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MONSTRATIVE ACTS AND BECOMING-MONSTER: ON IDENTITY, BODIES, AND THE FEMININE OTHER

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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY TO THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK.

RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN THE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK, UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF PROFESSOR GRAHAM ALLEN, AND DR. JOOLS GILSON.

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HEAD OF SCHOOL: PROFESSOR CLAIRE CONNOLLY

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Declaration

This thesis is the candidate's own work and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere.

Signed,

_____

Nicola Jane Moffat

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Dedicated to the memory of Linda van Duyker, 1951-2007

The loss of your body sustains my writing.

Introduction

A Critique of "Being"

From its inauguration in the works of Aristotle and Plato, the discipline of philosophy has sought to define what it means to be human and how it is we come to be who we are. With advances in the empirical sciences in the late eighteenth-century, came the advent of new schools of thought based on the observation of cause and effect in the experimental sciences, and thus were born anthropology, sociology, and psychology, all of which, in their varying ways, continue the quest for finding the origins of ourselves. What has been a common trope of these diagnoses, and this is by no means a new observation, is that they have been made by white, (largely) heterosexual men, speaking from positions of privilege and/or power. As such, the definition of Being has its roots in white, cis-male, heteronormative privilege, excluding from its category anyone who does not fit these boundaries. What is more, the history concerning Western definitions of Being has, since at least Plato, insisted on a split between mind and body, favouring the mind as formative of subjective experience and denigrating the body as secondary, impure, and unworthy of the heights of philosophical enquiry. As this thesis will demonstrate, the mind/body binary is in fact symptomatic of the masculine ontological imperative to disown the body and its effects on Being. Following philosophy, further ontological studies have perpetuated the mind/body dichotomy in inquiries relating to Being, with the exception perhaps of phenomenology.

At all times, however, the body has haunted the ontological enquiries of the humanities, from somatic symptoms in psychoanalysis to the scandal of the speaking body[1] in linguistics. Additionally, feminist reviews of the canon have called for another look at the body, which was at first rejected by these writers for its essentialist connotations, and which have tied the mind/body binary to those of man/woman, white/black, rational/emotional and so on. However, the outright rejection of the critical evaluation of the body's role in Being is akin to rejecting a critical reading of half of any of these binary categories, as well as serving to reify the idea that dichotomised categories are opposites. Bodily practices have in recent years, and mostly by way of Feminist and Queer Theory, found themselves an integral part of the ontological enquiries made by "critical theory," a practice encompassing the humanities and which ranges from linguistics to literature, philosophy to psychoanalysis. This enquiry follows those made by feminist theorists pertaining to the body, to bodily practices, and to the female body in particular, the reasons for which are that in its separation of mind and body, the canon has "lost" what it means to be a body, disparaged the body as inferior to the mind, and has made the body symbolic of a further denigrated femininity. Luce Irigaray, for example, points out that psychoanalysis "gets rid" of the body by ascribing it to the feminine, suggesting that both the body and the feminine are things to be rid of (*This Sex Which is Not One* 90).

With the desire to move forward and break away from this formation of the feminine in ontological discourse, this thesis will build on the ontologies of post-structuralist feminist theorists, Judith Butler and Rosi Braidotti, combining their main theories with the critical evaluations of masculinist ontologies made

by theorists Julia Kristeva, Peggy Phelan, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray. Feminist theory makes up the bulk of my theoretical analysis because it brings the maligned body back to ontology in its emphasis on the analytic link between the feminine and the corporeal. Moreover, the established connection of the mind/body dichotomy to that of man/woman questions not only the excluded feminine, but probes the reasons for the body's denigration, finding ontology at a severe loss in its omission of the body. What started this investigation was a desire to link the performative elements of identity practices to a theory of monstrosity, one which could explain how fictional qualities adhere to bodies, effectively constituting identities which are recognizable by the outward signs and gestures these bodies perform, but which exist simultaneously to, and in tandem with, various identity performances of self-knowledge. These signs and gestures are often taken as marks of an "authentic" or "original" self, which come from an essential, internal core, but, as Butler shows, these gestures are what constitute identity in the first place, concealing their genesis and presenting substance as the origin of these acts (*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Being* 33). Thus, acts which have come to be understood as originating from the inside are, instead, mimetic of behaviour which has been perceived as appropriate for certain bodies. These acts therefore come from outside the body (enacted by other bodies), finding themselves re-embodied and re-enacted.

Unlike Butler, however, I do not interpret identity performance as always deriving from the outside: as this thesis will later demonstrate, some identity acts are practised (consciously or unconsciously) in defiance of the acts expected of certain bodies, coming from the self. What is more, self-birthed

performances may or may not contradict the ways in which externally imposed fictional qualities have been embodied and thus performed. Butler's reworking of Austinian performativity in *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter: On The Discursive Limits of "Sex"* is thus the starting point of this investigation and is used as a way of explaining how bodily practices constitute identity, particularly gendered identity. Butler was first to implement the performative and use it to demonstrate the ways in which bodily acts that are recognisably gendered constitute the identity of the performer, with Queer Theory, spearheaded by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *Epistemology of the Closet*, following close behind. Butler's analysis of the sedimented acts which come together to form gender has brought the body back to scholarship concerning Being, by pointing out that the mundane daily gestures of the body are in fact what produce the "I." Peggy Phelan's work in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* and, particularly, in *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* builds on Butler's and Sedgwick's analyses of gender performativity by using the performative to talk not just about the acts made by gendered and Queer bodies, but to question the enactment of consciously fictional identities in theatre settings, examining the conceptual slippage that occurs between performing fiction and "reality," between literature and life. Phelan's inquiries thus assist this investigation by already standing on the threshold that ostensibly separates the literary and the "real", using theatrical performance theory to conceptualise Being. Furthermore, Phelan's writing style straddles the boundary between categories of writing that have traditionally been cast as either critical or creative, where each category has been understood to offer differing functions. The admixture of the creative and the critical in Phelan

proposes a re-evaluation of the performative abilities of "serious" and "non-serious" acts, whether the acts are produced on a stage or in life. The bearing of such a combination on ontological categories is that Being comes to mean not only performing, which is already dangerous, but performing in ways that may or may not be "serious."

The implications of Butler's and Phelan's studies on ontology are that one's identity is not a fixed category but a structure in flux, one that makes various negotiations between bodily performances which can be "serious" or "non-serious," and are, in either case, what Butler describes as "strategies" that the "I" adopts for survival in a binary world ("Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" 522). It is for this reason that this thesis uses the ontological theory of Rosi Braidotti; both her *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* and *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* propose a conceptualisation of identity as a process of Becoming rather than Being. The transferal from a noun to a verb not only emphasises the performative qualities of identity formation, in the sense that it is a "doing", and one that creates, but suggests fluidity and multiplicity in its creation. Moreover, "Becoming" is in the imperfect tense, signifying a sustained process that comes to accrue substance, as well as the creation of an opening for varied, multiplicitous, and even contradictory identity practices. As Butler already points out in *Gender Trouble*, "[g]ender is a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred, [as it is] never fully what it *is* at any given juncture in time" (22, my emphasis). That it is not "fully" what it *is* implies the ambivalence at the heart of gender and, if gender is a series of acts that performatively

constitute identity, this ambivalence also becomes a structural property of the "I." It is through the explanation of the "I" as multiplicitous, contradictory, ambivalent, and incongruous that some forms of Being have been linked to theories of monstrosity. Certain feminist and Queer theories,[2] postcolonial critiques,[3] and theories on race and ethnicity concerned with identity have noted the inclination of authorities to employ the language of monstrosity when writing or speaking about difference. What I mean by the "language of monstrosity" is the Othering that takes place in discourse and which makes the Other an uncanny and dangerous spectre that haunts the "I," carried out for the purposes of making a consolidated identity for the "I" who speaks. I understand "discourse" to mean precisely what Butler understands by the term in her Foucauldian reading of gender and identity politics, which is the combined signifying processes of cultural practices that, repeated over time, *create* what they signify; in other words, I understand "discourse" as being fundamentally performative.

It is useful at this point to list the meanings of monstrosity pertinent to this discussion. The *OED* cites the Latin *monstrum*, meaning a portent or a prodigy, as the root of "monster," with the verb *monere* (to warn) as its base. Chris Baldick points out that another verb makes up the base of *monstrum*, which is *monstrare*, to reveal or show, hence the English "to demonstrate" (*In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity and Nineteenth-Century Writing* 10). Monsters are thus a revelation of something; they serve as a warning to others, usually for behaviour considered depraved or aberrant. The etymology of "monster" is important to this discussion, as its category indicates a "doing": the monster signifies not only a "to be" but a "to do" at its very root. That it signifies

a "doing" is what makes the monster performative and, as performative acts do something to bodies, this indicates that the monster is an affective category; it is a body that affects other bodies. This affectivity is also signified by the use of "monster," which the *OED* lists as a verb as well as its more frequent application as noun or adjective. However, the definition of "monster" has evolved over the centuries to incorporate other meanings, such as a mythical creature that is "large, ugly, and frightening," "a creature of huge size," and, "[a] person of repulsively unnatural character, or exhibiting such extreme cruelty or wickedness as to appear inhuman" (*OED*, def. 1.a, 4.a, 5). Because of its varying meanings, the etymology of "monster" thus demonstrates a multiplicity of identities, and thus, a multiplicity of meanings, which are always already at the core of the monstrous figure.

Finding a Feminist Ontology

This thesis continues the project of realizing a feminist ontology, and it utilises feminist theory for its various demonstrations of the models of Othering at work in gender politics, a politics which has incorporated a persistent and sustained strategy in the identity formation of the feminine Other. However, I attempt to read the end result of Othering, the misrepresented body of the Other, as a potential site for more positive, empowered identity performances; in other words, I interpret the monstrous body and thus the monstrous "I" as a potentially positive model for identity practice. Kristeva's *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* is a compelling analysis on which to build my exploration of gender politics and its effect on the formation of gendered identity, while her investigation of the abject is potently productive to a discussion on what makes

identities monstrous. Given the connotations of the term "Becoming" in Braidotti's work, and the exploration of abjection in the expulsion of bodily matter in Kristeva, this analysis is also concerned with birth, both as a real, bodily function and as a conceptual tool for authorship.[4] This also means that feminist theory concerning mothers' bodies is re-appraised in this thesis, which assesses feminist associations of women's bodies with their confinement to producing children and to performing childcare, and analyses of the simultaneous denigration and exaltation of archetypal mothers.

Much feminist theory has interrogated psychoanalytic theory concerning motherhood, as well as that relating to childhood repression, and the constitution of the feminine sex drive. Kristeva's *Powers of Horror*, Braidotti's *Metamorphoses*, and Irigaray's work in *This Sex Which is Not One* are examples of this review of classic psychoanalysis, which scrutinise the phallogocentrism of the "founding fathers" of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. Such phallocentric analysis represents the feminine as lack, as eternally desirous of the Phallus, and as childlike, at least in the evolutionary scale of sexual maturity (which in Freud finds its teleology in phallic stimulus). Authoritative discourses such as psychoanalysis have Othered women according to their standpoint on what constitutes feminine identity, at the same time as (re)creating their own prominence as authority. As both Irigaray and Braidotti have demonstrated, Freud and Lacan view feminine desire only as complete, when (in their understanding) woman obtains the Phallus through the production of a child, preferably male. While I do build on both Freud and Lacan in regard to the split of the psyche, my argument steers away from classical psychoanalysis, as many of the theorists listed above have already

critiqued its influence on feminine ontology, where this thesis searches for the next step in understanding the nature of Being. However, the effects of psychoanalysis as a constitutional discourse are here well-documented as examples of the monstrosity of performative acts, acts which found and perpetuate fictional qualities of the bodies they describe. Using Butler's analysis in *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* of the ability of performative speech acts to injure, I will demonstrate that discourse that has as its project the definition and categorisation of the Other is a constitutional force that makes the Other other to themselves. The effect of living as simultaneously other to oneself and the struggle to consolidate fictional qualities with a differing self-view is monstrous, as it suggests a subject not in control of him-/herself. This self is not in control, because s/he is in fact a host of multiplicitous, often contradicting, "selves." The force of performative acts to create the Other's identity is in itself monstrous, as these acts assist the formation of this multiplicity but, also, because of the violence contained within the performative force to precipitate this Othering. Using Butler and Phelan, I will establish that this violence is the effect of performative (speech) acts, whether or not it is the intent of the speaker to injure with words. This thesis therefore also demonstrates the monstrosity of naming the body of the Other.

I also use Jacques Derrida's conceptualisation of the "event" as monstrous in this thesis, both as a means by which to view performative identity acts and as an apt metaphor for the suspicion with which (particularly pregnant) women have been historically viewed. The "event," an unpredictable, unheralded happening that disrupts history, causing us to question everything that has come before, is characterised by Derrida as a monstrous birth ("Structure, Sign

and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences" 370), one which announces the arrival of something else, another unknown. Thus, my examination of birth and of mothers' bodies plays a significant part in defining what I mean by "monster" in this thesis. However, in his depiction of the future as a monstrous birth, Derrida neglects the real bodies affected by birth, those of the child and of the mother – a move sadly characteristic of the phallogocentric project of philosophy. The bodies involved in birth are resurrected (as it were) by this thesis, from such narratives concerning male creation, especially authorship, where I reclaim their validity as bodies and not as mere metaphors. What is more, performative acts can be read as births, in that they bring something else into being; performatives constitute something, whether that is a marriage ceremony, a promise, or a gendered identity. They can, moreover, be characterised as *monstrous* births, because their invocation always creates the possibility of another act, one that is unforeseeable by the interlocutor and thus unpredictable. This means that the performative act of promising can be seen as a birth because it births a promise, but also as a monstrous birth, because that promise might signify something else *yet to come*.

The "to come" that animates Derrida's "event" is also at the heart of what structures the new theoretical category this thesis proposes. By demonstrating the ability of performative acts to affect bodies, at the same time as analysing the affectivity of monstrous figures, I propose the theoretical category of the "monstrative," a performative force that Others the "I" through bodily acts that include discourse and the gaze. If monsters exist as signs, whether they be of things to come or as warnings of the result for aberrant behaviour, then the monstrative is the performative force that makes the Other into such a sign, into

a monster. The monstrative is related to both the performative and to Othering; however, while the monstrative is performative, the performative is not always monstrative. What I mean by this is that by acting upon bodies, the monstrative is an affective and constitutional force (it is performative), but the performative is not always monstrative because, while it accounts for creation, it does not explain the end result: the performative does not always create monsters where the monstrative does. Moreover, while Othering explains the process by which the "I" is made Other by exterior forces, it does not adequately account for the processes that make the Other other to themselves. The monstrative also underlines the significance of embodiment to identity formation through its affectivity.

The monstrative determines the Otherness of the "I" through the performative acts of contagion and mutation, which affect both bodies and the Symbolic order. Thus, theories pertaining to contagion and mutation in both monstrosity and performativity also inform the category of the monstrative. With regard to contagion, I connect J. L. Austin's assertion that speech acts uttered as "play" are "etiolations" of the "real" thing with aberrant identity acts, through Parker and Sedgwick's analysis (*Performance and Performativity*) of Austinian terminology and Kristevan abjection. Mutation, meanwhile, is linked to the monstrative by way of teratology and etymology, where concepts of origin are called into question by the inaugurative qualities of repetitive acts. That the monstrative is manifested by contagion or mutation is important because both contagion and mutation are performative forces that affect bodies and the Symbolic order. I will demonstrate this through a detailed study of the relation of contagion to bodies and bodily performances, especially theatrical

performances, connecting such a concept of contagion to Derridean citationality, and, along with mutation, an examination of monstrous births in Early Modern Europe. These, in turn, will be compared to Derrida's understanding of iterability, which he differs from citationality in order to explain the evolution of certain acts, especially those acts designated as ritualistic (*Limited Inc* 40). Birth, particularly monstrous birth, is an important metaphor for understanding the ways in which the mechanisms of contagion and mutation have led to a conceptualisation of the feminine that is denigrated for fear of its reproductive power.

The monstrative is also related to demonstrative acts; however, while "to demonstrate" means to show or indicate, to be an example of, monstration implies a demonstration of monstrosity itself. What does it mean to demonstrate monstrosity, if to be monstrous already means to demonstrate something? For Baldick, who reads monstrosity against the backdrop of Enlightenment Europe, monstrosity demonstrates the abortive ways of Being exemplified by what in the first place instigated the French Revolution, and, by the Revolution itself, which, in tracts regarding the monstrosity of one party or another, were often characterised by the language of filiation or paternity (27). Given the abrupt move from a feudal system based on patrilineage to what essentially became anarchy, this comes as no surprise. Thus, monsters such as the Creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* might demonstrate the monstrosity of ungrateful offspring, or, conversely, the monstrosity of inheritance. However, Baldick describes the use of monstrative language within a specific timeframe: this thesis, while not detracting from the specificity of certain monsters to their cultural and historical contexts, questions the apparent timelessness of these

monsters in their continued ability to demonstrate our deepest fears. The monstrative explains how monsters are made, not biologically, but socially and culturally.

While "monster" comes from the Latin *monstrare*, "to demonstrate" comes from *demonstrare*: given the addition of the prefix "de-," which means to do the opposite of, to remove or reduce, or to be derived from, it would seem that we are given to believe that these are opposing forces, such as between "construct" and "deconstruct." However, an etymological search reveals that both *monstrare* and *demonstrare* mean "to demonstrate" (which is why Baldick uses *monstrare* as the basis for "monster"), suggesting that monsters cannot be read as anything other than signs or indications of something else yet to come. Alan Rauch, on the other hand, contends that to de-monstrate something is to make it *not* monstrous through the act of exhibition and revelation, as in the empirical sciences ("The Monstrous Body of Knowledge in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" 237). In either sense, there is a curious lack of contradiction in these terms, which suggests that "monster" is a signifier whose signified is always already yet to come; this, in turn, emphasises the Becoming that repeatedly takes place within monstrosity. Although Derrida stresses the gap that occurs between any signifier and its signified, "monster" is a signifier without any signified at all; it is what Jeffrey Jerome Cohen calls a "kind of third term" or a "third-term supplement" (*Monster Theory: Reading Culture* 6-7). Thus, the monstrative is a performative force that makes the Other into a living sign.

This thesis uses existing feminist theory to demonstrate the force of the monstrative in the following ways. First, using Butler's revision of performative acts, I indicate that the monster is an ontological category which carries

with(in) it the notion that Being (or substance) takes its form through performance, and that it does so by embodying the "doing" that its category names. The discourse surrounding bodies, including the names we use to categorise them, constitute them according to that diagnosis. "Monster" is the descriptive category of the result of the monstrative, the performative force that brings the monster into being *as* monster. Material bodies come to *mean* the monikers by which we know them, becoming embodiments of these names: for the embodied, they become neither the physical body itself nor the accrued meaning, but something in between. Elin Diamond eloquently explains embodiment as the "visible form and social incarnation of the body," but that which is "haunted by what it has swallowed, the material 'body'" ("The Shudder of Catharsis in Twentieth-Century Performance" 154). What I am at pains to avoid in this analysis of materiality, discourse, and performance, is the creation of another binary, that of the material/immaterial. The material body does not oppose performance or discourse, nor is it more "real" or more telling of identity. Neither does one's self-understood identity cease to exist in the advent of exterior categorisation, but is performed in tandem with it; the material body also remains, simultaneously accruing and resisting this signification. That one's identity takes shape as multiplicity and that this "taking shape" is a continuous project also echoes the multiple meanings of "monster" and the resistance of the monstrous body to take on signification as anything other than sign.[5]

Reading both Butler's and Phelan's work on the conceptual slippage between identity performance and performance as play or simulation, between the "serious" and the "non-serious,"[6] I demonstrate the capacity of Becoming to

disrupt the authority of monstrative acts, while exploring the implications of this disruption. The interplay between acts considered "serious" and "non-serious," between acts considered original and imitative,[7] is explored because the hybrid meaning of "act" implies the possibility of misrecognising "serious" acts for "non-serious" acts and vice-versa. Monstrosity occurs at boundaries and always signifies the possibility of misrecognition. Furthermore, the blurring of conceptual boundaries, especially between what is regarded as "serious" or "non-serious," is monstrous, because what crosses these boundaries is represented as an arrival, or birth. Using Kristeva's understanding of the abject as that which "disturbs identity, system, order" (*Powers of Horror* 4), I maintain that the arrival of bodies that act "inappropriately" according to an already established Symbolic order are incoherent and unrecognisable to those who benefit from this order. Figured as birth because they are regarded as something new, identities and the acts of which they are composed resist categorisation through their inability to be recognised by the established imperative, which, as all of the feminist theorists I have listed above expound is the Law of the Father, the Symbolic order that constitutes reality according to a hierarchical binary model, and which exercises its power through the monstrative forces of the gaze and discourse. Thus, unrecognisable identity acts are conceived of only as something "Other," constituting an unknown entity that resists the Symbolic, remaining unnameable and "unrepresentable except as representation" (Rebecca Schneider *The Explicit Body in Performance* 23), or, as a body existing only as sign.

Furthermore, Derrida's characterisation of the future as unknown entity, outrageous for the unpredictability of its arrival, is like a monstrous birth, in that the threat of misfortune that it portends is both unpredictable and figured as something that is yet to come. The description of arrival as something yet to come, its "to-come-ness," is another form of Becoming. Using Becoming to explain identity as the accretion of substance through performative acts suggests a process that lacks teleology, calling into question those structures that have been viewed as having a "natural" end, including "civilisation" in anthropological discourses, human (especially female) sexual maturity in psychoanalysis, and even the classical philosophical concept of Being, where the stability and oneness implied by "Being" infers completion. Becoming always already implies something else yet to come, a project that is unceasing. Monstrosity is a powerfully generative paradigm against which to read the processes of Becoming at play in human identity practice because its etymology indicates not only the multiplicity of meanings always already incorporated[8] by the "I," but that these various meanings comprise the "to come" inherent in Becoming and in the performative itself.

The "to come" that structures the performative is dramatized by the attempt Austin makes in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962) to bring illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts together. The divide Austin inaugurates between speech that performs an act in the utterance of what it describes (illocutionary) and utterances/acts that fulfil the possibility of the act that has already been enunciated (perlocutionary) is one which Austin finds impossible to bridge, precisely because the perlocutionary is a "to come" whose arrival is impossible to predict. Meanwhile, the illocutionary performative

always already signifies its perlocutionary answer, even if that answer is still "to come." The "to come" that structures identity is manifested by the various identity performances that accumulate to form the "I." While this thesis uses feminist theory as a starting point at which to examine these identity practices through its focus on gendered acts in Butler, it also combines this focus with a greater appreciation for other practices at work in the making of identity, including race, ethnicity, and sexuality. Braidotti's re-evaluation of Deleuzean Becoming forces a revision of second-wave feminist theory (such as Irigaray's) by characterising Becoming not just as Becoming-woman, but, as Deleuze, and, following him, Braidotti, put it, as "Becoming-minoritarian" (*Metamorphoses* 96). My interpretation of this is that identity is a process of Becoming-monster, which entails multiplicity in terms of identity structure (race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, religion, age, species, and so on), confounding any one "reading" of identity. Becoming-monster is a process, but it is not to be confused with monstrative acts.

Where monstrativity constitutes the body as a sign of Otherness, Becoming-monster is an empathetic response to the Other who has been classified as monstrous through monstrative acts. As such, monstrative acts are done *to* the body of the Other, where Becoming is a process adopted *by* the "I." As I will explain, the result of the monstrative is a body of difference that is characterised as monstrous by the Other, and thus made monster, by which I mean abhorrent, abject, filthy, feared, and excluded. Becoming, on the other hand, results in a monster, but by which I mean specifically a hybrid category. Many classical monsters are hybrids, and are monstrous only because of their resistance to categorisation. As I will demonstrate, the feminine can be classed

as this form of monster because of her ability to reproduce and thus become, in a fundamentally bodily sense, a hybridised form. However, I also want to make it clear that I do not consider monstrativity and Becoming to be opposing forms: where the monstrative is a process perpetrated against the (body of the) Other, while Becoming is a process that can only be initiated through mutual consent, both are performative processes that result in monstrosity – the monstrative results in a body being made sign, where Becoming is to be necessarily between forms. What differs the monstrative from Becoming is that the monstrative is a violent and negative force, where Becoming allows for a much more positive view not just of femininity and Otherness, but of monsters themselves.

Methodology

I use feminist theory, as opposed to, say, Postcolonial Theory or Queer Theory[9] in this thesis, because of the sustained project of phallogocentrism to attribute the bodily to the feminine in discourse ranging from the poetic to the juridical, the medical to the imperial. The point I would like to argue, and which, through her analysis of biblical interdictions, Kristeva has demonstrated in *Powers of Horror*, is that the feminine has a much longer history of deprecation according to the phallogocentric model of identity than that of any other Other. While certainly not implying that the feminine is a more important identity structure to study, this thesis does contend that there is a much larger corpus from which to garner examples of the performative function of discourse in the phallogocentric project. More importantly, I will also demonstrate that the feminine is the primordial form upon which further forms of Othering have been founded, and that its status as the foundational Other has made for the

continued derogation of femininity, as a form of gender expression but, also in the wider sense of archetypal human traits. As such, I use various textual categories, "serious" and "non-serious," to build a sample of the performativity of discourse to create what it describes. The identities that come under discussion are theoretical insofar as this investigation of identity formation requires the analysis of the theoretical texts listed above, but literary identities also infiltrate this thesis, some which may or may not embody "real" material bodies, such as those involved in theatrical productions.

My utilisation of the "serious" discourse at work in theory (psychoanalysis, philosophy, feminist revisions), and of the "non-serious" at work (or at play) in literature is to determine that fictional/fictive identities have a weighty bearing on "real" identities and bodies. The "non-serious" is also a specifically feminist space in which to launch an assault on The Law of the Father; as Irigaray playfully asks, "Isn't the phallic tantamount to the seriousness of meaning?"[10] (*This Sex Which is Not One* 163). What this means is that the playfulness, the "non-seriousness," of performance hints at the possible creation of a feminist conceptualisation of Becoming as something infinitely more positive than existing in relation to lack, as forever desirous of the Phallus, as abject, as object, as endlessly requiring regulation – all of which are monstrative formations of the feminine and thus of the women whose bodies have become the sign of femininity. I argue that the process of Becoming-monster can be used to political ends as a way of confounding the Symbolic Order by refusing to adapt to the binary of signifier and signified, simultaneously poking fun at the "serious" concept of a unified sign that identifies a unified subject or object. If the sign is confounded, then so might be the identity to which it points.

Literary identities feature in two ways in this thesis. First, I use two canonical literary monsters, Frankenstein's Creature (*Frankenstein* 1818) and Grendel's Mother[11] (*Beowulf*), to theorize monstrous identity, at the same time as appraising a selection of the human characters in these texts for their apparent monstrosity.[12] The literary thus becomes the theoretical in the process of this examination. This analysis leads me to an inquiry on motherhood, birth, and mothers' bodies and monstrosity, where feminist revisions of psychoanalysis and the philosophical mind/body divide are shown to be most pertinent in the monstrative formation of monstrous identities. Secondly, I use literary identities as case studies of the performativity of monsters and the monstrosity of performative acts in two literary texts, David Henry Hwang's play, *M. Butterfly* (1986), and J. M. Coetzee's novel, *Disgrace* (1999). Hwang's play offers a powerfully affective example of the external fictive qualities that adhere to the body of the Other, which make meaning happen for the "I"/eye of the beholder, while using various layers of the "non-serious" as a method in which to disrupt this meaning and the sovereignty of this gaze. *Disgrace* also unsettles the power of the phallogocentric "I"/eye by (dis)locating the authority of straight, white, cisgender, male identity in the aftermath of the "event," and in so doing, allowing various nuanced interpretations of Becoming as it occurs in the novel.

During this analysis, I will be paying special attention to form and its interconnection with the various layers of authorship in the performance of literary identities, especially with regard to Hwang's play, which requires live bodies in order to be actualized. I will be emphasising throughout this analysis that the identities in *Beowulf*, *Frankenstein*, *M. Butterfly*, and *Disgrace* posit a

"what if," a sort of literary exemplum of behaviour within the certain parameters laid out by each author. I employ *Beowulf* and *Frankenstein* as theoretical texts that propose the "what if" of the existence of fantastical monsters and what this existence entails for identity, monstrous or otherwise, while examining the layered meanings attributed to the birth and authorship of monstrous identities. The monstrative animates this discussion, as it explains *why* we are made to view these creatures as monsters and how, quite often, their apparent monstrosity has much more to do with the signifier that labels them rather than any essential internal quality of monstrosity. I will then move on to assess the birth and authorship of identities specific to *M. Butterfly* and *Disgrace*, considering literary form and its convolution of any reading of identity.

An evaluation of literary form is essential to this analysis as form plays a huge part in creating the fictional identities represented in the play and the novel. The difference these forms take also give us a greater understanding of how bodies become signs, whether this is through the performativity of the gaze and its constitutional effects upon the live bodies of a play, or the performative effects of narrative structure upon the identities represented in fiction. That drama uses actual live bodies in the unfolding of its narrative means that an audience participates in the story through the act of gazing, which, in *M. Butterfly*, implicates audience members as contributing actors in the creation of the identities represented on stage. The particular narrative form used by Coetzee in *Disgrace*, meanwhile, discursively shapes the identities represented according to a specific ideological view, which is that of David Lurie, the novel's protagonist. While the speech and action of a dramatic

performance is predicated on its disappearance, and therefore exists in the same temporal reality as its audience (that is, if it is *live* performance), narrative fiction does not necessarily unfold at the time in which the reader reads, and therefore it relies on narrative structure in order to make the story happen. In *Disgrace*, while the use of the present tense gives the reader a sense of temporal congruity, it is written from the point of view of its protagonist: that is, it is focalized through him. However, Coetzee writes in the third person for most of the narrative, perhaps to gain some distance from Lurie, who, like him, is an affluent, white, male academic. Through this evaluation of bodies and the gaze, and of narrative representations of identity, I thus use "non-serious" texts as a way in which to evaluate the "non-serious" at play in the very serious business of identity formation, which are posed as a "what if" by the very same "non-serious" texts that Austin famously disparages in his inaugural work, *How to Do Things with Words*.

The binary created and perpetuated by Austin of serious/non-serious exemplifies the various binaries I attempt to deconstruct in this thesis by way of textual analysis. My critique of binary models also brings me to a crucial re-evaluation of the core binary at work in philosophical and psychoanalytic ontology, that of the sovereign self/Other. This binary is made explicit by the characterisation of the self as "I"/eye, which suggests the returned gaze of the Other, an unforeseen event by the authority who does the looking and who categorizes according to that look. My analysis of the Other's returned gaze takes its form as an appraisal of the artistic technique of anamorphosis, where I read the Other as an anamorphic image. The gaze of the sovereign "I" is disrupted by the returned gaze of the anamorphic image, which cannot be seen

"except when viewed from a particular angle and distance or with a correcting mirror or lens" (Mayer *A Dictionary of Art Terms and Techniques* 14). Anamorphosis is an important metaphor for the misrecognition of the Other by the sovereign gaze and, as I have pointed out above, the possibility of misrecognition is symptomatic of monstrosity. Viewing an anamorphic image "incorrectly" is a monstrative process, as it makes the anamorphic image Other to itself.

The gaze thus plays an imperative part in the constitution of the Other by constructing knowledge based on the (mis)recognition of outward bodily signs. While, in Butler, the constitution of the Other remains within the realm of discourse, other theorists have attributed the metaphysical concept of knowledge (of the Other) with seeing. As the empirical sciences have based the accumulation of knowledge on observation, seeing has become *the* method by which objects are understood, while discourse has served to disseminate[13] the results of such (mis)understanding. For those who are not able to observe first hand, discourse is the sole form of knowledge by which to gain understanding, and reading thus becomes an extension of experience. This has, as I will show in chapter four of this thesis, certainly been the case in what Edward Said calls the Orientalisation of Asian bodies (*Orientalism*). The constitutional power of the gaze is analysed in this thesis alongside that of discourse, as the principle of the possibility of misrecognition is crucial to any theory of monstrosity as well as any theory concerning Being. To be categorised as something, one must exhibit outward bodily signs that are *recognisable*, and recognisability can only function with the existence of both the gaze and discourse. The monstrative is a combination of the performative forces of discourse and the gaze, which make

monsters by excluding them from the realms of recognisability and categorisation. What becomes clear in the process of this analysis is that what is meant by "discourse" includes acts by bodies upon other bodies, which act as a supplement for ideological and rhetorical imperatives. As I will demonstrate in the final two chapters of this thesis, these acts are carried out in order to enforce ideological constraints, which violently (re)order bodies according to these constraints. As such, in the process of demonstrating the monstrativity of bodily acts, I will also explain that inasmuch as speech can act, bodily acts can also perform as discourse.

Chapter One: Constituting the (Feminine) Other

> " . . . gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time –an identity instituted *through a stylized repetition of acts*" (Butler "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" 519, her emphasis).

Origins of the Monstrative: J. L. Austin's Performative Speech Act and the Concept of Discursive Practice

The concept of discursive practice or of speech as an act derives from two mid-twentieth century schools of thought, linguistics and sociology, the former more specifically the work of J. L. Austin and the latter of Michel Foucault. Where Austin's intent seemed to be to try to understand what kinds of speech could also be considered performance, Foucault deliberated on language as a social contract, specifically one of power. Judith Butler, an avid pupil of Foucault's, first formulated her theory of gender performativity through an analysis of the Foucauldian conceptualisation of discursive practice, on his theorisation of the power of speech to affect bodies, only giving Austin her full attention in a later book on linguistic violence.[14] However, what Butler borrows from Austin, and powerfully so, is the concept of the performative: an act that constitutes something in its invocation. This thesis concentrates on discursive practice as Austin has conceived it, for two reasons. First, Butler has already mapped out the ways in which Foucault's work has influenced her own thinking; secondly, because this thesis concentrates on lexical choice and the

specific names used for the literary figures it analyses, the detail expressed by the term "performative" as Austin has imagined it, and Butler, following him, allows for a more nuanced understanding of the power of language to affect bodies. The first part of this chapter traces the movement of the performative from linguistics to gender theory, not just because this thesis examines performatives uttered in literary texts, but because Butler's understanding of gender performativity is based on an underlying Foucauldian assumption that discursive practice has a lot to do with identity formation. Thus, in tracking the trajectory from speech acts to gendered acts, this chapter queries how the performance of speech relates to the making of identity, particularly the constitution of the feminine Other.

As such, I form a base in this chapter for monstrative acts, by examining the effect of (speech) acts upon the body of the Other. This assists me in the formulation of this new category by explaining how my acts create you, *as well as* giving an account of how these creational acts also go towards constituting *my* identity. From this basis, I move on to an investigation of other acts that may be considered performative, paying close attention to the act of gazing. Like speech, the gaze is constitutional and is wielded by the One who has power. Using Lacanian psychoanalysis, I examine the constitution of the monstrous self through the metaphor of the artistic method of anamorphosis. The gaze, as I demonstrate through this analysis, is vital to any theorisation of monstrosity, because a figure's monstrousness is incumbent on one's ability to recognise it. When a person, creature, event, or text is unrecognisable, its uncategorisability is what makes it monstrous, which is something I return to time and again in this thesis. What is more, using the metaphor of the anamorphic image, I

demonstrate the contagion of monsters and their ability to make monsters of us.

The Performative: From Speech Acts to Identity Acts

Before I discuss Butler's appropriation of the performative, I wish to highlight a few points about Austinian performativity that are important to this thesis. An Austinian performative is an utterance that performs an act in its very invocation, such as "I promise," which not only states the promise made but creates it. During his attempt to isolate the performative utterance from the constative (an utterance which Austin claims has description as its mission) Austin created a further split between illocutionary and perlocutionary performatives: if an illocutionary utterance performs an act in its expression, such as in "I promise," the perlocutionary act is that which the illocutionary performative ignites. While the illocutionary act of promising is rendered felicitously, as the promise occurs despite the intent of the speaker, the answering acts may not be: the promise may be reneged upon or fulfilled as expected, but its outcome is absolutely unforeseeable despite the best intentions of its speaker. Intention plays an important part in Austin's understanding of linguistic utterances, as his doctrine for the felicitous enactment of performatives makes clear:

> (A. 1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,
> (A. 2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
> (B. 1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
> (B. 2) completely.
> (Γ. 1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons

> having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then *a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves*, and further
> (Γ. 2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently (*How to Do Things with Words* 14-5, my emphases).

However, J. Hillis Miller observes that

> [i]n order for my performative to be felicitous, I must mean what I say, and I must know what I mean and that I mean what I say, with no *arrière pensée*, no unconscious motives or reservations [. . . meaning that a] Freudian notion of the unconscious would pretty well blow Austin's theories out of the water . . . (*Speech Acts in Literature* 29).

Austin's expectation for performative speech acts to be uttered felicitously thus means that they must be uttered by a sovereign "I" always already in control of himself, which

> indirectly assert[s] and reinforce[s] a powerful set of presumptions: the ideal of the male at the top in full possession of his "I," speaking from a position of authority in the right circumstances, with the conventions and the law all already firmly in place, and then women, animals, poets, "low types," actors and actresses, soliloquizers who mutter *sotto voce*, and so on, beneath the men of authority, firmly kept in place (58).

Like the canon which he criticises for its preoccupation with true and false statements, Austin's treatise is phallogocentric: it assumes that one is singular, in complete control of one's destiny and faculties, and in a position to speak as Austin's equal. A doctrine of intention rules out unconscious motives at the same time as reasserting the Law of the Father, while Derrida explains that intention is the "organizing center" of the phallogocentric model of a "free consciousness" it assumes the sovereign "I" to be in ownership and control of (*Limited Inc* 15). In the next chapter, I demonstrate the tragic fissure between intention and outcome in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, but for now, I want to move on to a closer reading of the first set of conventions that Austin lays out

for the felicitous enactment of performative utterances, the reason for which is a prerequisite for appropriateness.

In the first section of the rules he lays out for the "happy" production of performatives (A. 1- B. 2), Austin invokes the particularities of ritual required for felicity, which includes setting out the belief that only certain actors may be deemed appropriate to perform certain utterances felicitously. While intention remains a part of an "inner" self, appropriateness is all about bodies and the outward signs that indicate whether or not someone may enact a performative utterance felicitously. The most famous of his examples in regard to appropriateness is the marriage example, where the utterance, "I do (take you to be my lawfully wedded wife/husband)" performs the act that binds two people together by law. Of course, like all performative utterances, the marriage example requires a little more than just the uttering of these words: it requires the adjudication of a qualified individual to oversee the marriage and at least two witnesses to testify that the marriage has taken place. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Andrew Parker point out that for a marriage to take place felicitously, it also requires "the silence of witness (we don't speak now, we forever hold our peace)," while making explicit the assumption that the "appropriateness" of the two individuals to marry rests on their gender (*Performativity and Performance* 10).

For Austin, the felicity of the performative act hinges on convention, as he writes in his list of rules, "conventional procedure" that has "conventional effect" and which requires conventional utterances (*How to Do Things with Words* 14). However, Austin does not question the existence of convention itself, which is precisely what renders his argument vulnerable to Derrida's

judgement that convention or "'[r]itual' is not a possible occurrence (*éventualité*), but rather, *as* iterability, a structural characteristic of every mark" (*Limited Inc* 15, his emphasis). What Derrida means by this becomes clearer on review of his earlier explanation of the way in which writing works:

> [i]n order for my "written communication" to retain its function as writing, i. e. its readability, it must remain readable despite the absolute disappearance of any receiver, determined in general. My communication must be repeatable – iterable – in the absolute absence of the receiver or of any empirically determinable collectivity of receivers (*Limited Inc* 7).

A signifier must recognisably identify a certain signified, and it must be iterable, or changeable in regard to context and this is as true of the spoken word and performance as it is of writing. The sign (written, enunciated, performed, or embodied) can only be read if it is repeatable and, because it is repeatable, it is susceptible to change in order to make it fit the context in which it is being used. The repetition of the sign means that it is citational, where "[c]itation is supposed to drag its original context implicitly along with it" (Hillis Miller *Speech Acts in Literature* 71), while "[i]teration alters, [and] something new takes its place" (Derrida *Limited Inc* 40).

Marriage is therefore only conventional because it has been cited as such: it is a repetition of acts that have preceded it and may only be felicitous because of its long history of repeated performances. All ritual works in this way; it requires the citation of acts that have happened before. Opponents of gay marriage consistently refer to the conventional aspect of the tradition in regard to its definition as a legal or religious institution, without giving any regard to the repetition of signs that make up convention and which can easily be changed because of the iterable nature of the sign. What is more, Austin's

exclusion by way of appropriateness has ironically produced a performative act: Austin may as well say, "I forbid you." Derrida's reading of Austin in *Limited Inc* is what enabled Butler to use a linguistic term to describe the constitutional effects of gendered acts: because of Derrida's emphasis on the citational and iterable qualities of language, Butler was able to explain the constitution of identity as the repetition of recognisably gendered acts. I will return to Butler's use of the performative briefly, as I want to direct my attention to one more point Austin raises in *How to Do Things with Words* and which initiates Derrida's argument in *Limited Inc* – Austin's contempt for the "non-serious."

In his desire to exemplify "ordinary" language use, Austin writes that "a performative utterance will . . . be *in a peculiar way hollow or void* if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy" where "[l]anguage in such circumstances is . . . in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use – ways which fall under the doctrine of *etiolations* of language" (*How to* 22, his emphases). The act that is spoken on stage is, according to Austin, "hollow or void" as it violates the rules Austin lays out in Γ. 1 and Γ. 2, that is, if one is to take the *actor's* body as that which is responsible for its speech and gesticulation. Intention is thus once more the bone that sticks in Austin's throat, as the intent of the enacted "I" who speaks cannot be felicitously communicated, precisely because that "I" is fictional and does not exist in any "real" sense of the term. Again, this presupposes the existence of a singular subject in complete control of his faculties, as well as calling attention to the suspicion Austin has for the literary, the art that uses words and gestures as "play."

Hillis Miller writes that "[l]iterature is the ghost that haunts *How to Do Things with Words*" (*Speech Acts in Literature* 18), posed by the "what if?" of each of the examples Austin uses to demonstrate his theory of performative speech acts. Naming the literary speech act "parasitic upon its normal use," or an "etiolation" of language (*How to* 22), not only demonstrates a fundamental lack in understanding of the citationality of language[15], but, as Parker and Sedgwick note, add an element of moralism to Austin's rhetoric (*Performance and Performativity* 5). Using the Greek etymology of "parasite," the guest "who eats you out of house and home," Hillis Miller points out that Austin's use of the term "parasitic" leads one to question "whether the parasite may not belong in the home, or come to be at home there, that is, whether literature may not after all be an essential part of the economy of speech acts" (*Speech Acts in Literature* 36). The "parasite" characterises the unwelcome guest *par excellence*, but it also calls for a re-examination of the conceptual boundaries that separate inside from outside, forcing one to ask who or what "belongs" on each side of the fence.

Austin's exclusion of literary speech acts is also quite clearly for fear of mixing the "non-serious" with the very serious business of making certain what it is that I mean to say. The very same fear is echoed in Butler's earliest attempt to explain that the performance of gender can be equated with theatrical performance, where she suggests that intermixing "serious" with "non-serious" acts can lead to trouble for the social actor:

> [i]n the theatre, one can say, "this is just an act," and de-realize the act, make acting into something quite distinct from what is real. Because of this distinction, one can maintain one's sense of reality in the face of this temporary challenge to our existing ontological assumptions about gender arrangements; the various conventions which announce that

> "this is only a play" allows strict lines to be drawn between the performance and life. On the street or in the bus, the act becomes dangerous, if it does, precisely because there are no theatrical conventions to delimit the purely imaginary character of the act, indeed . . . there is no presumption that the act is distinct from reality . . . ("Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" 527).

The existence of this distinction, of course, assumes that the "I" is performing his/her gender "incorrectly," a practice that Butler exemplifies in her contention that gender is comprised of a series of acts rather than an expression of an essential sex. Like Austin, Butler understands that convention is a crucial structural factor for performance, serious or otherwise, but her invocation of the vague "theatrical conventions" that allow one to announce that "this is only a play" also highlights a mistrust for the "non-serious" and a misunderstanding of much of the "serious" intent behind the "non-serious." Furthermore, the "strict lines" she believes mark off the "real" from the imitative are boundaries which are often transgressed in the theatre and which challenge the assumption that the "real" and the imitative can indeed be distinguished.

Butler does, however, make amends for this early suspicion in her later work on drag in *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*, where she considers the serious intent of drag performances and parody. Her radical adaptation in both texts of Austin's central thesis takes the performative from linguistics to feminist theory about the body and discourse, by coupling performativity with its morphological forebear, performance.[16] Butler uses Austinian performativity, which states that language has the ability to create what it names, to demonstrate that the acts that accrue to form gender constitute the "I" that performs them, or, as she writes "within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative – that is,

constituting the identity that it is purported to be" (*Gender Trouble* 34). In short, gender (which is comprised of a series of performances) creates identity. The acts that comprise gender have "been going on before one arrived on the scene . . . much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it; but which requires individual actors to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again" ("Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" 526), meaning that gendered performances are citational in precisely the same manner in which speech acts are. Moreover, Butler's characterisation of the performative as a kind of script for social actors to follow not only conflates the "serious" with the "non-serious" but entirely disproves the philosophical premise that the actor exists before the deed.

