Evil Dead (Sam Raimi, US, 1983)

Executions (David Herman, Arun Kumar and David Monaghan, UK, 1995)

The Exorcist (William Freidkin, US, 1973)

Faces of Death (Conan LeCilaire, US, 1978)

The Fly (David Cronenberg, Canada, 1986)

Friday the 13th (Sean S. Cunningham, US, 1981)

Fucked by a Dog (Director unknown, Netherlands, 1996)

Guinea Pig (Kazuhito Kuramoto, late 80s, Japan)

The Hand (Oliver Stone, US, 1981)

Hands of a Stranger (Newton Arnold, US, 1962)

The Hands of Orlac (E.T. Greville, England and France, 1960)

Häxan ('Witchcraft Through the Ages', Benjamin Christensen, Sweden, 1922)

Hellbound: Hellraiser II (Tony Randel, UK, 1988)

Hellraiser (Clive Barker, UK, 1987)

Humongous (Paul Lynch, US, 1981),

I Corpi Presentano Tracce di Violenza Carnale ('Torso', Sergio Martino, Italy, 1973)

Il Mostro e in Tavola ('Flesh for Frankenstein' / 'Andy Warhol's Frankenstein', Antonio Margheriti, Italy, 1973)

In Einem Jahr Mit 13 Monden ('In a Year of 13 Moons', Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Germany, 1978)

The Killing of America (Sheldon Renan, US, 1981)

Kiss the Girls (Gary Fleder, US, 1997)

Lucker the Necrophagous ('Lucker', Johan Vandewoestijne, Belgium, 1986)

Macabro ('Frozen Terror' / 'Macabre', Lamberto Bava, Italy, 1981)

Macchie Solari ('Autopsy', Armando Crispino, Italy, 1974)

Mad Love (Karl Freund, US, 1935),

Men Behind the Sun (T.F. Mous, 1987, Hong Kong)

Mondo Cane (Gualtiero Jacopetti, Italy, 1962)

NekRomantik (Jorg Buttegreit, Germany, 1988)

NekRomantik 2 (Jorg Buttgereit, Germany, 1992)

Night of the Living Dead (George A. Romero, US, 1968)

Opera ('Terror at the Opera', Dario Argento, Italy, 1988)

Orlacs Haende ('The Hand of Orlac', Robert Weine, Austria, 1926)

L'Orribile Segreto del Dr. Hichcock ('The Terrible Dr. Hichcock', Ricardo Freda, Italy, 1962)

Paura Nel Citta Dei Morti Viventi ('City of the Living Dead' / 'Gates of Hell', Lucio Fulci, Italy, 1980)

Plague of the Zombies (John Gilling, UK, 1966)

Poltergeist (Tobe Hooper, US, 1982)

Profondo Rosso ('Deep Red', Dario Argento, Italy, 1975)

Pulp Fiction (Quentin Tarantino, US 1994)

Quella Villa Accanto al Cimitero ('House by the Cemetery', Lucio Fulci, Italy, 1981).

Revolt of the Zombies (Victor Halperin, US, 1936)

Rosemary's Baby (Roman Polanski, US, 1968)

Scanners (David Cronenberg, Canada, 1982)

Schindler's List (Steven Speilberg, US, 1993)

Scream Greats: Tom Savini (Fangoria, US, 1988)

Seven (David Fincher, US, 1995)

Shocking Asia (Emerson Fox, Germany/Hong Kong, 1974)

The Silence of the Lambs (Jonathan Demme, US, 1991)

La Sindrome di Stendhal ('The Stendhal Syndrome', Dario Argento, Italy, 1996)

Snow White (Walt Disney, US, 1932)

Snuff (Michael and Roberta Findlay, 1974, US)

Lo Squartatore de New York ('The New York Ripper', Lucio Fulci, Italy, 1981)

Suspiria (Dario Argento, Italy, 1977)

Tenebre ('Tenebrae', Dario Argento, Italy, 1982)

Terror Circus (Alan Rudolph, US, 1973)

The Texas Chain Saw Massacre (Tobe Hooper, US, 1974)

The Texas Chain Saw Massacre Part 2 (Tobe Hooper, US, 1984)

Thelma and Louise (Ridley Scott, US, 1992)

L'Uccello Dalle Piume Di Cristallo ('The Bird with the Crystal Plumage', Dario Argento, 1969)

Ultime Grida Dalla Savana: La Grande Caccia ('Savage Man...Savage Beast', Antonio Climati & Mario Morra, Italy, 1975)

Ultimo Mondo Cannibale ('Last Cannibal World', Ruggero Deodato, Italy, 1976)

VideoDrome (David Cronenberg, Canada, 1982)

White Zombie (Victor Halperin, US, 1932),

Xtro (Harry Bromley Davenport, UK, 1982)

Zombi 2 ('Zombie Flesheaters', Lucio Fulci, Italy, 1979)