That gender is a sustained performance which constitutes identity is most obvious, Butler writes, when it is enacted "incorrectly," that is, when gendered acts are performed by bodies with the "inappropriate" genital reality. Butler applies the theatricality of drag performance to this theory as a way in which to demonstrate the performative elements of gender, but also to establish the critical mass of the "non-serious." She writes that

> [a]s much as [male] drag creates a unified picture of 'woman' . . . it also reveals the distinctness of those aspects of gendered experience which are falsely naturalized as a unity through the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence. *In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself as well as its contingency* (*Gender Trouble* 187, her emphasis).

The "non-serious" act of pretence therefore emphasises the play and imitation always already at the core of identity, where "[a]s imitations which effectively displace the meaning of the original, they [drag acts] imitate the myth of originality itself" (188). The myth of an inner core of gender is so powerfully

believed that Butler contends it is "[o]nly from a self-consciously denaturalized position" that we can "see how the appearance of naturalness is itself constituted" (149).

Butler argues that because of the "serious" intent behind certain drag acts, we should view these acts as parody, where "the parody is *of* the very notion of an original" (188, her emphasis). Parody often takes on a political element, and by reading drag acts as parody, we are obliged to see the seriousness at stake in the enactment of the "non-serious." In an essay on the drag performances of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a worldwide charity of gay nuns in drag, Ian Lucas asserts that parody "can only create a vacuum" and that "[i]t does not replace that which it usurps" ("The Color of his Eyes: Polari and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence" 89). Similarly, Rosi Braidotti quotes "an anonymous ICA artist" as saying: "ironic mimesis is not a critique, it is the mentality of the slave" (qtd. in *Metamorphoses* 81). Butler's view that the mimicry of drag acts make explicit the theatrical elements of gendered identity blows this view out of the water, because she stresses the "unnaturalness" of gender and the presence of the "non-serious" always already at the heart of the "serious." Peggy Phelan's work on spectrality in theatre settings echoes Butler's assessment by pointing out that "theatrical performances . . . stage the phantasmatic becoming indicative. That is as the 'as if' of the phantasm takes a place on a stage larger than the architecture of a single imagination, it carries the remains of a collective reality, however illusionary or material such remains may be" (*Mourning Sex* 16). Even if it is "only" the rehearsal of a desired event, parodic acts permit bodies to perform and thus make actual what is longed for.

The "longed for" in drag acts is not the desire to embody the materiality and lifestyle of the "other" sex (as it is for trans* individuals), but for the cessation of the violence committed against those who perform their gender "incorrectly": by making explicit the absence of an original gender, drag addresses the misinterpretation of "appropriateness" in regard to gender. What is more, Phelan explains that by "stag[ing] the phantasmatic becoming indicative" theatrical performance articulates a promise, one of the many linguistic performatives that Austin exemplifies in *How to Do Things with Words*. That it stages both a promise and a Becoming ("becoming indicative") indicates the "to come" at work in theatrical performance, and, by extension, identity performance. Although Butler's earlier work contends that "theatrical conventions . . . delimit the purely imaginary character of the act" in performances that are consciously fictional, the blurring of conventional lines through the use of metatheatrical devices, the exposure of the mimicry of gender in drag acts, and the promise that such acts create, indicate that there is nothing really to separate the theatrical from the everyday. I will return to this analysis in a later chapter on *M. Butterfly*, but for now, I would like to turn my attention to Butler's focus on the constitutional effects of discourse in the gendering of the Other.

The gendered performances that Butler proposes create the "I" also always include speech acts and the broader effects of speech and writing to create what it categorises. Using the Althusserian notion of interpellation, which states that the address of the "I" by an authority brings him/her into a certain social existence, Butler explains that the "I" comes to exist by virtue of that call:

> [c]onsider the medical interpellation which . . . shifts an infant from an 'it' to a 'she' or a 'he,' and in that naming, the girl is 'girled,' brought into a domain of language and kinship through the interpellation of gender. But that 'girling' of the girl does not end there; on the contrary, that founding interpellation is reiterated by various authorities and throughout various intervals in time" (*Bodies That Matter* 7-8).

Again, the citational quality of the act is emphasised by the interpellative function of the name; moreover, the point that speech acts require an authority to be "appropriately" wielded is introduced by way of Althusserian interpellation (although Butler would already have a sense of authority through Foucault). The reiteration of interpellative language is especially prominent in naming, where, to continue using the example Butler gives above, the girl child is "fixed" not only by her gendered forename and the pronouns used to describe her, but also by the surname she inherits, at birth and in marriage. As Butler writes, the initial interpellation "'It's a girl!' anticipates the arrival of the sanction, 'I pronounce you man and wife'" (232).

The above are examples of the speech acts Butler says form part of the discourse that constitutes women as property; using the anthropological assertion that the exchange of women became the means by which peace could be assured in tribal and feudal settings, Butler proposes that this exchange is echoed by the family name. Butler explains that "[i]nterpellation is an act of speech whose 'content' is neither true nor false: it does not have description as its primary task. Its purpose is to indicate and establish a subject in subjection, to produce its social contours in space and time" (*Excitable Speech* 33-4). If the interpellative function of the name is that it allows the bearer a certain social existence according to that call, then it follows that the name is a speech act that constitutes the bearer as per the description of that name. Family names do not

necessarily describe physical features or bodily performances, but they do perform the function of inclusion within or exclusion from a familial group. Inclusion, however, rests on the patrilineal appropriation of women's bodies and their names, where

> propriety is achieved through having a changeable name, through the exchange of names, which means that the name is never permanent, and that the identity secured through the name is always dependent on the social exigencies of paternity and marriage. Expropriation is thus the condition of identity for women (153).

Performative Speech Acts and Constituting Women as Monstrous

Language therefore not only creates the "I" according to names but it affords the "I" a place in a social hierarchy. Because women do not "own" their names, receiving them instead by being someone's daughter or wife, they are also located by such language, becoming the "occupant of a *place* in symbolic and social relations" (R. W. Connell *Masculinities* 20, her emphasis). It is not only the names by which we come to know and recognise the "I" but the wider discourse that legitimises and sanctions the treatment of women according to a hierarchical gender binary which constitutes them as secondary. Thus, discourse that lays out the foundation of knowing what it means to be a thinking, speaking subject (re)asserts feminine subordination and, to use Butler's phrase, "conceals its genesis" as the natural order of things ("Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" 522). Scholarship concerning Being has, in a masculine act of reproduction, repeated the exaltation of the masculine subject by casting the feminine as a monstrous Other through discourse that performatively generates and confirms her monstrosity. At the birth of Western philosophy, Aristotle posits the human norm as masculine,

where the feminine is "a variation on the main theme of man-kind," making the masculine the norm and the feminine a sign of difference (Braidotti *Nomadic Subjects* 79). The empirical sciences are also "implicitly normative," where, for example, "[b]iologists have set up abnormal cases to elucidate normal behaviour," and, in a move demonstrating the reproduction of masculine rationality, Braidotti writes "psychoanalysis will follow exactly the same logic for mental disorders" (84).

The mental "disorders" diagnosed in the psychoanalytic method devised by Freud were most often "disorders" embodied by women, the same women who suffered under the strictures of nineteenth-century patriarchy. As Luce Irigaray points out, Freud "takes female sexuality as he sees it and accepts it as the *norm*," without attempting to understand (feminine) sexuality and sexual behaviour as a product of socio-historical context (*This Sex Which is Not One* 70, her emphasis). Freud takes feminine repression of sexuality as a given rather than as the result of patriarchal manipulation, as a condition occurring in nature rather than the product of a Symbolic culture that requires the subordination of women to function. "As a result," writes Irigaray, Freud "generally ends up resubmitting women to the dominant discourse of the father, to the law of the father, while silencing their demands" (70), being, as it were, "[h]eir to an 'ideology' that he does not call into question" (72). Such is the effect of living in the privileged position of the masculine, where the norm is taken as a natural state of affairs rather than a sustained politics enforced by patriarchal control. Butler underlines the performative aspect of discourse such as Freud's, where the discourse creates women according to its description, both founding and perpetuating their subservience. What I wish to point out is that this discourse

is also monstrative, because it makes women into living signs of their continued subservience.

Psychoanalysis in particular is monstrative because of its emphasis on embodiment and the repression of unconscious drives: as Braidotti writes "[t]he burden of embodiment is projected on the maternal feminine and immediately erased. This erasure constitutes the subject and founds phallogocentrism, understood as the empire of the One and the objectification of the Other" (*Metamorphoses* 58). Using a Lacanian model of subject formation, which states that in the infant's separation from the mother, he is brought into and made master of the Symbolic order that controls the representation of the body from whence he came, Braidotti, Irigaray and Kristeva indicate that women come to be represented by this primordial mother and thus enact their own disappearance from the Symbolic by their very existence. Braidotti expounds "that it is the specific materiality of the female flesh that is erased by the phallic regime. This primordial erasure is the condition of possibility for the subsequent kidnapping of the Symbolic order by the masculine" (45). By enacting their own disappearance, women are replaced by the sign, "woman," which signifies lack and the abject body, itself simultaneously (and ambiguously) fecund, polluting, and absent. That psychoanalytic discourse represents the feminine in this way is monstrative – it is a case in point of the monstrativity of the Symbolic Order – as it creates women as signs. Thus, women are abjected from the Law of the Father, jettisoned to exist as objects of the economy of speech in a place of abjection, where, as Butler comments "one can be 'put in one's place' by speech, but such a place may be no place" (*Excitable Speech* 4).

To find oneself in abjection is to discover that one is located outside of "the possible circuit of recognition" (5), which Kristeva explains situates the "I" in abjection as well as *forming* her under these conditions (*Powers of Horror* 8). Existing outside the realm of possible categorisation means that naming cannot happen, which is precisely why woman comes to be represented as sign, she is "unrepresentable except as representation" (Schneider 23); she becomes the location where the Symbolic breaks down. To be unnamed, to be unnameable, as I will explain in a later chapter, is to be monstrous. To be unnameable is also the condition of women, who exist as a sign of lack, but also, as Butler and Irigaray both point out, as a sign of exchange:

> [t]he value of a woman always escapes: black continent, hole in the symbolic, breach in discourse . . . It is only in the operation of exchange among women that something of this – something enigmatic, to be sure can be felt. *Woman thus has value only in that she can be exchanged* (Irigaray 176, her emphasis).

Like money, women are the (bodily) signifier for economic exchange among men, ensuring peace between different familial groups while founding and perpetuating the incest taboo.

Furthermore, one's recognisability hinges not only on discourse but on a conceptualisation of the gaze and its constitution of the Symbolic order. While Butler's analyses of the performativity of discourse does not critique the constitutional properties of the gaze, she does point out that the gaze does not exist prior to discourse, where

> to be addressed is not merely to be recognized for what one already is, but to have the very term conferred by which the recognition of existence becomes possible. One comes to "exist" by virtue of this fundamental dependency on the address of the Other. One "exists" not only by virtue of being recognized, but, in a prior sense, by being *recognizable*" (5, her emphasis).

The gaze does thus not exist before discourse, but neither does discourse exist before the gaze. Although Braidotti criticizes Butler's proposal of "a performative notion of gendered identity which fails to account for unconscious processes" (*Metamorphoses* 50), it is Butler's neglect of the constitutional force of the gaze in her conception of the Symbolic that I find most disconcerting, especially given her adaptation of Lacanian psychoanalysis to her theory of performativity. It is for this reason that my analysis will now move on to classical psychoanalytic theory and its application of the gaze to identity formation.

The Constitutional Gaze: The Anamorphic Image and Feminine Lack

The constitutive effects of the gaze are best recorded by Laura Mulvey's seminal essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," which uses Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to explain its affectivity. According to Mulvey, the gaze, which is explicitly cis-male but implicitly white, Western and able-bodied, constructs women's bodies as eroticised objects made for the visual pleasure of men. Using Freud's understanding of scopophilia, the pleasure obtained from viewing, Mulvey explains that looking subjects the Other "to a controlling and curious gaze" (30), which simultaneously objectifies and eroticizes bodies for the viewing pleasure of others. That some bodies are eroticized while others are not is dependent not only on a gendered binary of male film-makers and eroticized female stars, but quite often on a racial binary that subjects bodies marked by race to the same eroticization and

objectification, which, in turn, feminizes them. The gaze is constitutional in precisely the same way that discourse is: perpetuated images of bodies serve as demonstrations of archetypes that do not actually exist in any "real" sense, where images, like words, are part of the Symbolic system that constitutes identities according to what is shown.

Mulvey's essay, however, does not account for self-constitution, the way in which the "I" views him-/herself. Such an explanation can be found in Jacques Lacan's "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," where the infant's perception of the specular image is indicative of the self that the infant feels. Here, the "I" is "precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other" (442). Thus, the self/Other dialectic that Freud inaugurates in his analysis of the infant's separation from the breast becomes, in Lacan, a secondary split, occurring after that of the infant's psyche into the "I" and the gaze. Continuing this analysis in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, Lacan writes that during the mirror stage, the infant's self-perception is divided between his/her specular image and bodily self, resulting in a divide between seeing and feeling, between the inner self and the outer image of the body. We thus identify ourselves as an image, a flat surface enclosed by skin, simultaneously feeling our bodily selves, causing a schism between the interior bodily self and the exterior self-as-image. For Lacan, the dialectic between seeing and feeling constitutes a splitting of the unconscious that arises *before* the child's perceived bodily separation from his/her mother as breast and image, resulting in the interpretation of the self as divided *before* regarding the self as separate from the Other.

Phelan views the trauma of the splitting psyche as an ordeal that is specifically bodily, where "[s]evered from the placenta and cast from the womb, we enter the world as an amputated body whose being will be determined by the very mortality of that body" (*Mourning Sex* 5). The Freudian separation of the "I" from the mother is refigured by Phelan as bodily trauma that forms the "I" at the moment of birth; for Phelan, then, the first Becoming of the "I" is birth itself. In these psychoanalytic readings of the moment of Becoming, the "I's" Becoming is always birthed through the trauma of separation, bodily and psychically. Separation, in turn, creates a chasm between the detached parts, mother from infant, the Other from the "I," seeing from feeling. In the Lacanian split between seeing and feeling, a chasm is formed between the *Umweld*, the "I" that sees itself, and the *Innenweld*, the "I" that feels itself, which, like all binary pairs, creates a hierarchy between the seen self and the felt self. Seeing has become the preferred strategy by which to know the Other; as Braidotti comments, the "scopic drive [is] the paradigm of knowledge," where "'I see' [has become] a synonym of 'I know'" (*Nomadic Subjects* 49). This is because one cannot know the Other by his/her *Innenweld*, simply because we do not have access to their thoughts and inner feelings, nor do we have access to their felt body. Over time, one's specular image comes to represent the way the Other, or the Other's view of one, where one's "I/eye is always 'caught, manipulated, captivated' in the field of vision that precedes [one]. The subject never really sees [one]self, then, except through the gaze of the other" (Diamond qtg. Lacan *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* 152:92).

For Lacan, the dialectic between seeing and feeling and its effects on the formation of the "I" is best illustrated by experiencing the returned gaze of the

anamorphic image. To reiterate, the anamorphic image is a "painting or drawing that is distorted or unrecognizable except when viewed from a particular angle and distance or with a correcting mirror or lens" (Mayer 14). In their very different accounts of the gaze of the anamorphic image, Lacan and Phelan both use what is probably the most famous example of anamorphosis, the image of the skull at the foreground of Hans Holbein the Younger's portrait, *The Ambassadors* (1533). Lacan points out that one does not at first see the skull because it is anamorphic, and that when one does, the result is that one recoils in shock to find oneself the subject of the gaze of an "I"/eye that had, until that point, been unrecognizable. Its unrecognizability is what makes the anamorphic image an apt metaphor for monstrosity. As Daniel L. Collins observes in "Anamorphosis and the Eccentric Observer: Inverted Perspective and the Construction of the Gaze," anamorphosis is "the inverse of classical perspective in which rays emanating from a (usually) 'disembodied' eye define the space of the painting, ultimately converging at one or more vanishing points" (75). Classical perspective therefore assumes that the image is the object of the controlled gaze of a subject who stands directly in front of it. Anamorphosis inverts this assumption by "invading the space of the viewer" (75), by means of

> cast[ing] the observer in an active role in which the conventional relationship to the object of vision is literally thrown 'off-center'. To observe anamorphic images, one must . . . sacrifice a centric vantage point for the possibility of catching a glimpse of the uncanny from a position off-axis (73).

Shifting one's position to view the anamorphic image literally changes one's point of view of the object which can only be recognised by altering the relationship of subject and object.

Phelan remarks of *The Ambassadors* that "[t]o look at the men, we must overlook the skull . . . [and t]o look at the skull, we must lose the men" (*Mourning Sex* 123): maintaining one's status as observer of the painting from the viewpoint of classical perspective allows one to regard the two young men as recognisable subjects of the painting, while the skull in the foreground is unrecognisable as a skull. When one moves to the side of the painting, the skull becomes recognisable, but the position of the two men as central figures changes inasmuch as the position of the viewer does. What the viewer's shift in position entails is that "certain associations or body-felt realities registered by the observer have the potential of shifting the object of exchange to the identity of the observer. (One could argue in such cases that the observer, not the object, is undergoing change –in a phrase, coming into being.)" (Collins 75). What Collins parenthesises is what is most compelling about his essay, because it uncovers the performative ability of the anamorphic image to (re)create not just the sovereign subject's position in relation to the Other, but who the sovereign subject thinks he is.[17] The anamorphic image constitutes the sovereign "I" by its returned gaze.

This reconstitution is not merely performative, but is monstrative, because of its ability to mutate the viewer into what he is viewing. The anamorphic image is, at first, unrecognisable, and is thus categorised as unrepresentable. On changing his viewpoint in order to see the anamorphic image, the sovereign subject is dis-located from his privileged position and made to feel the uncanniness of being categorised by misrecognition. Donning the guise of the misrecognised, the viewer becomes the anamorphic image as he exchanges his privileged identity position for the ability to see through the Other's eyes. What

this trajectory would suggest is that the process of viewing the anamorphic image from the "correct" angle mutates the observer into the object that he views by virtue of positioning and that this repositioning causes monstrosity to spread contagiously from the anamorphic image to the viewer. Because he has to actively change his position, effectively stepping into the Other's place, the viewer feels the abjection of being Other to himself. What becomes apparent during this physical act of repositioning is that the performativity of the gaze, like that of discourse, is dependent on the position of the one doing the gazing.

In anamorphosis, the gaze that constitutes the anamorphic image constitutes it according to the misrecognition of its physical attributes: it is only in the physical act of repositioning one's viewpoint that the anamorphic image can be understood. There can be no simultaneous appraisal and recognition between the sovereign subject and the anamorphic image because, as Lacan explains, "[i]n so far as I am under the gaze . . . I no longer see the eye that looks at me and, if I see the eye, the gaze disappears" (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 84). To see the eyes of the skull in Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, one must reposition oneself so that one is no longer within the trajectory of the skull's gaze; to stand before the skull and not see it gives one "the sense of 'feeling seeing, like feeling the gaze of the other without seeing the other's eyes.'" (Diamond qtg. Ned Lukacher "Anamorphic Stuff: Shakespeare, Catharsis, Lacan" 155:876). The uncanniness associated with "feeling seeing . . . without seeing the other's eyes" comes precisely because of the constituting subject's misrecognition of the anamorphic image, where misrecognition literally blinds the viewer from seeing what is right before him.

In her examination of anamorphosis and contemporary theatre, Elin Diamond explains that the anamorphic image "stands for the terror of the unseen in the seen" (163). If the empirical sciences take observation as the foundation for knowledge, then it stands to reason that seeing has become the basis for knowing the Other; however, because the only information we receive of the Other is of the surface of their body and the outward gestures that they perform, what we see is not necessarily what we get. The disjointedness between outer embodiment and inner "truth" is dramatically played out by the physical (re)positioning that is required to "correctly" view the anamorphic image: facing the anamorphic image head-on, one sees it but does not see it, as one sees the Other but does not see her, resulting in the terror of the unknown and the terror of being gazed at by the unknown. Monsters are, by definition, the unknown; they are categorised as "monster" because of their inability to be categorised within a known taxonomic group, and they, like the anamorphic image, are "unseen" by the subject that stands before them in a dichotomous, hierarchical relation.

The "terror of the unseen in the seen" is similarly described by Derrida in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, where he illustrates the alterity of the Other's gaze as he stands before his cat, who he says "has its point of view regarding me [Derrida]. The point of view of the absolute other, and nothing will have ever given me more food for thinking than this absolute alterity of the neighbor or of the next(-door) than these moments when I see myself naked under the gaze of a cat" (11). What is unseen and therefore unknown is *what* the Other sees when it looks at one; its gaze is "bottomless" (12) because one's constitution by this gaze remains unvoiced. What anamorphosis results in is a detachment in the

viewer between seeing and feeling, as with the infant in a Lacanian model of the mirror stage. The consequence of this split, then, is not that the viewer conceives of his felt self as disconnected from his specular self, but that he imagines a monstrous Other who, instead of his specular "I" returning his sovereign gaze, holds him under its surveillance and its judgement, with the viewer all the while unable to see the eyes that constitute him according to its gaze. In effect, the inability to see the anamorphic image and to simultaneously feel its gaze also destabilizes the sovereign subject's position by widening the fissure between the selves of the subject's own psyche – it pitches and tosses the subject between the seeing "I" and the feeling "I," destabilizing the very notion of a singular subject in control of his consciousness.

This destabilization bears two effects: the reproduction of the anamorphic image's monstrosity and the creation of the "I"'s self-regulation. The monstrosity of the anamorphic image is reproduced in the viewer because its gaze destabilizes the viewer's sovereignty and singularity, a viewer who cannot know *how* his gaze is being returned. Monstrosity is thus, in a sense, contagious, as it moves from the misrecognised object to the destabilized subject through the gaze: the returned gaze of the anamorphic image is monstrative. The returned gaze, meanwhile, also creates self-regulatory behaviour in the "I." Because the viewer cannot see from whence the gaze arrives, the sensation of being watched by unseen eyes becomes the staple of the "I"'s condition. The perception of being under constant surveillance causes the "I" to order his behaviour according to the social script, becoming his own monitoring presence and regulatory force. This self-regulatory Becoming that takes hold of the "I" is simultaneously a monstrative force because it makes the

"I" monstrous to himself, as it is his monstrosity that requires decoding for him to be recognisable. As such, by viewing the anamorphic image, the sovereign, singular subject comes to live the uninhabitable status of the Other, becoming anomalous, Other to himself, self-regulatory, and thus, a sign of Otherness, where "Other" is the label we ascribe to the uncategorisable.

Because the anamorphic image is a powerful metaphor for Otherness, it is also decidedly generative for the critique of psychoanalytic readings of the feminine. Diamond writes that the anamorphic image is "both the blot in the visual field, and . . . the Mother's lack – an intolerable sight" (163). As "a blot in the visual field," the anamorphic image requires the displacement of the sovereign subject to be seen "correctly," at the same time as it represents lack by making a hole in the painting that draws the eye/"I" away from the vanishing point in classical perspective. For Diamond, the anamorphic image "cannot be cleared" by catharsis because it is "inseparable from anxiety," the anxiety of being seen without seeing the gazer's eyes (155), while for Ned Lukacher, catharsis occurs because the anamorphic image "clarifies the disorder, the illness that inheres within intellectual inaccuracy" (qtd. in Diamond 155: 869-70). As lack or cavity, as "hollow[ness] or void," the anamorphic image bears a compelling relation to the body, particularly the feminine body (Austin 22). The feminine, as I highlighted earlier, represents lack in classical psychoanalysis because of her inability to possess the phallus, for male castration anxiety when faced with female genitalia, and because of the physical "lack" of the male member on women's bodies.

Phelan's *Mourning Sex* centres itself around bodily cavities; as wounds that tear bodily boundaries or as openings that comprise body parts, these cavities

allow us to glimpse inside the body, to view the unrepresentable. Because of her physiology and her potential for motherhood, the feminine has come to represent the possibility of bodily pollution by her symbolic relation to holes and fissures in the body, as well as supplementing "the voracious maw, the mysterious black hole that signifies female genitalia which threatens to give birth to equally horrific offspring as well as threatening to incorporate everything in its path" (Barbara Creed *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* 27). Creed writes that

> [i]f we accept Freud's interpretation that the 'Medusa's head takes the place of a representation of the female genitals', we can see that the Medusan myth is mediated by a narrative about the difference of female sexuality as a difference which is grounded in monstrousness and which invokes castration anxiety in the male spectator (qtg. Freud "Medusa's Head" 2:274).

Figured as a hole that distracts the viewer from the vanishing point, the anamorphic image comes to symbolize psychoanalytic lack. However, the phallogocentric model already favours the vanishing point as an apt metaphor for femininity: the vanishing point is a hole that does not merely exist in classical perspective, but is what founds it in the first instance and what allows the artist to create the illusion of depth. The viewer, taking the privileged position of standing before the painting, thus banishes the maternal feminine by casting her as vanishing point. The vanishing point, in turn, signifies femininity by being a hole in the painting that simultaneously escapes the Symbolic order (it is a reference only to itself) while allowing the Symbolic to be created in the first place (the vanishing point creates the illusion of depth). Anamorphosis, meanwhile, only represents the gaping, black hole of feminine lack from a centric vantage point; changing one's position so that one stands in solidarity

with the feminine (represented by the misrecognised anamorphic image) is the only way to cease seeing the feminine as lack.

Becoming-monster: Destabilizing the Sovereign "I"

Because it provokes a sense of empathy within the seeing "I," the anamorphic image cannot be said to be monstrative but, instead, incites the "I's" Becoming-monster. To recapitulate, Becoming differs from the monstrative through the process of mutating the "I" into what the Other already is, through the contagion of the Other's monstrosity, where the monstrative is a force that can only be wielded by an authoritative "I" who dichotomises itself from the Other it makes Other. As the anamorphic image can hardly be said to be an authority, being, as it were, a metaphor for the abject Other, it instead spreads its Otherness through the "I's" sympathy. The "I" has sympathy for this abject Other, because he must, quite literally, position himself in the Other's place in order to see her. The anamorphic image therefore inaugurates the destabilization of the sovereign "I" "by sabotaging the nest of negativity on which it erects itself. What is affirmed in the process is the impersonal voice of a self that is not One, but rather a cluster of multiple [B]ecomings" (Braidotti *Metamorphoses* 94). The shift in view-point inaugurated by anamorphosis gives the shaken subject the lived experience of abjection, thus recreating his self-view and his view of the world. Obtaining the self-knowledge of the "I" is a form of Becoming (73), where "Becoming is the actualization of the immanent encounter between subjects, entities and forces which are apt mutually to affect and exchange parts of each other in a creative and non-invidious manner" (68): in his encounter with the anamorphic image, the subject is initiated into a

process of Becoming, by the very questioning of his status as subject. This is precisely why, like Braidotti, I find the paradigm of monstrosity in identity formation considerably more positive than the psychoanalytic/philosophical figuration of masculine subjectivity having to rest on the denigration and disappearance of the feminine: Becoming, while certainly traumatic (as all births are), allows for infinite possibilities of expression that are not hinged on categorisation and which permits the existence of the unclassifiable without insisting on its disappearance.

Like monsters, the feminine is commanded by the Symbolic order to vanish, to leave the domain of the Symbolic, which is why the feminine represents only itself: it exists only as sign. The monstrative is the process by which the body of the Other is made to exist *as a sign of* its Otherness, but is a process that hinges upon the sovereignty of the subject who wields it. The problem, however, with making monsters in this fashion is that the subject's sovereignty is threatened by the possibility that this monstrosity is catching. From the viewpoint of the anamorphic image, from the position of the Other, this is a positive process, because the "I's" sovereignty has resulted in the violent subjugation of the Other. The destabilization of sovereign subjectivity by the (continued) existence of monsters means that we *must* view monsters, as unreadable as they may be, as positive influences that mutate us into Becoming-monster. The consequence of our contact with monsters will always be traumatic and may not necessarily result in positive effects, but Becoming is never an end in itself, it is always a process that, like the monster, is yet to come.

Chapter Two: Birthing Monsters

Introduction: The Monstrativity of Knowing (the Other)

In the previous chapter, I traced the trajectory of the performative from speech acts to gendered identity, and, in so doing, concluded that Butler's application of performativity to gender theory afforded its further use by other theorists to account for the affectivity of human acts. Butler's use of the performative gave later scholars an insight into ways of performing Being, which transformed the category from stable immutability to potentially radical ways of living. It is thus the foundation upon which I animate my category of the monstrative, the force that makes the Other a sign, which I develop in this chapter. The aim of this chapter, then, is to examine performative identity practices by analysing the creation of the identities of fictional monsters, those of the Creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Grendel and his Mother in the Old English poem, *Beowulf*;[18] in this chapter I ask what it is that makes these creatures monstrous and why it is, and by whom, that we are persuaded to read them this way. Monstrosity is a pragmatic paradigm against which to evaluate performative identity practices because its concept directly indicates the perceived binary between normal and abnormal, natural and artificial, and, as such, implies a regimented structure for "normal" identities – the very antithesis of what Butler argues in her work on gendered identity formation.

Monstrosity occurs at any point in which boundaries are drawn to separate the known from the unknown and is thus emblematic not just of

human identity formation but of the myriad ways we categorise reality. Conceptualising the ways in which knowledge is formed and disseminated assists this theorisation of monstrous identity by demonstrating the ways in which knowledge affords creation, in this case, the creation of identity. If we create our identities and the identities of others through the sedimented acts done by and to bodies, it is through the collected knowledge of *how* to act (as well as who can act, when they should act and where to act) that creation can come about at all. Using Austin and Butler as examples, I indicate the two ways that this knowledge ensues, explaining how both occurrences can be understood as monstrous. I will then move on to monstrous births, "real"[19] and literary, examining the relationship between bodily monstrosity and the formation of monstrous identity. Because of the nature of birth, I will also examine the perceived origin of these monstrous babies – the body of the mother, who is herself monstrous. This, in turn, leads me to a reading of the monstrosity of motherhood, by discussing the ways monstrosity haunts the pregnant body and, using this body as a metaphor, the creative imagination. From this, I shall return to knowledge and how it helps constitute monstrous identity.

Parasitism, Etiolation, Mutation: Writing and Dissemination

Butler's theory of gender performativity can be viewed as a monstrosity, in that she "misapplies" its felicitous use as outlined by Austin in *How to Do Things with Words*, using it in such a way that Austin had not intended. As I highlighted in the previous chapter, Austin is consumed with intention and its effect on performative utterances. While it has been demonstrated that

intention is irrelevant to the performance of a felicitous speech act,[20] it is crucial to a full understanding of monstrosity because it has everything to do with creation: no matter our intentions, we cannot know the outcome of our creations, including the repeated creation of identity acts. Because Butler uses the performative in a way that it was not intended, it can be said to be "parasitic" upon its proposed use: as a "misapplication" of Austin's intended use for the performative, Butler's theory of performative gender is an "etiolation" of Austin's speech act and can be characterised in this way by the very criteria that Austin has laid out for the successful production of performative speech acts. As Anders M Gullestad points out "literary scholars who want to apply these tools [of Austin's] to their own object of research encounter a serious problem: Austin specifically forbids them from doing so" (301). If Austin feels so strongly about the "misuse" of the performative by literary criticism, imagine his dismay if he were to find its later use by a scholar who, at least in her early work, seems uninclined towards studying linguistics at all.[21] Parasites such as Butler's application of the performative are dangerous, not merely because theories of gender performativity threaten patriarchal authority, but because its transgression also threatens its "host" to the point of extinction. Parasites in the plant and animal kingdoms feed off their hosts' blood or food supply, where their bodies imbibe so much of the "essence" of their host that it eventually becomes difficult to tell the host and the parasite apart. In his essay on Austin's use of "parasite," Gullestad explains succinctly the reasons for why it is that Austin uses such a negative term to describe the relationship between the ordinary, "serious" use of language in philosophy, and the "non-seriousness" of literature.

Gullestad draws one's attention to the original meaning of "parasite," which, as J Hillis Miller concluded in an earlier work,[22] was used to describe a human being, not a plant or animal. Hillis Miller writes that the etymology of "parasite" is from the Greek meaning "beside the grain," where the term referred to the arrival of an uninvited guest who shared one's bread (*Speech Acts in Literature* 36). Therefore, writes Gullestad, the parasite is someone who "was originally viewed positively [and who] over time became known as the opposite, namely a guest, often of the uninvited sort, out to acquire a free dinner" (305). Thus, "it was only after the natural sciences of the early nineteenth century adopted the term that it became applied to sponging animals and insects," which means that "it is not the human parasite which was modelled on the animal one, but the other way round" (305-6). The purpose of Gullestad's investigation is to reinterpret Austin's use of "parasite" as a means by which to transcend its negative connotations, and he does so both by an etymological reading and a biological one. He explains that the relationship between parasite and host in nature is far more complex than the former merely feeding off the latter, an "etiolation" of the host, as it were. Instead, using the work of microbiologist, Luis P. Villarreal, Gullestad contends that a complex understanding of the relationship between host and parasite leads one to find very little difference between this relationship and the one between a mother and the child developing in utero:

> [m]ammals, being viviparous, pose an interesting immunological dilemma. They have highly adaptive immune systems that fail to recognize their own allogeneic embryos. In a sense, mammalian embryos resemble parasites that must suppress their mother's immune recognition systems to survive (Villarreal "On Viruses, Sex, and Motherhood" qtd. in Gullestad 306:859).

While Gullestad draws the connection between parasites and human pregnancy as a way in which to reinterpret the Austinian parasite as a positive force that adds to its host's Becoming, his observations are useful for this analysis not only because they provide a workable model of the monstrative but because this model relies on a reading of feminine (re)production to work. Furthermore, the parasite's propensity to blur the lines between itself and the host by imbibing the host's food or blood supply, as well as through its proclivity to control certain physiological features of its host (such as its immune system), allows for a deconstructive reading of the originality, authenticity, and identity of knowledge and its dissemination. Knowledge is necessarily parasitic; it depends upon earlier writing for it to qualify as knowledge, and all writing, as Derrida's *Limited Inc* demonstrates, requires the ability to be argued with, reshaped, reorganised, and, as it were, to be host to the parasite that is further scholarship. Derrida writes that "each species" of writing[23] "constitutes its own identity only by incorporating other identities –by contamination, parasitism, grafts, organ transplants, incorporations" ("Some Statements and Truisms" 66).[24] He follows this by stating "you can imagine what kinds of monsters these combinatory operations must give birth, considering the fact that these theories incorporate opposing theorems, which have themselves incorporated other ones" (67).

Taken in this sense, Butler's reshaping of the performative is parasitic upon the very tradition it uses, thereby "contaminating" the original thesis and changing its meaning. For many scholars, performativity means the accrual of substance through gendered acts before it ever means using speech as action[25] while Austin's coinage of the term ironically[26] relies on its morphological

predecessor, performance, to explain itself as action, which is also partly why Butler's early work was often accused of using the term incorrectly.[27] The monstrosity of the verbs "to act" and "to perform" is therefore in one's inability to be sure of whether or not the act that is taking place is serious or not, where its "non-serious" context is "parasitic" on its "serious" use, causing intent to be lost (as if we could ever be sure of its sentiment in the first place). Moreover, the parasite is itself performative, because it constitutes a change of meaning, a mutation, as it were. The monstrosity of mutants is in their etymological meaning: coming from the Latin *mutare*, meaning "to change," they are monstrous because they exist between categories, because they change and refuse to remain in their "original" form. Mutation is of course necessary for the purpose of the evolution and continued survival of any species.[28] However, as well as being utterly necessary, mutation is also dangerous. Derrida describes Critical Theory as a "mutation," which, "as enriching and as positive as it may be, remains dangerous" ("Some Statements and Truisms" 83). The mutant is dangerous because we do not know what changes will take place: Austin, for example, could not control the mutation of performativity any more than he could control the rules or doctrines by which he thought the performative utterance should abide. Birth and mutation are not mutually exclusive, as Derrida suggests in his statement that combinatory scholarship gives birth to monsters, but are, in fact, phenomena that are both found in the pregnant body, where "[t]he mutable nature of women's bodies is made most clear in pregnancy" (Creed *The Monstrous-Feminine* 50). Gullestad explains that "parasites do not only have to evolve if they want to stay ahead, they can also be seen as forcing their hosts to do the same" (Gullestad 309); similarly, during

pregnancy, the foetus adapts its mother's body into a habitable environment, one which nurtures and supports the foetus' growth.

Mutation can be connected to Austin's invocation of "etiolated" speech acts in that it is not merely that language *is* sickly or bleached in its theatrical use[29] but that the language becomes altered or mutated by this (mis)use, where it is *made to become* pale or sickly looking, at least as Austin understands it. Like parasitism, the "etiolation" of performative utterances by their theatrical use is itself performative, because something is done to language to make it change – for Austin it is the "non-seriousness" of the imitating act that "etiolates" the original. As I highlighted in the previous chapter, Derrida has observed that all language is thus "etiolated" because of its iterable and citational nature, because it is necessarily repeatable in order for it to work as language. Iterability and mutation share the ability to change something from its original form, where iterability allows a mutation of meaning. Bennett and Royle exemplify this when they indicate that even the meaning of "monster" has mutated (*Literature, Criticism and Theory* 259): while monstrous figures in literature and film may allude to the etymology of "monster," the noun now also describes "any imaginary creature that is large, ugly, and frightening," as something or someone "malformed," or "[a] person of repulsively unnatural character, or exhibiting such extreme cruelty or wickedness as to appear inhuman" (*OED*).

An etiolated speech act, an act that is "parasitic upon its normal use" (Austin 22), is citational, but is also iterable because it uses "the same words in a radical new context" (Hillis Miller 71): certainly, Butler's use of the performative to explain how gendered acts form identity drastically changes the

context of Austin's theory. However, no new knowledge would exist if it were not for the radical reapplication or "misapplication" of earlier scholarship: its mutation is necessary for knowledge to grow, in the same way that the mutation of language is necessary for its continued survival. In this sense, mutability, the propensity to change and to adapt, is necessary for the existence and the continuity of both language and knowledge, inasmuch as it is for the continuation of the species: if mothers' bodies were not mutable, if their skin were not able to stretch and house their infant, none of us would be here to utter our "I". As Derrida comments: "[t]his teratology is our normality" ("Some Statements and Truisms" 67). Because it is a common feature of scholarship, "parasitism" or mutation is referred to by Derrida as a "normal monstrosity," which he distinguishes from "monstrous monstrosities" (79). If Butler's use of the performative, as a parasitism or mutation of Austin's original thesis, is a "normal monstrosity," Austin's conception of the performative utterance can be understood to be a "monstrous monstrosity," that which Derrida names the "event."

Monstrous Monstrosities: Derrida's "Event" and the Metaphor of Birth

As a theory that conceptualises speech *as* action,[30] Austin's performative speech act is already monstrous as its formulation seemed at first to be entirely original (Hillis Miller 26). Austin's performative utterance is an example of what Derrida would refer to as an "event" or break in history that ushers into being something entirely new, an unexpected birth.[31] J. Hillis Miller

explains that the performative speech act is an event " . . . in the same way that Kant's third *Critique* was" (26), while Nicholas Royle considers "9/11", the bombing of New York's World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11th, 2001, as an event, writing that its uncanniness had to do with what was "*already happening* as well as the fear or dread of what may be to come" (*The Uncanny* viii, his emphasis). The event is something that seems to arrive from nowhere, and is monstrous because it cannot be known or takes the form of the unknowable. Derrida writes that "[a] monstrosity can only be 'mis-known' (*méconnue*), that is, unrecognized and misunderstood. It can only be recognized afterwards, when it has become normal or the norm" ("Some Statements and Truisms" 79). What he means by this is that the event, the break with history, cannot be immediately assimilated into knowledge as it is utterly alien and therefore uncategorisable. To be uncategorisable means to be unknown. If the monstrous constitutes the unknown, then it stands to reason that the unknown also constitutes the monstrous. The unknown, the strange, the foreign are all monstrous because "[s]trangers are almost always other to each other" and cannot be assimilated into a category until they are known and understood (Richard Kearney *Strangers, Gods and Monsters* 3). Monstrosity is, to Derrida, a "formless form," something that has material form but which eludes the Symbolic ("Some Statements and Truisms" 80). Thus 'monster' becomes a signifier in which to classify the unknown, the as yet uncategorisable.[32]

Until Austin's performative could be "domesticated" by further philosophers and theorists, it remained unknowable and monstrous. The monstrosity of canonical works such as *How to Do Things with Words* or Kant's Third *Critique* is described by Harold Bloom as a "strangeness, a mode of

originality that either cannot be assimilated, or that so assimilates us that we cease to see it as strange" (qtd. in Royle *The Uncanny* 35:3). *How to Do Things with Words* is strange and original because it was the first to point out the propensity for language to do things and to do things in ways that affect bodies and the social world at large. Austin gives birth to the performative in *How to Do Things with Words*; it is an event "that makes a decisive break in history" (Hillis Miller 26), and it is strange because it forces us to re-view an already established category, which, in this case, is the preconceived binary between speech and action. The "event" is constituted as such because it "cannot depend on pre-existing conventions, laws, rights, justifications, and formulations, however much it characteristically attempts to claim that it does," precisely because it is anomalous and unknowable (26-7).[33] This also means that the monster, as something unknowable, is by its very definition lawless or a law unto itself: as an unknown entity, it arrives at the borders of our understanding without rules or laws to help us know how it should be governed, or even if it should be governed at all. We do not know how to act on the arrival of the monster with a lack of knowledge that is dramatically played out by texts that incorporate monsters in their narratives, and which both *Beowulf* and *Frankenstein* demonstrate.

That Bloom characterises the event of canonical works as "a mode of originality that either cannot be assimilated, or that so assimilates us that we cease to see it as strange" is significant in that his statement implies the process of the "I's" Becoming-monster, which is the hazard involved in creating monstrous Others in the first instance: their monstrosity is contagious. Original works, the event, the monstrous Other, either cannot be integrated into the

existing system or change the system itself: monsters are not domesticated, *they domesticate us*. Monsters do not change to fit the status quo, the status quo itself is destabilized to make room for the monster. The change that the event, the monster, inaugurates is a Becoming: it is a performative force that mutates the system into a habitable environment for the monstrous Other, so that the Other ceases to be Other. Otherness thus becomes the staple of the "I" who now finds himself other to himself. Deleuze characterises the literary event as "minor literature" that stands "in a parasitic relation to major language," or the status quo, the Law of the Father, phallogocentrism, heteronormativity, or the favouring of art forms that express privilege by typifying it as the norm (Gullestad 314). Gullestad notes that by "standing in a parasitic relation to major language, the minor forces it into a state of continual Becoming," where "exactly what sorts of creative Becomings these agents will set in motion cannot be told in advance," just as a mother cannot precisely know how her child will look or what health issues s/he may have in later life (314-5).[34]

I use the birth metaphor because the "event" in Derrida's writing is characterised by an arrival, as "who or what comes to the shore or turns up at the door" or, as a birth (Royle *Jacques Derrida* 111). In the closing sentences of "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," the paper that introduced the world to deconstruction, Derrida writes in a startlingly self-reflexive manner of the "event" this very paper constitutes, calling it the "as yet unnameable which is proclaiming itself and which can do so, as is necessary whenever a birth is in the offing, only under the species of the nonspecies, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity" (370). The event, the break with history, is here described as the "nonspecies," an uncategorisable,

"as yet unnameable" force of change. The "as yet unnameable" is such because it is also the as yet unknowable, demonstrating that to name something is to know it.[35] The "event" is characterised as a birth because it is an arrival of something entirely new, in the same way that birth is the arrival of a new individual (animal or human). Derrida chooses to regard deconstruction in this way, emphasising "the operations of childbearing" by referring to the "event" as "*conception*, *formation*, *gestation*, and *labor*" (370, his emphases).

It is not, however, purely as birth that the "event" is characterised; Derrida refers to this birth as specifically monstrous. This birth is monstrous first because the "event" is anomalous and thus has "monster" as its signifier to indicate this indecipherability. Secondly, it is monstrous because of its anomalousness, which means that the "event" is unpredictable. This unpredictability is precisely the reason why Austin could not control the performative, either by formulating rules for its felicitous performance or for the radical ways in which it was later used. The event's unpredictability stems from *monstrum*, meaning "to demonstrate or to portend" (*OED*), and which gives us the third reason for its characterisation as a monstrous birth, in that it presages something that is yet to come. The meanings of omens and portents are notoriously difficult to predict and their implications are usually only defined in their aftermath. If birth is the arrival of a new entity, monstrous birth signifies a further arrival of something that is entirely unpredictable, as Royle's earlier quote suggests (*The Uncanny* viii). To grasp the bodily implications of such a fear and its effect on the feminine, it is necessary to turn to literal and literary monstrous births to illustrate the ways these arrivals have been understood as precursors of certain but unknown misfortune, and how

mothers (however they may be constituted) are always held responsible for the existence of monsters.

Monstrous Birth: Arrivals from the Womb

Alexandra Walsham writes that during England's Early Modern period,[36] births that were considered monstrous "were widely acknowledged to be providential tokens of future misfortune" (*Providence in Early Modern England* 167). Monstrous births were births where the (human or animal) foetus was malformed in some way so as to appear "unnatural" next to a "normal" offspring (such as Siamese twins, which were traditionally considered abnormalities), or were the "incorrect" issue of the mother, as in the case of Mary Toft, a Surrey woman who in the early eighteenth-century was said to have given birth to seventeen rabbits.[37] Walsham writes that in Early Modern England these births were considered "aberrations in the natural order [that] literally incarnated the spiritual chaos and anarchy created by sin" (169), citing various examples of these prophetic births and their "results" from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. She points out that the practice of reading monstrous births and other prodigious "signs" as tools of divination stemmed from a combination of "superficially inconsistent intellectual traditions" (169), including Biblical texts that mention signs heralding the apocalypse, the "series of prodigies observed prior to the siege of Jerusalem" in AD 70,[38] writings from the Classical tradition,[39] and various other influences. What is worth emphasising at this juncture is that most of these so-called "signs" heralded the arrival of something to be treated with fear and suspicion, as their existence was perceived as a warning of worse to come, hence one of the routes of *monstrum*: *monere*, "to

warn" (*OED*). In Early Modern England, this warning was understood to be from God, where "[t]hese unsightly spectacles unveiled His glory no less than perfect human specimens," being understood as both Godly creations and his punishment for sinful behaviour (194-5).

Walsham writes that this divine justice was not necessarily meted out to the parents of a monstrous child for immoral behaviour, but as a warning for entire communities to cease their sinful ways (198-9). In *Signs and Portents: Monstrous Births from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment*, Dudley Wilson agrees with this line of thinking, where he notes that in many Renaissance ballads[40] "the lack of personal responsibility of the parents for the monstrosity of their offspring may . . . be emphasised" (43) as these ballads served as warnings for whole communities rather than just their parents, hence their popular form. If, however, the child's parents were suspected of infelicities, they were held accountable for bringing monstrosities into the world, where "physical malformity was [regarded as] the outward manifestation of private immorality" (Walsham 201). Monstrous births were especially linked to sexual infelicities, given the logic of reproduction, and their existence has been mostly blamed on the apparent sexual misconduct of mothers. Using an extract from an Early Modern text, *The forme and shape of a Monstrous child, borne at Maydstone in Kent* (1568), Dudley Wilson explains that the child's monstrosity is quite clearly linked to its mother's promiscuity, as she is described as "being unmaryed" and having "played the naughty packe" (qtd. in Dudley Wilson 46). He writes, however, that "[e]ven in this instance . . . the call to penitence is directed towards England and its people in general, although in the prose introduction, a more precise accusation is implied" (47).

Even if the above text demonstrates the warning of monstrosity to whole communities, the mother becomes a part of that demonstration, along with her monstrous child: it is already what is happening that we must be fearful of as well as what may be to come. Rosi Braidotti writes that "[t]heories of the conception of monsters are at times extreme versions of the deep-seated anxiety that surrounds the issue of women's maternal power of procreation in a patriarchal society" (qtd. in Betterton 82-3:139), and Rosemary Betterton adds that "[m]onstrous births could be linked to women's sexual excess or perversion, the mixing of different sperm or different races, intercourse during menstruation, eating forbidden food, or demonic possession – and in a modern twist to the theme, to toxic or genetic damage" (83). Dudley Wilson cites a sixteenth-century text by the surgeon Ambroise Paré, *Des monstres et prodiges* (1573), for the causes of monstrosity, which are as follows:

> The first is the glory of God. The second his anger. The third too great a quantity of semen. The fourth too small a quantity. The fifth is the imagination. The sixth the tightness or smallness of the womb. The seventh the indecorous position of the mother, as when, being pregnant, she sits too long with her thighs crossed or squeezed against her belly. The eighth, because of a fall or blows directed against the belly of the pregnant mother. The ninth, because of hereditary or accidental illness. The tenth, because of the decay or corruption of seminal fluid. The eleventh, because of the mixing or mingling of the semen. The twelfth, because of trickeries of malignant tavern rogues. The thirteenth, because of Demons or Devils (qtd. and trans. by Wilson 68).

It is interesting to note that of the thirteen reasons for monstrous births that Paré explicates, three have supernatural causes, four can be attributed to the child's father, and five to the mother, which includes the "mixing or mingling of the semen," which is something that could only be attributed to the mother's sexual infelicities. In fact, multiple births were regarded as almost monstrous,

as Dudley Wilson explains, where even twins "were generally thought to be the result of two impregnations" (97). Many of Paré's explanations for monstrous birth are physical and some even have their basis in fact, but Dudley Wilson notes that Paré is also interested in maternal imprinting, which is "[a]n age old belief, which . . . alleges that a pregnant woman's imagination, frights, or longings can be transferred to her unborn child, thereby imprinting the child with characteristic marks or deformities" (Philip K. Wilson 1-2). Philip K. Wilson states that "[m]any mothers of children with physical or mental disabilities continue to suffer life-long guilt and blame," as "[c]learly anxiety and hope for the effects of maternal imprinting survive in our culture, albeit under the guise of prenatal care," thereby supporting Betterton's argument that, in either occasion, if it is not the result of divine will, then mothers are to blame for bringing monsters into the world (17). Creed also connects imprinting to monstrous birth in David Cronenberg's *The Brood* (1979), where monstrous children are born of their mother's anger (*The Monstrous-Feminine* 45).

That mothers are responsible for the creation of monsters can be plainly seen in the cases of *Frankenstein* and *Beowulf*: while one text is an Old English epic and the other a Gothic novel from the late Romantic period, both are texts that deal with monstrous mothers and their equally monstrous issue. In each text, the monstrous child goes forth and creates havoc: in *Beowulf*, Grendel attacks Heorot and kills its sleeping inhabitants, while his mother exacts her revenge after Beowulf slays Grendel for his transgressions against the Scylding community; in Shelley's novel, Victor Frankenstein is the creator of the monster that murders those he holds most dear and is, for this reason, often considered to be the Creature's mother. Other critics[41] have noted that it is precisely

because the Creature has no biological(ly) female mother that he is monstrous, as his "birth" itself is regarded as a violation of natural human reproduction and therefore as an example of monstrosity.

However, the texts differ in their handling of motherhood and the categorisation of mothers: while the *Beowulf* text groups Grendel and his mother taxonomically, the Creature Frankenstein puts together in his "workshop of filthy creation" is made from sutured pieces of human and animal corpses: "I collected bones from charnel houses; and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame" (*Frankenstein* 32). Grendel and his Mother are classified as Other in terms of species: they are "*Caines cynne*," Cain's kindred (107), like the "*eotenas ond ylfe ond orc-neas, swylce gigantas*," the etins, elves, orcs and giants (112-3) that roam the marches outside civilised society. Grendel's Mother is also very definitely female: "*Ðæra oðer wæs, þæs þe hie gewislicost gewitan meahton, idese onlicnæs*" (1349-51), "One of them was, as plainly as they could tell, the likeness of a lady" (Fulk). Victor Frankenstein, on the other hand, is a very unlikely mother, not least because he is a man. He does, however, create life, in a century where life was only ever created between the sheets and not in the scientist's laboratory. Because Grendel and his Mother are treated taxonomically, it is easy enough to link motherhood to monstrous birth in *Beowulf*: Grendel is monstrous because monsters beget monsters.[42] In the case of *Frankenstein*, however, a monster is born because of the determination of a man to produce life "unnaturally," that is, without feminine intervention.

The Hideousness of Feminine Birth and the Purity of the Masculine Imagination

It is specifically the lack of a mother's *body* that makes the Creature's birth monstrous in *Frankenstein*. Ellen Moers writes that "[b]irth is a hideous thing in *Frankenstein*, even before there is a monster" because the Creature is made from dead matter; it is also hideous because the womb in which the Creature is "grown" is not part of his creator's body, but is, instead, an artificial incubator (220). If Grendel is monstrous because he is birthed by a female monster, Frankenstein's Creature is monstrous because he is not birthed by a woman at all. Birth is also a hideous affair in *Frankenstein* because it has constituted a series of tragic events in Shelley's own life. She would have been aware from an early age that her birth was the cause for her own mother's death and she herself lost many children, either through miscarriage or early death; as Ellen Moers writes, "[d]eath and birth were thus as hideously mixed in the life of Mary Shelley as in Frankenstein's" (221). Given the century in which Shelley was living and writing, miscarriages, infant deaths and the deaths of mothers during childbirth were not at all unusual events;[43] this however does not remove the fact that birth and death are bodily affairs, involving pain and suffering that is both physical and emotional. Taking into consideration her father's propensity for sincerity (Pérez Rodriguez 184), Shelley must have been cognisant of the fact that her delivery into this world caused her mother tremendous pain and a slow, poisonous death (she died eleven days after giving birth to Mary), as well as causing her father grief and depriving the world of a prolific philosopher and social commentator.

We are not privy to the primal scene in *Beowulf*, but Frankenstein's Creature is, in some sense, born. However, his birth is not bodily at all: the Creature's body is put together from dead matter, not the living cells that forge to make a human baby, and Frankenstein's "workshop of filthy creation" serves as the womb from which he must emerge (*Frankenstein* 32). That the conception, incubation and birth of the Creature are all achieved without a body, and specifically without a woman's body, is arguably at the crux of what makes Frankenstein's experiment so utterly monstrous.[44] Mothers' bodies are therefore both natural and unnatural, particularly when in their pregnant form; woman is "morphologically dubious" (Braidotti *Nomadic Subjects* 80). Mothers' bodies are natural insofar as they are the only means by which life can reproduce itself (at least, without scientific intervention), but they are also unnatural because they hold the potential to birth monsters, as both the *Beowulf* text and the various examples Walsham and Wilson have used demonstrate. Because they straddle the boundary between natural and unnatural, mothers' bodies, and, by extension, mothers themselves, are monstrous. Mothers are conflated with their bodies because to become a mother (at least, biologically) is a *bodily* process: conception, incubation and birth are bodily occurrences, for both the child and the mother. That *Frankenstein* writes the mother's body out of the birth-narrative is disturbing on a corporeal level, which is partly why Shelley's novel works well as a horror/ghost story.[45]

We could, however, regard this rewriting of the birth-narrative as having a feminist purpose for female writers. Barbara Johnson notes in her essay, "My Monster/My Self," that female writing can be seen as a birthing of the

autobiographical self that must reconceive itself by rejecting the mother's bodily matrix:

> [i]n order to prove herself worthy of her parentage, Mary, paradoxically enough, must usurp the parental role and succeed in giving birth to *herself* on paper. Her declaration of existence as a writer must therefore figuratively repeat the matricide that her physical birth all too literally entailed (249, original emphasis).[46]

While Frankenstein's Creature is, in a sense, able to perform this authorial matricide through his narrative at the novel's centre, both Grendel and Grendel's Mother are unable to claim the same authority, as they are not given voices to describe their suffering at the hands of the Danes and Beowulf. Grendel suffers because of the Danes' music, which reminds him of his exclusion from the realm of men and his Mother suffers because of Grendel's horrific death at the hands of Beowulf. However, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen points out instances within the *Beowulf* text where we are allowed to sympathise with Grendel, where "we see the world, for a moment, through a monster's eyes" ("The Promise of Monsters" 456). Cohen explains that the first of these moments occurs when Grendel perceives the noise of Heorot (456), which he argues "causes Grendel great pain (*þrage geþolode* [from *geþolian*, to suffer])" (456). Cohen's explanation as to the reason for this suffering is that the noise created by the inhabitants of Heorot, and which Grendel overhears, is the narrative of the building of the hall, closely linked in this poetic account with the Genesis creation (457). Grendel's pain is therefore caused by his knowledge "that the Genesis story is just as demarcative, just as exclusionary as the walls of the hall" (457): Grendel is cognisant of his state of monstrosity, as an aberrant outsider excluded from the happiness of Heorot.

The second moment in which we are given to sympathise with Grendel is in his battle with Beowulf, where Beowulf has seized Grendel's arm in a vice-like grip with no intention to let go (Cohen 458). In his analysis of this account, Cohen interrogates Heaney's translation of *sweg*, the ""wail" that pours from Grendel's mouth" (459) during this grapple with Beowulf. Cohen writes that Heaney translates the sound that issues from Grendel into "a mere scream, a visceral howl that signifies but holds no content" (459), explaining that another meaning of *sweg* is music. Cohen cites the scene in which the poet of Heorot sings of God's creation of the world, stating that "his harp resonates with "*sweg*" (*þær wæs hearþan sweg*), the melodious accompaniment to sweet song (*swutol sang*)" (459). As a "visceral howl" or an untranslatable song, Grendel's death dirge (*gryre-leoð*) is an affective sound, touching the bodies of the men in the hall with horror: "*Sweg up astag niwe geneahhe; Norð-Denum stod atelic egesa, anra gehwylcum þara þe of wealle wop gehyrdon*" (782-5, which Fulk translates as "The volume mounted again and again; there arose in the North-Danes an acute horror, in everyone who heard the wailing through the wall"). Cohen contrasts Grendel's scream to the Creature's eloquence in *Frankenstein*, stating that if Grendel had had the opportunity to learn language like Frankenstein's Creature had, perhaps he too, would have more aptly expressed his pain, at least in a way that would have been recognisable to the men of Heorot.

Gullestad's essay on parasitism and Becoming explains why Grendel's *sweg* is unrecognisable to the Scyldings; by referring to the Deleuzean concept of minor literature and its effect on major language, he points out that

> [m]inor literature is internal to language, because it is made up of it, since it is bound to find at least most of its tools in the latter: words, expressions, syntax, and so on. What separates the two – indicating the

> foreign character of minor literature – is that the minor approach will apply these raw materials in new and unexpected ways, purposefully breaking and bending the rules of normal speech for artistic effect. Especially in these cases where it is taken the furthest, a minor use of language will constantly be in danger of being perceived as utter nonsense, madness or as noise, and thereby defined as void of meaning, belonging in the same category as animal sounds, the glossolalia of the infant and the ramblings of the mad (312).

The "raw material" of language implemented by Grendel is sound: unable to express himself coherently, he can only make an animal noise that frightens the Scyldings, rather than eliciting their sympathy.

These moments in which we are given to feel his suffering are also not unique to Grendel, as we are given insight into the anguish his Mother feels during her episode in the poem (Dockray-Miller 91). Mary Dockray-Miller writes that on her journey to Heorot in order to avenge her son, Grendel's Mother is "*yrmþe gemunde* [1258], thinking on misery" (92). She explains that while

> *yrmþe* could conceivably refer to misery she plans to inflict on the Danes . . . it is not likely in a series of lines that tell us also that she has lived for a long time worrying about the hatred between her son and the Danes and that she lives in a cold, watery place. This misery is hers. She travels to Heorot on a *sorhfulne sið*, a sorrowful voyage (1278a), thinking about her loss (92).

In a sense, then, the *Beowulf* text and its various translations are monstrative. As readers of the text, translated or not, we are made to view these creatures as monsters, which the text(s)[47] descriptively and literally[48] constitute.

However, as both Cohen and Dockray-Miller have demonstrated, the narrative is not entirely unsympathetic with the plight of the two creatures, where much of the animosity toward them is perhaps a creation of modern translators. This is precisely why discourse such as narrative, which is often designed to instruct, can be described as monstrative: that we are given to focus

more on the suffering of the men at the hands of Grendel and his Mother than on their own suffering, especially in some modern translations, demonstrates Grendel's and his Mother's function as signs in this text. Because the narrative is not told from the point of view of the creatures but from the men of Heorot, Grendel and his Mother are not offered the opportunity to reject the maternal by self-constitution, but are, instead, doomed to misinterpretation in every new reading of the text, particularly in its translation. However, the subversion of the text's celebration of masculine heroics by momentary sympathy with the monsters emphasises the importance of the creatures' existence in the text, not as mere adversaries of the titular hero, but as signs of something unknowable. Grendel is unknowable because of his guttural howl, which eludes the comprehension of the Scyldings by being an unrecognisable signifier, a sign whose meaning escapes the Symbolic, while his Mother is unrecognisable for her "incorrectly" performed masculinity.[49] Neither creature can reject their "birthing" by this text, because they are unable to narratively birth themselves and give voice to their suffering, and it is only through sympathetic moments in the text that we are allowed to feel what they feel.

There is also more to the "rejection" of the material mother (Johnson 249) than the birthing of the self as author, as Gilbert and Gubar note in "Mary Shelley's Monstrous Eve." Here, they point out that "*Frankenstein* is a version of the misogynistic story implicit in *Paradise Lost*" (228), that of bibliogenesis, the Christian myth of man/God giving birth to woman. Although they do not say so explicitly, the implication in Gilbert and Gubar's article is that what may perhaps be truly monstrous about the Western canon, and, moreover, of Western history, is the acquisition of the feminine realm of birth by a masculine

God. This acquisition is, furthermore, rewritten as a pure, painless, bodiless masculine birth, superior in all ways to its female counterpart, which is abject, bloody and thoroughly corporeal. Braidotti's appraisal of classical mythology, which "represents no founding hero, no main divine creature or demigod as being of a woman born," emphasises the "antimaternal dimension at the very heart of the matter" of originary mythology, which, in creating the genesis of god- and mankind, effectively "gets rid" of mothers ("Mothers, Monsters, and Machines" 68). Shelley's subversion of the already altered unclean feminine birth by pure male birth demonstrates the masculine fears inherent in allowing women reproductive power, where mothers are monstrous not just because this status means they overlap the boundary between nature and artifice but because they perform the monstrous threat/promise of arrival. Mothers' bodies threaten to bring into the world something that is unknowable and unpredictable, which Shelley seems acutely aware of in *Frankenstein*. This is dramatically re-enacted by the Creature's "birth." Up to the moment of the Creature's birth, that is, his animation as a sentient being with potential autonomy, Frankenstein describes his experiment with anticipation as "[a] new species [that] would bless me as its creator and source," asserting that "[n]o father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve their's [sic]" (32).

At the instant of birth, however, Frankenstein realises his mistake:

> [h]ow can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! –Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes,

> that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips (34).

It is in the precise moment that the Creature looks back at Frankenstein that he feels abject horror at what he has created, where he finds himself being suddenly appraised as a body by the object of his creation. That it is this moment in which Frankenstein becomes aware of the uncanniness of what he has produced is no accident on the author's behalf: the Creature's sentience is symbolised by the return of his gaze, suggesting an autonomy that Frankenstein cannot control. For women who are mothers, this presence is felt long before the arrival of the child. The movement of the child in the womb signifies an autonomous presence that is intimately *unheimlich*, where its uncanniness is due not just to its presence within the mother's body, but to its potential autonomy and Otherness on a very bodily level. Betterton comments that "[t]he embodied pregnant woman, like the monster . . . destabilizes the concept of the singular self, threatening to spill over the boundaries of the unified subject," because the pregnant body is in fact more than one body (85). The returned gaze of the pregnant body is also doubly uncanny because of its being more than one body, carrying with it more than its own "I"/eye and the possibility of the returned gaze of the child in utero.

Because Frankenstein does not conceive, incubate or birth his creation in a bodily manner, it is only at the moment of the Creature's sentience – animation – that Frankenstein recoils. As a mother, Shelley must have understood this bodily context of birth and pregnancy profoundly, knowing that even housing an infant in one's very body does not mean that what is produced in the moment of birth is in any way knowable, predictable or controllable. The

uncanniness of pregnancy is also performative because it constitutes, to use Royle's phrase, "unpredictable and strange effects": the movement of the child in the womb and the knowledge that another body is within one's own, although perfectly natural, is also profoundly uncanny (*The Uncanny* 16). As a way of explaining this uncanniness, Royle reminds us that the *OED* gives an "archaic synonym for the time of birth, giving birth or being born" as "the canny moment" (viii), the moment in which the uncanny, the unseen, becomes canny, or visible. Thus, the moment of becoming aware of the anamorphic image[50] is an apt metaphor for birth, because the previously unseen is now visible.

Frankenstein cannot even predict his *own* reaction to the Creature's animation, and it is precisely this level of unknowability that monsters inspire. This is also specifically what makes Frankenstein himself monstrous: as a mother, he performs the threat/promise of the arrival of an entity that is unknowable and ungovernable, and it is Frankenstein's powerlessness to control his creation that is played out by the novel's events. This is also why intention is integral to a clear understanding of monstrosity, in that no matter what our intentions are, we still have the potential to produce monsters. Frankenstein's sincere intentions for the Creature were, to begin with, for the Creature's best interests; indeed, he believes that life is such a gift that the Creature will be grateful for its existence. However, as the quotation from *Paradise Lost* on the title page of the 1818 edition forewarns,[51] one man's gift is another's burden. We cannot know the outcome of our creations; however much we may intend good to come from them, the consequence may be tragedy and suffering, which is why our creations, whether they be our children or

artistic endeavours, perform both the promise of goodness and the threat of tragedy.

While in *Frankenstein* motherhood is performed meticulously (and horrifically) outside the corporeality of women's bodies, pregnancy and birth are usually bodily affairs, specific to women's bodies. If mothers perform the threat/promise of arrival, they do so precisely with their bodies. In this sense, mothers' bodies are not only monstrous, in that they promise/ threaten the arrival of something unpredictable, but they are also performative. By performing the promise and/or the threat, mothers' bodies are, as Phelan points out (16), performative in an Austinian sense, as they create the speech acts of promising and threatening. Mothers' bodies demonstrate the performativity of monsters, where monsters perform the promise/threat, meaning that they are performative on a linguistic level. Furthermore, as both the monstrous mother and the monstrous child exemplify, this performative is also bodily: it is the monster's very *existence* that makes it performative, and this existence is always corporeal, even if it is only understood in terms of the Symbolic. When Cohen claims that the monster's body is "pure culture" he does not mean that the monster's material body ceases to be: the monster's body exists materially, but it does so beyond the scope of predictability and knowing, and therefore its materiality exists, like pregnancy, as a process rather than as a fixed form (*Monster Theory: Reading Culture* 4). Butler argues that "to be material means to materialize" (*Bodies That Matter* 32), which locates the body as well as the "I" within an ontological theory of Becoming rather than of Being (which instead emphasises a fixed and stable object). In fact, Butler's entire oeuvre is about locating the "I," which is created by language, within an

ontological theory of Becoming, where Becoming is a process: this is how she was able to conceptualise gender as both performance and performative in the first place. For Braidotti, the monstrous body is also a process, one "without a stable object . . . [and which] makes knowledge happen by circulating, sometimes as the irrational non-object" (qtd. in Betterton 83:150). This Becoming, this making knowledge happen through process, sounds remarkably like performance, and for performance to happen there needs to be a body. However, that the monster exists as a sign of things to come means that its material body is also only ever understood in terms of its signifying economy. What does this entail for the pregnant body, whose signifying economy includes, among other things, the abjection of feminine creativity and the purity of the masculine imagination?

Of course, men do not give birth to fully grown humanoids in the same way that Victor Frankenstein does (cloned sheep and the human genome notwithstanding); men do nevertheless give metaphorical birth to their creative imaginings, which become "flesh" in their physical form, such as writing. While Braidotti maintains that it is alchemy that is "a *reductio ad absurdum* of the male fantasy of self-reproduction" (*Nomadic Subjects* 87), and while this is certainly played out in Shelley's novel by Victor Frankenstein, writing is *the* method in which men give birth to an autobiographical self without the assistance of mothers or mothers' bodies. This is arguably why *Frankenstein* is a novel that is so lacking in mothers: the masculine desire to usurp the bodily in favour of a clean, controlled birth and the production of a predictable and organised individual is certainly understandable, if not recommended. Mothers are conspicuously missing in the novel: Frankenstein's own mother dies quite early

on in the text; he destroys the female creature before she can reproduce little monsters of her own; the Creature murders Elizabeth in the very bed that would make her mother to Frankenstein's children; and, it is an Oedipal mixture of Elizabeth and his mother that he dreams of after bringing the Creature to life:

> I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms (34).

This autobiographical rebirth of the self through writing is simultaneously a rejection of the physicality of birth and the male appropriation of creation from women, which is, it would seem, what Shelley is painstakingly emphasising through the narrative of masculine birth and conception. While there are definitive parallels that can be drawn between the carrying and delivery of a child and writing, the issue at stake when making this metaphorical connection is the loss of the material body. Betterton writes that "the traditional metaphor of creativity in which the (male) artist claims to conceive and give birth to imaginative ideas" (84) is paradoxical for female artists because their bodies hold the potential for the literal embodiment of this ideal, claiming that "the contradiction that the metaphor of male creativity conceals [is] that actual conception and pregnancy are bodily conditions that cannot be 'enabled' by will or desire and, in this sense, are quite unlike the practices in making art" (84-5). This metaphor quite literally comes to life in *Frankenstein*, writing the mother's body out of the narrative through the artificial birth of the Creature and represented by the lack of mothers and women, who symbolise this materiality, in the text. While mothers are missing in the text, women, as representations of materiality and the potential for

motherhood, are also made absent: Elizabeth is killed by the Creature on her wedding night, Safie, along with the De Laceys, runs away from him, effectively abandoning him, and Justine is hanged for the Creature's crime. At each point in the text where there is potential for female creativity, either Frankenstein or his Creature quash this potential by usurping the role of creator or reinforcing male agency. This is, of course, excepting the female creativity responsible for existence of the novel itself.

As a text written by a young woman at a time when writing was still considered a discipline to be accomplished under the governance of men,[52] *Frankenstein* pointedly warns of the dangers inherent in thinking that, as masters of themselves, men have sovereignty over their creations. That it took a woman to understand this is no surprise, because only she could comprehend the volatility of the sovereign "I" in a way that Shelley's husband and father (who were also both writers) certainly could not.[53] Furthermore, as male writers, neither Godwin nor Shelley could understand being situated as an object of science and art in quite the same way that Mary could, and which the Creature embodies in her novel. Shelley's mastery of the narrative technique and the warning that the novel enacts is, in a sense, the retaking of birth by the feminine: if writing, which is a male occupation, dramatizes the male conquest of birth, female writing performs its recapture. There is, however, a difficulty with trying to regain birth through the occupation of writing, and I would argue that Shelley is aware of this, which is that

> autobiography consists precisely in the story of the difficulty of conforming to the standard of what a man should be. The problem for the female autobiographer is, on the one hand, to resist the pressure of masculine autobiography as the only literary genre available for her enterprise, and, on the other, to describe a difficulty in conforming to a

> female ideal which is largely a fantasy of the masculine, not the feminine, imagination (Johnson "My Monster/My Self" 251).

Birth without embodiment is, as I have demonstrated here, such a "fantasy of the masculine," and it is precisely the omission of the body in the male fantasy of pure birth that is performed by writing that Shelley's monster warns us of. Most importantly, the monster warns us of this with his very body –a body that was not born of woman and is thus a warning of what may happen if one is to proceed in the business of writing.

It may be pointed out that *Frankenstein* is not strictly speaking an autobiographical account of the life of Mary Shelley, even if it is of its three narrators – Walton, Frankenstein and the Creature. However, it is rare to find a scholarly text on the novel that does not at least touch on Shelley's life: it seems that the narratives of *Frankenstein* are inextricably chained to a biographical account of its author. If autobiography is, in a sense, giving birth to oneself, does Shelley create herself in *Frankenstein*, and does she do so by creating a literary monster? By their very designation, each of the novel's narrators creates his "I" by narrating his experiences, effectively talking himself into Being. The Creature, at the novel's centre, gives his account to Frankenstein, from the moment of his "birth" to the moment in which he stands before him on Montanvert; Frankenstein gives his account to Walton, who, in turn, gives his to his sister, Margaret Saville, who bears the same initials as the novel's author. Each narrator accounts for himself in ways that the other could not, which is why the novel is structured in such a way as to allow each narrator to utter his "I."

However, (auto)biography and fiction do not only create the "I": writing also gives birth to a new individual (there is, it can be said, no book that is quite like *Frankenstein*), to a narrative or set of narratives, to ideas, principles and philosophies that are sutured together to make a book's "body." This is partly why Shelley refers to her debut novel as her "hideous progeny" in the 1831 edition. Books do not of course have identities like human beings do –they do not think for themselves, they are not organic or sentient –but they can constitute our identities in much the same way that seeing, speaking humans do. If performative acts done by and to a body create that body's "I", texts act in a similar way on the "I", creating it by mutation, osmosis, influence, and parasitism: I am not the same "I" that I was before reading this book, a reading which has performed my Becoming-other. Few texts demonstrate this performative ability of writing quite as plainly as *Frankenstein*. Before I move on to this literary demonstration, however, it is first necessary to note some of Shelley's biographical details, especially concerning motherhood – her own and her mother's.

The Performative Power of Writing: Texts as Mothers, Mothers as Texts

Earlier in this chapter I mentioned maternal imprinting, where a pregnant woman's imagination was said to physically affect the child she carried, thereby causing the child harm. These imaginings, longings and worries were blamed for the result of a monstrous birth, but were also blamed for other physical defects a child might suffer *later*, such as illness or deformity.

Philip K. Wilson cites the case of the nineteenth-century "Elephant Man," Joseph Merrick, whose birth was perceived as normal,[54] but who began to display bodily abnormalities at the age of two. He writes that "[a]mong the most prominent of the "bizarre distortions" upon his body was an "extraordinary mass of flesh" that "continued to force its way from beneath the upper lip," eventually protruding "several inches" from Joseph's mouth in the form of a "grotesque snout" that weighed several ounces" (13). While the diagnosis of Merrick's condition remains disputed, the contemporary explanation was that he suffered from maternal imprinting, a result of his mother being startled by a "parading" elephant at a Humberstonegate fair while in her second trimester (14).

Similarly, Mary Toft, from Godalming in Surrey, who in 1726 claimed that she had given birth to rabbits, was able to fool doctors and midwives in London not just because she managed to secrete rabbit parts in her body, or that she had just miscarried and therefore was still bleeding and able to produce contractions, but because "when [she was] five weeks pregnant, she had been weeding a field and was startled by a rabbit" (Dennis Todd 7). Todd explains that not only did the rabbit startle her, but on being unable to catch it, she developed a craving for rabbit meat (7). Thus, being both startled by and experiencing a longing for a rabbit meant that Toft's emotions were transferred to the foetus in her womb, resulting in the monstrous births of seventeen rabbits. In a comprehensive study of the medicalization of mothers' bodies in Europe, Rebecca Kukla notes that this theory of maternal imprinting came about due to an ancient understanding of the womb as permeable and susceptible to corrupting influences, an understanding that would transfer to

the pregnant body itself, demonstrating that imprinting was the next step in the movement of this logic (5). As well as this, she points out that even more than being prone to corruption, the womb itself was seen as a corrupting influence, as it was at the root of untoward cravings, the "seat of capricious and forceful appetites that beckon foreign substances in," thereby threatening the development of the child in utero (6). Furthermore, writes Kukla, "[t]he whole notion of a craving –so deeply linked in our imagination with pregnancy – is of not just any appetite but an appetite that is inherently irrational, *unpredictable*, forceful, and hard to control or deny" (6, my emphasis). The craving of the womb, and, by extension, of mothers themselves, is described here, as it is in many other sources, using the language of monstrosity.

Both imprinting and the susceptibility of the womb to invite disaster by craving are monstrous because of an age old understanding of contagion and parasitism. To be affected by one's mother's thoughts, either through her longings or frights, demonstrates a belief in an autonomous womb that parasitically takes hold of the mother's ability to produce "normal" births. That is to say, the mother's thoughts are contagious in that they spread to the child.[55] These beliefs persisted long into the nineteenth century, and, as Rosemary Betterton has shown, are at the route of much prenatal care even today. Joseph Merrick, "The Elephant Man", was born in 1862, which means that during Shelley's life maternal imprinting was still commonly believed to be the cause of defects and illness in children, taking place not just during pregnancy but also while the child breast-fed (St. Clair 462). Kukla writes of breast-feeding that "[m]ilk was seen [in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries] as a direct medium of transference of the nature of the nursing body, not only physical but

moral, to the infant," meaning that the nursing mother was just as much danger to her child as she was when pregnant (11). This belief was evidently still widely accepted in Shelley's lifetime, as St. Clair notes of her moods while lactating after the birth of her fifth child. He writes that Shelley's anxiety regarding her father's welfare while she was in Italy was blamed for the ensuing case of diarrhoea that Percy Florence suffered in the summer of 1820, the same illness that had killed his sister Clara and his brother William (462). St. Clair explains that Shelley's worry and depression were thought by her husband to be the fault of Godwin's letters, which always imparted his often dire need for money and his inability to provide for his family, and, by August, he wrote to Godwin, "[h]is main point [being] . . . Godwin's effect on Mary's milk" (462). Mothers' thoughts were so dangerous, they could not just bring about monsters but could, quite monstrously, kill the very child they were expected to "naturally" protect and nourish, not only during pregnancy but exceeding that, through the child's nursing and its later life.

If we are to take Frankenstein as the mother of his creation, it would seem that the logic of maternal imprinting is revealed in the novel's narrative events: before and throughout his "labour," Frankenstein becomes obsessed with the ability to make life in the laboratory, and unhealthily so. After discovering the secret of life and then deciding to make a man, Frankenstein describes himself as having "grown pale with study" and "emaciated with confinement,"[56] because a "resistless, and almost frantic impulse, urged [him] forward" and he remembers that he "seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit" (32). One could certainly read Frankenstein's desire to know and to create as a craving in the sense of a maternal craving, and this

craving is passed on to his Creature, whose desire to know manifests itself in his education by the unwitting De Lacey family and by the books he reads, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Plutarch's *Lives*, Volney's *Ruins*, Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, as well as some papers of Frankenstein's that document the Creature's construction. From all of these texts, the Creature receives an education, not just in language but in the creation of humankind and of his own creation (79-88).

However, the Creature learns language by over-hearing the lessons of the De Lacey children, making the Creature parasitic in an Austinian sense. He is a "parasite" upon the "normal" forms of dissemination and locution, listening in furtively, in the knowledge that his use of what he learns may be "inappropriate", quite simply because of his own "inappropriateness" in using the knowledge he, like Prometheus, "steals." Peter Brooks writes that language, as the Creature encounters it, is "tied to human love and patterns of kinship and relation" (86), while, for Shelley, language is tied to authority. Both are excluded from wielding language successfully: the Creature because he feels and is excluded from human kinship and relationships, and Shelley because she is a woman and thus an "inappropriate" authority on anything, including the successful rearing of children. Perhaps this is also why Grendel's death song (*gryre-leoð*) sounds like a wail to the men of Heorot: lacking the knowledge of language, Grendel is unable to communicate his pain to the Danes because of his "inappropriateness" to undertake the task.

The craving of knowledge that Frankenstein's Creature has contracted from his creator is that of self-knowledge, of knowing who and what it is he is. Braidotti suggests that "[t]he desire to know is, like all desires, related to the

problem of representing one's origin, of answering the most childish and consequently fundamental of questions: 'Where did I come from?'" (*Nomadic Subjects* 90). This primeval question is born of the condition of being Other, which is dramatically re-enacted by the text the Creature comes to love the most, *Paradise Lost*. In Milton's epic poem, both Eve and Satan, the two Others to Adam and God, ask themselves this question for the reason that they are not a given in the way that Adam and God are. If Adam and God represent the universal type, Eve, who is only a derivative of Adam (a mutant, if you will), and Satan, who is God's antithesis, are Other to the inflexible identity that is God/Man, or as Brooks puts it, the Creature "radicalizes the situation of Eve, who also has no 'model' – Adam is created in God's image, God is male; in whose image is Eve created?" (99).

The Creature identifies his Otherness through the education he receives from textual analysis, including that of Frankenstein's papers documenting his own creation. The Creature's "inappropriate" education can be viewed as autobiographical, as Shelley would have received her education largely from the books she read, which included not just her father's influential *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness* (1793), but her absent mother's equally influential *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (1792). Shelley would have also come to know her mother through her writing, reading all of her published works (Allen *Mary Shelley* 36-40) as well as Godwin's published *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798). Wollstonecraft's identity was created for Shelley between these sheets of paper, making Wollstonecraft's identity, in a manner, a ghostly figure built from this series of texts. In a sense,

then, Wollstonecraft's texts acted as mother for Shelley, educating her not just of the woman that Wollstonecraft was, but of what it meant to be a woman, to be Other in a world that was made for Adam. This act of literature, of text as mother, becomes literal in *Frankenstein*, where Volney, Plutarch, Milton and Goethe become parents to the Creature just as much as Frankenstein does, in that they help to create him. Frankenstein is not wholly responsible for the Creature's monstrosity – inasmuch as his maternal imprinting and his paternal abandonment may have affected the Creature, the texts that the Creature reads im*print* upon him as well.

It is in this sense that texts are not only performative, but monstrative, in that they take part in constituting monstrous identity. The Creature in *Frankenstein* is only able to recognise who he is in relation to humanity by seeing examples of the Other, which in this case are tellingly a monster and a woman, and it is only in knowing his Otherness that the Creature is able to utter his "I," and thereby constitute it. It is also crucial that this event takes place within the Creature's own narrative, in that he gives an account of himself, meaning not only accounting for his actions, but the double meaning of creating himself autobiographically through his narrative. This is something that we all do whenever we utter an "I": I bring myself into being by uttering my "I," performatively constituting myself as an "I." As Brooks expounds

> [l]anguage by its very nature transcends and pre-exists the individual locutor; it implies, depends on, and necessitates that network of intersubjective relations from which the Monster protests he has been excluded. That is, in becoming the narrator of his story, the Monster both dramatizes his problem and provides a model for its solution, the solution implicit in the discursive interdependence of an 'I' and a 'thou' in any interlocutionary situation (84).

The Creature's "I" differs from the narratives of both Frankenstein and Walton, as he knows his "I" as monstrous, having recognised it as so by his identification with Milton's Eve and Satan. What is also crucial in the scene of self-constitution is that in order for one to utter an "I" there must be a "you" to listen; as Butler writes "I begin my story of myself only in the face of a "you" who asks me to give an account" (*Giving an Account of Oneself* 11). This is enacted in each of the novel's narrative frames: the Creature constitutes himself before Frankenstein, who constitutes himself before Walton, who constitutes himself before his sister/the reader of *Frankenstein*, each time not just giving an account for his actions but for *himself*. Thus, telling and reading, both a form of narrative, require a "you" in order to exist; as Peggy Phelan writes "[t]he degree to which I can sustain my belief in a "me" and a "you" is the degree to which I can generate points fixed enough to keep writing" (*Mourning Sex* 17).

However, the Creature's constitution of his identity through uttering his "I" does not give him the freedom to create himself as he so chooses, and thus "the solution" to his solitude that Brooks insists is "implicit in the discursive interdependence of an 'I' and a 'thou' in any interlocutionary situation" (84) is not in fact a solution at all, because the "I" the Creature utters is not *just* the "I" he has made of his own choosing. He is already constituted as monstrous by his creator, and the monstrosity of his body further constitutes the monstrosity of his identity to those who come in contact with him: both the body that Frankenstein fashions for him and Frankenstein's reaction to his sentience are monstrative. He also (re)constitutes himself as monstrous through his identification with Satan and Eve in *Paradise Lost*, which is enacted through his exclusion by others. Moreover, Butler explains that "[w]hen the "I" seeks to give

an account of itself, it can start with itself, but it will find that this self is already implicated in a social temporality that exceeds its own capacities for narration" (*Giving an Account of Oneself* 7). What constitutes the "social temporality" within which the Creature finds himself, and how does this go towards constituting his ability to utter and thus create his "I"? If we return to Hillis Miller's recognition that the event, the monster, "cannot depend on pre-existing conventions, laws, rights, justifications, and formulations, however much it characteristically attempts to claim that it does" (*Speech Acts in Literature* 26-7), we find that inasmuch as the Creature identifies with Milton's Satan and Eve, he also does not, lamenting that "Satan had his companions, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him; but I am solitary and detested" (*Frankenstein* 88).

Even though he can liken himself to Satan through his feelings of envy for the De Laceys' evident happiness, the Creature, as an anomaly, is not at all like Milton's antihero and therefore is *not* governed by the pre-existing conventions to which the Miltonic Satan is, or to which any of us are; that is, until he starts using language. Elucidating her earlier statement, Butler contends that

> the very terms by which we give an account, by which we make ourselves intelligible to ourselves and to others, are not of our making. They are social in character, and they establish social norms, a domain of unfreedom [sic] and substitutability within which our "singular" stories are told (21).

Once the Creature is able to utter the "I" that he claims he is, he becomes subject to the same norms that govern every speaking person, norms which are constituted in and reiterated by the very language that he uses to claim his "I". The Creature has been changed by his interaction with the texts he reads, or as Butler says "I am invariably transformed by the encounters I undergo; recognition becomes the process by which I become other than what I was and

so cease to be able to return to what I was" (27). The Creature's identity when he speaks to Frankenstein, the identity that he utters to the reader, is not the same identity that Frankenstein describes to Walton in his narrative preceding the Creature's: the texts the Creature reads are as much responsible for his identity as Frankenstein is.

Fred Botting makes an important point, however, about the constitution of the Creature's identity by the texts he reads, stating that his identity

> remains a purloined one, a subjectivity he can never call his own as it is never recognised by others. Almost recognised by the blind father of the De Lacey family, the monster is cast out by the son before he can be accepted. His subjectivity remains a Promethean theft of fire, stealing identity from the 'godlike science of letters' in an act which has, for him and others, terrible consequences (*Making Monstrous: Frankenstein, Criticism, Theory* 16).

This is precisely why the Creature remains monstrous: his inability to be recognised as he would like to be constitutes a divide between how the Creature would like to be perceived by others and how he is actually seen. For any person who can claim the status of Other, this is a familiar quandary, feeling oneself become Other *to oneself*. The Creature dramatically re-enacts the simultaneity of self-constitution and the constitution of the self by the other, where neither is in any sense more "real" than the other and where each haunts the other's performance. Furthermore, using Julia Lupton's analysis of the term "creature" in her essay "Creature Caliban" (2000), Cohen reiterates the etymology of the noun, which Lupton notes

> derives from the future participle of the Latin verb *creare*, so that *creatura* means 'a thing always in the process of undergoing creation; the creature is actively passive or, better, *passionate*, perpetually becoming created, subject to transformations at the behest of the arbitrary commands of the Other' (her emphasis, qtd. in Cohen "The Promise of Monsters" 463:1).

As I have already demonstrated, this Other need not be another person, nor does it necessarily perform "arbitrary commands" of the self in order to constitute changes in the self; these changes can come about through an awakened identification with another's narrative and the subsequent ability to see through another's eyes. This identification with a textual Other is what Deleuze and Guattari call "minor literature" (*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*) and what Beth Newman names the "seduction of narrative." Using Shoshana Felman's *The Literary Speech Act* (1984), Newman explains that the Creature's narrative "has an immediate purpose: to bind Frankenstein to a promise" ("Narratives of Seduction and the Seduction of Narrative" 178). Being seduced by narrative, according to Newman, is dangerous, as hearing or reading it poses the threat of having to make a promise, of having to reciprocate by making more monsters. The Creature's demand, the promise he intends to exact from Frankenstein, is for the production of a female creature: if Frankenstein is to be seduced by the Creature's narrative, he must follow through with this promise. However, as Newman points out, Frankenstein never actually makes this promise: he does not make the performative utterance required for this promise to become binding, at least in such a way that Austin would mandate (180), for, according to Austin, for a promise to be performed, the person promising must utter the words "I promise" (*How to* 6-7).

I would argue, however, that by agreeing to listen to the Creature's tale, Frankenstein still binds himself to this promise because of the transmittable nature of the frame narrative. Each of the novel's accounts is passed on to another, orally or written in words. The Creature's desire for a mate thus elicits

Frankenstein's sympathy, if only briefly, and Frankenstein's narrative provokes Walton's sympathy, whose plight is read by the reader of his letters, ostensibly his sister but in reality anyone who reads the novel. Thus, the promise that the Creature elicits passes from Frankenstein to Walton and on to the reader. The promise of narrative is infectious. It is not just the narrative events of the novel that are passed from speaker to listener, writer to reader, but the transmission of the Creature's

> desire and lack, through the signifying chain of language and through the interlocutionary relation established in language, with the result that lack and desire come to inhabit the listener. As a listener or narratee, once you have entered into a narrative transaction with the Monster, you are yourself tainted by monsterism: you cannot break out of the relation established by the pronouns 'I' and 'thou' once they are seen as complementary (Brooks 95).

The "narrative transaction" of which Brooks speaks is the transmission of the promise to fully sympathise with the Creature, and with which we, as the novel's readers, are now infected. While Newman asserts that the Creature's narrative loses its "seductive hold, its ability to exact promises" (184) in its transformation from speech to the written word, on reading the novel, the reader has still "entered into a narrative transaction" with the Creature and "cannot break out of the relation established by the pronouns 'I' and 'thou'" (Brooks 95). This is because the reader, while not literally embodying the figures of the novel, "mentally pronounce[s] an 'I'" with which each of the novel's characters speak, mentally reiterating the Creature's 'I' as well as the 'I' uttered by both Frankenstein and Walton (Poulet qtd. in Iser "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach" 297:56). The monstrosity that is passed from speaker to listener is also transferred by the written narrative to the reader, infecting the reader with the Creature's desire for inclusion, making

that desire the reader's own. The text elicits one's sympathy for the Creature and thus it also enacts one's Becoming-monster. In the same way in which the texts that the Creature reads performatively constitute his identity, reading the Creature's narrative informs and mutates our identities. Reading his narrative, we become monsters, mutated versions of ourselves and the Other with whom we sympathise.

The reason for this is in part because of an archaic use of "monster," which treats the term as a verb. The *OED* states that "monster" also means "[t]o make a monster of; to make monstrous; (also) to transform (something) *into* a monstrous version of itself" (emphasis in original). The Creature's narrative thus makes a monster of Frankenstein, not because he was not already one to begin with, but because he can now, after hearing of the Creature's suffering, identify with that suffering and acknowledge his monstrosity-by-abandonment. Like that of his creation, Frankenstein's identity is in a constant state of Becoming, informed by the discourse that surrounds him. The Creature is by his very designation an unstable identity in a constant state of flux, a process rather than a fixed form, and this is played out by his self-education and the discourse that Frankenstein and others use when describing him. His monstrosity is not chosen *by* him but *for* him, through the reactions of the humans he comes in contact with, making those reactions monstrative and therefore supplying us with the reason why we are meant to regard the Creature as a monster. However, he is also monstrous in the sense of his Becoming, in that he finds himself between ontological categories, a Becoming that is itself unstable and fluctuating. Thus, he is able to view himself as "similar, yet at the same time strangely unlike" the humans he watches and

reads about, who fill him with sympathy and, simultaneously, with disgust (*Frankenstein* 86). He finds himself between categories, neither fully human nor fully Other, not just biologically but ontologically. His status as simultaneously either and neither is enacted by his exposure to the other subjects he comes in contact with, both "real" and literary, rehearsing the very Becoming that the *Frankenstein* text provokes in us and which makes monsters of us.

The difference between the monstrative acts that ensure the Creature's monstrosity – his abandonment by his Creator, the reactions of fear and horror by the De Laceys – and his Becoming-monster through textual osmosis, is precisely the difference between enforced subject formation as Other to oneself and becoming-Other elicited through one's sympathy for the Other. Thus, the plot of *Frankenstein* rehearses the very choice the text gives us in reading it, which is to either reject the Creature as Frankenstein does, or to welcome him despite his Otherness. Shelley does not make this an easy choice, either for Frankenstein or for the reader: Frankenstein realises that were he to provide the Creature with his desired mate, she too might reject him and wreak even more havoc on humankind (he is not about to make the same mistake twice) but, in so doing, washes his hands clean of the responsibility he has for the Creature. This is not merely the responsibility of creator for creation, or parent for child, but the "I's" responsibility to the Other, regardless of the Other's difference. Thus, difference itself is not denied in *Frankenstein* but the fundamental difficulty in understanding the Other, in sympathising with her/him, is emphasised as a prerequisite for Being. The only way to counteract

the power of this binary system of self/Other is through Becoming-monster oneself.

As I have demonstrated in my analysis of *Frankenstein*, our Becoming-monster is enacted through our reading of the text, as the Creature's is when he reads Volney, Plutarch, Milton, Goethe, and the notes Frankenstein has left him. In a similar fashion, then, we are infected with the monstrosity of the creatures in the *Beowulf* text, precisely because the text does not *always* cast them as Other, but provides moments in which we are to sympathise with their plight. Thus, in sympathising with Grendel's exclusion from Heorot, we, too, find ourselves out on the margins, and, in sympathising with his Mother's loss, we become the monsters that have taken her son from her. In this way, the creatures act as warnings to the text's readers, by demonstrating our responsibilities towards the Other, whom we should have invited in.

Chapter Three: Naming Monsters

> "Finding oneself deprived of language, one loses the power to name, to name oneself, indeed to answer [*répondre*] for one's name" (Jacques Derrida *The Animal That Therefore I Am* 19).

Introduction: What Do Names Do?

The following chapter advances the analysis of the "monstrativity" of discourse, where I analyse the performative function of the name, a signifier that categorises bodies according to kinship but which may also offer a descriptive function for the expected behaviour of these bodies. An analysis of naming (bodies) points to the performative abilities of the specific signifier, taken within the context of the broader discourse from which it hails. I assess both the function of the name and the act of naming, where the name's function is to categorise the body it refers to according to a social hierarchy. As I will prove in this analysis, this categorisation is conditional of both proper names and the various other appellations by which we come to know an individual. In "Aphorism Countertime," Derrida identifies the aphoristic function of names, which is that names are a concise execution of a larger discourse that works to reiterate social hierarchy. Thus, the name does not only stand in for the individual it ostensibly represents, but in fact signifies the social standing of the individual, indicating his/her legitimacy or lack thereof within such a system. This implies that the name, regardless of the intention of the person who utters it, also "produce[s] an unexpected and enabling response . . . [it] runs the risk of inaugurating a subject in speech" (Butler *Excitable Speech* 2). The name's

function thus also raises the question of who has the authority to name the bodies of others, underscoring the responsibility involved in giving another a name.

This chapter specifically examines the term "monster" as an appellation for the creatures that populate the texts, *Frankenstein* and *Beowulf*,[57] continuing this examination of the 1818 publication of *Frankenstein*, as well as two translations of *Beowulf*, Seamus Heaney's (2000) and RD Fulk's (2010), to explore the supposed monstrosity of the creatures for whom the poem's scribe had no common moniker.[58] I pay close attention to the precise names used to define Frankenstein's Creature, which are oddly duplicated as descriptions for the creatures in Friedrich Klaeber's translation of *Beowulf*, the text translation that most students of the poem would have read prior to the publication of Heaney's translation in 2000. I also give special focus to the apparent namelessness of the Creature in *Frankenstein* and Grendel's Mother in *Beowulf*, asking why it is that these two figures are deprived of legitimate names. The purpose of this study is to build upon the category of the monstrative by giving examples of its effect on creatures who otherwise cannot be named. Because this thesis is concerned with the literary rather than the visual, it is crucial to note the constitutive effects of discourse on the literary bodies of these texts. Analysing the same effects of the gaze is also important, but because these are literary texts, the gaze and its effects are always experienced indirectly by the reader, and, as such, cannot be critiqued from the reader's point of view. For this reason, the bulk of this chapter will focus on naming as a type of discourse specifically used for the categorisation of bodies, while the performative power

of the gaze will be used to demonstrate that what the gaze names is an anamorphic construct that haunts the material body.

The gaze plays a particularly important part in *Frankenstein*, as it is in moments of looking, watching, and the return of the gaze, that much of the monstrativity and Becoming-monster of these characters' identities take place. In *Beowulf*, the gaze comes under scrutiny in the poet's recollected tale of the queen, Modthryth, whose violent refusal to be constituted by the gaze allows her Becoming-monster to transpire. In Modthryth's episode, the poet describes the queen as beautiful[59] but indisposed to being looked at, so much so that she has those who look at her killed for their impertinence. Monstrosity is thus not based on the outward appearance of the texts' characters but on their behaviour, whether that is behaviour considered "inappropriate" by the individual performing or by the simple act of looking back and refusing to remain the static object of a curious and normative gaze, which is itself conduct considered "inappropriate" for certain bodies. Derrida sums up the correlation between naming and the gaze in his comments on the balcony scene of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, writing that "[t]his drama belongs to the night because it stages what is not seen, the name; it stages what one calls because one cannot see or because one is not certain of seeing what one calls" ("Aphorism Countertime" 425). Naming bodies, naming the "I," is fraught with the possibility of realising the fissure between signifier and signified. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, the severance of the sign and its signified threatens the authority of the Symbolic order and thus the authority of those who wield it; this threat emerges no more noticeably than from the appellation, "monster," because it is a sign that always circles back on itself. I use theories on the gaze

to sustain this argument because the implied relationship between signifier and signified requires the existence of an observing body, or a collectivity of observing bodies that see the signified and make the correlation between the material object and the audible mark that identifies it.

I start with an analysis of injurious names as a means by which to demonstrate the performative force of the name, not just as a constitutional effect, but as an act of violence that constitutes *through* injury and which continues to injure because of its constitutionality. This is a crucial aspect of the monstrative, as it explains the process by which monsters symbolically come to Be, demonstrating the injury we inflict upon them through the specificity of the address, and the abject position which they come to inhabit. This brings me to the monstrosity of the act of naming, where I examine the violence that is always already inherent in the name, a sign that is used by others to signify one's body and one's "I" in a singular sense. Butler's analysis in *Excitable Speech* focuses on the violence of hate speech, used with the specific intention to injure, where Derrida's view is that the violence of naming is not within the precise historicity of the appellation but that all naming is always already indicative of an authority who has the right to bestow names and wield the Symbolic according to his needs. "Nomination is important," writes Derrida, "but it is constantly caught up in a process that it does not control" ("Living On" 67): we have no control over the names by which we are known, but, as I determine in a later chapter, these names also hold the possibility of severance from the bodies they endeavour to fix precisely because of the différance between the mark and its object. The monstrosity of naming is compounded by the naming of monsters, which is where this discussion proceeds, where I analyse the specific

appellations by which we know the "monsters" of the *Beowulf* and *Frankenstein* texts, including modern translations of these names. This analysis leads to an investigation of the denial of proper names in both texts, which necessarily enquires as to whether the violence of naming is perhaps surpassed by the violence of not naming.

The Performative Function of the Name: Butler's Injurious Speech and Abject Identity

I pointed out in my first chapter that Butler uses Althusser's theory of interpellation to build a thesis on the performative abilities of naming, which she begins in *Bodies That Matter* and later develops in *Excitable Speech*. In *Bodies That Matter*, Butler uses interpellation as an example of the ways in which speech constitutes gendered identities, speaking of the "founding interpellation" that "shifts an infant from an 'it' to a 'she,'" and which "girls" a girl child, where the gendered pronoun is a speech act that constitutes the child's gender, thus constituting the child's identity according to the interpellative call (7-8). She combines this analysis with the anthropological account of kinship structures given by Claude Lévi-Strauss in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949), which states that kinship structures are based on a universal incest taboo and the exchange of women. Butler uses Lévi-Strauss' observations of primordial kinship structures to point out that women's names, like women's bodies, are never their own but always that of their father or husband:

> [f]or women, then, propriety is achieved through the exchange of names, which means that the name is never permanent, and that the

> identity secured through the name is always dependent on the social exigencies of paternity and marriage. Expropriation is thus the condition of identity for women (*Bodies That Matter* 153).

Women's identities are therefore not their own to govern, because their names constitute them as the property of their husband or father.

Furthermore, the sign that women's bodies bear, the name of the father or husband, is the sign of the exchangeability of women in patriarchy, where the bodies of women "yield to [man] their natural and social value as locus of imprints, marks, and mirage of his activity" (Irigaray 177). Woman, in bearing the name, becomes sign. Butler repeats Irigaray's stance when she writes that "the bride functions as a relational term between groups of men; she does not *have* an identity, and neither does she exchange one identity for another. She *reflects* the masculine identity precisely through being the site of its absence" (*Gender Trouble* 50). Butler argues that the signifier that woman becomes functions not simply as the reproduction of patronymic bloodlines, but for "relations among patrilineal clans [which] are based in homosocial desire . . . a repressed and, hence, disparaged sexuality, a relationship among men which is, finally, about the bonds of men, but which takes place through the heterosexual exchange and distribution of women" (52). By being the signs of interfamilial exchange, women also act as acceptable signs for homosocial bonding. This is precisely how women have come to be seen psychoanalytically as a sign of lack, where women bear the Phallic signifier but cannot be in ownership of it; as Butler writes, "[a]s the site of a patronymic exchange, women are and are not the patronymic sign, excluded from the signifier, the very patronym they bear" (50).

The disappearance of the feminine through the exchange of women and for the purpose of enacting homosocial bonds means that women, like monsters, exist only as signs of something else, "unrepresentable except as representation" (Schneider *The Explicit Body in Performance* 23). The enactment of homosocial bonds through the exchange of women is, moreover, the very act by which they find themselves excluded from the status of subject, made to exist as a reflection of masculine subjectivity and forced to live in the opposing realm of abjection, where "the address constitutes a being within the possible circuit of recognition and, accordingly, outside of it, in abjection" (*Excitable Speech* 5). What is made explicit by this statement is that one's recognisability allows one "a certain possibility for social existence" (2), whereas to be unrecognisable as subject means instead to be abject. Kristeva explains that living in abjection means that "[i]nstead of sounding himself [sic] to his [sic] 'being' [the "I"] does so concerning his [sic] place: '*Where* am I?' instead of '*Who* am I?'" (*Powers of Horror* 8): abjection is a place, one that is outside of the realm of the acceptable, but is also external to recognisability. Finding oneself in abjection means finding oneself outside of "the possible circuit of recognition," which is precisely where the creatures of *Beowulf* and *Frankenstein* find themselves, and this is dramatized by their physical exclusion from the realm of men.

Butler's analysis of the interpellative function of the name is diverted in *Excitable Speech* to names that are not proper names but injurious names, used in order to inflict injury upon the body described, but which, as Butler deduces, also result in the abjection of the identity to whom the speech is directed. Although "[t]o claim that language injures . . . is to combine linguistic and

physical vocabularies," Butler gives evidence for the trauma inflicted by words by pointing out that "physical metaphors seize upon nearly every occasion to describe linguistic injury [which] suggests that this somatic dimension may be important to the understanding of linguistic pain" (*Excitable Speech* 4-5). What this suggests to me is that the "somatic dimension" of linguistic injury is in fact integral to the affectivity of naming, making explicit the violence of the act. While the proper name includes the identified within a kinship group, it also excludes him/her from other kinship groups, performing simultaneously the acts of exclusion and inclusion. Injurious names, on the other hand, perform the act of injury by describing the identified within derogatory terms, where "[t]o be injured by speech is to suffer a loss of context, that is, to not know where you are" (4).

Butler shows that the name, proper or not, "is also one of the conditions by which a subject is constituted by language" (2), where to be called a name gives one "a certain possibility for social existence, [allowing one to be] initiated into a temporal life of language that exceeds the prior purposes that animate that call" (2). Proper names sanction one's "social existence" as inclusive of a family group, simultaneously excluding others who do not bear the name. In the utterance of the name, this inclusion and corresponding exclusion is reiterated, but is also re-effected by the interpellative function of the name, which, as Butler concludes, is inaugural, as interpellation "seeks to introduce a reality rather than report on an existing one . . . through a citation of existing convention" (33). Thus, "[o]ne comes to 'exist' by virtue of this fundamental dependency on the address of the Other" (5), meaning that the performative function of the name is to animate the subject into existence according to the

Other's interpretation. Injurious names which categorise the individual with the view to wound thus place this individual in abjection, where

> [t]o be addressed injuriously is not only to be open to an unknown future, but not to know the time and place of injury, and to suffer the disorientation of one's situation as the effect of such speech. Exposed at the moment of such a shattering is precisely the volatility of one's 'place' within the community of speakers; one can be 'put in one's place' by such speech, but such a place may be no place (4).

That one does "not know the time and place of injury" is, according to Butler, precisely what makes the injury happen, even if it is not the speaker's intent to injure: the citational quality of language allows the injury – what is performative about such speech acts – to be repeated by each new invocation of the term. Moreover, because injurious speech permits one "to be open to an unknown future," placing one in "a place that is no place," it demonstrates the monstrativity of naming. Being "open to an unknown future" with regard to identity is the condition of being Other to oneself, an Other that is impossible to predict. Being in "a place that is no place," meanwhile, is the condition of abjection, a place that borders "legitimate" society and which acts as a reflective surface for the legitimation of this society, as Phelan emphasises when she says that "those on the margins become the focal point for the center's self-definition" (*Mourning Sex* 16). Both unpredictability and abjection are formative of monstrosity. Unpredictability stems from the state of unrecognizability, where being Other to oneself means existing in a state of being unrecognizable to oneself, which Kristeva writes is the experience of "[n]ot me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A 'something' that I do not recognize as a thing" (*Powers of Horror* 2). The state of being unrecognizable to oneself is circumstantial of abjection, which "places one haunted by it [the Other

that one has become] literally beside himself" (1). Part of what is monstrous about naming is that it creates a multiplicity of the self that is not recognisable to the self as s/he thinks her-/himself to be, much as Lacan's mirror stage splits the seeing infant from his feeling self. This is what is known as becoming Other to oneself.

Naming Monsters and the Monstrosity of Naming

Derrida makes much of the violence contained within the act of name-giving in *Of Grammatology*, pointing out that, first, the forename, while given to signify the individual who will bear it, is not unique to that individual, because of its repeatability (109). Secondly, violence is instituted by the Law regarding names and naming, which in Western culture is the contagion of the surname, passed down, like genetic material, from each generation to the next, through the legitimation of the masculine by feminine exchangeability (112). The proper name is, thirdly, violent because of the singularity it imposes on the "I" (which, itself, is a signifier that imposes singularity), and, fourthly, because it is a singularity not chosen by the "I" who bears it (*Of Grammatology* 112 and *The Animal That Therefore I Am 32*). The name is monstrous because it constitutes the "I" as a singularity that it cannot in fact Be, because it constitutes according to the appellation, which decides the fate of the "I" by the outward signs and gestures of the body, and, which therefore makes the "I" Other to herself. The propriety of the proper name also (re)aligns us by blood, insisting on our allegiance and responsibility to our kin prior to any other person, making the proper name crucially undemocratic. The discrimination of the Other is intrinsic to proper names, which, in *Frankenstein*, is dramatized by

Frankenstein's rejection of the Creature he brings into the world. Violence and monstrosity are therefore already present in the proper name, before names are used with the explicit intent to injure.

The violence of specific appellations is dependent upon meaning, where "[t]he name carries within itself the movement of a history that it arrests" (Butler *Excitable Speech* 36). Butler clarifies this statement, explaining that

> [i]f we understand the force of the name to be an effect of its historicity, then that force is not the mere causal effect of an effected blow, but works in part through an encoded memory or a trauma, one that lives in language and is carried in language. The force of the name depends not only on its iterability,[60] but on a form of repetition that is linked to trauma, on what is, strictly speaking, not remembered,[61] but relived, and relived in and through the linguistic substitution for the traumatic event" (36).

Because the injury is carried through what is re-membered, responsibility for the injury inflicted is "linked with speech as repetition, not as origination" (39). The injurious name does not just inflict the bearer with the trauma of past events, but categorises her according to the description of that name. In the next chapter, I demonstrate this through an analysis of the injurious and constitutional effects of the name "Butterfly" in David Henry Hwang's play, *M. Butterfly*; for now, however, I focus on the term "monster" as a name that is strangely categorical of the uncategorical, as well as an appellation that, due to its inability to categorise, also acts injuriously.

To recapitulate, "monster" stems from the Latin *monstrum*, meaning portent, omen, or prodigy, with the verbs *monere*, to warn, presage, or advise, and *monstrare*, to reveal, or show, at its base. As corporeal manifestations of warning and revelation, monsters arrive on the edges of imagination as pure signifiers, signifying nothing but their own monstrosity. Literary monsters

reiterate this embodiment of indication by incarnating the "yet to come" of identity: because "monster" always means "sign," it always points to the fact that it is not indicative of anything *but* sign. Monsters are a bodily manifestation of différance, continually differing and deferring their content. In this sense, monsters challenge the Structuralist corollary of signifier and signified, because there is no signified to which the sign can refer, and, as such, they dramatize the gulf between the Symbolic and the Imaginary orders. "Monster" therefore does not categorise a specific nomenclatural group, but is used as a "third-term supplement" for miscellaneous anomalies (Cohen *Monster Theory* 6-7). What groups creatures under this taxonomy is their unrecognizability and their utter segregation from the Symbolic order: "monster" categorises the uncategorisable, simultaneously categorising it *as* uncategorisable. What I mean by this is that "monster" is a supplement for the name, a term used to signify its anomalousness, which, in its use as an appellation, paradoxically inaugurates the anomalousness of the body that it categorises.

By virtue of its uncategorisability, the monster also embodies the performative acts of promising and threatening: because the monster dramatizes the "to come" in its appellation, it is always already indicative of something else, which is precisely why births that were considered monstrous were treated with both suspicion and wonder, as I have already demonstrated. It is in their very resistance to categorisation that monsters come to embody the performative acts of promising and threatening, by literally Becoming-sign. Moreover, their inability to be categorised is doubled by the inability of "monster" to categorise: "monster" is a blanket term for beings that are

unrecognisable and thus uncategorisable. While the performativity of monsters lies in their embodiment of the threat and the promise, the monstrativity of monsters is in their embodiment as signs. Literally embodying the inauguration of the "I" into the Symbolic order by simultaneously confounding this order, the monster is "unrepresentable except as representation" (Schneider 23) and is thus made monster by such a resistance to categorisation: "monster" is monstrative. The appellation "monster" is, however, far from being on its own in this regard, as the history of any repeated mark, such as the injurious name, may also make the Other a sign of the unrecognizable, which is precisely what monstrous figures are, hence the monstrativity of injurious speech.

As Butler has demonstrated in *Excitable Speech*, injury is carried over in the name's historicity; it can thus be extrapolated that the performative force of monstrativity is carried by the name in the same manner in which injury is passed from the mouth of the speaker to the body of its victim, which is through the repeated utterance of the specific appellation. Thus, in *M. Butterfly*, the name "Butterfly," which carries with it the injurious force of Orientalist discourse, constitutes the body of the one who bears it according to a subjugating Western gaze, which, in turn, makes that body into a recognizable sign of Otherness. Of the anomalous creatures in the *Frankenstein* and *Beowulf* texts, only one has a proper name, Grendel, while he, his Mother, and Frankenstein's Creature are known by various other appellations, none of which can be said to be "proper." What often groups Grendel, his Mother, and the dragon (the "monsters" of the *Beowulf* text) together for a modern audience is their common taxonomical status as *æglæca*,[62] a term which has already

come under much scrutiny by *Beowulf* scholars, and for which the translation has proved exceptionally challenging.

The twentieth-century Anglo-Saxon scholar, Friedrich Klaeber translated *æglæca* as meaning, among other descriptive terms, "wretch," "monster," "demon," and "fiend," (*Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg* 298), while Heaney has translated *æglæca* as "monster" when speaking of Grendel and the dragon (433, 816, 1269, 2534, 2557, 2905),[63] and "demon" (646), "creature" (739), and "fiend" (1000) when speaking of Grendel. Fulk translates *æglæca* as "troublemaker," where Grendel's Mother is referred to as "female troublemaker" in 1259. Andy Orchard also points out that the term is used of Beowulf himself in 2592 (*Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* 33). I return to a detailed analysis of Klaeber's translation of *æglæca* at a later point in this chapter, but for now, I concentrate on its use as an appellation that must have meant something specific for these particular beings to be assembled under. What confounds this reading is that Grendel, his Mother, and the dragon are not the only figures to be grouped under the appellation *æglæca*: not only is the text's hero, Beowulf, referred to by this name, but the poet also relates the tale of the renowned warrior, Sigemund the dragon-slayer, also describing him as *æglæca* (893). *Beowulf* is also not the sole source for *æglæca*: Orchard shows that the eleventh-century scholar, Byrhtferth, refers to Bede, author of the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*), and thus one of England's most important early historians as "*se æglæca lareow*" in his *Enchiridion* (qtd. in Orchard 33:66). Klaeber's translation of *æglæca* as "wretch," "demon," "monster," and "fiend" is unfitting, as this explanation cannot possibly describe

the venerable teacher. It must be noted, however, that these are only the first four terms Klaeber's glossary gives as translations of *æglæca*, stating that these are "used chiefly of Grendel and the dragon," following these interpretations with "warrior" and "hero" for Beowulf and Sigemund. How can one be both "monster" and "hero"? Unless Beowulf, Sigemund, and Bede are all monsters in the classical Hollywood sense of the term, or Grendel, his Mother, and the dragon are comparable in some way with Beowulf, Sigemund, and (I think, most perplexingly) with Bede, then Klaeber's translation is simply not sufficient.

Many scholars have accounted for this translation by pointing out that the heroic warriors, Sigemund and Beowulf, demonstrate a form of monstrosity themselves. Orchard notes that "Beowulf fights monsters because only then is he well-matched. When he does face human champions, like the Frankish Dæghrefn, his methods are distinctly inhuman, one might almost say monstrous; Dæghrefn is simply crushed to death" (32-3). How, then, does this account for Byrhtferth's depiction of Bede? Perhaps it is simply for his fierceness, or his formidable nature: certainly, one of Orchard's translations of *æglæca* is "formidable one" (33). Described by Orchard as monstrous for his outrageous physical strength, Beowulf is perhaps pronounced as *æglæca* because of his prodigious and anomalous strength, but also because he arrives like a monstrous birth in Grendel's Mother's mere, following this initial incursion with a second monstrous arrival in the dragon's lair. Grendel's monstrosity is contagious: it moves from him to his Mother to Beowulf himself, and its contagion is dramatized by the act of intrusion and the moniker *æglæca*. This monstrous contagion is not assimilated by the Scyldings or by Beowulf and his men, but instead assimilates them. Some critics, Tolkien among them, have

noted Beowulf's progression from defender to interloper, where Grendel's monstrous intrusion has infected the Geat, and which is underscored by the appellation *æglæca*: Beowulf is referred to as *æglæca* in those moments where he arrives like a Derridean event on the territory of those he wishes harm. Episodes of Beowulf's characterisation as *aglæca* occur at 1512, where Fulk describes Beowulf as a "troublemaker" and Heaney as a "gallant man" during his descent to the mere, and in 2592, where Beowulf and the dragon are referred to as *ða aglæcean*, which Fulk translates as "the troublemakers" and Heaney as "the fierce contenders."

Æglæca itself has become monstrous, as its resistance to translation means that it currently exists as pure signifier, without an object or a body to which to refer. Those bodies that are signified by *æglæca* also come to exist as sign, being named as such, and thus become monstrous themselves – at least, for a modern audience that cannot properly translate the term. While Klaeber translated *æglæca* first as "monster," he probably meant it in its modern sense, but it is striking that its very untranslatability brings the term and those who bear it back to the Latin roots of "monster," indicating its own demonstrativeness, its unrepresentability "except as representation" (Schneider 23). The resistance of *æglæca* to translation, its present existence as pure signifier, also reveals the curious inability of monstrosity to function as anything other than sign. *Æglæca* shares its resistance to meaning with the Latin *monstrum*, which has at its base the verb *monstrare*, meaning to show, reveal, or advise. Each of these translations circle back to monstrosity; each translation reiterates the fact that the monster cannot be represented, because it exists as pure symbol. This curious circularity is compounded by the addition

of the prefix de-, which, according to the *OED*, "has the function of undoing or reversing the action of a verb" or means to be down from, off, away from or aside from the verb it precedes: however, while, the addition of de- to the verb "activate" means its exact opposite, the Latin *demonstrare* has precisely the same meaning as *monstrare*.

The proximity of my chosen appellation for the monstrative to the adjective "demonstrative" (coming from the verb "to demonstrate"), while strangely coincidental, has also been significantly useful in the development of this category, having led me to an investigation of the meaning of *monstrare* and *demonstrare*. Monstrosity always refers back to itself, where to be a monster means being pure sign, one that signifies one's inability to be categorised by the existing Symbolic order. Those that are named "monster" exist in this way until the prevailing order is mutated to accommodate the intelligibility of the monster, while those that are named incorrectly or injuriously become Other to themselves, become monstrous by being a sign of Otherness. If naming creates categorical boundaries, social hierarchy, inclusion in and exclusion from kinship groups, if it injures through repetition, Others, and makes the Other other to herself, what effect, then, does the lack of naming have?

(Not) Naming the Monsters of Beowulf *and* Frankenstein

As I pointed out earlier, the only monstrous creature in either *Frankenstein* or *Beowulf* to have a proper name is Grendel.[64] Much scholarship (such as Orchard's) has focused on the meaning of both "Grendel" and "Beowulf" as a means by which to explicate their behaviour, especially given that early cultures would have often named their children according to meaning

or to kinship groups rather than what is pleasing to the ear; this analysis, however, concentrates on those creatures without proper names, Grendel's Mother and Frankenstein's Creature.[65] Grendel's Mother does not have her own name; she is known by her description as the mother of a monster, and thus as a monster herself. However, as Gillian Overing indicates, she is not the only woman in *Beowulf* to go without a name: of the eleven women mentioned in the text, only five have their own names while the rest are referred to as someone's wife, mother, or daughter (*Language, Sign and Gender in Beowulf* qtd. in Dockray-Miller 85:123). Mary Dockray-Miller concludes that the omission of women's names from the text reinforces the masculine economy of the poem's Anglo-Saxon audience, where the names of these women are insignificant because their deeds are of no consequence to their phallocentric society (Dockray-Miller 85). Grendel's Mother, who, along with these women, has no name of her own, is in no way secondary to the text's plot progression: even Hildeburh, whose tale is used only as a relational tool for the poet's rhetoric, has a name, but, unlike Grendel's Mother, she is not monstrous.

Grendel's Mother is arguably the most important female figure in the text, yet she has no name of her own and is known instead by her relation to the first monster that terrorises the men of Heorot. In addition to this, in what has become one of the most influential essays on studying the literary elements of the poem (particularly its monsters), J. R. R. Tolkien entirely omits Grendel's Mother from his focus on the monsters in "The Monsters and the Critics". Writing at a time when the *Beowulf* text was studied primarily for its historical value, Tolkien was among the first to underline the importance of the text's monsters to understanding the fears of *Beowulf*'s Anglo-Saxon audience, yet, in

his analysis of these monsters, he utterly neglects any reading of Grendel's Mother, focusing instead on Grendel and the dragon. While this suits Tolkien's comparison between a young Beowulf who defeats an invading foe and an ageing Beowulf who becomes an occupying force and, while this reading is by no means ill-fitting, his disregard of Grendel's Mother means that the change in Beowulf's character is overlooked, as are the textual elements that constitute this change.[66]

That Grendel's Mother is known by this appellation and that Tolkien neglects even mentioning her in his article is indicative of the enduring entrenchment of the phallocentric project, which either casts women's lives as appendices to those of men or enacts their total disappearance from its narrative. Indeed, what makes Tolkien's analytical omission of Grendel's Mother perplexing is that her episode lasts from lines 1255-1644, taking up over one-eighth of the text. Moreover, as Jane Chance points out, this episode takes place at the very centre of the poem and is preceded by poetic narratives concerning most of the other women featured by the poem's larger narrative or mentioned as part of the narrative context ("The Structural Unity of *Beowulf*: The Problem of Grendel's Mother" 157). Chance explains that by placing Grendel's Mother at the centre of the poem, after the recollected tale of Hildeburh and the depiction of Wealhtheow's anxiety for her sons, the poet is in fact urging a comparison between Grendel's Mother and the other mothers in the text (157). Grendel's Mother is contrasted with Wealhtheow, and particularly with Hildeburh, because her actions are unbefitting of a woman within the context of the poet's community.

The human mothers in the text exist as symbolic indicators of ideal motherhood, and by extension, ideal femininity.[67] That Grendel's Mother is known by the signifier "Grendel's Mother" demonstrates her inability to be read as anything other than the sign of motherhood, where her maternal body signifies the etymological root of "monster" as demonstration, warning, portent, precisely because mothers' bodies possess the possibility of further monstrosity. But what is it that Grendel's Mother warns us of? One reason perhaps for structuring *Beowulf* with Grendel's Mother's episode at the centre, as Chance suggests, is to emphasise the correct course of action for an aggrieved mother of a slain warrior, where we are also regaled with the tale of Hildeburh's grief at the feud between her birth family and the family she has married into. Unlike Hildeburh, who loses both her uncle and her son, Grendel's Mother behaves "inappropriately" for an aggrieved mother by avenging the son that Beowulf has killed.[68] Dockray-Miller makes the assertion that Hildeburh's son may have died in a similar manner to Grendel, also having his arm severed from his shoulder, which would give further textual evidence of the distinction we should make between Hildeburh's acts and those of Grendel's Mother, who, in contrast with Hildeburh, seeks revenge for her son's death (99). By so doing, Grendel's Mother acts as an exemplum for Anglo-Saxon women by demonstrating the aberrance of a woman who retaliates for the deaths of her kinsmen, where "[f]or a mother to "avenge" her son as if she were a retainer, he were her lord, and avenging being more important than peace-making, is monstrous" (Chance 159).

By putting her son on the same funeral pyre as her uncle, thereby symbolising the coming together of two feuding families in grief (1114-7),

Hildeburh's maternal performance is exemplary, while Grendel's Mother's revenge demonstrates the embodiment of a masculinity forbidden her by her biological sex. As Dockray-Miller puts it, "Grendel's Mother is "doing" revenge, but she does it wrong. Her femininity, her maternity, her monstrousness . . . all impede her supposed heroism as she avenges her son's death" (93). Grendel's Mother is monstrous because she performs her gender "incorrectly," but she is also monstrous because she literally embodies the consequences of this performance, at least in the text's extant translations, which have made a monster of her. Her monstrosity is further indicated by the lack of a proper name: while the signifier "Grendel's Mother" articulates the reason for her monstrosity (her deviant maternal performance) it also serves to exclude her from the realm of men, who each have proper names and the names of their forebears to locate them within a familial group. The only family that Grendel and his Mother have are each other, while their ancestry harks back to Cain and his monstrous offspring. They are excluded from Heorot, not only because they are border-wanderers,[69] but because they are named as such, kinsmen of the outcast Cain and strangers to the world of men.

Referring to Grendel's Mother in this way is not just a reiteration of her exile but part of what creates the conditions of her exclusion from Heorot: she is a monster because she is called a monster. Overing's emphasis on the omission of women's names from the text, where they are instead referred to as wives, mothers, and daughters of men, questions what this might mean for Grendel's Mother, whose identity rests on the fact that she is known only as mother, and a bad one at that.[70] If the address "constitutes a being within the possible circuit of recognition, and, accordingly, outside of it, in abjection" (Butler *Excitable*

Speech 5), then calling Grendel's Mother by this name means that she can only be recognised in her status as mother; everything else about her is unrecognisable, and thus she enacts the sign of monstrous motherhood. This "incorrect" performance of motherhood makes her completely unrecognisable, because she defies the laws that insist she perform in one way and not the other, which places her outside of the "possible circuit of recognition . . . in abjection," and in monstrosity (5).

Grendel's Mother is also not the only woman in the text to behave inappropriately; Modthryth, who, like Grendel's Mother, is offered in contrast to the other women of the text, is represented as "*sinfrea,*" sinful, for her refusal at being looked at. Using Overing's point that the higher-born women of Anglo-Saxon England would have been regarded as "gold-adorned queens who circulate among the warriors as visible treasure" (qtd. in Dockray-Miller 85: 130), Dockray-Miller argues that Modthryth rebels by violently repudiating her status as object by having those who dare look at her executed. Much of the scholarly analysis on Modthryth concentrates on what Dockray-Miller refers to as "shrew taming" (80), where the scholarly consensus is that after marrying Offa, Modthryth becomes a "good" queen. However, as Dockray-Miller has illustrated, Modthryth "specifically *gesohte*, sought, Offa's hall [and] . . . [o]nce there, she is *in gumstole*, on the throne, not walking among the warriors serving them drink" (86). Unlike Freawaru and Hildeburh, Modthryth is not a commodity to be exchanged, the *freoðuwebbe* or peace-weaver whose marriage to the enemy ensures peace between feuding families.

Her rejection of her status as commodity is also indicated by her extreme distaste in being looked at and thus her refusal to be objectified in a culture that

sees her as nothing else. Kristeva reminds us that the abject "can be grasped only as a sign. It is only through the intermediary or *representation*, hence a *seeing*, that holds it together" (*Powers of Horror* 46, her emphases), which signifies the abject state of a body that is understood only as object. That Modthryth rejects this economy, prohibiting her exchange as commodity by choosing her own husband and murdering those who dare look at her, signifies an autonomous sovereignty that would be more fitting for a man, at least according to the culture in which she finds herself. By acting like a man, Modthryth performs her gender incorrectly and is thus another example of feminine monstrosity in the text. Furthermore, her refusal to be looked at could also be read as a rejection of the monstrous feminine, where her demonstration as object is invalidated by her refusal to become said object. Grendel's Mother's monstrosity has a definite function – to warn Anglo-Saxon women of the dangers inherent in performing a masculinity forbidden to them – but Modthryth repudiates this functionality, refusing to even conform to the monstrosity she should embody.

Although Modthryth is a mother, Dockray-Miller states that she is not maternal, explaining that " . . . she is textually separated from her son, who is defined as Offa's son rather than hers" (87). Dockray-Miller sees this textual severance of the child from his mother as an unkindness on the part of the poet; I view it as a reinforcement of Modthryth's monstrosity, of her inability to be forced into a monolithic reading of femininity and thus as a site of possibility, an embodied promise for later generations. If the abject must be jettisoned from the Symbolic, the world that is structured by sign and language, then it seems that Grendel's Mother fulfils the obligations of the abject through her death,

being thrust from the world of the living. Modthryth, however, seems to be fully integrated into this society of men – she has her own name, she is clearly defined within the Symbolic category of feminine royalty – but her very existence in the text suggests a phallocentric interpretation of her masculine behaviour as event-ful and anomalous.

Dockray-Miller also seeks to reclaim a Symbolic identity for Grendel's Mother that does not rest on her kinship to Grendel, by referring to her, as the poet does in 1506 and again in 1599, as the Sea-wolf (*seo brim-wylf*). Instead of reading this as a description of Grendel's Mother's prowess in battle, Dockray-Miller chooses to regard the appellation as a proper name that lends Grendel's Mother more autonomy than merely being known as a monster's mum, claiming that "just as the humans Beowulf and Eofor have names derived from animals, so might she have an animal epithet or name that suits her fierceness in defending her home" (94). As tempting as it is to give Grendel's Mother an autonomous identity through the appellation Sea-wolf, this would then mean that we would have to also know her by further descriptive terms by which the poet portrays her, which include "slaughtering spirit" (*wæl-gæst* 1331, trans. Fulk), her and Grendel as "alien spirits" (*ellor-gæstas* 1349, trans. Fulk), and the famously problematic *ides aglæc-wif* (1259), which Fulk translates as "lady, female troublemaker." While Dockray-Miller gives a convincing argument for renaming Grendel's Mother the Sea-wolf, asserting that the appellation functions as a name due to its uniqueness in the *Beowulf* text, we would then also have to treat Grendel and Frankenstein's Creature with the same courtesy, calling them by the various other descriptions afforded them in each text (94).

This is particularly pertinent in the case of Frankenstein's Creature, who is known only by the expressions of disgust with which Frankenstein assaults him, where the most neutral appellations by which we come to know him are "creature" and "being."[71] The most common names Frankenstein calls his creation are, coincidently, precisely the same descriptive terms Klaeber uses to translate *æglæca*: "monster," "demon," "wretch," and "fiend." It would seem that while the *Beowulf* poet means us to link Grendel, his Mother, and the dragon thematically through "*aglæca*," Klaeber's translations would have us interpret these creatures in the same manner in which Frankenstein views his creation. It is uncertain that what Klaeber means by "monster" is as broad as its etymology; he may have only meant "monster" in its modern sense.[72] A closer look, however, at the etymology of the three further names may serve as a way to better understand (certainly) how Shelley meant for us to interpret the monstrosity of Frankenstein's Creature and (perhaps) what the poet meant for us to realise in the three monstrous creatures Beowulf faces in the epic.

In the 1818 edition of *Frankenstein*, the term "fiend" occurs as an interpellative description of the Creature twenty-five times; "monster" occurs twenty-four times, demon (or dæmon) nineteen times, and "wretch" eleven times.[73] The *OED* defines "fiend" as "enemy," from the Old English *feond* ("Fiend," def. 1): Grendel and his Mother are both described as "God's enemy," "*Godes andsacan*" and "*Godes andsaca*" (786, 1682) and as the "enemy of mankind," "*feond man-cynnes"* (164, 1276), and Frankenstein often refers to his creation as "my enemy" (127, 139, 140, 143, 144 (twice), 145, 151). "Fiend" constructs the creatures as Other to the texts' protagonists, making opposing forces of them. In the case of *Beowulf*, the Othering of Grendel and his Mother

signifies not only their enmity to Beowulf, or even to the men of Heorot, but to all humankind. Furthermore, by way of the description, "God's enemy," Grendel and his Mother are featured as opposing any human conception of goodness, where the appellation places them in a binary system of good and evil. In such a system, the description of the creatures as "fiend" or "enemy" of the protagonist, of humankind, and, above all, of God, means that they are constructed as agents of evil. In their representation as the enemies of God, Beowulf's subjugation of the creatures ensures that they are "exorcised from the right order of things and sent to some sort of Hell. 'Our' order is identified with the sacred over against a diabolically monstrous chaos" (Timothy Beal *Religion and its Monsters* 6).

By the same token, after destroying the Creature's would-be bride, Frankenstein claims that his reasons for doing so are because he is afraid that the Creatures will procreate and thus forge a new species that will become the enemy of humankind:

> Even if they were to leave Europe, and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first sympathies for which the dæmon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror (*Frankenstein* 114).

The name "fiend" is aphoristic of the discourse that both inaugurates and supports the claim that the creatures in both texts are enemies and must be treated with violence. It is thus also monstrative, because it enacts and ensures their rejection from the society of men, which, in turn, makes the creatures living signs of their Otherness and enmity to humanity. However, Orchard points out that what obfuscates this binary code is that in lines 2287-9 of the poem Beowulf is referred to as *feond*, while the dragon is described as "the

stout-hearted one" (*stearcheort*, Orchard 30, his translation).[74] While it stands to reason that if the dragon is Beowulf's enemy then Beowulf is the dragon's – the term signifying a binary system – that Beowulf is named "*the* foe" and not "*his* foe" (that is, the dragon's) means that he, too, is Othered by the description. Orchard builds the case that it is because of the reversal of invaders that Beowulf becomes known by this appellation, because he is now the interloper and not the defender against intrusion that he is "the foe," which raises the question whether it is by performing the part of the unwelcome guest that one becomes a monster (30).

Cast as the fiend from whom the dragon must defend his home, Beowulf undergoes the process of Becoming-monster, which Braidotti states is a deconstructive step "across the boundaries that used to separate qualitatively self/same from others" (*Metamorphoses* 119). For Braidotti, this process "is not about signification, but rather the opposite: it is about the transcendence of the linguistic signifier," a transcendence which is enabled by the inability of the sign "monster" to signify anything but itself (119). The other signifiers that are used to describe the creatures in *Beowulf* and *Frankenstein* further indicate their monstrosity, for reasons that only each specific signifier can point to. In the case of the appellation, "fiend," their monstrosity is in their enmity to man, which sets the creatures and the world of men against one another within a binary logic. This name is monstrative because it constitutes those who bear it as sign, a sign that is specifically one of difference. It must also be noted that while Frankenstein christens the Creature with the name "fiend," cementing his monstrosity through binary difference, Grendel and his Mother are given the appellation indirectly, through Klaeber's translation of *aglæca*. Grendel is,

however, referred to as "fiend" (*feond*) several times by the poet, in 102, 143, 279, 725, 962, 970 and 1273, which is perhaps one of the reasons Klaeber adopted this term as a convenient translation. The creatures' monstrosity is, furthermore, contagious, as it mutates the men with whom they come in contact, and this is illustrated by the name's movement from Grendel to Beowulf, once Beowulf becomes the aggressor. "Fiend" is also only one of four repeated appellations by which we come to know the creatures in both texts; as I pointed out earlier, after "fiend," the three most common names for Frankenstein's Creature, echoed by Klaeber's translation of *aglæca* in *Beowulf*, are "monster," "demon," and "wretch." As I have already considered the myriad meanings of "monster" and its pertinence to this thesis, I will move on to a discussion of "demon" and "wretch" and their importance to our understanding of the creatures in these texts.

The name, "demon," which appears nineteen times in the 1818 edition of *Frankenstein*, is derived from the Greek *daimon*, which the *OED* describes as a "supernatural being of nature intermediate between that of Gods and men; an inferior divinity, spirit, genius (including the souls or ghosts of deceased persons, *esp*. deified heroes)" ("Demon," def. 1a). Frankenstein's Creature certainly fits the description in terms of his physical strength: he is of "gigantic stature" (*Frankenstein* 48), he moves at "superhuman speed" (65) and he is "capable of scaling the overhanging side of Mont Salêve" (49), like an inverse Hercules. The Creature is not quite human in his abilities or stature, yet neither is he divine, as his enmity to Frankenstein and mankind therefore ensures his enmity to the divine.[75] That he relates himself to Milton's Satan is further indication of this interstitiality, as Satan, a former angel and, thus, a former

divine being, has been cast out of Heaven and is now the enemy of God. The Creature's liminal state is also indicative of his monstrosity, as it specifies the multiplicity of his identity. Lorenzo Lorenzi points out that "[t]he demon was an indeterminate power, whereas a god was a completed individual": to be complete means to be one or the other, not fragmentary of both categories (qtd. in Kearney 31:50).

Graham Allen demonstrates that the Creature's ambivalence is further symbolised by his actual physical makeup in that he is not merely a corpse brought to life, but is instead created from the combined remains of both human and animal bodies ("Jacques Derrida and Monsters" 3):

> I collected bones from charnel houses; and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, I kept my workshop of filthy creation . . . [t]he dissecting room and the *slaughter-house* furnished many of my materials . . . (*Frankenstein* 32, my emphasis).

The Creature's body is not merely a sutured patchwork of human remains, but is a hybrid form of human and animal parts that come from both "charnel houses" and the "slaughter-house." Anne K. Mellor is therefore mistaken when she writes that "Mary Shelley saw the creature as potentially monstrous, but she never suggested that he was anything other than fully human" (*Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* 63). Because the Creature is hybridised, he is, by definition, a monster. Basing his work on the Aristotelian law of non-contradiction, Allen writes that "we do not normally expect a human being also to be a dog, or a cat also to be in some way a fish. Even if all human beings, all dogs and all cats are hugely different, there are, we would want to say, limits beyond which species cannot cross" (2). Yet, he explains, much of our DNA is shared with those very animals from which we would like to differ

ourselves, where "[n]inety-nine percent of our genome is shared with chimpanzees" (2: qtg. Jamie Shreeve). Through language, we make animals our Other, performatively constituting them as something outside of humanity, where the very definition of "inhuman" spells out what we expect from ourselves as well as what we expect of our Others: inhuman, meaning "destitute of natural kindness or pity; brutal, unfeeling, cruel" ("inhuman" def. 1a) . As we share so much on a cellular level, animals are also literally in-human: what constitutes our bodies also constitutes theirs, and the gulf that separates us Symbolically is largely made up of words.

As a body that is made from both animal and human parts, Frankenstein's Creature is dangerous not only because his body includes parts of the animal Other, but because it is "a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash [the] distinctions" between the superior human and the inferior animal (Cohen 6). Hybridity reflects "a human preoccupation with retaining mastery over the animal kingdom," refusing to acknowledge that humans form part of that kingdom (Christopher Dell 115). Similarly, in being constituted as "demon," the Creature is not only a human-animal hybrid, but a hybrid force of good and evil, somewhere between divinity and monstrosity: the very liminality of his position further constitutes the Creature as monstrous as he becomes by this definition undefinable. Allen believes that this hybridity is symptomatic of the Creature's humanity, where to be human means to be always already divided in oneself:

> [l]ike the De Laceys in relation to the wider human society, the creature, reading Goethe's *Werter*, finds himself 'similar, yet at the same time strangely unlike the beings concerning whom I read, and to whose conversations I was a listener'. If human beings are essentially ambivalent, a mixture of good and evil, rational and yet irrational,

> virtuous and yet corrupt, then this sense of being 'similar' and yet 'unlike' is in fact an accurate impression. You cannot simply be *like* creatures who are so radically divided within themselves, since there is not a singular essence or characteristic to uncomplicatedly resemble or from which to differ (*Mary Shelley*, original emphasis, qtg. *Frankenstein* 27-8:86).

However, I find that human hybridity is symptomatic of *our* monstrosity, rather than the other way around. This view opens the possibility not just for the comprehension of monsters but for our assimilation by them. By being uncategorisable events, monsters change the shape of the world in order to be understood: their hybridity challenges order and thus calls Symbolic difference into question and we become hybrid because *they* are hybrid.

Frankenstein's Creature physically embodies the ambivalence of the human psyche in his very genetic makeup, reminding us that as human animals we are also always already genetically Other, down to the very cells from which we are built. Allen points out that perhaps this is why Frankenstein uses so many monikers to describe the Creature, even as he simultaneously refuses him a legitimate proper name: because the Creature is not "one" means that he requires many names to describe his multiplicitous identities ("Jacques Derrida and Monsters" 4). Refusing the Creature a proper name means that Frankenstein does not view him as a legitimate member of the community of men; indeed, his actions in the novel confirm his complete disregard for the Creature's place in society, and clearly demonstrate the objectification of the scientific gaze. That Frankenstein instead chooses to address the Creature with a series of appellations that are tantamount to abuse[76] illustrates the taxonomical difference with which Frankenstein desires to separate himself from the Creature. However, his assorted use of names and of "demon"

challenges the binary code he imagines to divide himself from the Creature, as this points to the multiplicity of the Creature's identity: in a binary system, One is separate from Other, the Other cannot already be Other to himself. The deconstruction of this binary by signifier also reveals that Frankenstein's identity is *also* always already Other: the Creature's monstrosity rubs off on him and he becomes aghast at the former self that so willingly wrought the Creature in the first place. The hybridity of the "I" is further demonstrated by a second definition of "demon": the *OED* also defines "demon" as a spirit, usually of the deceased, something that returns to haunt the living. The Creature, whose body is comprised of the decomposing flesh of the dead, certainly haunts the living Frankenstein, and he does this literally, by following him to the ends of the earth and, metaphysically, through Frankenstein's fear of what he may have unleashed upon the world. Although the Creature is composed of the dead, Frankenstein's alchemy makes him a living being, and one whose bodily existence is by its very composition abject: "[t]he corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection" (*Powers of Horror* 4).

He is, however, made incorporeal by the designation "demon," and this is further compounded by the other appellations by which Frankenstein refers to him, including "spectre" (37) "spirit" (49) and "vampire" (49). These descriptions of his ghostliness, as well as his patch-worked body, make him a hybrid mix of corporeality and incorporeality, which Kristeva writes is a condition of abjection: "[e]lusive, fleeting, and baffling as it is, that non-object [the abject] can be grasped only as a sign. It is through the intermediary of a *representation*, hence a *seeing*, that holds it together" (46, original emphases). As I have said before, to be a monster means existing as sign, monstratively

manifested through combined performative forces. Here, Kristeva views representation constructed solely by the gaze, but representation is also produced by discourse, where names, proper or not, are aphorisms of the larger discourse that serves to classify bodies according to a patriarchal and heteronormative hierarchy.

The ambiguous mix of corporeality and immateriality that is written across the Creature's body is also manifested in the descriptions given to Grendel and his Mother in *Beowulf*. Heaney's translation of the lines of the poem in which we first encounter Grendel reads: "Grendel was the name of this grim demon *haunting* the marches, marauding round [sic] the heath and the desolate fens" (Heaney 102-4, my emphasis). This translation, while not necessarily inaccurate, takes certain liberties by adding the concept of haunting through the description of Grendel as ghost. Untranslated, this line reads: "*wæs se grimma gæst Grendel haten, mære mearc-stapa, se þe moras heold, fen ond fæsten*" (102-4). Here, the poet names Grendel a "*grimma gæst*," which can be literally translated as "grim ghost." Heaney instead refers to Grendel as a "grim demon" whose ghostliness is signified through his haunting. What is more, "*gæst*" also means "spirit," a term that is used as an appellation for God, as in "holy spirit," as well as meaning "guest" (hence the modern similarity between "ghost" and "guest"). Neither of these uses signify haunting in the sense in which Heaney has used it.

That they are specifically marches that Grendel haunts in Heaney's translation is important, as well as being a particularly clever rendition of the original meaning. Grendel's monstrosity is not reduced to mere ghostliness in this line (translated or not), and this is because of his positioning: Grendel is a

"*mearc-stapa*," a "march-stepper" or a "border-wanderer." The marches that Heaney retains in his translation are border lands, lands that lie in a state of liminality with regard to the laws of men, because borders are areas that in Anglo-Saxon England remain regions of disputed ownership (Noetzel 107). Grendel therefore wanders in areas that are lawless, slinking around the edges of the map, neither belonging to the world the Anglo-Saxons inhabit nor to the world of their enemies. Heaney's interpretation is not inappropriate, as it is not the translation that first calls the corporeality of Grendel into question: the poet's description of Grendel in these lines is "*grimma gæst*" (102) and both Grendel and his Mother are referred to as "*gæst*," "*ellor-gæstas*" (as in 1349) or "*ellor-gast*" (as in 807).[77] Both creatures, it would seem, take the form of immaterial spirits, ghosts or apparitions. We also know, however, that both Grendel and his Mother have material bodies, as Beowulf fights both of them in physical combat and because both of them can be and are eventually killed by Beowulf. Andy Orchard writes that "[w]hat bursts into Heorot is not a nightmare, but a monstrous terror made flesh" (37), suggesting that while Grendel certainly embodies the stuff of nightmares, he is also corporeal. Through the various descriptions of Grendel and his Mother and the borderlands they inhabit, it can be established that they are neither *and* both material bodies and immaterial spirits, which places them between ontological categories. That they are also referred to as demons in both translations of the text (Heaney's and Fulk's) means that they are further constructed as ambivalent creatures whose ontological status remains liminal.

Finally, the term "wretch," which Frankenstein uses to define his creation and which Klaeber uses as a translation of *aglæca* also has its roots in

Old English: "wretch" comes from the Old English, *wrecca*, which, as well as describing an unfortunate person, also means "[o]ne driven out of or away from his native country; a banished person; an exile" (*OED*, def. 1). That Grendel and his Mother are located as "*mearc-stapan*" (1348), those who wander the borders of legitimate realms, is because they are exiled from these territories by virtue of their inability to assimilate. These creatures cannot be assimilated by Anglo-Saxon society because of their Otherness, which is explained in part by an early depiction of Grendel as one of "*Caines cynne*" (107) or "among the race of Cain" (trans. Fulk), the very same Cain who committed the first murder in the Old Testament. According to the book of *Genesis*, Cain's punishment for killing his brother is that he is banished to the land of Nod to forever wander the desert in atonement for his crime. For an Anglo-Saxon audience, the idea of exile is worse than death,[78] first because while there can be honour in death there is none in banishment, and also because the focus of heroic life is on the mead hall (Hugh Magennis *Images of Community in Old English Poetry* 35).

The mead hall forms the centre of the community, both physically and conceptually (Magennis 35-6): it is where the warriors feast after battle, their king distributing gifts to those who have fought valiantly (as in *Beowulf* lines 80-1, 491-8, 611-28 and 991-1250 especially) and, it is here that the expected roles of young men and women are communicated through song and poetry. The mead hall symbolises the heart of the Scylding community, so when Grendel (and, later, his Mother) attacks the hall (Heorot) he is in fact attacking everything this community stands for. As I already pointed out, in each battle that Beowulf fights the interloper is subverted, until it transpires that Beowulf himself becomes the trespassing foe who "steadily shifts from a primarily

defensive role to an aggressive one" (Orchard 29): while Grendel seeks carnage by intruding upon Heorot, his Mother only intrudes to avenge her son; Beowulf then becomes the interloper when he pursues Grendel's Mother to her own lair and again when he encroaches on the dragon's cave. To become the intruder is to become the exile, where the exile is the unwelcome guest par excellence. The intruder is never welcome and his/her place is always on the outside, looking in at what s/he cannot have or be a part of.

For Grendel and his Mother, that essentially means not being a part of the known world; for Beowulf it (eventually) means death, which is itself not a part of the known world.[79] Grendel and his Mother are also excluded from the men of Heorot taxonomically, which means that they only have each other, and no mead hall with songs and stories regaling their heroic feats, no loving lord to give them riches, no *freoðuwebbe* to hand them cups of mead, and, significantly, no male authority to guard them from Beowulf's attack. In an earlier chapter I discussed Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's analysis of Grendel's pain at hearing the music coming from Heorot: this pain, as Cohen explains, is derived from his exclusion from the hall and what it represents –family and companionship. In *Frankenstein*, the Creature is also excluded from companionship, but specifically from having family, others of his *kind*. Because of this, he is effectively in exile, since, like an exile, he has no-one with whom to relate his experiences (Allen, for example, reads the text(s) of *Frankenstein* as the profound desire for friendship[80]). The Creature is also banished from the realm of humanity for, although he may resemble us, his stature frightens any humans he encounters in the novel, including Victor's younger brother, William, who becomes the Creature's first victim (*Frankenstein* 45).

Writing *Frankenstein* in the wake of the French Revolution and as a student and inheritor of both her parents' idealised visions of the future, Shelley's novel questions the role of responsibility in friendship and kinship, or the brotherhood (*fraternité*) that was expressed by followers of the Revolution. David A. Hedrich Hirsch explains that the kind of "[m]etaphorical brotherhood" that was expressed by advocates of the Revolution is dangerous because it "threatens to dissolve the naturalness of literal, descent-based concepts of kith, kin, and kind," demanding of humanity equal treatment for strangers as for family ("Liberty, Equality, Monstrosity: Revolutionizing the Family in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*"118). This means that the unwelcome guest must now be welcomed with open arms, whether or not s/he poses the possibility for eating one out of house and home, or, more ominously, of actually imbibing his/her host. Shelley's novel epitomises the deep ambivalence of this democratic model of hospitality by presenting us with the arrival of such a guest and the repulsion with which he is treated upon his arrival into the world of men. Frankenstein also eventually comes to embody the wretchedness of the exile, as his pursuit of the Creature for the deaths of William, Henry, Justine, and Elizabeth leads him far from the company of humanity. That he imposes exile upon himself during the period in which he constructs the Creature is curious, because it is suggested that he actually shirks the company of his peers, preferring to keep his own company: " . . . the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seen for so long a time" (*Frankenstein* 33). Creating the Creature finally ensures the fulfilment of this

wish, as his family and companions are either killed by the Creature or die from natural causes (his mother from illness and his father from a broken heart).

Exile and exclusion are also not limited to the "monsters" in *Beowulf*. Orchard points out that Beowulf is also "described as a 'wretched and solitary figure' (*earm anhaga*, line 2368), a term which might have well been used of Grendel, the 'wretch' (*earmsceapan*, line 1351) twice described as a 'solitary traveller' (*angenga*, lines 165 and 449)" (*Pride and Prodigies* 32). The wretchedness of Grendel, and thus of Beowulf, is attributed by Orchard to their loneliness and singularity; both Grendel and Beowulf are remarkably different from the men of Heorot, which is precisely what makes one a hero and the other a monster, and which is why we remember their names. Fulk translates the description for Grendel, "*angenga*" (165 and 449), as "loner," while Heaney takes a more poetic route and writes that Grendel's conflict with the Scyldings is a "lonely war" (165), and that if he wins in his battle with Beowulf, Grendel will feed on Beowulf "alone" (449). While Orchard describes Grendel as a "wretch" (*earmsceapan* 1351), Fulk writes that he "trod the paths of exile" and Heaney that he "moves beyond the pale." What each translation agrees upon is that Grendel is a solitary figure who wanders the heaths.

Conclusion

The impression we are left with of the creatures in *Beowulf* and *Frankenstein*, whether due to authorial intent, creative interpretation, or the loss or change of meaning of words, becomes more complex on a closer inspection of lexical choice (authorial or translatory). Where, at first, their monstrosity seems taxonomic or biological, what it fact makes Grendel, his

Mother, and Frankenstein's Creature monstrous is that they are linguistically constituted in this way. The speech acts that make up the monsters' "names" act more as categories than familial signifiers, and, certainly in Shelley's Creature's case, while perhaps only arguably in the case of Grendel and his Mother, are intended to indicate their exclusion from humanity. Most interestingly of all, particularly with regard to its significance to this thesis, is the circularity of the term "monster," which, using Cohen's phrase, acts as a "third-term supplement" to temporarily designate the as yet unnameable (*Monster Theory* 6-7). No other term in the English language seems to function as this kind of "stand-in" or supplement for something we do not yet have a name for. What is equally remarkable is the monster's ability to mutate that which it comes in contact with, so that it might assimilate rather than be assimilated: where we might monstratively constitute the monster, s/he, in turn, will mutate into Becoming-monster. The following two chapters are case studies that exemplify the monstrativity of linguistic and bodily acts in its relation to the contagion that is our Becoming-monster through literature.

Chapter Four: "Butterfly" and the Monstrous Orient: David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*

Introduction: The Monstrative and David Henry Hwang's M. Butterfly

Premiering in Washington, DC in February of 1988, David Henry Hwang's play, *M. Butterfly*, was written in response to a real-life case of mistaken gender identity, retelling the story of French diplomat, Bernard Boursicot's affair with Chinese opera singer and spy, Shi Pei Pu, who, after more than 40 years, was revealed to be a man. In its retelling of the affair, *M. Butterfly* demonstrates the intensity of monstrative (speech) acts, which have the power to create monsters because of their basis in self-perpetuated mythologizing, but which also provides a model for their deconstruction. The play is closely based on the Boursicot-Shi affair, presenting the tale of French diplomat, Rene Gallimard and his tryst with Chinese actor, Song Liling, who exploits Gallimard's feeble grasp on reality in order to spy for communist China. The real-life events that led to the trial and incarceration of both Boursicot and Shi in 1986 have never been fully disclosed by either party and have compelled followers of the trial to wonder what it was that made Boursicot believe that Shi was a woman for the twenty years that their affair lasted. In the play's notes, Hwang explains that he realised almost immediately what it was that Boursicot thought he had found in Shi, and that was the living embodiment of Madame Butterfly (author's notes 86), the titular character of Giacomo Puccini's famous opera (1903).

M. Butterfly combines the narratives of the opera and the Boursicot-Shi affair not just to explain how and why Boursicot could be so easily manipulated by the Chinese spy but to deconstruct the monstrative forces that created the fiction with which he had been duped. This chapter examines these forces in order to develop the category of the monstrative, demonstrating that there are various types of acts that can be named monstrative because of their performative ability to create monstrous Others. The particular monster that I examine in this chapter is the fictional character, Butterfly, who was first given "body" by Puccini's opera[81] and who is embodied by the play's two protagonists. Butterfly is monstrous because she is a sign of Oriental Otherness, which means that I start this chapter with an analysis of a specific type of monstrative discourse, that which Edward Said names "Orientalism." Explaining how Orientalism is monstrative, that its discursive use is a performative act that creates monsters, I show that it is a discourse that relies on the gaze and recognisability in order to work, which itself is based on a binary system always already in motion. This analysis paves the way for a close examination of the particular names that the bodies in the play come to embody, where these names are aphoristic of the larger discourse of Orientalism and thus the power relations between those who are named and those who have the power to name.

This leads to a detailed analysis of what the name does in its utterance: it is, as I have already shown in an earlier chapter, constitutional, but in the utterance of a name that is not "proper" or "legitimate," it can also inflict the bearer with linguistic injury. This argument thus develops the conceptual slippage between linguistic and bodily injury that was initiated in the last

chapter and which Butler examines in *Excitable Speech*, where I analyse not just the ability of words to wound but the ability of physical injury to act as discourse, to have as its raison d'être the constitution of the Other through injury. I continue to use *M. Butterfly* as a textual example of monstrative acts, demonstrating that monstrative acts do not only take a linguistic form but are also manifested as physical violence, where both kinds of acts have the same effect on identities. From this, I will turn to an inquiry as to how the monstrative acts in the play are deconstructed, where I assess the structural flaw of both performative and monstrative acts and which, in turn, deconstructs the binary that Austin inaugurates between "serious" and "non-serious" acts. As such, I argue that the "unhappy performatives" that Austin dismisses for their "failure" to properly enact the intended performative, while not producing the intended act are not unproductive either. Thus, I explore what *is* created by those acts in the play that Austin would see as "miscarriages," and how these acts may be used to deconstruct the phallogocentric, heteronormative, and racist premises of monstrative discourse. Furthermore, because *M. Butterfly* is a play, it is already a form of discourse that Austin would find to be "non-serious," which means that the production of performative acts in the play, whether or not they perform the intended act, irrupt Austin's distinction by having effects in the "real" world. This means that the "miscarried" performatives in the play affect bodies outside the play.

One of the ways that bodies are affected (or infected, if you will) is through the moment of the monstrous birth of the self that Gallimard enacts by becoming Butterfly, which, I will argue, is analogous to the moment of recognising the anamorphic image. As I argued in my first chapter, recognising

the anamorphic image for what it is rather than what it appears to be requires a shift in perspective, so that the viewer literally puts him-/herself in the position of the object to properly see it. The moment of recognition is a birth of the self, as the viewer becomes the object by changing his/her position. In *M. Butterfly*, the monstrous anamorphic image is Butterfly, who Gallimard must Become in order to finally see Song for who he really is, a man who manipulated him with the intent to dominate him in every way possible. The anamorphic image is a compelling metaphor for the moment of realisation of the self-as-Other, because its operation rests on the constitutional properties of the gaze. This is part of the reason for choosing *M. Butterfly* as a textual example of the monstrative, as the gaze, while playing a crucial part in the sexualisation of the female image for the purposes of feminine subjugation, is also of fundamental importance to the constitution of a feminized Oriental Other. The anamorphic image is thus an important visual metaphor for the development of the monstrativity of the constitutional gaze, as it explains how the gaze creates monsters.

Orientalism and the Monstrativity of Discourse and the Gaze

As Hwang explains in his notes following the play, Boursicot's apparent confusion with regard to his lover's anatomy stemmed from "the fact that he had never seen his 'girlfriend' naked" (Notes 85). A *New York Times* article quotes Boursicot's own admission of "his sexual misidentification of Mr. Shi," stating that "Mr. Boursicot said their meetings had been hasty affairs that always took place in the dark. 'He was very shy,' Mr. Boursicot said. 'I thought it was a Chinese custom'" ("France Jails 2 in Odd Case of Espionage"). Hwang writes that "this is not a Chinese custom, that Asian women are no more shy

with their lovers than are women of the West . . . [and] that Bouriscot's [sic] assumption was consistent with a certain stereotyped view of Asians as bowing, blushing flowers" (Notes 85). *M. Butterfly* points out the flaw in this logic by critiquing the West's relationship with the East, demonstrating that the concept of a gender binary does not merely mirror the power dichotomy of Occident and Orient, but is played out in tandem with it, so that the East comes to symbolise femininity and the West masculinity. There is, therefore, a history of the East being set up as delicate, submissive, and mysterious, an enigmatic "nature" for Western science to discover, where the West has concurrently been portrayed as strong, dominant, and rapacious. The play's "female" lead, Song, demonstrates this in 3.1, stating that the West's masculinity is symbolised by its "big guns, big industry, big money." At the same time as subverting these binaries, Hwang also problematizes the simplicity implied by the gay/straight binary, emphasising that there is much more to the performativity of desire than genital reality. The subversion and obfuscation of opposite pairs is also underlined by textual form, as theatre necessarily stages the layered meanings of the verb "to act." From its opening pages, then, the play draws one's attention to the combination of binary pairs and the discourse that is used to inaugurate and perpetuate their economy.

A large part of this discourse is what Edward Said refers to as "Orientalism," a "style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and . . . 'the Occident'" (*Orientalism* 2). Such a distinction takes the form of binary pairs, like those between other ontological categories, male/female, gay/straight and so on. Said writes that this distinction is the initial point at which discourse on "the Orient" is formed

(2), discourse that has as its focus the descriptive constitution of "the Orient," which makes Orientalism a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3). This domination and authority works through discursive practices that hinge on difference, much as narratives concerning women's roles have used gender difference as a starting point from which to launch the detailed inauguration and perpetuation of feminine subordination. Orientalism is a discourse, one that perpetuates the political subservience of "Oriental" countries and the dominance of Western cultural constructions of the East as a geographical, cultural, and political space. In his end notes, Hwang explains that he uses the term ""Oriental" specifically to denote an exotic or imperialistic view of the East" (85), which signifies a category that has been created from outside the cultural and geographical spaces this discourse determines, and that it is wielded by a violent Western authority. Iain Chambers explains that the constitutional discursive practices of imperialism were fuelled in part by "the spreading power of writing secured through the rise of the mass medium of print," writing which assured its authority through a "self-assured tone, critical distance and academic or 'scientific' neutrality . . . that purports to describe and explain the world [and which] flowed without interruption towards meaning" ("Signs of Silence, Lines of Listening" 47).

What is more, Orientalist discourse works in tandem with the gaze, which Said corroborates when he writes that the "Orient" is one of the West's "deepest and most recurring *images* of the Other" (*Orientalism* 1, my emphasis). The "Orient" is an image fabricated from disparate Asian aesthetic objects, including stylized artwork and everyday cultural artefacts, as well as the flora

and fauna native to the "Orient." Each of these objects, plants, and animals, as well as the ethnic features of "Orientals" build a tableau of images that perpetuate the narratives of exoticism, adventure, and danger posed by Orientalism, serving as a further constitutional tool of this discourse. In his guiding notes to the play, Hwang suggests that for future productions of the play the set and costumes should reflect this aesthetic: "[w]e in the West have a certain 'vision of the Orient' which revels in exotica and lush beauty . . . it seems to me more subversive to present this *chinoiserie* in its full glory, and then to question the reasons for the audience taking pleasure" (90). The kind of pleasure that Hwang mentions here is scopophilic, pleasure that fetishizes according to the gaze, and which, in turn, is intertwined with an Orientalist narrative that constitutes this aesthetic not just as exotic and alluring, but as shy, submissive, intuitive, and quasi-magical.

Hwang requires his audience to question the scopophilic satisfaction that they derive from watching the play, not merely to recognise the imperialist discourse that the play deconstructs, but to understand the interweaving of various discourses of power that are at play within Orientalism. What I mean by this is that Orientalist discourse does not only classify according to race or ethnicity, but, because it is articulated by authorities that already have patriarchal power, as well as having had economic and technological advantages that their various colonies in the Far and Middle East did not have,[82] Orientalism combines discourses of racial superiority with misogyny and heteronormativity. Orientalism is thus not only racist, in that it presupposes a hierarchical "value" for ethnically diverse groups, but is also phallogocentric, patriarchal, and heteronormative. The interdependency of authoritative

discourses is entrenched in the historicity of the metaphorical associations between racist, sexist, and heteronormative discourses, which is played out in the various repetitions the characters of *M. Butterfly* embody. Hwang achieves this by simply exchanging the material sex expected of the bodies playing masculine and feminine parts. In an earlier chapter, I analysed Grendel's Mother masculine performance in *Beowulf*; that I could do so rests on the assumption that gender exists as a binary, where masculinity and femininity are opposing styles of identity practice. If we employ Butler's characterisation of gender as a distinct style of identity practice that does not hinge upon biological sex, that certain features can be considered feminine or masculine is decided on according to material markers and thus encoded in practice. To name an act masculine, then, does not mean that the act necessarily follows from a biologically male body; that I name Grendel's Mother's act of vengeance "inappropriately" masculine is because the binary of masculine/feminine has traditionally followed from the binary male/female, where masculine is to male as feminine is to female.

Both *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter* explain that stylistic practices that have been encoded as masculine or feminine are arbitrarily selected to mirror various bodily realities, so that women come to be seen as naturally nurturing and caring because they carry and deliver children, and men come to be seen as protectors because of their physical strength. That either sex can successfully embody attributes considered masculine or feminine is clearly demonstrated in *M. Butterfly*, not only by the acts of Song Liling, who purposefully pretends to be a woman in order to gather intelligence from the play's European protagonist, but that this protagonist, Rene Gallimard, is cast as

feminine by the various events that happen to him in the play. Compounding the subversion of feminine and masculine acts is the destabilization of the West/East boundary, where the feminization of the "Orient" is not only deconstructed by the play's concluding acts but is actively made fun of. For the play to mock the feminization of a racial or ethnic group means that certain structures need to already be in place: the feminine must always already be a sign of difference and one that is treated as abject, while paradoxically regarded with suspicious awe and set up as an object of desire. As I pointed out in an earlier chapter, this contradiction is based on women's capacity to produce children, where their fecundity has been viewed as both magical and dangerous, requiring careful regulation through bodily discipline and the creation of discursive parameters.

The historicity of racial feminization has furthermore complicated the binary categories of masculine and feminine, so that men and women in different racial and ethnic groups are made to embody extreme versions of gendered attributes according to the rhetorical purpose that animates their social existence. Asian men are thus feminized by their comparison to European men, but are represented as hypersexual and dangerous to white women, especially, as Ann Laura Stoler writes, "during real and perceived crises of control" ("Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia" 21).[83] As Stoler points out, the "analytic slippage between the sexual symbols of power and the politics of sex . . . was more than just a convenient metaphor for colonial domination; it was . . . a fundamental class and racial marker implicated in a wider set of relations of power" (15). The "wider set of relations of power" to which Stoler refers includes gender, the oldest,

most entrenched binary hierarchy that has come to be used as a metaphor for race relations. Sau-ling Wong writes that "[e]thnicity is, in some sense, always already gendered, and gender always already ethnicized" (qtd. in Wong and Santa Ana "Gender and Sexuality in Asian American Literature" 171: 126): while I agree with the first part of Wong's statement that racial power relations hinge upon an already established gender binary, stating that gender is always already ethnicized is problematic because the subject first comes into contact with an Other who may differ sexually but does not differ ethnically.[84] While Orientalist representations have cast Asian men as either effeminate or dangerously hypersexual, Asian women, particularly East Asian women, have been portrayed either as submissive beauties or aged, nagging wives, where appellations such as "lotus blossom" and "dragon lady" perpetuate these depictions (Wong and Santa Ana 185). In the following section, I analyse some of these appellations to demonstrate the monstrativity of this discourse, but for now I make explicit the monstrativity of Orientalism itself.

Orientalism is clearly a monstrative discourse, one that works in tandem with the gaze to denote Asian bodies as signs of Oriental Otherness. These bodies become signs of the Orient by way of recognisable ethnic and cultural markers, which makes the existence of "Orientals" possible "not only by virtue of being recognized, but, in a prior sense, by being recognizable" (Butler *Excitable Speech* 5, her emphasis). While the gaze ensures the recognisability of Oriental Otherness, Orientalism equates this recognisability with narratives of "natural" subservience, so that recognisable aesthetic features become signs of this clearly fictional stereotype. However, the pervasiveness of Orientalist discourse is also unmistakable, which is precisely why Gallimard believes

Song's masquerade in the play, and why the real-life Boursicot believed that Shi Pei Pu was a woman for almost forty years. The signs of Oriental submissiveness, femininity, and mystique that *M. Butterfly* plays on are that of Butterfly herself, and, the use of "lotus blossom" as an appellation representative of Asian femininity.

"I am your Butterfly": Naming the Oriental Monster

The stereotypes of Asian femininity that the play repeats exemplify the use of an Asian aesthetic that is interwoven with Orientalist discourse, an interweaving that solidifies the interdependence of the gaze and discourse as constitutional forces. The aesthetic that stereotypes such as "lotus blossom" and "dragon lady" conjure is of Eastern exoticism, which, through language, is intertwined with the twin discourses of fetishism and peril. "Lotus blossom," in particular, signifies what Said refers to as a "detailed logic" that is "governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections" by the West (*Orientalism* 8). The name denotes Asian femininity not only because lotus flowers are beautiful and delicate (and thus Asian women should be beautiful and delicate) but because the history of Chinese patriarchy is carried by this name and affords the one who uses it with the same power by subjugating the one who is named. As Butler writes in *Excitable Speech*, the use of the name, one that is not proper, is "not a momentary happening, but a certain nexus of temporal horizons, the condensation of an iterability that exceeds the moment it occasions" (14), where "lotus blossom" condenses a history not just of naming Asian women but of centuries of physical trauma inflicted on Chinese women's bodies. While this

is not immediately obvious to those unfamiliar with Chinese cultural practices, the fact remains that "lotus blossom" carries with it the violence of Chinese patriarchal control by condensing its history for practicing foot binding, the effects of which were often referred to as "lotus feet" for imitating the shape of a lotus flower bud.

Reaching its height in popularity during the Song Dynasty,[85] foot binding resulted in the severe deformity of women's feet and a lifetime of pain and disability, but became popular because it decreased foot size, as well as making Chinese women sway and hobble in a fashion that was considered desirable by Chinese men. Importantly, foot binding also signified class status, as only richer families could afford the loss of a daughter's physical labour. Bound feet thus came to represent an ideal form of femininity, because it not only signified an upper class sexual fetish, but the submissiveness and obedience of these prized brides, as a woman with "lotus feet" was unable to run away from either her father or her husband and was therefore literally imprisoned within her own home. The term "lotus blossom" has thus come to imply the submissiveness and obedience thought to be a "natural" state of Chinese women, and of all East Asian women for their ethnic similarities and the Western propensity to confuse and conflate "Oriental" cultural practices. The colonial control of the Far East by European imperialism in the nineteenth century resulted in the exchange of one patriarchy by another, so that Asian women became the fetishized objects of white men's desires. The use of "lotus blossom" to denote the fetishized bodies of Asian women has thus become aphoristic of imperialist discourse in that it signifies the movement of property from one centre of control to the other, but is also aphoristic of patriarchal discourse because it

signifies the concept of women as property, especially the highly prized fetish that Asian women's bodies came to be.

The term is used twice in *M. Butterfly*, first in 1.8 by Song, when she describes the economy of Asian women's bodies in imperialist China, and then by Toulon, Gallimard's boss, in 2.3, when he learns of Gallimard's affair with Song. Both instances in which the term is used suggest that Asian women are a commodity prized by European men: in 1.8, Song explains that although Chinese men were not allowed into European clubs in imperialist China, women, "especially . . . delicate Oriental wom[e]n" were permitted entry because they were desired by European men. "Could you imagine it otherwise?" she asks of Gallimard, "Clubs in China filled with pasty, big-thighed white women, while thousands of slender lotus blossoms wait just outside the door? Never. The clubs would be empty" (Song 1.8). The sexual commodification of Asian women's bodies is inextricably tied to the perception of their "natural" subordination to men in the use of the name "lotus blossom," which is precisely what Hwang implies through its use in the play. In 2.3, Toulon uses "lotus blossom" to congratulate Gallimard for "keeping a native mistress" who "must be gorgeous," before consulting with Gallimard for his "inside knowledge" on the Chinese position on Vietnam. As such, Gallimard's perceived ownership of Song makes him, in Toulon's eyes, an authority on what the Chinese think – an irony that is not lost on the play's audience who know that the Western conflation of this apparent Chinese subordination with a Vietnamese desire to "submit to a greater force" is vastly mistaken. "Lotus blossom," while already injurious for bringing with it the violence associated with the guaranteed subordination of Asian women by Asian men, is made

doubly injurious in its adoption by Western control that already feminises the East. "Butterfly," on the other hand, is a name that reiterates the inauguration of Asian women's subservience to Western men in a move that is simultaneously misogynist and imperialist.

The importance of the construct "Butterfly" to the play is signified not just by its title but by the play's parodic representation of Asian exoticism, surrender, and obedience to Western maltreatment in Puccini's opera, *Madama Butterfly* (1907). "Butterfly" is a specifically Orientalist concept that, while not created by the opera, is perpetuated by its (continued) popularity, where Puccini bases his portrayal of Eastern femininity on a Western perception of "natural" Asian subservience. In Puccini's opera, Cio-Cio-San, or "Butterfly," is purchased by the American sailor, Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, who abandons her and their infant son; arriving back in Japan years later with an American wife, Pinkerton takes the child from Butterfly, who kills herself in disgrace. *M. Butterfly* subverts this narrative arc by ending with the suicide of the disgraced Gallimard, who has been conned by Song into thinking that his lover is a woman who has also given birth to "their" son. Gallimard first meets Song during a private performance of the opera's death scene, during which Song plays Butterfly. Gallimard tells her that he finds her performance "utterly convincing" because "it's the first time [he's] really seen the beauty of the story," explaining that he thinks of Butterfly's death as "a pure sacrifice. He's [Pinkerton's] unworthy, but what can she do? She loves him . . . so much. It's a very beautiful story" (Gallimard 1.6). The "purity" of Butterfly's sacrifice can only transpire because she is specifically an Asian woman; when Song suggests a reversal of the racial binary, the "purity" of the sacrifice sounds utterly ridiculous:

> SONG. Consider it this way: what would you say if a blonde homecoming queen fell in love with a short Japanese businessman? He treats [her] cruelly, then goes home for three years, during which time she prays to his picture and turns down marriage to a young Kennedy. Then, when she learns he has remarried, she kills herself. Now, I believe you would consider this girl to be a deranged idiot, correct? But because it's an Oriental who kills herself for a Westerner –ah! –you find it beautiful. (1.6)

Song's pronouncement foreshadows the eventual "sacrifice" that Gallimard will come to embody at the play's close, where, in place of a "blonde homecoming queen," the white, Western man becomes the "Butterfly" who kills himself for the love of a cad. Thus, the play narrates Gallimard's metamorphosis into "Butterfly," which is animated by a complex layering of monstrative forces hinged upon the monstrosity of the Oriental Other. "Butterfly" is a construct that reiterates the Orientalist assumptions of Puccini's opera, which is that Asian women, and, by extension, all Asians, are naturally submissive, both sexually and politically. *M. Butterfly* reiterates the narrative of Oriental submissiveness in its punishment of Gallimard, simultaneously recasting the white Westerner into the feminised role of "Butterfly," and it achieves this through the use of various monstrative forces that are usually applied to Asian bodies. Orientalist discourse of Asian subservience is condensed in the name "Butterfly," but it is not the only monstrative force at work in the perpetuation of this ideology: in order to make Gallimard "Butterfly," he needs first to be feminised. I will shortly examine the other monstrative forces at work in the play that constitute Gallimard as Butterfly, where now I want to turn briefly to Song's embodiment of the ubiquitous character, which he dons in order to manipulate Gallimard.

That Song can play at being Butterfly is precisely because the foundation of Western racial misogyny is already laid down; as Song quips during the trial scene, " . . . being an Oriental, [means he] could never be completely a man" (3.1). The feminization of the "Orient" is so entrenched in the Western cultural imagination that it takes very little effort from Song, who is already an actor, to convince Gallimard that he is the "perfect woman." The plausibility of Song's performance rests on this cultural construction as well as on the fact that the play is based on the very real life situation that the Boursicot-Shi trial brought to light. What this construction depends on, as Song points out in the trial scene, is that Asians are always already feminized by the Western imagination, which is precisely why both Song and Shi could "get away with" their performances. However, Song does not embody Butterfly the same way that Gallimard comes to by the end of the play; Song is able to discard Butterfly once the purpose of his enactment has been fulfilled, which means that in his conscious performance of the character he never really embodies her to begin with. He does, however, realise that it is only in this incarnation that he is able to seduce Gallimard and thus gain the information he requires for his espionage, where this incarnation is an extreme version of the feminine "virtues" Gallimard desires in a woman. The point is that Song never becomes Butterfly, even if that is how Gallimard and the audience see him to begin with, because we only see him like this to begin with precisely because of the monstrativity of Orientalism.

By the play's close, the audience come to realise that Butterfly is an unrealistic construct, albeit an enduring one, and that the use of her name to describe Asian women is not only monstrative, in that it constitutes them as the sign of Asian subservience and Western dominance, but is also injurious,

because of the linguistic and physical violence that it takes to ensure Western dominance. "Butterfly" is violent not because it restates Western dominance but because it performatively (re)enacts the violence of this dominance, where it "carries within itself the movement of a history that it arrests" (Butler *Excitable Speech* 36). The name (Butterfly) is an aphorism of the history of Western dominance and violence, but, because this history has been documented by the West, the "'pain of violence' is written out of the narrative and forgotten," at least by those whom the name does not affect (Chambers 48). The play thus inflicts Gallimard, who symbolises the West, with the pain of the name, rewriting the historical narrative from the point of view of the injured and thus demonstrating exactly how painful the trauma of Orientalism is. The pain of linguistic injury, as Butler shows in *Excitable Speech*, is that it re-enacts the physical violence exerted by dominant forces. However, at the same time as speech performs violence, physical acts of violence can also act as discourse, which means that monstrative acts include acts exerted by the body.

Speech as Acts, Acts as Speech: Feminization, Queering, and the Violence of Rape, Castration, and Sterilisation

That Gallimard can become Butterfly means that, like his Asian counterpart, he must first be feminised. The play achieves this through the monstrative forces of rape, castration, sterilisation, and the queering of Gallimard's body, acts which all work to make Gallimard feminine and thus strip him, and the West that he symbolizes, of his privilege. These forces require discourse to inaugurate and repeat their ideology, simultaneously acting *as* this

discourse, as bodily equivalents of the discourse that creates the Other as other to herself. Butler writes that

> [i]f we understand the force of the name to be an effect of its historicity, then that force is not the mere causal effect of an inflicted blow, but works in part through an encoded memory or a trauma, one that lives in language and is carried in language. The force of the name depends not only on its iterability, but on a form of repetition that is linked to trauma, on what is, strictly speaking, not remembered, but relived, and relived in and through the linguistic substitution for the traumatic event" (*Excitable Speech* 36).

If "Butterfly" is a "linguistic substitution" for and repetition of imperial injury, then bodily violence such as rape, castration, and sterilisation, while certainly performing injury, also act as physical signifiers of the discursive practices that give certain bodies the power to injure others. My argument here is that bodies which are injured through the physical acts of (particularly) rape and castration are made feminine by these acts, because the feminine is always already represented and understood as the weaker half of a binary pair, where its weakness is used to justify the use of dominance and force. The bodies that perform these acts of violence are thus simultaneously made masculine through the act itself, where violent bodily acts, like interpellative language, performatively produce the subject's masculinity through the feminisation of the act inflicted on the body of the Other.

If we agree on a binary principle that separates masculinity and femininity as performative acts that can be performed by any body, it then becomes possible to conceive of the feminisation of one body by another having the inverse effect not just of reaffirming but actually producing the masculinity of that other body. In other words, the feminisation of the "Orient" as a political space and of "Orientals" as representative of this space, has also had the equal

effect of masculinising white Westerners, where, as Elaine Kim remarks, "Asian women are only sexual for the same reason that Asian men are asexual: both exist to define the white man's virility and the white race's superiority" (qtd. in Wong and Santa Ana 70:173). In *M. Butterfly*, the affirmation of binary opposites is played out by the masculinisation of the One and the feminisation of the Other, but the materiality of the bodies who enact these effects is reversed. The unfortunate effect of this reversal, however, is the confirmation of feminine denigration, through acts of bodily violence that simultaneously inaugurate and perpetuate this denigration, whether or not the body enacting femininity is biologically female. Thus, while the usually emasculated Queer Asian man is masculinised through the feminisation of the white European man, the feminine, as a conceptual space of Becoming, is still an unoccupiable place of abjection. Acts of violence in the play are comprised of the linguistic injury of being named "Butterfly," but also the bodily trauma of rape, castration, sterilisation, and queering, which are often physical acts, but which also take the form of linguistic acts that perform the same function and therefore have the same effects as their physical counterparts.

In my M. A. thesis, I argued that the flashback scene of Gallimard's first sexual encounter in 1.11 reads like rape, rather than as Andrew Shin views it, which is as a material consummation of homosexual desire ("Projected Bodies in David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* and *Golden Gate*" 185). Stating that "Gallimard clearly occupies the feminine position in this parody of a woman's sexual initiation as the passive, sexually disenfranchised partner" (185), Shin suggests that Gallimard's desire is to be dominated by a man, but this reading rests on the assumption that "the feminine position" is always already beneath

that of a man (sexually or otherwise) and that all women's sexual initiations are disenfranchising. It is not an empowering view of female sexuality or sexual control; in fact, it almost reads as if rape is the "natural" way in which to initiate sex and that feminine consent is irrelevant. The scene is as follows:

> GALLIMARD. You told me to wait in the bushes by the cafeteria that night. The next thing I knew, she was on me. Dress up in the air.
> MARC. She never wore underwear.
> GALLIMARD. My arms were pinned to the dirt.
> MARC. She loved the superior position. A girl ahead of her time.
> GALLIMARD. I looked up, and there was this woman . . . bouncing up and down on my loins.
> MARC. Screaming, right?
> GALLIMARD. Screaming, and breaking off the branches all around me, and pounding my butt up and down into the dirt.
> MARC. Huffing and puffing like a locomotive.
> GALLIMARD. And in the middle of all this, the leaves were getting into my mouth, my legs were losing circulation, I thought, "God. So this is *it*?" (1.11)

The scene reads like a classic case of predatory rape, except that the material sex of attacker and victim are reversed.[86] Isabelle pounces on Gallimard in a public place, a space that has traditionally been associated with a masculine autonomy and, which contrasts with later scenes of sexual privacy in Song's apartment. Space, in fact, plays an important part in *M. Butterfly*, because it not only emphasises the binary opposition of the conceptual spaces of public and private and their association with masculinity and femininity, but of the political spaces of Orient and Occident, which have come to further symbolize the feminine/masculine binary. Space is also a crucial element of what has lately become a hotly debated topic of global discussion: rape. Rape has traditionally been viewed as an act of violence perpetrated in public spaces by strangers to the victim, but its definition is currently under ardent review in the light of various global incidents, which do not easily fit this traditional

representation. I analyse this more closely in the following chapter, which focuses on the monstrativity of rape in the "new" South Africa. The rape scene in *M. Butterfly* closely resembles traditional representations, emphasised by the scene's imagery, where "on me," "pinned," "breaking," and "pounding" paint a scenario of attack rather than of consensual sex. What makes rape monstrative is that it has the effect of situating the victim as the weaker half of a gender binary, where s/he becomes a sign of femininity and Otherness. Rape thus performs the act of putting the victim, as Pamela Cooper writes, "in *her* place" ("Metamorphosis and Sexuality: Reading the Strange Passions of *Disgrace*" 31, my emphasis).

Coupled with the feminisation of the victim, rape also performs the act of masculinising the perpetrator. Because rape is an act of violence that has as its aim the *specifically sexual* subordination of its victim, it performatively constitutes both the victim and the perpetrator according to the violence of its logic, which is that gender is necessarily divided into complementary pairs of submission and dominance. That half of the pair has come to be "feminine" and the other half "masculine" is based on the material reality of physical strength, where the prevailing attitude has been that dominant forces deserve the rewards they reap by virtue of their dominance and their ability to perpetuate violent acts. This is echoed in a number of statements that Gallimard's school friend, Marc, has to say about women in the play. In 1.4, telling Gallimard of the parties he has during the summer, he explains that their late night swimming with girls is a "grab bag," where "You don't have to ask! That's the beauty – don't you see? They don't have to say yes": Marc's attitude reflects rape apology, which consists of discourse that excuses this kind of behaviour for the

belief that women are asking for it and that "no" actually means "yes." Again, in 1.9, when watching Song through her window during a dream sequence, Gallimard admonishes Marc, saying "I won't look. It's not respectful," to which Marc replies "We don't have to be respectful," following this with rape apology that clearly signifies the intersection of gendered denigration with colonial attitudes: "We're foreign devils" (1.9). One can certainly understand this overlap between sexual imagery and imperialist discourse when one considers the shared language used to describe relationships with a similar dialectic of dominance and submission. As Song points out in 3.1, "The West has sort of an international rape mentality towards the East," built on the feminisation of the East but which simultaneously performs the act of feminisation. Ann Laura Stoler explains that "gender inequalities [are] essential to the structure of colonial racism and imperial authority" (13), because the West is already patriarchal and thus uses its self-definition as masculine to feminise those it wants to subject to its control. Control is meted out by physical force such as rape, which is also already sexual, to both inaugurate and support the rhetoric of imperialist patriarchy.

Rape is not just physically violent, its violence is specifically sexual, where its objective is to reaffirm a gender binary that not only injures by definition but situates subjects according to its logic, which, as Butler reminds us, is either "within the possible circuit of recognition [or], accordingly, outside of it, in abjection" (*Excitable Speech* 5). Because rape feminises its victim it also constitutes him/her as abject, as Other to him-/herself. In *M. Butterfly*, the Otherness that Gallimard comes to embody is Butterfly, and his rape by Isabelle is the first physical contribution to this embodiment. The second occurrence of

Gallimard's metamorphosis into the Oriental Other is during a scene in which Renee, his first "extra-extramarital affair," regales him with her views on Western civilisation:

> RENEE. I guess. But, like, it just hangs there. This little . . . flap of flesh. And there's so much fuss that we make about it. Like, I think the reason we fight wars is because we wear clothes. Because no one knows –between the men, I mean –who has the biggest . . . weenie. So, if I'm a guy with a small one, I'm going to build a really big building or take over a really big piece of land or write a really long book so the other men don't know, right? But, see, it never really works, that's the problem. I mean, you conquer the country, or whatever, but you're still wearing clothes, so there's no way to prove absolutely whose is bigger or smaller. And that's what we call civilized society. The whole world run by a bunch of men with pricks the size of pins. (*She exits*.)
> GALLIMARD. (*To us*.) This was simply not acceptable (2.6).

Gallimard is vice-consul of the French embassy in China, at a time in which the US is moving in on Vietnam in an act that has been described as neo-imperialist,[87] and which resulted in unforeseeable losses by the U. S. By delivering this diatribe, Renee calls Gallimard and the government that he represents out for their involvement in the Vietnam War, while concurrently pointing out that the reason for their involvement is a violent attempt at reifying Western masculine superiority.

Renee effectively castrates Gallimard in this scene by comparing phallic lack with imperialist expansion; while he is physically undamaged, the Western investment in masculine superiority and its metaphorical association with colonial force means that Gallimard, and thus the West, is politically gelded by Renee's observations. Gallimard is castrated because Renee's speech is performative: while it does not literally perform the physical act of castration, it has the same effects, which is to emasculate him and, by proxy, the Western world that he represents. This emasculation transpires because of a complex

layer of metaphorical associations between immaterial masculine attributes and the physicality of the male body, where the masculine virility is connected to physical size, especially of the male member. That it is Renee who has this effect on Gallimard is important: Renee is a woman (albeit Western), which means that she should already represent feminine lack herself, but by castrating him through speech, she reaffirms his femininity and her own masculinity. Gallimard even comments on her masculine behaviour after he meets her, asking the audience if it is "possible for a woman to be *too* uninhibited, *too* willing, so as to seem too . . . masculine?" (2.6). Western women's masculinity is part of what drives Gallimard's desire for an Asian woman, because he believes that Asians are already feminine. To be gelded linguistically as Gallimard is by Renee also imitates and subverts the castratory force that is the myth of Oriental diminutiveness, where the power of discourse to create is clearly demonstrated in the continued perpetuation of this myth.

The emasculation of Asian men through their Symbolic castration, monstratively performed through discourse that perpetuates the mythic correlation between masculinity and penis-size, is part of the Orientalist discourse that enabled the colonialist expansion of Western government in the nineteenth-century, also continuing to serve as a powerful metaphor for white male self-assurance in the face of Asian migration to the U. S. This discourse is monstrative because it has ensured that Asian men, particularly East Asian men such as Song in *M. Butterfly*, have become signs of lack, and thus, signs of femininity. This discourse works particularly well as a colonial tool because it prepares the colonial subjects as feminine and thus unable to defend themselves, as well as providing a ready excuse for their exploitation. This

discourse is, in a sense, rape apology, as it provides a neat basis upon which to carry out its plunder of both land and resources. The conceptual slippage between the physical act of castration and the gelding force of imperialism is further played out in the scene during which Toulon informs Gallimard of the U. S. involvement with the assassination of Vietnam's President Diem, during which Song, who is standing upstage, clips the head from a flower. The flower's decapitation indicates the removal of the head of the Vietnamese state, where decapitation and castration are symbolically linked by the psychoanalytic association between these two acts of violence.

For Freud, castration and decapitation find their commonality in the Medusan myth, where the sight of female genitalia invokes the fear of castration in the male subject, effectively forming his subjectivity: "[t]o decapitate = to castrate. The terror of Medusa is thus a terror of castration that is linked to the sight of [the mother's genitals]" ("Medusa's Head" 84). Women, as Hélène Cixous explains, lack this fear: "[t]hough masculine sexuality gravitates around the penis, engendering that centralized body (in political anatomy) under the dictatorship of its parts, woman does not bring about the same regionalization which serves the couple head/genitals" ("The Laugh of the Medusa" 889). As such, feminine castration anxiety finds its form in the fear of decapitation: "[i]f man operates under the threat of castration, if masculinity is culturally ordered by the castration complex, it might be said that the backlash, the return, on women of this castration anxiety is its displacement as decapitation, execution, of woman, as loss of her head" (Cixous "Castration or Decapitation?" 43). Cixous explains that this feminine fear for losing one's head is in fact the fear of losing one's tongue, of one's ability to speak and make a different reality through

feminine discourse, which is precisely what women have suffered through the Law of the Father and their banishment from the Symbolic order ("Castration or Decapitation?" 43-5).

Furthermore, as Sally Robinson points out, castration fear is a masculine fear not for the body but for the preservation of the phallus and what it stands for,[88] which is the control of the Symbolic order and the perpetuation of a phallogocentric economy that values the masculine and derides the feminine ("Misappropriations of the 'Feminine'"49). Discourse such as psychoanalysis, which is an "exclusively masculine theoretical economy" perpetuates the preservation of masculine power by prioritizing "the phallus as standard of meaning and value" (Robinson 49). If the phallus is lacking, as it is in a Freudian and Lacanian view of female sexuality, then it stands to reason that femininity has no value in such an economy. Thus, the decapitation of the Vietnamese state "allowed" by the U. S. neatly sums up the feminization of the Orient by the West, as the use of decapitation through Song's symbolic gesture not only indicates the gelding of Vietnam, but demonstrates the West's regard for the East as always already feminine. Importantly, castrating one's foe leaves them unable to retaliate for raping them, which is precisely the desired effect; moreover, castration constitutes the already feminised rape victim as symbolic of lack, reiterating their femininity. That these acts are instead performed on Gallimard in the play means that the West is symbolically raped and castrated, and thus made feminine. Significantly, his feminisation occurs at the hands of the women with whom he has any form of sexual relationship, including his wife, Helga.

In 2.5, Helga asks Gallimard to visit a fertility specialist, after pointing out that she has been cleared by the same specialist as physically able to bear children. The implication is that Gallimard is infertile, which emasculates him, as masculinity has been traditionally associated with virility and the ability to produce children in abundance. Song knows precisely what to say in order to assure Gallimard of his masculinity and thus procure from him the intelligence she requires as a spy:

> SONG. You men of the West –you're obsessed by your odd desire for equality. Your wife can't give you a child, and you're going to the doctor?
> GALLIMARD. Well, you see, she's already gone.
> SONG. And because this incompetent can't find the defect, you now have to subject yourself to him? It's unnatural.
> GALLIMARD. Well, what is the "natural" solution?
> SONG. In Imperial China, when a man found that one wife was inadequate, he turned to another –to give him his son.
> GALLIMARD. What do you –? I can't . . . marry you, yet.
> SONG. Please. I'm not asking you to be my husband. But I am already your wife.
> GALLIMARD. Do you want to . . . have my child?
> SONG. I thought you'd never ask.
> GALLIMARD. But, your career . . . your–
> SONG. Phooey on my career! That's your Western mind, twisting itself into strange shapes again. Of course I love my career. But what would I love most of all? To feel something inside me –day and night something I know is yours. (*Pause*.) Promise me . . . you won't go to this doctor. Who is this Western quack to set himself as judge over the man I love? I know who is a man, and who is not. (*She exits*.)
> GALLIMARD. (To us.) Dr. Bolleart? Of course I didn't go. What man would? (2.5)

A child, especially a boy, would give Gallimard material "proof" of his masculinity; because Helga's fertility has been confirmed, Gallimard's virility is in question, and thus, so is his masculinity. Song is acutely aware of this as well as her need to reassure Gallimard of his masculinity in order to keep up her charade. This is precisely why, when Gallimard orders her to strip, she tells him that she is pregnant (2.6), explaining to Comrade Chin in the following scene her

reasoning: " . . . Suddenly, it hit me – 'All he wants is for her to submit. Once a woman submits, a man is always ready to become "generous."' . . . And it worked! He gave in! Now, if I can just present him with a baby. A Chinese baby with blond hair –he'll be mine for life!" (2.7). Helga's words have the same effect on Gallimard as Renee's do, they geld him symbolically by calling his virility into question, thereby emasculating him and performing the act of feminization. Song's "pregnancy" reassures Gallimard of his virility, if only briefly, as she undercuts this encouragement in her naming of the child:

> SONG. I'm going to call him "Peepee."
> GALLIMARD. Darling, could you repeat that because I'm sure a rickshaw just flew by overhead.
> SONG. You heard me.
> GALLIMARD. "Song Peepee"? May I suggest Michael, or Stephan, or Adolph? (2.8)

What is implied by this exchange is that the Chinese name Song chooses for the child is effeminate, as it is immediately compared by Gallimard to three Western boys' names that carry with them a long association with masculinity. That Gallimard chooses "Adolph" in particular demonstrates a specific conceptualisation of Western masculinity that is premised on imperial domination and racial superiority.

Gallimard's dislike of the name, "Peepee" is because of its association with a Western colloquialism for urination as well as being a diminutive for the male member. If Gallimard is to embody masculine virility, then his son must also express manliness, down to his very name; because his name echoes Renee's comments on Gallimard's "weenie" (2.6), the child's masculinity is questionable, and, therefore, so is his father's. The masculinity of a boy child acts as an extension of the father's in Western patriarchy, which is precisely

why a male child's effeminacy has historically been a source of shame for his father. This has been particularly true for male children that have expressed a form of sexuality that deviates from heteronormativity, or who have merely appeared to have done so, where behaviour or stylistic acts that have been traditionally associated with femininity have been translated into a sign of same-sex desire. Because gender has been conceived of in binary terms, the expression of desire outside of the heterosexual norm has resulted in the grouping of deviant sexualities according to this imperative, so that identities are constituted as either feminine or masculine despite bodily realities. In other words, homosexuality does not make sense in a binary system until bodily pairs are categorised as either masculine or feminine, which is precisely why lesbians, for example, may find themselves questioned as to who the "man" is in the relationship, even if it is precisely because there is no man in the relationship that it is lesbian at all.

The incongruity of bodily reality and gender performance is often what makes Queer bodies monstrous, where bodies resist the categorisation that a binary gender system attempts to enforce. These bodies become signs of the unrepresentable and thus exist as living signs of their resistance to the Symbolic order. The same incongruity is embodied by Gallimard, who, having been feminised by each encounter he has with women in the play through rape, castration, and sterilisation, is once more made feminine by his relationship with Song. As Song is, in fact, a man, the nature of his relationship with Gallimard is such that Gallimard is queered by his affair with Song. It is important to note that Song is not trans*; he does not identify as a woman but, instead, consciously performs this role for the purpose of spying. Song's

embodiment of Butterfly thus constitutes a theatrical performance in the purest sense of the term, which is that it is done with the intent to portray someone else, as she remarks to Gallimard: "I'm an artist, Rene. You were my greatest . . . acting challenge" (2.7). As such, Song does not really embody Butterfly at all, but only wears her like a cloak; embodiment suggests a Becoming that cannot be discarded quite as easily as Song discards Butterfly, which is precisely why it is Gallimard who finally comes to embody her.

The queering of Gallimard through Song's exposure as a man is also indicative of the transfer of Orientalism to white queer desire. Wong and Santa Ana describe the emergence of a queer white privilege that translates itself as a desire to dominate a group already feminised and fetishized by white masculinity. This is commented on in particular, they write, by Asian American gay male writing, which criticises the white fetish for the fictional role of "rice queens," who are seen as submissive "bottoms" in relation to white male "tops" (Wong and Santa 205). As such, *M. Butterfly* has received criticism from some writers who view it as a "fulfillment of white male homosexual fantasy," (qtd. by Wong and Santa Ana 210: xiii) particularly with regard to Gallimard's position during coitus, which Song suggests during his trial: "Of course we did enjoy more . . . complete union, and I suppose he *might* have wondered why I was always on my stomach…" (3.1, emphasis in the original). It is only fair, however, to remember that Gallimard does not know that Song is a man, and thus the fantasy of white homosexual dominance cannot properly be played out: homosexual dominance is not the issue here, as Gallimard thinks he is dominating an Asian woman. To call Gallimard's sexual union with Song homosexual is to deny the brilliance of Song's performance as well as the

philosophical message of the play, which is that immaterialities are no more or less "real" than the physical reality of bodies.

The result of Song's metamorphosis is that Gallimard is queered by the nature of their past relationship, meaning that he is emasculated further, even if the positioning of their sexual union says otherwise. In the case of the rape scene with Isabelle, bodily position is what emasculates Gallimard, but in his affair with Song, it is his inability to recognise bodily reality that he is feminized. Each sexual liaison he has brings Gallimard closer to Butterfly, but not as he wishes: instead of dominating the prized sexual Other, Gallimard comes to embody her. Butterfly is monstrous precisely because she is a sign of Asian passivity, femininity, and exoticism, not an actual complex human identity. She is purely Symbolic; she exists only as a symbol that ensures the perpetuation of Western masculine dominance, alluded to by Gallimard at the play's close when he says to the disrobed Song: "You, if anyone, should know – I am pure imagination. And in imagination I will remain" (3.2). The "I" that Gallimard utters here is Butterfly's, as he has now completed his transformation, confirming this embodiment with his last words: "My name is Rene Gallimard – also known as Madame Butterfly" (3.3). That he claims to be both Rene Gallimard and Madame Butterfly is not an incongruity on his part but the embodied reality of Otherness, of living as Other to oneself, where his "truth is a foreign body inhabiting [him], speaking from within, but finding articulation only through externalisations that are no longer true renditions of the feminine condition but are only true because the act of public performance performs them as truths" (Elisabeth Bronfen "Performing Hysteria: Anne Sexton's 'Business' of Writing Suicide"131). This Other is, moreover, monstrous, as she

exists as pure representation even as she takes solidity through Gallimard's performance.

Gallimard's Becoming-Other-to-himself can only take place through the repetition of acts that have in the first instance produced Butterfly. Butterfly exists, even if only in an immaterial form, because of the repeated feminisation of the "Orient," carried out through the monstrative acts of discourse, rape, castration, sterilisation, and queering. Like performative acts, monstrative acts in *M. Butterfly* only produce the effect of feminisation because of their citationality: these acts repeat prior acts of domination and control already perpetrated by the masculine One against the feminine Other, thus repeating this binary logic. In the following section, I explain how the iterability of monstrative and performative acts, their propensity to mutate, not only ensures their continued survival but also produces the possibility of their de(con)struction. I demonstrate that the possibility of deconstruction lies in the production of what Austin names "unhappy performatives," or performatives that misfire because they are enacted by "inappropriate" bodies or because they are used "non-seriously," where I show that unhappy performatives do not fail but produce something other than what was intended. *M. Butterfly* is an excellent example to use because it takes the form of the "non-serious" that Austin so dearly wishes to separate from the "everyday" use of performative utterances, while its content shows that "inappropriately" performed acts also produce something, not just in the world of the play but, also, in the "real" world.

The Unhappy Performative: Play, Parody, and the Subversion of Monstrative Acts

Song's theatrical enactment of Butterfly poses the question: why is he so easily able to discard Butterfly while Gallimard is doomed to die as her physical embodiment? Why does Gallimard, who does not fit the descriptive constitution of Butterfly, identify with her, when Song, who, because he is "Oriental" and therefore always already feminine, does not? This happens precisely because of the levels of meaning ascribed to the verb "to act," which the play text actively tampers with, where boundaries that ostensibly divide fiction from "reality" are confused by both plot developments and metatheatrical devices. The character of Song, for instance, is a Chinese man playing at being a Chinese woman, but, because he is a "character," the complexity of his act is doubled by the fact that he is part of a work of fiction. That a play is a work of fiction designed to be viewed by an audience, in the way that a scientist might observe something under a microscope, is destabilised by the levels of fiction at work in *M. Butterfly*, compounded by various moments in the play where the fourth wall is broken. Instances of metatheatre call attention to the fact that what one is watching is a fictional representation, where the audience[89] finds itself addressed at various moments by almost every member of the play, breaking the immersion that lulls each audience member into a state of passive watching.

The use of this device in the play requires the audience to reflect on what might separate the fictional world on the stage from the "real" world that they inhabit, as well as asking them to review the various fictional discourses that

have constituted the "real" world and which the actors of *M. Butterfly* reproduce. The interweaving of levels of fiction is put into practice by the layers of acting that are going on in the play *as well as* those that are occurring in reality. Therefore, where Song's performance is that of a man playing a woman, doubled by the performance of an actor who plays Song in the first instance, the plausibility of his performance makes apparent Butler's premise that gender is itself a performance. That gender is a performance, a set of learned behaviours and gestures that are mimicked by the body, is not the same as saying that gender is performative, something Butler underlines repeatedly in her work, from *Bodies That Matter* onwards. What makes gender performative is that it constitutes the "I," where gestures and stylised acts that establish a person's gender also inaugurate a speaking "I" into the Symbolic order. *M. Butterfly* re-enacts this by literally constituting "Butterfly" through the repetition of Song's bodily performances, simultaneously emphasising the performativity of race and ethnicity and its intertwinement with gender. Song's performance as Butterfly could not, however, be successful if it were not for Butterfly's recognisability (Butler *Excitable Speech* 5), which rests on certain material markers that identify her. As such, the various levels of theatricality that occur in the play can only do so because of a recognisable materiality, even if the signs that identify that materiality are fictional.

In *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, Susan Bennett explains that there are two frames within which a theatrical performance can take part: an "inner frame" that consists of the play performance itself and an "outer frame" that allows the performance to be culturally intelligible to its audience (139). The outer frame is comprised of

various discourses and ideologies that shape the way an audience views material bodies and objects, while the inner frame compounds these discourses by containing visual signs that ratify the presupposed ideologies with which an audience arrives in its viewing of a play: "the combination and succession of visual and aural[90] signs which the audience receives and interprets, some fixed but the majority in flux . . . permits the audience to posit the existence of a fictional world on stage with its own dynamic and governing rules" (140). Those signs that are in flux are necessitated by the performance of bodies on stage, while those that are fixed make up the sets and backdrop.

I pointed out earlier in this chapter the requirements laid out by Hwang for future productions of the play in the play's end notes, which suggest backdrops, settings, and costumes that revel in the expected "exotica and lush beauty" of the Orient (90). These stylistic elements are "expected" by the audience because of the play's name, which makes obvious the connection between the play and Puccini's opera: that the play makes use of an Asian aesthetic consolidates this connection because the audience already knows that opera is set in the East. The adaptation of the opera's narrative as a parody is successful because of its repetition of these aesthetics, but also because of the repetition involved in performance. In an earlier chapter, I explained that in order for something to be communicated it needs to be both repeatable (citational) and subject to change (iterable). This is as true of performance as it is of the written word on which Derrida bases his argument in *Limited Inc*, which is precisely what enables Butler's analysis of gender as both performance and performative: "[g]ender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory fame that congeal over time to

produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of [B]eing" (*Gender Trouble* 44). While gender performance "conceals its genesis" ("Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" 522) and gives the impression that it is the expression of an interior gendered substance, Butler consistently points out that these are learned performances, stylized acts, and gesticulations that we learn to repeat and are forced to repeat from the moment of birth. Because we are social animals, human beings rely on mimicry, imitation, and repetition in order to be integrated within the social group; mimicry is precisely the method by which we come to learn anything communicative, including language.

Repetition is incorporated in the play for various reasons, but is especially used to emphasise the repetition involved in theatre and gender performance, the differences between which the play purposefully obfuscates. Examples of emphasised repetition occur in 1.8 when Song tells Gallimard that she wishes there were still cafes to sit in with "cappuccinos, and men in tuxedos and bad expatriate jazz." Gallimard mimics this wish almost word for word during his consultation with Toulon in 2.3, explaining that the Vietnamese will "want the good things [the West] can give them," saying that the Chinese "miss the old days. You know, cappuccinos, men in tuxedos –". This demonstrates the conviction Gallimard has in Song's performance but also that the cultural script is present *before* Song's masquerade, which is precisely what enables him to take advantage of Gallimard's ignorance. This becomes clear in the final repetition of this line, after Song has performed his transformation:

> SONG. Then again, maybe I'm just playing with you. How can you tell? (*Reprising his feminine character, he sidles up to Gallimard*.) "How I wish there were even a small cafe to sit in. With men in tuxedos, and cappuccinos, and bad expatriate jazz." Now you want to kiss me, don't you? (3.2)

What this final repetition proves is that there is no elementary origin upon which identity acts are based, as all performance is citational, meaning that it requires repetition to be reproduced but *also* to be recognisable. What this suggests is that aberrant identity practices are considered monstrous because they are unrehearsed, arriving seemingly out of nowhere on the horizon of collective knowledge.

Aberrant identity practices in *M. Butterfly* are, however, monstrous not because they are unrehearsed, but because they are performed by "inappropriate" social actors, suggesting that they are unrehearsed *only by certain bodies*. Song's embodiment of Butterfly is "inappropriate" because it hinges on a repetition of bodily acts that are *recognizably* feminine. Gallimard's embodiment of Butterfly occurs, however, because of acts that are done *to* him, rather than being performed *by* him, demonstrating that the affectivity of performative acts is that they are done both *by* bodies and *to* bodies, requiring the repetition of recognisable acts in order to do so. Theatre rehearses repetition because its performance would be unrecognisable if it did not, while parody exploits repetition in order to emphasize the connection one is meant to make between the "original" performance and the parodied act. What *M. Butterfly* parodies is not merely the absurdity of Orientalist discourse and the self-certainty in Western power relations, but that the matching of binary categories where Orient is to feminine is to submissive are broken down by the very presence of bodies performing "inappropriate" acts. This can only be produced through repeated acts that are recognisable as "feminine" and "Oriental" because of the acts that have preceded them. While Butler's early work in "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" states that there are

"strict lines" that separate theatrical performances such as plays from those that are expressed in "reality" (527), *M. Butterfly* is a clear example of how these lines are often blurred. As I mentioned above, there are countless moments in the play where characters address the audience, disrupting the imagined boundary between fiction and life. For example, Gallimard, who acts as the play's narrator, ostensibly re-enacts his demise for the benefit of the audience. His role as "author" is then usurped by Song who takes over in order to perform his transformation, to which Gallimard (without a scrap of irony) beseeches: "You have to do what I say! I'm conjuring you up in my mind!" (2.11).

Theatricality, by which I mean exaggerated stylistic performance and/ or self-conscious performance practised in awareness of its status as act, is thus simultaneously set up and broken down by the play, achieving this deconstruction through the various levels of fiction and of acting that take place during its performance. Normative gender practice eschews theatricality where non-normative or "inappropriate" gender acts often employ a conscious theatricality in order to emphasise the imitational nature of normative practices and the fact that these practices disguise this nature. Butler analyses drag as an instance of this kind of theatricality in *Bodies That Matter*, and, taken in this light one could certainly read Song's performance as Butterfly as a drag act.[91] The use of theatricality in "inappropriate" gender acts also deconstructs the dialectic of "serious" and the "non-serious" that Austin would so dearly like to keep separate in *How to Do Things with Words*. Theatricality, which is present in exaggerated acts delivered with pomp and ceremony, is clearly not only the domain of the "non-serious" as its use in ritual suggests. In fact, many of the examples of felicitous performative utterances that Austin utilizes in his thesis

form the pivotal act within a larger ritual that rests on theatricality to convey its importance and solemnity. Thus, a marriage ceremony does not merely exist of a bride and groom exchanging their vows, even if the illocutionary utterance forms the actual act: the life-changing importance of the ritual could not be successfully expressed without a certain amount of theatricality, hence the symbolic import given to the various props, costume, and actions of those taking part.

What theatre and ritual share in their use of theatricality is the visible manifestation of the result of both performative and monstrative acts. In theatre, the performances and gesticulations of the actor performatively constitute his or her character, and the lighting, costume, sound, and mise-en-scène of the play create the fictional world in which the actor performs. The very same thing can be said for ritual practices, which, along with their actors, include props and costumes to signify both that the ritual is taking place and its import to the actors taking part. Notably, both theatre and ritual also require witnesses in order to accomplish the act around which its theatricality is formed: the performance, "serious" or otherwise, could not be said to have taken place with the absence of witnesses. The theatricality of the event, its repeated gestures and its visual and aural signs, make visible the modifications to the bodies taking part. In the marriage ceremony, the fact that it *is* a marriage ceremony is made visible by the theatricality of visual and aural signs, such as the bridal gown and the use of music to indicate the bride's arrival.[92] While these signs do not perform the act itself, they instead perform the act of making obvious to others that this ceremony is taking place, as Parker and Sedgwick note when they write that "like a play, marriage exists in and for the

eyes of others" (*Performativity and Performance* 11). The slippage between theatre and ritual is also monstrative as the metamorphoses of the bodies taking part is visibly manifested in the theatricality of the space that forms the proscenium arch of each performance.

In *M. Butterfly*, Gallimard's embodiment of Butterfly is facilitated by the monstrative force of physical and discursive practices discussed above, but this embodiment is *made visible* by the theatricality of the event. This theatricality is evidenced by the use of aural and visual signifiers that represent the audience's view of Oriental exoticism and which support its expectations for Oriental submission, as well as the use of bodily signifiers to indicate its presuppositions of femininity in Song, signifiers that are presupposed because "she" is Asian and because "her" behaviour is feminine. As the play shows, however, performance does not necessarily reflect bodily reality, but is instead a recognisable repetition of expected behaviour. While Butler considers the parodied performance of drag acts a serious commentary on the constructional nature of gender practices, she does not focus on the further ways in which such performances can be used "seriously." In the play, Song's "non-serious" performances do not only demonstrate the performativity of gender, but result in the "serious" manipulation of Gallimard for his ambassadorial secrets. "Non-serious" acts such as those enacted by Song become political weapons as they take advantage of a debilitating flaw in Western patriarchal heteronormativity, which is that, in its reliance on gendered and racial binaries, it is subject to having these binaries exploited by the very people it seeks to subjugate.

Most importantly, the play itself is an example of Austin's "etiolated" speech, where performative utterances that are said on stage are "*in a peculiar*

way hollow or void" (*How to* 21-2, emphasis in the original). Does this mean that we should read the performative acts that take place during the play as "non-serious," as "etiolations" of the "real" thing? Austin's regard of speech acts uttered onstage as etiolated, as sickly, anaemic, weaker versions of the "real" thing, is because he understands these acts as not having taken place in the "real" world, but in a "pretend" world that happens on stage for the purposes of entertainment. A marriage ceremony performed on stage does not, of course, result in the lawful binding of the two people who take part,[93] but that does not mean that the "unhappy" performative performs nothing either. The principal performative in *M. Butterfly* is Song's performance as Butterfly; while he may be considered "inappropriate" to enact the role because of his male anatomy, the performance does not misfire at all, as Gallimard believes it wholeheartedly, thanks to the Orientalist discourse that is already in place to vindicate Song's femininity. If, however, we read Song's performance against a much larger tradition of drag acts, particularly those that have been performed on stage,[94] we find that what is performed is not merely an "unhappy" expression of gender but the exposure of an originating gendered core, as Butler expounds: " . . . drag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity" (*Gender Trouble* 174). The reason for this is because "[w]hat is 'performed' in drag is, of course, *the sign* of gender, a sign that is not the same as the body it figures, but that cannot be read without it" (Butler *Bodies That Matter* 237, her emphasis). What happens, instead of the belief that what one is watching is the expression of the bodily reality of a biological woman, is that

gender is exposed as performance and, thus, the "serious" act of Being is irrupted by the "non-seriousness" of theatricality.

The enactment of unhappy performatives may result in the miscarriage of the intended or expected act, but that does not mean that it fails to produce anything. As Phelan points out in *Mourning Sex*, repetitive acts produce the effect of Becoming by indicating their possibility, where, "[a]s theatrical performances, they stage the phantasmatic becoming indicative. That is, as the 'as if' of the phantasm takes a place on a stage larger than the architecture of a single imagination, it carries the remains of a collective reality, however illusionary or material such remains may be" (16). As well as this, writes Phelan, the unhappiness of the theatrical performative also produces a linguistic promise of something yet to come (16). The promise enacted by Song's drag performance is the eventual banishment of Butterfly through her embodiment by Gallimard, where the play not only rehearses, but ensures, Butterfly's expulsion from the Western imagination by subverting her "pure" Oriental sacrifice into a ludicrously lampooned performance. If we understand the performative as a birth, in that it produces something in its invocation, the unhappy performative, while not producing the expected act, produces another act altogether, one that is unexpected and unpredictable. Taken in this sense, the unhappy performative is a monstrous birth because it produces unexpected effects, simultaneously acting as a promise (or a threat) of something more to come.

The Anamorphic Image as a Monstrous Birth: The Canny Moment of Song's Disrobing

As I explained earlier, the uncanniness of birth has been associated with the Becoming-seen of the previously unseen, of the moment of awareness of the Other's "I/eye." The visual technique of anamorphosis is a striking metaphor for what Nicholas Royle names the "canny moment," an archaic term for birth, but also the moment of being able to see what was unseen, of the inside coming out, of the emergence of something hidden (*The Uncanny* viii). Using Daniel L. Collins' essay, "Anamorphosis and the Eccentric Observer," I explained that what occurs at the moment of recognition, the "canny" moment, if you will, is that the viewer of the image *becomes* what the image stands for – the Other – on seeing it correctly.[95] Seeing the anamorphic image correctly by literally changing his point of view, the viewer becomes Other to himself. In *M. Butterfly*, Gallimard, a stand-in for Western patriarchy, becomes the anamorphic image when his point of view is changed by Song's nakedness. Earlier, I pointed out that the play constitutes a series of monstrative acts that mutate Gallimard into Butterfly, shaped by every sexual encounter he has. His full metamorphosis from the self-professed (1.5) "ugly" caterpillar into submissive Butterfly in 3.3, however, occurs immediately after Song's exposure of his "real" sex in 3.2. This metamorphosis occurs here precisely because Gallimard finally sees the anamorphic image straight on, seeing Song for what he is rather than what he has appeared to be. This can only happen when Song demonstrates the reality of his material sex.

On witnessing Song's genital reality, Gallimard cannot possibly see him as Butterfly anymore, and thus Gallimard takes his place, becoming the physical embodiment of Butterfly by literally seeing things from Song's point of view. This final act of Becoming has everything to do with the gaze and with the physical position of the one who does the gazing, which Gallimard ratifies in his final speech: "Tonight I realize my search is over. That I've looked all along in the wrong place" (3.3). If he looks in the "wrong" place, that is, straight on from a position of power, the Butterfly he finds is one that takes advantage of his desire; if he positions himself so that he is seeing from the point of view of the disempowered, he becomes that which he desires, something he can only do by experiencing the same disempowerment that he has subjected his "Oriental" Other to. This moment comes like a monstrous birth where Gallimard delivers himself-as-Butterfly, an effect which is unpredictable to the incredulous Song, who believes he has Gallimard right where he wants him. Gallimard has finally realised, however, that Butterfly is completely immaterial:

> GALLIMARD. Get away from me! Tonight, I've finally learned to tell fantasy from reality. And, knowing the difference, I choose fantasy.
> SONG. *I'm* your fantasy!
> GALLIMARD. You? You're as real as a hamburger. Now get out! I have a date with my Butterfly and I don't want your body polluting the room! (3.2)

It was never Song's body that Gallimard wanted to dominate, even if its material markers were what initially sparked his interest. The material markers that signify Song as Asian only serve as visual indicators of Western discourse, not of any characteristic intrinsic to Asian bodies, while the markers that indicate his femininity are revealed to have nothing at all to do with his material sex.

Thus, as Gallimard admits, Butterfly exists only in the Western imagination, where her physical indicators really have nothing to do with her existence. It is for precisely this reason that Gallimard is able to embody her, as neither gendered nor ethnic performances follow from materiality but are constructions that are developed and enforced discursively. The agreement between signifier and signified is disrupted by the sudden recognition of the anamorphic image, which happens when the viewer positions himself so that he can see from the object's point of view. The sudden fright that occurs when one recognises the anamorphic image is not just from being able to see what was previously unseen, but because of the implications involved in realising that one's gaze is being returned. For Freud, the returned gaze results in one's petrification, symbolically manifested in the myth of the Medusa. However, Freud's metaphorical association is between Medusa and female genitalia, which means that what Freud suggests by the male child's castration anxiety on seeing his mother's phallic lack is in fact the anxiety of *losing power* over the phallus and what it symbolises, the Law of the Father and authority to wield the Symbolic order. Castration anxiety is thus not about the fear of losing the male member but the fear of losing what it stands for, the authority to use the Symbolic order and to use it to control others. Where Freud asserts that the sight of the mother's genitals induces castration anxiety, writing that "[t]he terror of Medusa is thus a terror of castration that is linked to the sight of something" ("Medusa's Head" 84), what he forgets about the Medusan myth is that it is not the sight of the famous Gorgon that turns men into stone, but *the return of her gaze*, which is precisely why Perseus's shield petrifies her, as she returns her own gaze. The castration anxiety that Medusa prompts is therefore

not caused by gazing at her but by having that gaze returned. If we understand castration anxiety as a fear not of losing male genitalia but of male power over the Symbolic Order, then this makes perfect sense, because, as a female monster, Medusa wields the gaze "inappropriately": women are to be looked at, they are not the ones to do the looking.

What the Medusan myth suggests is that the female gaze is dangerous and that a feminine use of the Symbolic order will turn men into stone. Women have thus had to be looked at from a point at which they cannot return the gaze, where they are watered down by representation or dissected into parts which represent their "whole." The anamorphic image is a fitting metaphor for the tension between looking and being looked at in the Medusan myth, because looking at Medusa straight on, that is, having her return one's gaze, is recipe for disaster. Medusa must be looked at from another angle so that she cannot return the gaze, and thus her power is stripped from her by Becoming-looked-at, where she embodies the sign of the dangerous feminine gaze. Medusa can only safely gaze at one when one cannot see her and thus be in danger of turning into stone. However, silencing women by making them representations of the Symbolic and not masters of it means that they become warped images of patriarchal authority that can only look back when they are not recognisable, because gazing back is itself an unrecognisable trait in a woman. "You only have to look at the Medusa straight on to see her," writes Cixous, "And she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing" ("The Laugh of the Medusa" 885). The anamorphic image is unrecognisable when viewed from a position of power but becomes clear when man changes his viewpoint: will having the feminine

gaze returned really turn man into stone, or is it a lie to keep our eyes averted and thus have the power to look continue to rest in patriarchal hands?

The threat Medusa embodies, that her gaze will mutate the one who gazes at her into stone, is the same threat that all monsters engender, which is the possibility for unpredictable effects. Medusa's gaze makes the one she gazes at Other to himself, a stony self, an Other that he cannot possibly predict but that lives within his skin. In *M. Butterfly*, the Becoming that the anamorphic image engenders is such that the figure in power, Gallimard, comes to embody its Otherness, where he becomes Other to himself, existing simultaneously as both Gallimard and Butterfly. For Cixous, the threat of Medusa's gaze to turn her viewer into stone is a metaphor for the admixture of a masculine fear of feminine power and the erotic impulse to dominate what it fears, finding its symbolism in the erect phallus: " . . . [men] need femininity to be associated with death; it's the jitters that gives them a hard-on! [F]or themselves! They need to be afraid of us. Look at the trembling Perseuses moving backward toward us, clad in apotropes[96]" (885). While this is a compelling approach to Freud's reading of the Medusan myth, it is the power to impose the Becoming-Other through the gaze that I find most interesting about Medusa and which is aptly re-enacted by the positioning required to view the anamorphic image. It is precisely because Medusa is female that her gaze turns men to stone: erotic subtext notwithstanding, her "inappropriateness" at being the subject of the gaze rather than its object is what mutates men into monstrous versions of themselves, where they are literally made powerless to act because their role as lord of the transcendental signifier has been usurped by the threatened authority of the feminine gaze.

Finding himself able to see from the point of view of the anamorphic image by the play's close, Gallimard is not turned into stone but is instead turned into something worse – woman. In psychoanalytic terms, being petrified and being turned into a woman are the same thing, as each have the same effect of taking phallic authority from man, hence Freud's boy child's castration anxiety at seeing his mother's vulva: it is not the loss of the thing itself he is afraid of, but *the loss of his power*. The sudden fright Gallimard gets when faced with an accurate view of the anamorphic image, corrected by the removal of Song's briefs, is not just coming to the realisation that the object he held in his gaze was all along looking back, but that *he* has now become the object of the gaze and has lost his phallic power. Every sexual encounter Gallimard has leads him to this moment of revelation, where it is not just Song's true identity that is revealed, but also Gallimard's. This realisation of the self is a monstrous birth as it arrives seemingly without warning – at least, it does for Gallimard, who, thinking he had dominated Song, also thought that he had finally become the man he always wanted to be, and, instead, finds himself embodying the woman he always wanted to have.

Chapter Five: The Monstrative and Becoming:

Rape and Atonement in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*

"*Animal* is a word that men have given themselves the right to give" (Derrida *The Animal That Therefore I Am* 32, his emphasis).

" . . . recognition becomes the process by which I become other than what I was and so cease to be able to return to what I was" (Butler *Giving an Account of Oneself* 27).

"All becoming is becoming monster; even the desire to want to become is monstrous, because all becoming is about an ambiguity between, but never attaining either of, two points" (Patricia McCormack "Perversion: Transgressive Sexuality and Becoming-Monster" 11).

Introduction: Rape and Becoming-Animal in Coetzee's Disgrace

In this chapter, I deal with two major theoretical concerns as they relate to the category of the monstrative: the constitutionality of rape and the process of Becoming-animal. These themes come together in this chapter as they relate to identity formation, specifically as a process that produces an "I" always in relation (and often in opposition) to a "you." Such a process invariably produces ethical questions that concern human relationships, as well as our relationships with other beings, so that ontological queries always already presuppose not just the "I's" rights but its responsibilities towards the Other. As Butler writes, "Nietzsche did well to understand that I begin my story of myself only in the face of a 'you' who asks me to give an account" (11), where accounting for oneself has the double meaning of self-constitution before the Other and of defending one's actions. J. M. Coetzee's 1999 Booker Prize winning

novel, *Disgrace*, can be understood as the attempt by its white, male protagonist to account for his actions. However, unlike Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, to give a similar example of narrative accountability, *Disgrace* is written in the third person but is focalized through its protagonist, David Lurie, allowing him a degree of distance from the accountability of first person confessional narratives such as *Lolita*. Instead, *Disgrace* posits a narrative situation in which the constitutional effects of rape indirectly affect Lurie (who is himself accountable for rape), which is played out by his Becoming-animal as the novel progresses.

At the fore of Coetzee's philosophy in *Disgrace* is a deeply ethical concern for the individual's responsibilities towards the Other, which in the novel takes the form of the absolute Other, an Other whose will cannot be known because of its total inability to use the Symbolic Order. In *Disgrace*, as with Derrida in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, the absolute Other arrives in the form of the animal – the silent, impenetrable Other that has been subject to centuries of human violence and neglect. Thus, the ethical questions with which Coetzee is engaged in this novel, and with which this chapter will be concerned, emphasise moments of human silence and refusal that take place in the novel and juxtapose them against the Other's absolute silence and inability to communicate. The Other's silence, whether a conscious choice or the absolute inability to communicate, is also contrasted with the human propensity to use narrative as a form of justification, as well as highlighting the constitutional effects of narrative and literary discourse. In *Disgrace*, the literary canon is very clearly demonstrated as a performative force that constitutes the bodies it describes and is also very clearly presented by the novel as a system of

representation that can be and has been wielded by a self-serving androcentric authority.

I start this chapter with an analysis of rape as it occurs in the novel, continuing with the interpretation of rape as performative and monstrative. In addition to this analysis, I investigate the linguistic power carried in the act of defining rape, and how the resulting definitions have perpetuated feminine oppression.[97] The conceptual definition of rape is a crucial aspect of the novel but it is also key to this thesis as it exemplifies what is at stake in the use of monstrative language, demonstrating how those with the authority to wield language use it to corroborate their innocence, vilify the victims of sexual violence, and perpetuate their power and the cycle of oppression and violence. This chapter examines both the performativity of rape and the performativity of defining rape, and how these acts interrelate, serving as a point from which to discuss the monstrativity of (specifically) rape and (generally) of violent bodily and speech acts. From this, I turn to a discussion on responsibility to the Other as it figures in *Disgrace* and how it relates to violent acts that do not only *cause* injury, but constitute identities *through* the act of injury.

At all times, I use Coetzee's novel to illustrate the broader discussion on rape but also to read the violence of these acts against the specific backdrop in which Coetzee has set the novel, that of the post-apartheid, "new" South Africa. My reasons for this are that South Africa's new constitution, which was drawn up in 1995, was the first constitution in the world to include non-discriminatory laws with regard not just to race, ethnicity, religion, and gender, but to sexuality and trans* rights. In the twenty years since the inauguration of the new constitution, much scholarly attention[98] has been given to what appears to be a

widening gap between the constitution and the realities that South Africans face in their everyday lives, particularly with regard to issues centring on violence against women and crimes targeting South Africa's LGBTQ communities. Very little criticism on the novel has focused on the point that Lucy Lurie's rape is in fact a punishment for her "crime" of being a lesbian. In this chapter, I demonstrate the critical importance of Lucy's sexuality to the altering ethnic landscape of the new South Africa, where she is raped not because she is Lucy, but because of what she stands for, because of what, in her attackers' eyes, her materially female body is a sign of. Monstrative acts are the process whereby bodies are made into signs, and rape is such an act. The monstrativity of rape lies in its ability to feminize its victim's body, simultaneously masculinizing the body/ies of the perpetrator/s. Thus, what this analysis demonstrates is that while speech can be an act, acts can also perform as speech.

Silence plays a crucial role in the representation and justification of all violent acts, where it is often the reclamation of the victim's once-silenced narrative that is used to redefine these acts as violent and transgressive. Whether silencing has been enforced or is a symptom of trauma, its existence has been taken as consent for the violence committed against the "I" and used as part of the justificatory narratives for bodily violence. This stands particularly true for rape, and *Disgrace* goes so far as to use silence as a literary device, where Lucy's refusal to narrate her rape becomes one of the major ethical points in the protagonist's redemption arc. The choice Lucy has in remaining silent about her rape, however limited that may be, is juxtaposed against the absolute narrative silence of the animals that populate the novel, reinforcing Coetzee's ethical concerns with regard to silence, consent, and

responsibility to the Other. Silence is figured in the novel not just as "not telling," but as a refusal to narrate, to represent. While the events of Lucy's rape are left absolutely unrepresented by the novel (we only know it is rape because the narrative is focalized through Lurie and because Lucy falls pregnant), Melanie's rape by Lurie is aestheticized and fetishized to the extent that it is (more often than not) not regarded by the novel's critics as a rape. Furthermore, we are not offered Melanie's perception of the events as she is the object of Lurie's narrative focus, that is, she is the focalized to Lurie's focalizer. That she is made the object of the narrative focus in this way is precisely because we are meant to regard Melanie as an object, not merely of lust and sexual conquest, but, specifically, as an exemplified object of patriarchal narrative practice, which has the simultaneous effect of (re)constituting her as an object.

The performativity of narrative to shape the "truth" of events is indelibly tied to the manner in which rape is interpreted *as* rape, which, in turn, perpetuates the constitution of a culture of rape. Rape culture is narrowly defined as a cultural acceptance of rape, but is gradually also coming to mean the acceptance of the ownership of women's bodies within public spaces, a narrative that is enacted not just through rape but through various practices that perpetuate the self-regulation of women's bodies in public spaces, including street harassment, sexual harassment, assault, and the normalising of a sexuality that is not in ownership or control of itself. I analyse this more closely further on in this chapter. The narratives of ownership and control, the total of female and animal narrative voice, and the focalization of the narrative through Lurie are used by Coetzee not just to critique misogynist practices, but

to demonstrate the interrelation between a phallocentric view of the world and androcentric, technocratic, planet-harming practices. Much of Coetzee's writing has been noted[99] as focussing on the slippage between a European conceptualisation of land ownership and the misuse of women's bodies, and *Disgrace* continues this slippage in the form of Lucy's rape and her ownership of the farm. This slippage is further disrupted by the addition of the misuse of animals' bodies in the novel, both physically and discursively. As the novel's title suggests, its narrative events concentrate on the protagonist's fall from grace into a state of abjection, only finding a shaky redemption once he accepts his utter powerlessness, which is characterised in the novel as his Becoming-animal.

Tom Herron (2005) has already pointed out that *Disgrace* takes the form of a narrative metamorphosis, where the novel's protagonist literally becomes a "dog-man" (*Disgrace* 64). This metamorphosis is always already incomplete: Lurie does not become a dog, but becomes some sort of hybrid, a monstrous version of himself and the dogs that come under his care in the second half of the novel. In order to explain this metamorphic process, I employ Deleuze and Guattari's concept of Becoming-animal, which they explain

> is to participate in a movement, to stake out the path of escape in all its positivity, to cross a threshold, to reach a continuum of intensities that are valuable only in themselves, to find a world of pure intensities where all forms come undone, as do all the significations, signifiers, and signifieds, to the benefit of an unformed matter of deterritorialized flux, of nonsignifying signs" ("Becoming-Animal" 96).

To become animal, then, is to become something that exists outside Symbolic meaning, and to be something that sees the absolute Other *as* him-/herself and him-/herself *as* the absolute Other. James Urpeth offers another account:

> In logical terms the notion of "becoming-animal" challenges the primacy traditionally accorded to negation, a claim concerning the nature of thinking by both Aristotelian and Hegelian philosophy. The significance of such a displacement is clear if it is recalled that it is via negation that self-identity and indeed all distinctions in kind, including the opposition between "man" and "nature," are established ("Animal Becomings" 104).

If we recall the definitions of monstrosity made earlier in this thesis, the monstrous creatures of antiquity are often hybridised forms of other animals, including animal-human hybrids, such as mermaids, centaurs, Pegasus, and so on. These creatures exist under the appellation, "monster," because they do not obey the categories nature has ostensibly set out for them. Of course, as we now know, the in-between is precisely the state in which every living thing on the planet exists, as we constantly evolve to adapt to our changing environments. In Coetzee's novel, this state is represented as Becoming-animal.

David Lurie's Becoming-animal occurs through his state of disgrace: the event in which he is attacked and Lucy raped leads to his eventual atonement, which is meant in the sense of redemption for his wrongdoings against Melanie but also in the sense of being at one with those he shares his abject state. In *Disgrace*, these are the dogs that he and Bev Shaw euthanize because nobody else can or wants to care for them. His at-one-ment with these animals is what makes Lurie a monster, a "dog-man," but this Becoming-animal does not occur in one single event; instead, Lurie's Becoming is a series of events that accrue to make him at one with the Other he has up to this stage treated as secondary and inferior. Furthermore, it is through this Becoming-animal that Coetzee invites us to meditate on our relationship with the Other as Other, and to reflect on similar tropes regarding human (mal)treatment of animals, colonialism, and the

patriarchal control of gendered arrangements and expectations. *Disgrace* thus questions our responsibilities to the Other while suggesting that it is only through Becoming-Other that we can atone for the vast inequalities and oppressive systems to which we have subjected the other beings with whom we share this planet.

This chapter focuses a good deal on the ethics of performative acts, on our responsibilities to the Other that we linguistically constitute, to the monsters that we create with our performative acts. The concept of Becoming, particularly in its relation to the static philosophical and psychoanalytical notion of Being, necessarily invokes an ethics, because it is always already about becoming Other than what one already is. Becoming also situates the performative within an ethical framework: Becoming is constitutional, as well as being a physical and psychical doing, which means that it is performative. Butler's scholarly concern for the ethics of performative acts was already clear in *Excitable Speech*, and much of her later work[100] has focussed on the responsibilities we undertake when, as social actors, we act in and upon the world. Because the monstrative is a performative force (the force that makes the Other into sign), I also discuss the ethical implications of making monsters, with the help of *Disgrace*. The ethical concerns of this analysis are not just to question what responsibilities we have to our (linguistic) creations, but to interrogate the right to narrate in the first instance. If narrative creates Symbolic meaning and the ordering of the world according to the narrator's tenets, what right does s/he have to wield the word, especially when an irresponsible use of language can injure, traumatise, and create identity through injury or trauma? Moreover, what right do we have to demand narrative in the

wake of a traumatic event? Finally, using *Disgrace* as a narrative template that posits the "what if?" of monstrous birth, I examine the ethical concerns surrounding the Derridean event, and our responsibility to welcome the absolute Other, even if that means inviting in a most unwelcome and unmitigated disaster.

The Performative Rhetoric of Rape Culture/The Performative Act of Rape

In a recent article, I wrote about the two performative acts that take place when rape is committed: the rape itself, which creates and reifies gender binaries, simultaneously placing categories within a hierarchical structure, and the rhetoric that supports the act, either by claiming that it is not rape, or through victim-blaming ("*Disgrace*: Rape Culture Rhetoric in the New South Africa" 2013). I pointed out that while rape is itself a performative act, the rhetoric that surrounds it is also performative because it creates rape culture (101-2). Rape culture has been defined as a culture that condones or normalises rape, but in reality is as complex as the definition of rape itself, because rape culture does much more than just condone physical assault. It also perpetuates a narrow definition of rape, tolerates various types of public harassment of women,[101] reifies gender binaries by insisting on strict defining differences between men and women, normalises victim-blaming, and passes rape off as seduction or normal, healthy sex. While rape culture affects men adversely, and in varying ways, for the purposes of this argument I will be focussing on the negative effects of rape culture on women's lives. I am

especially concerned in this analysis with definitions of rape and their connection to the production of rape culture, particularly with regard to aestheticized narrative representations such as those we find in literary texts.

I moreover use "narrative" rather than "discourse" to describe these representations, as "narrative" implies an element of storytelling, an artistic weaving of events, and a making of representation that "discourse" does not necessarily express. The definition of rape is contingent on storytelling, as Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver explain in *Rape and Representation*, stating that "who gets to tell the story and whose story counts as 'truth' determine the definition of what rape *is*" (1, emphasis in the original). As they point out, the person narrating is who gets to retrospectively define the act as rape or not, where "representations of rape after the event are almost always framed by a masculine perspective premised on men's fantasies about female sexuality and their fears of false accusation, as well as their codified access to and possession of women's bodies" (2). Examples of this kind of retrospective delineation find themselves reiterated not only in backwater fundamentalist contexts but are in fact enunciated by personalities in leadership positions all over the world, where recent instances include comments by the ex-Representative for the State of Missouri, Todd Akin, and British M. P., George Galloway. What is important is not just that these are people in leadership positions whose public comments are read and heard by hundreds-of-thousands of people (if not millions), but that they are men, and that they are in positions of privilege, with considerable influence and resources at their disposal. While Akin's comments were certainly baffling in their misunderstanding of basic human biology, what concerns this analysis is that in order to put forward his peculiar view on the

logistics of insemination,[102] Akin promoted rape apology by using the rhetoric of "legitimate rape."

Akin uses the term "legitimate rape" as a way in which to delineate rape from false accusations, but what is reiterated by this rhetoric is the implication that some rape is not really rape, but something else altogether. Galloway's comments on the Julian Assange case[103] echoed these sentiments by eloquently asserting that "[n]ot everybody needs to be asked prior to each insertion" (qtd. in Williams 2012), which, in other words, means that it is not really rape if you have just had consensual sex with that same partner. Higgins' and Silver's statement that retrospective comments on rape are often made by men is certainly validated by these two examples, while their point that the person "who gets to tell the story and whose story counts as 'truth' determine the definition of what rape *is*" concludes that both Galloway's and Akin's comments are performative. A performative speech act does not just report on an existing truth but brings into being that which it describes: thus the proposal that there are certain types of rape that are not "legitimate" performatively constitutes the definition of rape, doing so in a manner that excuses certain types of rape because it is believed that it is not rape at all. If we are to define rape according to Akin, then women who seek abortions due to rape have not been raped (because rapists' sperm is apparently rejected by women's bodies), and if we accept Galloway's definition, then spousal and partner rape are non-existent. That there are thirty countries in the world that do not count marital rape a crime and that many rapes committed by partners go unreported on a global level makes Galloway's statement highly problematic, because it suggests that a man who is already in a sexual relationship with a woman has absolute right to

her body. This kind of thinking belies the underlying point that women are often regarded as property and pervasively so.

The definition of rape is a major conceptual conundrum in *Disgrace*. Where Lucy's rape is rape in the classic sense – enforced and violent penetrative sex by three total strangers – it is not the only rape that occurs in the novel. Lurie's "affair" with his student, Melanie, is not the consensual contract between two adults that a sexual relationship should be, and, as such, their sexual union is complicated by the imbalance of power between them. This imbalance is constituted not just of a student-teacher dynamic, but by that of race (Herron writes that there is a strong possibility that Melanie is coloured,[104] while Lurie is definitely white), affluence (Lurie is not uncomfortable, while Melanie is a student on a scholarship), and, especially, by that of gender (Herron 477). Furthermore, as the following scene demonstrates, the power dynamic between Lurie and Melanie culminates in rape:

> He has given her no warning; she is too surprised to resist the intruder who thrusts himself upon her. When he takes her in his arms, her limbs crumple like a marionette's. Words as heavy as clubs thud into the delicate whorl of her ear. 'No, not now!' she says, struggling. 'My cousin will be back!' But nothing will stop him. He carries her to the bedroom, brushes off the absurd slippers, kisses her feet, astonished by the feeling she evokes . . . She does not resist. All she does is avert herself: avert her lips, avert her eyes. She lets him lay her out on the bed and undress her: she even helps him, raising her arms and then her hips. Little shivers of cold run through her; as soon as she is bare, she slips under the quilted counterpane like a mole burrowing, and turns her back on him. Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core. As though she had decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration, like a rabbit when the jaws of the fox close on its neck (*Disgrace* 24-5).

An extraordinary passage, this is nonetheless one of the most problematic moments in the novel, not only because of what it depicts and the

way in which it is depicted, but because of *who* narrates the moment; as Higgins and Silver write, in deciding if rape is rape, "who is speaking may be *all* that matters" (1, emphasis theirs). Although this is a third person narrative, Lurie is its focalizer, which means that the narrative goes some way to vindicate his actions. The focalized narrative gives us insight into his motivations, but it also makes us aware of the ideology to which Lurie is heir, that is, white European patriarchy. Furthermore, by writing in the third person, Coetzee is distanced from the narrative that would otherwise perhaps conflate him with his protagonist. Like Lurie, Coetzee is a privileged, educated, white South African man; thus, his treatment of such contentious subject matter, not only with regard to race relations but as a male writer writing rape, has to be delicate and cautious. While Higgins and Silver question the role of male authors in representing rape (5), they do not discourage male writers from discussing the subject; indeed, at least one of the writers contributing to their edited collection is male. Neither does Coetzee shy away from the subject, although he does treat it with the respect due of a man representing an act that has an aesthetic tradition of being represented as masculine seduction, which is precisely why the narrative, while focalized through Lurie, is written in the third person. By writing this scene from Lurie's perspective, Coetzee represents rape from the point of view of a man who believes he is the "servant of Eros,"[105] whose "case rests on the rights of desire" no matter who is affected (*Disgrace* 89). Lurie does not think that what he has done is rape and cannot make the comparison between this scene and the later one in which his daughter is raped by three strangers.

He knows, however, once it is over that he has done something wrong, that what happened in Melanie's apartment was "done *to* her" (25, my emphasis):

> . . . when he reaches his car, [he] is overtaken with such dejection, such dullness, that he sits slumped at the wheel unable to move. A mistake, a huge mistake. At this moment, he has no doubt, she, Melanie, is trying to cleanse herself of it, of him. He sees her running a bath, stepping into the water, eyes closed like a sleepwalker's. He would like to slide into a bath of his own (25).

However, both during and after the episode, he is characterised by a lack of autonomy, overtaken instead by a desire planted in him by ancient (European) Gods: "Strange love! Yet from the quiver of Aphrodite, goddess of the foaming waves, no doubt about that" (25). What is more, Melanie is represented in the episode as not completely unwilling; she "does not resist," she "helps him, [by] raising her arms and then her hips" (25). Higgins and Silver explain that in the literary representations of rape that make up their study, substantiating the rape claim often means that the victim has to prove their "innocence" by exhibiting resistance during the assault, demonstrating a chaste sex life, or other such forms of victim-blaming (2), where it is the victim who is implicated and not the perpetrator. Unfortunately, this is not an unusual phenomenon: just a quick *Google* search results in three separate rape trials between 2007 and 2014 in which judges in the U. K. and the U. S. have blamed victims for being raped because they did not demonstrate "enough" resistance or because they were regarded as sexually promiscuous and thus open to attack.[106]

Disgrace muddies the waters of definition in its depiction of Melanie's compliance with Lurie's acts, but it does this precisely because the historic definition of rape is not clear cut. Women may submit to their rapists for any

number of reasons, chief among them the fear of physical injury or death, but this does not mean that what they have suffered is not rape. Narratives that employ victim-blaming such as the real-life cases cited above and such as Melanie's in *Disgrace* are precisely the kinds of representation that constitute rape culture. Victim-blaming is, moreover, complemented by the surrender of autonomy by rapists: Lurie is not accountable for his actions because he is "servant of Eros," because the god "acted through" him (89), and, in an effort to explain his actions to his daughter, he compares himself to a dog whose instinctual urges could not be helped (89-90). The representation of rape as an act that cannot be helped not only creates rape culture but disguises the fact that it *is* rape, even from those doing the raping. In an article on rape, race, and gender in the new South Africa, Helen Moffett imparts the story of a televised interview with a South African taxi driver, who openly described his weekend activities with his friends as "gang-banging." Moffett writes that when told that what he was doing was in fact rape, his surprised rebuttal was "'But these women, they force us to rape them!'" (qtd. in Moffett 138). She continues: "He followed this astonished disavowal of male agency by explaining that he and his friends picked only those women who 'asked for it'. When asked to define what this meant, he said, 'It's only the cheeky ones – the ones that walk around like they own the place, and look you in the eye.'" (138).

As Moffett points out in this passage, the cultural narrative of men such as this is that what they are performing is not rape, but the "teaching" of a lesson and the disciplining of those they deem in need of correction (138). This narrative is very different to the one that Lurie uses to convince himself that his liaison with Melanie is seduction, but it is voiced for precisely the same reason:

it is an attempt by the rapist(s) to (re)claim a masculinity being denied them through the feminisation of the victim. In Lurie's case, his failed seduction of Melanie is a result of the emasculating effects of aging; where his early self-description as classically good-looking meant that "[i]f he looked at a woman in a certain way, with a certain intent, she would return his look, he could rely on that" (7).

However, he finds that as he ages, his allure dwindles and he must find other ways in which to assure himself of his manliness. Lurie's masculinity is *absolutely* tied to his self-image as a seducer of women, as an active force that pursues women as trophies. When his powers of seduction fade with his looks, he "exist[s] in an anxious flurry of promiscuity" (7) and he finds himself in a position he regards as abject, as unwanted, at least, sexually. His abject state is made up of a diminished masculinity, where he imagines the conversations had by women in his absence: "He has a shrewd idea of how prostitutes speak among themselves about the men who frequent them, the older men in particular. They tell stories, they laugh, but they shudder too, as one shudders at a cockroach in the washbasin in the middle of the night. Soon, daintily, maliciously, he will be shuddered over" (8). His abjection is symbolised in this passage by a cockroach, an insect that lives on the effluence of others, especially of humans, which is why they are often found in bathrooms and kitchens. Later in this chapter, I go into more detail on Lurie's use of animal symbolism, whereas now I concentrate on his motives for pursuing Melanie.

Importantly, Lurie's emasculation is tied not to his inability to please women, but to their sexual conquest: when he takes the new secretary of his department home for sex, he describes it as a "failure" because of the degree to

which she seems to enjoy it, where "[b]ucking and clawing, she works herself into a froth of excitement that in the end only repels him" (9). Thus, his pursuit of Melanie is coloured by his self-image as a conquistador rather than an attentive lover, where women are regarded as objects to be won and then discarded. The way in which his affair with Melanie is narrated only adds to his emasculation; although he "wins" her sexually a number of times, he is always left wanting more from her; moreover, his seduction techniques, while resulting in the desired finale, do not wholly captivate her. It is as if he wants not just to conquer her body but to make her as obsessed with him as he is with her. Lurie's description of the encounters he has with Melanie also demonstrate that his emasculation is indelibly tied to his strange new moribundity, where his techniques at seduction fail due to the almost visible age gap between them. When he first invites her to his apartment, he shows her a film by Norman McLaren, probably *Pas de Deux* (1968), where his hope is that Melanie will feel as "captivated" by McLaren's dancers as he is:

> Two dancers on a bare stage move through their steps. Recorded by a stroboscopic camera, their images, ghosts of their movements, fan out behind them like wingbeats. It is a film he first saw a quarter of a century ago but is still captivated by: the instant of the present and the past of that instant, evanescent, caught in the same space. He wills the girl to be captivated too. But he senses she is not (*Disgrace* 15).

Having thus far garnered little attention from critics, this passage is crucial to understanding the existential crisis Lurie finds himself in. This crisis is existential precisely because the "I" " . . . cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of [its] gender" (Butler *Gender Trouble* 13), which means that in finding himself "losing" his masculinity through the waning of his seductive powers, Lurie is losing himself, losing his self-understanding *as man*.

Because he lives within a system of binaries, this can only mean that he is Becoming-woman, a Becoming that he will later try to actively perform. The significance of this passage is that first, the dancers are described in precisely the same manner in which Lurie has only just described himself, where his declining magnetism has left him a "ghost" of his former self (7). Lurie is a ghost because he is not seen by the gaze he wishes returned, where "[g]lances that would once have responded to his slid over, past, through him" (7); moreover, like the dancers, he is a ghost because he exists simultaneously as his old self, the young seducer, as well as this new self that has lost his powers to captivate. Like the dancers, old Lurie and young Lurie, masculine Lurie and emasculated Lurie, are "caught in the same space" of his desire, and the film only serves to visualise this moment of Becoming. Second, Melanie is quite obviously (to everyone but Lurie) not about to be captivated by the scene of evanescence precisely because she has not lived it yet; Lurie recounts that it was twenty-five years since he first saw the film, where Melanie cannot even be that old yet (she is probably somewhere between eighteen and twenty-two). Lurie's use of the verb "captivate" is deliberately chosen by Coetzee in this moment, where its etymological relationship with the verb "to capture" signals his actual motives in inviting Melanie into his house, but instead, he finds himself captured by his desire and by his aging body.

What is more, there is a subtle indication in this passage towards the animal symbolism with which he will regard Melanie in subsequent chapters, where the "wingbeats" of the dancers' movements foreshadow his eventual portrayal of her as his "[p]oor little bird" (32), and his "little dove" (34).[107] The image of Melanie as a caged bird is not a far leap to make. Animal imagery is

used consistently through the novel for a number of reasons, not least of which is the language of seduction that Lurie borrows from his literary forebears. As an academic well-versed in English literature,[108] Lurie adopts the language of the English poets as a means by which to seduce Melanie, inviting her to submit to this seduction by saying that "a woman's beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it" (16). In order to ring this truth home, he quotes from Shakespeare's "Sonnet 1": "From fairest creatures we desire increase, that thereby beauty's rose might never die" (1-2); however, this only serves to further alienate her by reinforcing the various divides between them. His role as Melanie's teacher is suddenly emphasised in this moment, which in his mind furthers the age-gap between them, but what he does not realise is that he is also reifying the strangeness of his master tongue, the English language with which his ancestors have subjugated much of the African continent. In *History of the Voice*, the Barbadian poet, Kamau Brathwaite, writes of the unfamiliarity felt by children in the colonies on learning English poetry in school, explaining that "[w]hat English has given us as a model for poetry . . . is the pentameter" (9) yet, to a child living in the Caribbean, this meter sounds odd and unnatural, for the "hurricane does not roar in pentameters" (10). Similarly, the subject matter of English poetry is often a world away from the experiences of people in the (ex)colonies, which is partly why Lurie's words serve only to alienate him from Melanie.

Lurie's mastery of the English tradition performatively constitutes his masculinity, a masculinity that is specifically contingent upon a European poetics of seduction that is made up of centuries' worth of masculine wooing techniques and into which Coetzee weaves a complex layer of intertextual

material. Lucy Valerie Graham explains that the history of the Western artistic tradition has had "a fraught relationship" with the representation of rape ("Reading the Unspeakable: Rape in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*" 439), where the poetics of seduction and aesthetic renditions of rape intersect in worrying ways. Higgins and Silver, meanwhile assert that "the politics and aesthetics of rape are one" (1), and it would certainly seem that Coetzee means for us to make the same connection between Lurie's privileged use of seductive poetics and the performative speech act that his daughter's rape represents. Pamela Cooper writes that "Lurie's sense of sexual right rests on his mastery of the symbolism of desire and otherness entrenched within the Anglo-European aesthetic tradition," where "in contemporary South Africa, the erotic conventions of Western art split off from their referents to drift among alien signifiers" ("Metamorphosis and Sexuality: Reading the Strange Passions of *Disgrace*" 25). Like Brathwaite's contention that English poetic modes ultimately fail in a colonial setting, Lurie's performative speech act misfires, as it does not convince Melanie to fall in love with him. However, like many unhappy performatives, this does not mean that Lurie's iteration of the Western aesthetic does not produce a performative act: what it does instead is reproduce the conventions of rape culture, which is intonated by Lurie in the same aesthetic as his old masters. Thus, saying that "[b]eauty does not own itself" (*Disgrace* 16), while lofty sounding, ultimately has the performative effect of absolving Lurie of the crime he later commits, permitting him to become the owner he thinks she lacks.

While Lurie alludes to the English tradition in many of the lines he feeds Melanie, in his private thoughts, which we are privy to through the use of

italicization, and in his hopes to produce an opera on Byron, the literary allusions Coetzee makes in and through the novel's plot point to a far deeper, more insidious tradition in the West of representing rape as courtly love, as women's fate, and as men's due. For example, Graham points out that the two women raped in *Disgrace* have names that echo literary forebears: Lucrece (Lucy) in Shakespeare, and Philomela (Melanie) in Ovid (439). What is more, Coetzee's intersection of Western aesthetic traditions with the (post)colonial conflation of bodies and land echo Western poetic modes of seduction as well as the tradition of the English pastoral. Much postcolonial feminist theory is concerned with the conceptual slippage between imperial expansion and the bodily violations of those being subjugated by its rule, in both imperialist rhetoric and in the acts carried out in its name. Coetzee's writing focuses quite often on white South Africans' relationship with the land,[109] and *Disgrace* is no different; in this novel, however, Coetzee conflates notions of land ownership and boundaries with women's rights to bodily sovereignty, comparing the patriarchal modes of the white settlers, who cling to their European heritage, with those of the rising black power in the new South Africa. With regard to Coetzee's postcolonial stance, Rita Barnard names the genre that novels such as *Disgrace* challenges the "South African Pastoral," a genre of white (often Afrikaans) writing that praises the beauty of the land and the simplicity of pastoral life, while omitting the theft of land and living space that colonialism ensured.

Graham explains that the South African Pastoral "presents a vision of the 'husband-farmer' as custodian of the feminine earth [which] has been discursively implicated in the colonial appropriation of territory" (438). Using

Coetzee's *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (1988), Barnard offers more on the "husband-farmer," whose "dream topography" is "the family farm, ruled by the patriarch and inscribed (albeit by the invisible labor of black hands) as a legacy for his sons, theirs to inherit and bequeath in perpetuity" (qtg. Coetzee 6: 204). As such, the South African farm has become a symbol of colonial oppression, and thus a contested space for patriarchal control, just as it has in neighbouring Zimbabwe. One of the myriad reasons that farm space is disputed in southern Africa is because of size, which averages on 1,200 hectares per privately-owned, commercial farm (Gbetibouo and Ringler 7), the remains of colonial expansion. These large tracts of land were originally claimed by white European settlers and made into farmland overseen by white custodians. The correlation between the rhetoric of colonial land-grabbing and that of seduction in the European aesthetic tradition is made precisely because imperialism is a patriarchal system. Moreover, the Western canon is made largely of men's writing, where the literature of seduction quite often belies the misogynist and imperialist ideals of its writers, who make metaphorical connections between the conquering of women's bodies and land. Take, for example, John Donne's poem, "Elegy 19, To His Mistress Going to Bed" (1669), which makes such a comparison between the newly-"discovered" Americas and the body of the woman who he is at pains to seduce:

> O my America! my new-found-land,
> My kingdom, safeliest when with one man manned,
> My mine of precious stones, my empery,
> How blest am I in this discovering thee! (26-30)

It is precisely from this tradition that David Lurie performatively constitutes his masculine authority and desire.

While Lurie himself is not a conquistador of space in this way, he is certainly a conqueror of women. Instead, Coetzee makes the connection between the patriarchal control of women's bodies and colonisation through Lucy's rape, which takes a very different form from Melanie's. In fact, Lucy's rape perhaps best fits what Akin calls "legitimate" rape, that is to say, rape that is part of a violent physical assault, perpetrated by invasive strangers, and which is very obviously unwanted. Significantly, in the context of the novel, Lucy, who is white, is raped by three black men, who drag her into her own house to enact the assault, a detail for which Coetzee received a lot of criticism following the publication of *Disgrace*. Graham remarks that there is an argument that the rhetoric of "black peril" is reiterated by this move, but she refutes this by pointing out that that such an argument "obscures the fact that most rapes in South Africa are intraracial" (435). The uproar in South Africa regarding Lucy's rape scene was such that politicians, academics, and journalists all weighed in with their displeasure at what was deemed a racist attack on the policies of the new South Africa. Graham quotes Jeff Radebe, Minister for Public Enterprises under Thabo Mbeki's A. N. C. government, as saying: "In this novel J. M. Coetzee represents as brutally as he can the white people's perception of the post-apartheid black man" (435), while Moffett explains that "luminaries from the President himself to the cream of South Africa's writers and academics assumed all too readily that any discussion of rape [such as that posited by *Disgrace*] is predicated on a rapist who is black" (135). What is made quite clear in either case is that only Lucy's ordeal has been regarded as rape, whereas Melanie's has not.

In fact, many of the critics writing about *Disgrace* do not regard Melanie's ordeal as rape, or they simply choose not to write about it: both Herron (477) and Maria Lopez (924) refer to Melanie's rape as "abuse," while Cooper names it only "effectively a rape" (25); Sue Kossew, meanwhile, perplexingly contends that Lurie's behaviour is "more morally complex than rape, than pedophilia" (159). Kossew does not elaborate on what she means by behaviour that is "more morally complex" than these crimes and I do not think she would write so flippantly if she properly considered the comparison Coetzee makes between Melanie's case and Lucy's. The point is precisely that neither rape nor paedophilia (which I will unfortunately not have time to give proper consideration here) are clean-cut, dye-in-the-wool occurrences, but are subject to a great amount of what Higgins and Silver call "undecidability" between post-incident narratives (2-3). As I have already pointed out, this is in part due to the prevalence of cultural modes that dictate the definition of incidents according to patriarchal systems of belief and understanding. In *Disgrace*, neither incident is narrated by the victim, but instead framed by the protagonist, who is, in one case, the perpetrator, and in the other, a failed defender. As such, we never hear Melanie's take on the incident that leads her to report Lurie to the university authorities, and, because Lucy adamantly refuses to give life to her attack through its narration, neither do we get a clear picture of what happens to her. Higgins and Silver explain that it is often the case in narrative representations of rape that the actual event is in fact absent from the telling, where it instead "exists as an absence or gap that is both product and source of textual anxiety, contradiction or censorship" (3). In *Disgrace*, while we are shown the sordid details of Melanie's rape, Lucy's is left to the imagination. What Coetzee

manages with this telling and lack of telling is a fetishization of the kind of rape that Melanie is subjected to, to the point that its very definition as rape is obscured, which is precisely why criticism of the novel only ever touches on Lucy's rape and not Melanie's.

Part of the reason for this, as I have emphasised in this chapter, is the long history of deflecting rape through representation, "where it has been turned into a metaphor or a symbol or represented rhetorically as titillation, persuasion, ravishment, seduction, or desire (poetic, narrative, courtly, military)" (Higgins and Silver 4). Another reason that the definition of rape is obscured is because it has everything to do with having the authority to rape. Higgins and Silver maintain that "rape and rapability are central to the very construction of gender identity" (3), which is precisely what I argued in the previous chapter: whether or not the body of the victim is female, the act of rape performatively constitutes that body as feminine, simultaneously (re)producing the masculinity of the person who rapes. Moffett, meanwhile, writes that, at least in the South African context, "sexual violence has become a socially endorsed punitive project for maintaining patriarchal order" (129). The key words here are "punitive" and "patriarchal": with the move from apartheid to the "new" South Africa, what has clearly been demonstrated by the bewildering number of reported rapes in the advent of the new democracy is that this move has precipitated the rise of a new black patriarchy which is establishing its masculine authority through rape. This is especially the case with instances of rape that are coupled with severe violence and assault, as with Lucy's case in *Disgrace*. The controversy associated with Lucy's rape was partly fuelled by the sensationalism surrounding many of these cases, especially as

many of them were perpetrated by black men against white women. However, these cases hardly give an accurate representation of the realities of rape for most women in South Africa because these are sensationalised reports of violent crimes and not the (no less unfortunate) everyday incidents of partner-rape or coercion that constitutes most rape, as Moffett contends, pointing out that "the majority of rapists in South Africa are black only because the majority of the South African population is black" (135).

What is more, the sensationalized accounts of violent rapes, especially of black men against white women, make light of the kind of rape that Lurie perpetrates against Melanie, to the point that such rape is not even regarded as rape, but as "[n]ot rape, not quite that" (*Disgrace* 25), the result of which is that rape is the continued model of human sexuality. The upshot of this model, popularised in English Literature through metaphors of colonial expansion, hunting,[110] and other masculine pursuits, is the extreme dichotomisation of masculine and feminine sexuality, where being a man has become synonymous with being a rapist inasmuch as being a woman has become synonymous with being a disenfranchised and passive victim. Some feminist critics, such as Susan Brownmiller (1975), view male sexuality as inherently rapacious in its nature, but to make this assumption means falling back to essentialist views of sexuality, regarding both masculinity and femininity, in a move that is precisely one in which second-wavers such as Brownmiller herself would find highly problematic.

The current focus on rape in academia, the media, women's lobby groups, global politics, and rape crisis centres alike, has been on making clear the definition of rape, so that there can be no mistake as to what constitutes

rape and who should be held culpable for its perpetration, as well as pointing out that much of the behaviour considered merely to be seduction techniques or normal masculine behaviour ("boys being boys") is in fact contributing to rape culture. Instead of excusing men on the grounds that it is "in their nature" as Brownmiller does, making known the kinds of behaviour that contribute to the constitution of rape culture, as Coetzee's novel arguably does, seems to have a far greater effect on curbing the behaviour of would-be perpetrators. While on the witness stand for his teammates, Trent Mays and Ma'lik Richmond, high school footballer, Evan Westlake tried to explain why he did nothing when he witnessed his friends sexually assaulting an as yet unnamed, intoxicated sixteen-year-old, in Steubenville, Ohio, stating that he did not understand this behaviour as rape, that he had "always pictured it [rape] as forcing yourself on someone" (qtd. in Wetzel 2013). The Steubenville case in 2013, which resulted in the incarceration of Mays and Richmond, along with the Assange case in 2010, have certainly cleared things up for a number of people who may have been mistaken in thinking that only incidents such as the Delhi rape case in 2012[111] make the cut, those cases that Akin would describe as his much taunted "legitimate rape." However, the reason for each of these cases seems to be the (re)affirmation of masculine authority and/or privilege: like Lurie, Julian Assange is a privileged, white man; Mays' and Richmond's privilege, while neither racial nor fiscal in Richmond's case, stems from their near-celebrity status as high school footballers in small-town America; the rapists in Delhi were exercising their authority to rape in a country that on many levels holds victims responsible for the crimes committed against them; and Lucy's rape is

quite clearly an exercise of masculine authority as a punishment for claiming a masculine authority of her own.

Performing "Inappropriate" Masculinity: Black Patriarchy and the "Correction" of Lesbians in the New South Africa

Lucy's masculinity is manifested in two ways: first, as a lesbian, she performs a masculine sexuality through her "ownership" of women, and, second, by owning land, Lucy claims an authority that is denied her by her material body. That is, Lucy's masculinity is only "inappropriate" with regard to the context in which it is performed, which is in the shift from apartheid to the "new" South Africa, from one patriarchal centre of control to another. Much of the criticism targeted towards apartheid was quite obviously for its obscene racial prejudice and oppression, but what is often omitted from such criticism is the status of women during its tenure. While white women were given the right to vote in 1930, all people of colour waited until 1994 before they could exercise their democratic right. Yet, white women were not regarded as white men's equals during apartheid, and though far from living with the oppression black women endured during this time, they faced additional oppressive systems that were vindicated by the state. In short, apartheid was a patriarchy, where being a white woman meant being oppressed by white men, but being a black woman meant being oppressed by both black men and white women, while, as Jennifer R Wilkinson comments, "white men did not even view black women as women" (353). All other racial and ethnic groups living in South

Africa during apartheid fell somewhere in the middle of this complex order of oppression.

Lucy's rape signifies what both Graham and Cooper refer to as a shift from one patriarchal group to another, where Lucy's sexuality and status as landowner put her in the precarious position of performing a masculinity that is forbidden her material reality by the emerging power. This power is symbolised in the novel both positively, in the material success of Petrus, Lucy's neighbour and one-time employee, and negatively, through Lucy's rape. As Cooper points out "the assault signifies, on a broad symbolic level, the black phallus replacing the defunct white one as the features of patriarchal authority are reconfigured in South Africa" (29): it is the second rape to occur in the novel, which is written in two parts, the first showing the demise of the "fallen" Lurie, and the second showcasing the emerging success of black patriarchal control through the figure of Petrus. As Graham contends, there is more than a suggestion that being a lesbian is partly what provoked Lucy's rape (439), and the reason for this is because, as a lesbian, Lucy performs a masculinity that is regarded by her black neighbours as inappropriate. To illustrate this more fully, it is crucial to this argument to realise that as rape rates continue to rise in South Africa, and, among these rapes, a large portion are committed with the intent to (re)feminise an unapproved lesbian population. Like the sensationalised rapes committed against white women that make the news, the rapes of South Africa's lesbians are often coupled with extreme violence, bodily assault and in some cases, murder. In an article covering the "corrective" rapes of lesbians in South Africa, Pumza Fihlani notes that many of these rapes are committed against "butch" lesbians, as they are considered to be "stealing"

women from men (2011). Interviewing men on the streets of Johannesburg for their opinions on the topic, this BBC reporter found that what many had to say corroborated the performative act of rape, quoting one man as saying "When someone is a lesbian, it's like saying to us men that we are not good enough" (qtd.in Fihlani 2011). Thus, the pervading logic that such statements and that "corrective" rape imply is that women are property to be used by men as they see fit.

This is precisely the reason Coetzee conflates Lucy's identity as a woman, and especially as a lesbian, with her status as landowner: as a woman, Lucy is regarded under the new patriarchal order as property, which means that she has no rights to property ownership herself, whether that is of land, as is the case with her farm, or of goods and chattel, which she claims by taking other women into her bed. Graham writes that "[a]s a lesbian, Lucy would be regarded as 'unowned' and therefore 'huntable'" (439), as little more than an animal, which is precisely the connection Coetzee wishes us to make. I shortly move on to an analysis of the animal in *Disgrace*, but first, I want to give greater consideration to the link Coetzee makes between the lesbian/female body and land. This relationship is more complex than simply that of ownership of goods; land, as well as its symbolic representation in the Western tradition, is also a conceptual metaphor for space, namely between public/private, and rural/urban settings. I have already discussed earlier in this chapter Coetzee's dystopian representation of the English pastoral in *Disgrace*, which is reinforced by Lurie's consistent allusions to the Western tradition. However, Coetzee's critique of the genre relies heavily on the same modes in order to convey this

critique, where the conceptual binary is reinforced between rural and urban settings, between the farm in Grahamstown and the university in Cape Town.

Maria Lopez argues that the novel "makes a clear opposition between Lucy's way of coping with her rape in the rural context, and the sexual abuse suffered by Melanie in Cape Town, an urban context in which women can more easily turn to institutions and to the law in order to protect themselves" (925), but I think this oversimplifies the vastly different experiences of women living in both contexts. First, Lopez does not take class or economic stature into account in this argument, forgetting that not every woman living in an urban context such as the sprawling suburbs of Cape Town has access to institutional help such as that offered by universities and technikons.[112] The ongoing corrective rape of urban lesbians is testament to this, as most reported cases of corrective rape take place in urban townships, while the lesbians living here have little reason to trust institutional assistance, because their experience with the South African police force has taught them that institutional authority is not on their side. Fihlani explains that a corrupt police force is more likely to taunt a victim of corrective rape than help her, quoting a young lesbian from Soweto, who says that "[s]ome policemen in the township mock you saying: 'How can you be raped by a man if you are not attracted to them?' They ask you to explain how the rape felt. It is humiliating" (qtd. in Fihlani 2011). Secondly, although Lucy lives on a farm in the outskirts of Grahamstown, Grahamstown itself is a thriving university town, with one of the oldest universities in South Africa, as well as having the necessary institutional support that any large town with a population over 12,000 requires. Yet, Lopez's assertion that Coetzee "carefully situates Lucy's rape in a delimited context in which it acquires a

significance it would not have in a different place" (925) is not altogether erroneous: although rapes such as Lucy's take place across South Africa[113] on a daily basis, its significance is not cleanly based on a rural/urban divide, but on its intersection with the dissolving boundaries between public and private spaces (that women have long had a precarious relationship with), as well as the dissolution of designated black spaces and white spaces that apartheid enforced.

As I have made abundantly clear in this thesis, the concept of place and the process of placement are crucial to ontological distinctions between a "you" and an "I." Moreover, any conceptualisation of Otherness or monstrosity is born out of a pre-existing notion of one's place within (or without) human communities, not just in a physical sense, but on a Symbolic level, and, as Kristeva has demonstrated, it is from the obfuscation of inside and outside that our deepest fears are made known to us. By owning land, Lucy confounds the private and the public spheres: because she is a woman, Lucy can neither be the Afrikaner "husband-farmer" nor a post-apartheid custodian of the land such as Petrus. For flouting this "rule," Lucy is raped, which, as Cooper writes, is an act that puts her "in *her* place," that is, "the conventional place of wife and mother – albeit in a reshaped system" (31, my emphasis). Just as Gallimard's rape by Isabell in *M. Butterfly* has the effect of feminising him, because it places him according to a binary system, so too does Lucy's rape have the performative effect of putting her in "*her* place." What is more, Cooper points out that by taking place within her home and thus within the sphere associated with femininity, the idea is driven home most literally, invading the inner sanctum of her home as well as of her body (31). By eventually accepting Petrus' offer of

marriage, Lucy's feminisation within the new patriarchal order is complete, which, she points out, hinges not only on his ownership of her, but of her land: "'I don't believe you get the point, David. Petrus is not offering me a church wedding followed by a honeymoon on the Wild Coast. He is offering an alliance, a deal. I contribute the land, in return for which I am allowed to creep in under his wing. Otherwise, he wants to remind me, I am without protection, I am fair game'" (*Disgrace* 203).

Unconditional Hospitality: Welcoming the Unwelcome Guest

While commentators such as Harald Leusmann read Lucy's acceptance of her fate as retribution for apartheid ("J. M. Coetzee's Cultural Critique" 61), Barnard indicates that such a reading means "that one accepts or ignores her own enormously troubling proposition that the rape is 'the price [she] has to pay for staying on'" (221:158, Barnard's addition). "[B]y the same token," writes Barnard,

> [there may also be] something sentimental about seeing her labor in a positive light. It requires, after all, that we forget an ugly word that resurfaces right before David Lurie's final visit to the farm: *bywoner*. Considered morpheme by morpheme, the word should mean the same thing as "neighbor" does in English ("by," after all, means "near" and "woon" means "dwell"). But *bywoner* bears none of the English word's implications of equality and reciprocity: it conveys instead humiliating connotations of indebtedness and poverty and suggests, depressingly, that the old rural economy has remained intact, even if the roles within it have been reassigned along racial lines (221).

The price to pay for apartheid, it would seem, is the resubjugation of (white) women to the new patriarchal order, which is highly problematic. My suspicions are that Coetzee produces this conundrum in *Disgrace* purposefully, that his intent is (among other things) to illustrate the same difficulty Shelley's

Frankenstein has with the Enlightenment principles of liberty, fraternity, and equality, maxims born of the French Revolution. The difficulty Shelley and Coetzee articulate with regard to these ideals accrues as a crisis in the conceptualisation of unconditional hospitality, illustrated by the arrival of an unwelcome guest. For Shelley, this "guest" is Frankenstein's Creature, whose "birth" through Frankenstein's proto-scientific practices is immediately regretted by his creator and the Creature is abandoned. Even after reasoning with Frankenstein, the Creature's request for a mate is violently refused, which results in the deaths of everyone that Frankenstein loves. Frankenstein could neither welcome his Creature into the world, abandoning him at "birth," nor his mate, who Frankenstein destroys when she is half-made, leaving the Creature alone and vengeful – a thoroughly unwelcome guest when he comes to "visit" Frankenstein and his kin.

For Coetzee, in the aftermath of apartheid, the figure of the unwelcome guest is obscured by (post)colonial violence. In *Disgrace*, as Maria Lopez notes, hospitality is featured in "the continuous use of synonyms, quasi-synonyms or semantically related terms . . . with the words 'here,' 'visit,' 'intrude,' 'friend' and 'kind'" (924). Lopez points out that "'friend' is the only word whose etymology is given in the novel" (930), where Lurie muses "Modern English *friend* from Old English *freond*, from *freon*, to love" (*Disgrace* 102), which Lopez concludes "underlines its prominent significance" in the novel (930). In a move that mirrors the concerns of *Frankenstein*, the ideals of friendship and kinship are questioned in *Disgrace*, especially in the aftermath of visitation (the Derridean "event"), because friendship and kinship have everything to do with likeness, similarity, and difference, which Lopez reminds us is precisely what the politics

of apartheid were hinged upon (931). In his first letters to his sister, Walton confesses a primal need for a friend, which he finally finds in the dying Frankenstein, a man who is "like" him in so many ways: "I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me; whose eyes would reply to mine. You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend" (*Frankenstein* 10). The Creature, in turn, confesses his need for friendship to Frankenstein, which is how he is able to extract Frankenstein's promise to make him a mate. In *Disgrace*, we are shown a view of the new South Africa through the eyes of a man who is, for all intents and purposes, the continued animation of the Creature in *Frankenstein*, still desperately seeking after a mate in the attempt to be at one with her, but this at-oneness is, for Lurie, only the joining of bodies and the relief of his desires. Although he thinks loftily that his affair with Melanie was motivated by a "force that drives the utmost strangers into each other's arms, making them kin, kind, beyond all prudence" (*Disgrace* 194), when this physically materializes in Lucy's pregnancy, Lopez notes that he is not at all enamoured by the possibility that he may now be related to Petrus, through her possible rape by Pollux,[114] to whom Petrus refers as "my family, my people" (201).

Within the rhetoric of kin and kind, fraternity and friendship, the politics of monstrosity is always already present. Using Derrida's *Of Hospitality*, Lopez explains how:

> In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida poses the question, 'How can we distinguish between a guest and a parasite [?]', describing the parasite as 'a guest who is wrong, illegitimate, clandestine, liable to expulsion or arrest'. If 'absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.) but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other', the implied answer to Derrida's question is that we

> cannot distinguish between a guest and a parasite, since I must open my home to an other of whom I know nothing, independently of who s/he is (933: 59, 61, 25).

Monsters represent the arrival of the unwelcome guest par excellence, not just as parasites that eat one out of house and home, but visitors that will cross both the threshold of one's hearth and the very boundaries of one's body with impunity. The concept of regarding another, any other, as unconditionally welcome found its naissance in Enlightenment philosophies that sought to re-establish the means of gaining political power in Europe according to a democratic template set out by the Ancient Greeks, and was literally enacted by the undertakings of the French Revolution. In order to vindicate the overthrowing of the French monarchy, a new system had to be proposed that could determine who had the rights to leadership and what form a leader's responsibilities towards his/her people should take.

Hirsch writes that at the crux of the democratic ideal proposed by the Revolution is an "instability" implemented by "the Revolutionary key word *fraternité*, which simultaneously connotes competing designations of the locus of social cohesiveness and responsibility" ("Liberty, Equality, Monstrosity" 117). What this means is that in adopting the rhetoric of fraternity, the Revolution's "[m]etaphorical brotherhood threatens to dissolve the naturalness of literal, descent-based concepts of kith, kin, and kind" (118), resulting in the conceptualisation of responsibility not exclusively towards family, but towards one's absolute Other, even if that other is regarded as a parasite. Shelley's father, William Godwin, famously rejected the idea of familial responsibility in favour of a democratic model of responsibility to the other in his highly influential *Political Justice*, and, in many ways, Shelley's novel takes the form of

an argument that tempers Godwin's rational, by pointing out the aporetic impossibility of welcoming the absolute Other. What is more, Shelley manages to do this without merely subverting Godwin's argument, because the Creature *is*, as I argued earlier, Frankenstein's family, his "hideous progeny." Hirsch points out that Godwin's reasoning rests on an interrogation of the use of "my," where he asks "What magic is there in the pronoun 'my'? My brother or my father may be a fool or a profligate, malicious, lying or dishonest. If they be, of what consequence is it that they are mine?" (*Political Justice* qtd. in Hirsch 122:170).

In an intriguing move, Hirsch responds: "Should *brother* refer only to one's legal or biological kin, Godwin, like Cain, would disavow the responsibility of being his brother's keeper, and in doing so uphold the impartial responsibilities of social fraternity" (122, his emphasis). Lest we forget, Cain is the titular character of one of Byron's most famous works, one that Lurie is teaching to his Romantics class, of which Melanie is a member. Cain can be classed as a Byronic hero, a "disaffected, self-pitying, self-hating, suicidal" and, often, highly desirable hero (Leonard Michaels 71), which Byron popularised in many of his works,[115] including *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-8) and *Lara* (1814), the latter being another text Lurie covers in his class. Selecting a passage from *Cain* to examine with his class, Lurie lectures on the character, Lucifer:

> Note that we are not asked to condemn this being with the mad heart, this being with whom there is something constitutionally wrong. On the contrary, we are invited to understand and sympathize. But there is a limit to sympathy. For though he lives among us, he is not one of us. He is exactly what he calls himself: a *thing*, that is, a monster. Finally, Byron will suggest, it will not be possible to love him, not in the deeper, more human sense of the word. He will be condemned to solitude

(*Disgrace* 33-4, emphasis in the original).

There are various reasons for putting this passage in the novel, not least of which is an invitation by Coetzee to compare Lurie with the kind of Byronic hero presented in *Lara*. Like Byron's Lucifer, we are "invited to understand and sympathize" with Lurie throughout the novel, but, as he himself says "there is a limit to sympathy" (33). While Lurie regards himself as monstrous because of his age, an "old man" who, thinking through his students, cannot possibly "know about love[116]" (23), but what truly has him "condemned to solitude" is his mistreatment of Melanie, which is the point at which our sympathy for Lurie runs out.

We are again expected to make the connection between Lurie and the Byronic hero in the next passage, where "[h]eads bent, they scribble down his words. Byron, Lucifer, Cain, it is all the same to them" (34). Yet, we are also required to see these figures as "all the same" (the legend of Byron, rather than the man himself, is perhaps the most Byronic of all Byronic heroes), and to regard Lurie in the same manner. Lurie is indeed a brooding, "disaffected" and "self-pitying" individual, but what differentiates him from the classic Byronic hero is that instead of rebelling against the higher forces that impose their will on him, he blames a fictional set of higher forces in which he does not even believe for his downfall, calling himself a "servant of Eros" (52, 89), stating that a "god acted through" him (89). Yet, it is precisely because he does not meet the standards of the Byronic hero in this regard that he is monstrously alone and that our sympathy for him is limited; in many ways, Lurie exemplifies what were the higher powers in apartheid South Africa, being white, affluent, young, good-looking, and well-educated, and it is only with the onset of his twilight

years and the rise of a new patriarchy that he finds himself a Byronic outcast. Our sympathy is very limited, indeed. More importantly, we are shown in this passage (33-4) the real connections Coetzee wants us to make between Lurie and the Romantics, not the self-aggrandised version that Lurie creates. The key words to this passage are "sympathy" and "love." Like the account Frankenstein's Creature conveys on Montanvert, we are expected through this narrative to sympathise with Lurie; yet, as Sue Kossew writes, although we are required to connect Lurie with the Byronic figures of Cain and Lucifer, he is "also a smooth talker of the Stavrogin and Humbert Humbert[117] school, those who, in the very act of confession, are seen to be justifying themselves" (158).

However, the sympathy that Coetzee wishes to elicit is not from the reader, at least, not directly. Lurie can only act the way he does because he has cut himself off from others, because he has deliberately made of himself a Byronic figure. Finding himself in a new political landscape, no longer the authority he once was, Lurie monstratively constitutes himself as Other as a way of justifying the monstrative act of rape that he puts Melanie through. It is only through *really* sympathising with the Other, by literally Becoming-Other through his disgrace that Lurie is able to receive redemption for his acts. Moreover, this sympathy can only be elicited by a love for the absolute Other, "the deeper, more human sense" of love that he insists Byron's Lucifer could not be given, the love that he finds at the root of the English word for 'friend,' "*freond*, from *freon*, to love." This is precisely what the rhetoric of friendship and fraternity has to do with *Disgrace*: to love the absolute Other as family, even if that Other is responsible for one's own misery and maltreatment, which in *Disgrace* takes the form of Lucy's rape and subsequent pregnancy. When Lucy

explains on Lurie's second visit that the "boy," Pollux, is back living with Petrus, she clarifies his position with regard to her rape, saying "Pollux turns out to be a brother of Petrus's wife's. *Whether that means a real brother I don't know*. But Petrus has obligations toward him, family obligations" (200, my emphasis). As Lucy puts it, whether or not Pollux is a blood-relative of Petrus' wife, Petrus has "family obligations" toward the boy, and these are the same obligations he will have toward Lucy if she concedes to marry him.

What Petrus is putting into practice by protecting the boy is a model of responsibility much like that of the Enlightenment model of fraternity, which is not based on actual family ties but on a perceived brotherhood of man. In certain Southern African traditions, this philosophy is known as "Ubuntu," an "anti-Cartesian notion that [states] 'I am because you are'" (Jennifer R Wilkinson 356), or as Archbishop Desmond Tutu has put it:

> [Ubuntu is] the essence of being human, it is part of the gift Africa will give to the world. It embraces *hospitality*, caring about others, being willing to go the extra mile for the sake of others. We believe a person is a person through another person, that my humanity is caught up, bound up and inextricable in [sic] yours. *When I dehumanize you, I inexorably dehumanize myself*. The solitary human being is a contradiction in terms and therefore you seek to work for the common good because your humanity comes into its own community, in belonging (qtd. in Wilkinson 356, my emphases).

However, inasmuch as Enlightenment or Ubuntu models may open the door to a possible utopia, novels such as Shelley's and Coetzee's demonstrate that accepting the Other as brother is easier said than done. While the Ubuntu philosophy insists that the creation of the "I" is dependent on its responsibility towards a "you," in a move that is even more egalitarian than the Enlightenment model of fraternity, it explicitly states that it is a *human* mode of being that does not demonstrate an affinity with any of the other beings with whom we share

this earth. Given the manner in which women have been systematically likened to animals, not just aesthetically, but through the kind of treatment that demonstrates the regard for women as useable and ownable, it is no wonder, then, that the political change in South Africa has resulted only in the move from one patriarchy to another.

What is more, even if I see myself only through my responsibilities towards the Other, and through what I can provide for the Other, and that I do so even if the Other is truly monstrous and unlovable, such a model for being is still aporetic:

> I am responsible to the other as other, I answer to him [sic] and I answer for what I do before him [sic]. But of course, what binds me thus in my singularity of the other, immediately propels me into the space or risk of absolute sacrifice. There are also others, an infinite number of them, the innumerable generality of others to whom I should be bound by the same responsibility, a general and universal responsibility . . . I cannot respond to the call, the request, the obligation, or even the love of another without sacrificing the other other, the other others . . . (Derrida *The Gift of Death* 68).

It is precisely for this reason that we pick and choose our allegiances, forming boundaries that dictate to whom we are responsible, and which simultaneously create alterity and the concepts of hospitality and visitation, welcome or not. As Lopez has noted (924), *Disgrace* not only emphasises the idea of hospitality, but quite clearly demonstrates the precariousness of being a host, as "[t]he logic of visitation in the novel . . . goes beyond the strictly political and historical sphere, as the father-daughter relationship between Lurie and Lucy is also depicted in terms of the guest-host dyad, and animals are portrayed as friendly visitors" (Lopez 926), yet it also signals the physicality of unwelcome intrusion and likens it to rape.

However, Coetzee purposefully obfuscates the "logic of visitation" by showing the varying degrees of being a host or a guest and how and why we should question our responsibilities as either. For it would seem, according to the logic of the Western tradition, that the responsibilities of the host always outweigh those of the visitor. If, for example, we read Lucy's rape and resulting pregnancy as hopeful, as "some new annunciation or intervention – the arrival, perhaps, of an unexpected grace" (Barnard 219), then we must effectively ignore the violation of her right to bodily sovereignty; however, if we do not, then the implication is that even God gives visitors the right to violate their host, and the story of the Annunciation suddenly becomes rape. Was Mary ever asked if she wanted to bear the son of God? The New Testament narrative implies that it was her "duty" to bring the child to term and forebear the agony of its insemination, however fantastical that may or may not have been. Lurie himself becomes an unwelcome visitor when he arrives at the Isaacs' house for dinner, calling himself the "unwanted visitor, the man whose name is darkness" (*Disgrace* 168). However, inasmuch as he most certainly is an intruder in this instance (neither Melanie's mother nor her sister are happy to have him there), he is treated cordially and welcomed to break bread with the Isaacs, in an episode that exemplifies the responsibilities of the host. Yet, Lurie is all too aware that he owes them something in return and he eventually apologises for his trespass against Melanie, going so far as to bow down in supplication before Mrs Isaacs and Desiree. Melanie, however, never hears an apology for what he has put her through and it is only to Mr Isaacs that the words "I apologize" are uttered, making Lurie's redemption far from clear cut. It is as though Lurie still regards women as the property of their menfolk, fathers or lovers alike.

The associations between Lucy's rape and biblical events, though subtly portrayed, are nevertheless there. By naming her rapists "the men who visited them" (107), "their visitors" (115), and "the three visitors" (159), he gives them religious importance (Barnard 219), lexically and narratively, as their narrative can be compared to the tale of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the lexical associations with visitation also liken Lucy's conundrum to Mary's. Shortly before sending angels to the city of Sodom to see if there are any people to be saved from his wrath, God sends three visitors to Abraham, who, having received these visitors with perfect hospitality, is gifted with his aging wife's pregnancy. Abraham asks God, through a series of questions, whether he will save Sodom and Gomorrah from destruction if he believes there are at least ten people worth saving. God sends two of his "visitors" to Abraham's nephew, Lot, in the city of Sodom, who are also properly received in hospitality. However, the city's inhabitants hear of the strangers and demand that Lot release his guests so that they may "know them," a phrase which has come to be understood as "know them carnally" (*Gen*. 19: 4-5). Lot refuses, offering instead his two virginal daughters as compensation. In a twist of biblical events, *Disgrace* names the visitors rapists and demonstrates the horror of rape that would have befallen Lot's daughters, had the city's people accepted Lot's offering. What is more, this passage in Genesis is often used as a means by which to prove the "sinfulness" of homosexuality, as the men of the city want to have sex with the strangers (who, as angels, one can only assume are male). By making Lucy a lesbian, Coetzee not only plants the account of her rape firmly in the context of the new South Africa, but subverts the biblical narrative by pointing out that if there is any "sin" to be found in the story of Lot's visitors, it

is that no consent is asked of the strangers, and that to allow the men of Sodom to rape his visitors, Lot would be violating the rules of hospitality.

Furthermore, it is the protagonist's daughter who is violated *by* the visitors in *Disgrace* (rather than *instead of* the visitors, as with Lot's story), which subverts the responsibilities of the host to those of the guest, perhaps signifying that if there is such a thing as a good host, there is also such a thing as a good guest. As one can never be sure of whether one is inviting a parasite or a good guest into one's home, the onus is on the responsibilities of the host before those of the guest. What is implicated by the host/guest dyad and the rhetoric of hospitality in *Disgrace* is that the responsibilities of the host do not outweigh those of the guest, and it is through this implication that we are made to review the colonial encounter. Lucy's pregnancy, meanwhile, is tied to the notion of visitation, not just through its obvious links to the Annunciation, but lexically, through the narrative of the pregnant Mary at her equally pregnant friend's house during an episode referred to in the Bible as the Visitation. In this encounter, Mary's visitation is regarded as the arrival of grace, which anoints the unborn child of her friend, Elizabeth, with this grace. Thus the concept of visitation is intimately interwoven not just with hospitality and friendship, but with pregnancy and birth, significantly allying these primal concepts with monstrosity. Coetzee's intertextual readings of the Western tradition are also indelibly linked to animal imagery in *Disgrace*, where the event of Lucy's rape is immediately presaged by another arrival, that of three wild geese to the farm. Of the geese, Lucy says, "They come back every year. The same three. I feel so lucky to be visited. To be the one chosen" (88). Occurring a few pages before the rape scene, the insinuation is that the three rapists will be back to collect

their dues from Lucy, over and over again. What is also suggested by the arrival of the geese is that opening one's home to the absolute Other might not result in tragedy at all, but instead in grace. However, animals play a far more important role in *Disgrace* than merely portending human doom or acting as symbols for human interaction in the novel. Animals feature as the absolute Other in *Disgrace*, the kinds of monster that cannot be assimilated but that instead assimilate us.

The "Dog-Man": David Lurie's Atonement and Becoming-Animal

Animals, particularly in their use as symbols or metaphors, have a long history in the Western aesthetic tradition, one that is both reiterated and deconstructed in *Disgrace*. Throughout the history of Western art, literature, medicine, and science, animals have been subject to and subjected by the human gaze, and all that this gaze brings with it, namely discursive and bodily subjugation, without possible recourse. For scholars of feminist, Queer, or postcolonial theory, this subjugation sounds very familiar indeed. Like Derrida, Coetzee understands the animal as our absolute Other, even though we are also animal. For Derrida, the animal is figured as a neighbour, but one of "absolute alterity" (*The Animal That Therefore I Am* 11), for one cannot know or even begin to guess what the animal sees when it returns one's gaze. The animal's gaze, unlike ours, is silent, and not paired with discursive parameters that performatively constitute what it sees. David Wood writes that "it is no accident that . . . categorial distinctions are actually wielded by only one of each pair [of binary "opposites"]" ("Thinking with Cats" 133), where "animal" is "a word that men have given themselves the right to give" (*The Animal That*

Therefore I Am 32), inasmuch as injurious names have been bestowed upon other Others. Thus, when Butler writes that the injurious address "may also produce an unexpected and enabling response" by "inaugurating a subject in speech who comes to use language to counter the offensive call" (*Excitable Speech* 2), the only Other who cannot "counter the offensive call" through speech is the animal. However, even though we "may admit that the 'other' has a role to play in determining who I am" (Wood 130), defining what part the animal Other determines is absolutely impossible, precisely because of its silence.

Silence is the point in *Disgrace* where the animal and the human converge, not just with regard to being unable to speak or to narrate past events, but of having the right not to speak or narrate. In *Disgrace*, silence has everything to do with abjection and bodily trauma, where speech and the command to account for oneself are likened to violent physical penetration. Wood points out that "what is true of naming . . . is equally true of silence (and speaking out). Silence can preserve possibilities that articulation would prematurely close off, but, in many political contexts, silence is construed with consent, and can be fatal" (135). Earlier in this chapter, I explained how Melanie's silence and co-operation with Lurie during their rape scene has resulted in many critics not regarding the episode as rape at all, precisely because silence (and co-operation) have been understood ideologically as consent. That Lurie cannot understand Lucy's choice to remain on the farm after her rape is also because he views her silence on the matter as consent to her violation. As animals cannot speak at all, they have very little chance of denying the "violence and genocide" (Wood 129) we continue to put them

through every day. This violence does not only take the form of bodily trauma, although the cruelty, torture, and neglect that animal welfare societies highlight on a global level showcase the destruction that comes with objectifying our animal Others. Lurie notes the same of animals in *Disgrace* once he starts working with Bev, who does what she can to alleviate their suffering, including euthanizing the animals (chiefly dogs) that nobody wants.

Violence towards animals also comes in the form of linguistic categorisation, which not only creates conceptual parameters that favour humanity but subjects the animal to a binary system of mastery and slavery, which, being speechless, they cannot answer for: "[f]inding oneself deprived of language, one loses the power to name, to name oneself, indeed to answer [*répondre*] for one's name" (*The Animal That Therefore I Am* 19). Derrida writes of the scene in Genesis in which Adam is told by God to name the animals, which he explains allows Adam (the progenitor of all *man*kind), to "*subject*, *tame*, *dominate*, *train*, *or domesticate* the animals born before him and assert his authority over them" (16, emphasis in the original). Linguistic categorisation has lent itself to symbolic associations between animals and human traits, so that animals have come to represent certain human behaviour, becoming metonymic supplements for our own virtues and vices. Thus, lions have come to be associated with royalty, foxes with cunning, dogs with loyalty, and so on, even if animal behaviour bears nothing in common with what it represents. Our propensity to view animals symbolically has also often led to their destruction, such as in the case of foxes, whose presumed "cunning" is part of the rhetoric used in their culling by farmers and fox hunters alike. Lurie's mastery of the Western aesthetic tradition means that these representations of animals have

made their way into his vocabulary, especially when speaking of women and of the men who rape his daughter, that is, those he subconsciously believes are beneath him. Lurie's use of animal imagery to describe women is also often in line with the aesthetic of the hunt, a poetic device used to suggest human seduction and which is common of Greek mythology as it is of Renaissance poetry. Every woman he encounters in the text is compared to an animal or to animals, especially where sexuality is concerned.

Of Soraya, the "exotic" escort he meets once a week before embarking on his affair with Melanie, Lurie says "[i]ntercourse between Soraya and himself must be, he imagines, rather like the copulation of snakes: lengthy, absorbed, but rather abstract, rather dry, even at its hottest" (*Disgrace* 2-3). Once he sees her outside her role as an escort, however, in a chance encounter in which she has her two boys with her, Soraya terminates her work with the agency; Lurie manages to track her down, and, on telephoning her at home, she commands that he cease his harassment of her. Lurie's comments on the episode confirm his self-view as hunter, where "[h]er shrillness surprises him: there has been no intimation of it before. But then, what should a predator expect when he intrudes into the vixen's nest, into the home of her cubs?" (10) Interestingly, Soraya is not considered prey in the way that Melanie is later, but is instead referred to as a "vixen," a term that suggests an aberrant over-abundance of female sexuality. Foxes are predatory, which makes Soraya predatory, a fitting description, Lurie must think, for a prostitute. After this outburst, Lurie leaves Soraya at peace, but not because of her insistence; instead, Lurie loses interest in Soraya precisely because she shows these attributes as part of her "real" self, no longer the obedient escort who Lurie had described as "[a] ready learner,

compliant, pliant" (5). It is also for this reason that he quickly loses interest in the new secretary in his department; describing their union as "a failure" (9), Lurie is disgusted by her sexual enjoyment, which is illustrated by animalistic imagery: "Bucking and clawing, she works herself into a froth of excitement that in the end only repels him" (9). Her sexual mannerisms are comparable to two animals, one that traditionally alludes to masculine sexuality, the horse, and the other to aberrant female sexuality, a predatory animal with claws, probably a feline.

What is more, the horse imagery conveyed by the secretary's "bucking" and the "froth of excitement" she gets herself into also alludes to an unchecked, bestial sexuality that is symbolised by the horse/human hybrid, the centaur. Centaurs often (although, not always) traditionally represent a monstrous form of male sexuality that is bestial and rapacious in nature. That the secretary's mannerisms allude to a typically masculine sexuality is not a mistake, as it is precisely because she is not timid about her sexual enjoyment that Lurie finds her repulsive. That this symbolism is paired with feline imagery also suggests her masculinity: predation and predatory animals allude to hunt imagery, which has traditionally cast men in the role of predator or hunter, and women as prey. Indeed, Lurie casts himself in the role of hunter, describing himself at various stages as a "fox" (25), a "worm" (37), a "viper" (38), and a "shark among the helpless little fishies" (53). That he is able to do so is through his monstrative constitution of women, particularly Melanie, as animals, usually of the "helpless" variety. This monstrative constitution is what enables Lurie to consider himself a hunter or predator, because he views the world according to a binary logic. Thus, he is a "fox" only because Melanie is a "rabbit" (25), and

because she is a "little bird" (32) and a "little dove" (34), he can fill the role as her predator. However, it is not only for the purpose of reifying his masculinity that he casts Melanie as prey, but to vindicate his misuse of her. While his mastery of the Western tradition performatively constructs this vindication by normalizing its rhetoric, he also reiterates the human propensity to regard animals as objects. Thus, by likening Melanie to an animal, he unconsciously recreates her objectification.

Coetzee makes a lexical connection between Melanie's objectification and the objectification of animals through use of repetition. When he first "invites" Melanie to embark on an affair with him, his reasoning is that "a woman's beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it" (16), thinking to himself "She does not own herself. Beauty does not own itself" (16). Lurie uses the very same reasoning to console himself later of the impending slaughter of Petrus' two sheep, thinking "Sheep do not own themselves, do not own their lives" (123). Reading *Disgrace* post-women's liberation, our reaction to Lurie's objectification of Melanie through the logic of ownership should cause at least a few hackles to rise; the purpose, however, of Coetzee's lexical repetition is not *only* to point out the Western patriarchal objectification of women through their similarity to animals, but to emphasise the calm acceptance most of us have with regard to the fate of the sheep. What is more, the fact that they are sheep, animals used as livestock, allows Coetzee to make his argument all the more pointed: we are meant to regard these animals as similar to Melanie, insofar as they are also similar to Lurie, and to the rest of humankind. What, therefore, gives us the right to claim ownership of sheep, to claim ownership of any

animal? For, it is not only to Melanie that we are to make this connection; thinking that Melanie "does not own" herself, Lurie adds later "perhaps he does not own himself either" (18). At this point in the novel, when Lurie ruminates on his lack of self-ownership, he is attempting to justify his behaviour, where, as Sue Kossew argues, confession (in this case, to the reader) enacts vindication (158). Furthermore, in a religious context, confession also performs the act atoning for one's sins, as it "becomes an end in itself" (156).

As the title suggests, the novel is about being in a state of disgrace for which the protagonist must atone. He is smart enough to realise that a formal confession before the committee to which he is called following Melanie's complaint will not perform the act of atonement for him. In what can only be described as a mockery of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a formal hearing that was put in place in order to hear the truths of perpetrators as understood by them and by victims, for the purpose of reconciling and moving on, Lurie refuses to narrate the events of the rape before the committee. Instead, the events are put to us in the form of the novel. Kossew writes that "remorse was not considered part of the T. R. C. process, as it was deemed too difficult to measure its sincerity" (159), which is how the T. R. C. differs from other formal confession-based institutions, such as Catholic confession. The point of confession within the Catholic context is to *begin* the act of atonement, and is followed by further vocal performances that are said to express the sinner's penitence, such as the "Hail Mary" and the Lord's Prayer. According to the Church, confession, followed by repetitive chanting, thus performs the act of atonement. When Lurie is summoned by the committee to answer for his actions against Melanie, he is expected to "express contrition," to

which he exclaims "I have said the words for you, now you want more, you want me to demonstrate their sincerity. That is preposterous. That is beyond the scope of the law" (*Disgrace* 55). Lurie realises, much like the conductors of the T. R. C., that inasmuch as his illocutionary utterance may be perfect, the cavity between the performative and the perlocutionary answer, its desired effect of retribution, is unbridgeable.

Lurie must atone, instead, by what Kossew describes as "attending to the everyday, to the respective needs of an unborn child [Lucy's] and desperate dogs" (161). However, while "attending to the everyday" is perhaps the *method* by which Lurie finds atonement, his amends only start to properly take place when he finds himself in a state of Becoming. Lurie's Becoming is specifically that of Becoming-animal, because the animals that he helps in Bev's centre elicit his sympathy. If the first section of the novel demonstrates Lurie's fall from grace, the second section finds him learning how to welcome the absolute Other through his atonement, that is, his at-one-ment with the animals in his care. In the first part of the novel, Lurie uses animals as metaphors to justify his behaviour, naturalizing his desire for dominance over Melanie by likening it to predatory behaviour. Similarly, the pages of *Disgrace* are filled with animal metaphors; written from Lurie's perspective, these metaphors become metonyms for human behaviour. Coetzee uses Lurie as a focalizer in order to demonstrate how the protagonist distances himself intellectually from both his own base desires and the acts of those he feels are beneath him, thereby monstratively making parts of himself and others into signs of abject Otherness. The very act of metaphoric association is monstrative because it relates humans to animals according to a human viewpoint. Thus, Lurie regards his aging self

as a cockroach (8) because the signifier "cockroach" is a stand-in for something abject, revolting, and Other, something to be shuddered at (8). However, Braidotti explains that by using metaphors, one may run into a problem, which is that by relying "on the mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy as hermeneutical keys," one's expectation is that the Imaginary order runs on the same logic as the Symbolic: "[t]he imaginary is not conceptualized along the same semiological axis [as the Symbolic] and the logic of latent and manifest meanings. That is to say, the 'meaning' – of a symptom, a text, a piece of music – is not indexed on the power of the signifier" (*Metamorphoses* 139).

While there are common associations between animal metaphors and their meaning, these are only common insofar as they have common ancestry, which is to say that we only regard, for example, cockroaches as abject and filthy because we see them crawling out of drains and existing on the effluvium of other animals. In other words, our use of animal metaphor is hinged upon a long history of associating animals with human vice and virtue. This is partly because of the existence of medieval bestiaries, which documented animals, real and fantastical, according to real or perceived behaviour, for which the animal became metonymic of similar behaviour in humans. This is precisely why we still make metaphorical connections between human characteristics and animals, even if these metaphors have been scientifically disproven, such as being as greedy as a pig or as blind as a bat.[118] What is more, animal metaphors became so culturally ingrained in the West, thanks in no small part to the popularity of bestiaries, that they ceased to be metaphors and became fact, a practice that has had an interesting effect (to say the least) on psychoanalytic discourses. Braidotti points out that in classic psychoanalysis, "each animal

signifies a repressed or disavowed aspect of the patient's remembered experience, now festering silently into pathology," where animals are "metaphoric representations or metonymic displacements of unprocessed traumas" (*Metamorphoses* 140). However, as she has proven, these representations are *based on the psychoanalyst's understanding* of what each animal represents, which, in turn, is hinged on centuries of repeated metaphors. Thus, Freud's entire thesis on subject formation[119] is based solely on the material fact that horses have large penises and therefore represent a threatening masculinity with which the boy child must compete. As with much psychoanalytic discourse, this tells us far more about the analyst than the patient.

It is precisely this "reliance on the mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy as hermeneutical keys" (139) that Lurie suffers from and which take part in his Othering of Melanie. Yet, after his fall from grace, Lurie is offered salvation through his Becoming-animal, which is not the same as using animals as metaphors, which he is inclined to do before his fall. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, Becoming "is not a correspondence between relations . . . [and] neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or, at the limit, an identification" (87), meaning that it is not a metaphorical association between two bodies. Lurie does not become the "dog man" by imitating the dogs in his care, but rather by being affected by their lot, by suffering with them:

> He had thought he would get used to it. But that is not what happens. The more killings he assists in, the more jittery he gets. One Sunday evening, driving home in Lucy's kombi, he actually has to stop at the roadside to recover himself. Tears flow down his face that he cannot stop; his hands shake. He does not understand what is happening to him. Until now he has been more or less indifferent to animals. Although in an abstract way he disapproves of cruelty, he cannot tell

> whether by nature he is cruel or kind. He is simply nothing . . . His whole being is gripped by what happens in the theatre (*Disgrace* 142 3).

This affectivity "is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel" (Deleuze and Guattari 89).

Certainly, it is not characteristic of Lurie to sympathise with others; when he tries to reflect on Lucy's rape, he finds himself unable to put himself in her position: "Lucy's intuition is right after all: he does understand; he can, if he concentrates, if he loses himself, be there, be the men, inhabit them, fill them with the ghost of himself. The question is, does he have it in him to be the woman?" (*Disgrace* 160). That he can "become" the men who rape his daughter is easy for Lurie, not least because he is a rapist himself (even if he does not regard himself in this way); when Lucy speaks to him of the incident, she recalls for him the violence associated with penetrative sex which is what allows him in the first instance to imagine this Becoming:

> 'Maybe, for men, hating the woman makes sex more exciting. You are a man, you ought to know. When you have sex with someone strange when you trap her, hold her down, get her under you, put all your weight on her – isn't it a bit like killing? Pushing the knife in; exiting afterwards, leaving the body behind covered in blood – doesn't it feel like murder, like getting away with murder?' (158).

However, when he tries to inhabit Lucy's body, he is left only with the question of whether he can. His work in the clinic is what starts Lurie's journey to redemption because of the affectivity of the dogs' deaths: by being at one with the animals in their last minutes, he eventually finds a way to be at one with women as well.

This occurs in his return to the opera on Byron that he had started before leaving Cape Town, where he had originally conceived of it "as a chamber-play about love and death, with a passionate young woman [Teresa, Byron's married lover] and a once passionate but now less than passionate older man" (180). He finds, however, that there is no heart or spirit to this piece of writing, and so he attempts to rewrite the opera, this time from the point of view of a middle-aged Teresa, asking himself, "Can he find it in his heart to love this plain, ordinary woman?" (182), an echo of his earlier question about Lucy's rape. This, in turn, echoes Lurie's earlier sentiment on Byron's Lucifer, telling his Romantics class

> Note that we are not asked to condemn this being with the mad heart, this being with whom there is something constitutionally wrong. On the contrary, we are invited to understand and sympathize. But there is a limit to sympathy. For though he lives among us, he is not one of us. He is exactly what he calls himself: a *thing*, that is, a monster. Finally, Byron will suggest, it will not be possible to love him, not in the deeper, more human sense of the word. He will be condemned to solitude (34, his emphasis).

Eschewing sympathy for the abject Other, such as that which he suggests here, has only resulted in Lurie's fall, and it is in finding sympathy for the Other that he is able to redeem himself. His Becoming-animal is what instigates his sympathy with women, those he had made monstratively Other through animalisation, because he is at-one with the abject Other. It has now become possible to love the Other, in, as Lurie says "the deeper, more human sense of the word," precisely because that Other has changed *him*, has assimilated *him* so that he can get to this point of understanding.

However, like *Frankenstein*, *Disgrace* is altogether ambivalent about Becoming, because of the potential for violence that such sympathy can elicit. In *Disgrace*, sympathy is met with the violence of rape, which is an extremely

troubling outcome and not at all far from the experience of South African women today. Barnard writes that the end of the novel, where Lucy stays on the farm under Petrus' protection (ownership), "remains strange, unexpected, unpredictable in terms of generic codes. By ending *Disgrace* in this way, Coetzee refuses to make his novel the critic's friend and reminds us that the radically new, both in literature and society, will be impossible to predict and difficult to welcome" (223). Thus, the novel itself is monstrous, because of what it suggests but also because of its strangeness and unpredictability; it is also monstrous because of its use of intertextuality and the splicing of excerpts from the European literary tradition, which makes *Disgrace* a very strange hybrid. Inasmuch as the novel ends ambivalently, I would suggest, however, that it remains that monsters will arrive at our thresholds, and, whether or not we receive them with sympathy and welcome them as guests, these monsters will change us so that we *will* sympathise with them and become them. What is more, while Lurie's use of animal metaphor is a perfect example of the monstrativity of language, Becoming-animal, although performative is not monstrative.

If the monstrative is a performative force that makes the Other sign, Becoming is a process that includes the "I" *within* its constitution of the Other. Thus, monstrative acts form the Other through a differentiation between the self and the Other, thereby constituting the Other as other. Becoming-monster, on the other hand, while acknowledging the differences between the self and the Other, is instigated through the sameness, the spirit of fraternity between beings. Becoming-monster is affective, it hybridises meaning so that difference becomes difficult to see; it is also contagious, mutating me into the monster I

have already made of you through monstrative acts. I cannot make you monstrous without also making myself monstrous; however, the monster I have made of you is enacted through a violent process whereby you have become Other to yourself (monstrativity), whereas the monster you have made of me is elicited through the sympathy I feel for your abjection (Becoming-monster). Monstrativity relies on the power dichotomy of master-slave, whereas Becoming-monster occurs in the deconstruction of binary pairs. Either way, the monsters created by monstrative forces will *have* to be welcomed because their arrival and ensuing contagion is immanent.

Conclusion

Monstrativity and Becoming: Becoming-monster Versus Being Monstrous

This thesis has enacted the birth of the monstrative, a performative force which creates monsters. However, it has also recognised the importance of discerning monstrative acts from that of Becoming, as Deleuze and Braidotti have conceptualised it. Both the monstrative and Becoming are processes, but the monstrative is teleological, in that it is a process that results in the creation of a monster by an Other; Becoming, on the other hand, only results in the creation of a monster because its hybridity resists categorisation. To clarify, where the monstrative is a performative force that makes the body into a signifier, that is, a demonstration or warning of something yet to come, Becoming enacts monstrosity by situating the "I" between ontological categories that are in constant flux and mutation, in a process that *has no end, but is in fact the end itself*. The "to come" therefore does not arrive, at least not in any way that is predictable, and therefore, as Derrida has consistently maintained, is always already in perpetuity. Arguably, the key difference between the monstrative and Becoming is that the outcome of the monstrative, the being-Other-to-oneself, results in pathology, in an ambiguity within the "I" that cannot be consolidated because of the "I's" inability to think of itself pluralistically. Becoming, meanwhile, is a state of Being that allows simultaneity without engendering a crisis in the psyche. The two literary case studies I explored in chapters four and five exemplify this difference: in *M. Butterfly*,

Gallimard cannot exist as both the masculine self that ensnared Song and the feminine Butterfly that (it turns out) he has always embodied, thereby ending the play by ending his life; in *Disgrace*, Lurie empathises with the animals he helps to euthanize, finding himself at one with them and able to atone for his misuse of Melanie and thereby finding peace with the dog-man that he is becoming.

The difference is that Gallimard, in being a stranger to himself, is alienated from himself (the Butterfly part of him), whereas Lurie "has it in him to be" as low down and disgraced as the dogs who wind up in his and Bev's care, because, although he is surprised by it, he accepts this new aspect of his Becoming. The difference between the monstrative and Becoming ultimately boils down to the ability to welcome the uninvited guest at the most intimate level of all, that is, one's psyche. While the monstrative forces a new identity upon the psyche, resulting in the "I's" anxious existence as sign in abjection, Becoming is a process in which the "I" is involved – she *must* accept this new identity in order to embody it and live it simultaneously with her older ways of Being, so that she can be Other to herself without being in a state of psychic crisis. What is more, Becoming is an infinitely more positive view than classic psychoanalysis would suggest such a splitting of the psyche can be, as it embraces the fragmented nature of Being and the Becoming-monster that such fragmentation implies. Like Braidotti, I understand being monstrous as something far more positive than it has traditionally been viewed: because Becoming-monster opens the possibilities for Being in ways that we have not yet conceived, the promise monsters offer is that not even the sky is our limit. However, lest we forget, monsters do not only make us promises, they also pose

a threat, warning us that once we have pushed through the limit, even our own reactions may be unpredictable. The lesson to take from monsters is that we must always welcome them, because, either way, they will infect our world (our homes, our psyches, whatever that may be) and mutate it into one in which they can make themselves at home. The point remains to welcome without knowing the end result, or even if there may be an end result at all.

What is more, Becoming is also a way of Being that allows for playfulness that traditional modes do not. While Deleuze and Guattari argue that Becoming is not "a resemblance [or] an imitation" (87), I believe that Becoming can be manifested through imitation, even if it is not the thing itself. For example, a trans* woman's Becoming-woman is certainly not an imitation in the way that a drag act can be,[120] but it requires imitation in order to be carried out effectively; imitation is the *means* by which Becoming is initiated, but to say that it is merely pretence or to refute its legitimacy under such a rubric is to gravely miss the point of the embodied performances carried out by trans* individuals. Furthermore, Deleuze's and Guattari's refutation of mimicry implies origin: imitating animals, one can only imitate behaviour (acts), which is always already "translated" by human conceptualisation, meaning that there is no original meaning to decipher and hence no original act to imitate. As Butler has consistently maintained, stylistic performances only signify a certain gender insofar as meaning has been attributed to performance: there is nothing inherently masculine or feminine about bodily acts, and that we regard these acts as gendered is only because a gendered meaning has been ascribed to them in order to make them recognisable. That certain styles are regarded as feminine or masculine has only occurred because repetition has given meaning

to gesticulation. The seriousness of patriarchal modes of Being has not only resulted in the view of multiplicity and fragmentation as pathology, but the sustained attempt to force meaning into a binary system, which, as we know, is at the root of gendered, sexual, and racial inequalities.

Deleuze and Guattari write that Becoming is a state of Being that is "always in the middle [and] one can only get to it by the middle. A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between, the border or line of flight or descent running perpendicular to both" (94). What I want to suggest is that Becoming, by situating the "I" as healthier and more evolved in its hybrid form, not only deconstructs the idea that multiplicity results in illness, but challenges patriarchal modes by allowing the "I" to exist as multiple and fluid in a playful and creative manner. Consequently, what differs Becoming from monstrative acts is that Becoming "is always a *mutual* process" (Urpeth 108, my emphasis), whereas monstrative acts are carried out by the "I" *onto* the body of the Other. With regard to the existence of monsters, what this entails is the following: Patricia MacCormack writes that "any woman is a monster to begin with and has been for as long as can be historically traced. A body of difference, while being (especially in a compulsory hetero normative culture) an object of fascination, is simultaneously that of disgust" (8). What MacCormack describes is the sustained monstrativity of the acts that have implicated women's bodies in this way, literally making monsters of us. Yet, as she later contends, "[a]ll becoming is becoming monster; even the desire to want to become is monstrous, because all becoming is about an ambiguity between, but never attaining either of, two points" (11). What this suggests to me is that the kind of monster that women have been monstratively constituted

as is (rightly) viewed as a negative construction that, as MacCormack agrees, has not been chosen *by* us but *for* us (8), whereas Becoming, which Urpeth insists is a mutual process accepted by the "I" as part of her *self* (108), is a type of monstrous existence that not only *can* be but *must* be embraced in order for Becoming to ensue. Both Becoming and monstrativity are performative, in that they constitute identity, and they are also both monstrous, but in very different ways: while monstrative acts force identity upon the "I," making her a living sign of the monstrative speech that creates her, Becoming is a mutual process that is welcomed by the "I" through sympathy for the Other, which creates a hybrid form that escapes classification and thus *escapes* being made sign. Becoming thus provides a liveable space outside the Symbolic without making that space one of abjection, and, in so doing, deconstructs binary logic.

Woman, the Primordial Monster

For women, as I pointed out in chapter two of this thesis, Becoming is not only a psychic possibility but a bodily prospect, one which results in not only the creation of an entirely new being, but the creation of the woman as mother and the perpetuation of her status as monster. As MacCormack reminds us, the "primary monster" in all human cultures is Mother (8). This point leads me to the second conclusion I have made compiling this thesis, which is that woman is the original monster upon which the monstrosity of others has been based. This has furthermore resulted in the continued denigration of the feminine in theoretical settings, particularly in gender performance theory. Because difference and the uncanny ability to reproduce are written across our bodies,

the feminine has been the visual and material template of monstrosity, a primordial Other upon which other Others have been based. Thus, in the formation of Orientalist discourse, a device used for making entire ethnic and cultural groups subservient to Western dominance and expansion, a model of subservience upon which Western patriarchy could base its binary code of Orient and Occident was already in existence. As Meyda Yeğenoğlu attests, representations of sexual difference, such as the discursive formation of the feminine, are "of fundamental importance in the formation of a colonial subject position" (*Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* 2). The result, as we know, has been the feminisation of the East and its people, and the subsequent masculinisation of the West.

However, it has been pointed out by various theorists, such as Wong and Santa Ana (173), that much of the monstrative discourse used to keep "Orientals" in check was the hyper-masculinisation of Asian men. Yet, the purposes of these discursive practices were not to create equality between Eastern and Western men, but to instigate fear in white women for Asian men, a device used to keep white women in check. Thus, narratives that feminised Asian men did so in order to masculinise white men, while narratives espousing male Asian hyper-masculinity reaffirmed the femininity of white women, and thus their reliance on white men to protect them. Similar tropes have occurred in the monstrative discourse on black men in both colonial and postcolonial settings. Aside from the obvious inequalities that abound from this kind of binary thinking, what this logic also entails is that the feminine is always already a maligned form of gender expression. Since the implementation of gender performance theory, which Butler has played no small part in, the

emphasis has been on the acceptance of male femininity and particularly of female masculinity. An unfortunate outcome of this decoupling of gender from material sex is that the expression of masculinity as a gendered form has continued to be advocated in optimistic terms, whether the actor is male or female, while feminine forms are still regarded as unfavourable. I mean, for example, the promotion of identity markers such as ambition and self-sacrifice, in women as well as men, and the continued vilification of "weaknesses" such as ill health (particularly mental health) and tolerance of others. For instance, Gallimard's self-recognition as feminine in *M. Butterfly* is what leads to his suicide: to be feminine is not a liveable space, it would seem, particularly for men.

While it certainly was not the intention of gender performance theorists to promote the continued denigration of femininity (given that much of this theory has stemmed from feminism), a probable cause is a general inability to imagine a world beyond a binary logic, which not only constricts expression into One or the Other, but creates and maintains a hierarchy between the holy One and its monstrous Other. However, to refute a binary logic does not necessarily translate into the rejection of difference: basing her theoretical work on Deleuze, Braidotti has demonstrated that an acceptance of difference can also result in multiplicity, or, what she names "multiple becomings" (*Nomadic Subjects* 102). Embracing difference in this way can only occur, however, through the instigation of sympathy, by being affected by the Other, where "affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel" (Deleuze and Guattari 89). Becoming is affective; it is an affect that

infects the "I" and thus mutates it into a hybridised version of what it was and what it is becoming, through the mechanism of sympathy effected by the monstrous Other. The multiplicity implied by Becoming also opens the possibilities for reading gender expressions that go beyond just masculine or feminine, which is something Butler already put forward in *Gender Trouble*, writing that "even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology . . . and constitution . . . there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two" (10). The "Becoming" of gender is, I think, made most clear in those forms of expression that refute the masculine-feminine binary, such as Queer, androgyny, or gender-fuck, exemplified by 2014 Eurovision Song Contest winner, Conchita Wurst, whose masculine and feminine physical attributes and bodily expressions certainly do "fuck" with the binary code.

Stylistic bodily expressions such as Wurst's simultaneous donning of a beard and perfect eye makeup are, however, only one aspect of gender performance. Stylistic expression aside, certain identity markers that are considered either feminine or masculine – markers that have been considered essential to femininity (such as nurturing) or masculinity (such as risk-taking) – are also given expression through the body. In this sense, gender performance theory has done much in the way of bringing the body back to ontological discourse. Butler's defence with regard to the criticism she received for *Gender Trouble* resulted in the publication of *Bodies That Matter*, which points out that the constitutional aspect of discourse does not necessarily negate the existence of materiality, but that it claims "that there is no reference to a pure body which is not at the same time a further formation of that body" (*Bodies That Matter*

10). What is more, she reiterates in *Bodies That Matter* the importance of the body to *enable* repeated performances, something she had already made clear as early as "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution": "gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (519). In other words, to be a gendered subject, that is, to *be*, requires the existence of the body in order to be actualised through the body's performances. There is thus no Being without the body.

Butler's gender performance theory is also a theory of gender performativity because it explains that performance (acts, gestures, expression, and the like) is constitutive of gender and that gender is constitutive of the "I." Butler is able to refashion Austin's linguistic theory into one on gender precisely because she realises that performative utterances are constitutive of reality, and because she appreciates the mechanics of the performative (something Austin himself could not grasp), which is that an act is only performative because of its repetition and its repeatability within a community of witnesses. A performative is an act, whether one is speaking of speech acts or bodily gestures, which means that it *always* requires a body in order to be (re)produced. What this thesis has done to advance the return of the body to ontology is not just to point out the ways in which discourse acts on the body as a constitutional force but, that bodily acts (carried out *by* and *to* the body) also perform *as* discourse, by physically (re)enacting symbolic meaning. What is more, it has done so through the introduction of the monstrative, a

performative force that makes the Other into sign, by demonstrating that the monstrativity of bodily acts is in fact the reiteration of ideological structures.

Speech as Act, Act as Speech: The Return of the Body to Ontology

This thesis has analysed monstrative bodily acts such as rape and castration as a way in which to develop an appreciation of the mechanics of gender performance theory, but also to garner a more thorough understanding of the complexity of the constitutional effects of the body. Where Butler's original contribution to ontological theory was to explain that bodily acts are the cause rather than the effect of gender, her emphasis on the constitutionality of *stylistic* acts done *by* the body and *speech* acts done *to* the body has meant that the constitutionality of other bodily acts have been overlooked, particularly those acts whose aim it is to constitute the body as gendered. I have named these acts performative for their constitutional effects but also monstrative for constituting the "I" as a sign of his/her gender. Thus, both rape and castration performatively constitute the "I" as feminine by enforcing the binary logic of rapist/victim or castrator/castrato, in tandem with monstratively making the victim of rape or castration into a living sign of subjugation. As such, these violent bodily acts inaugurate the "I" into the social world as dominated, and, significantly, as dominated specifically through the process of feminisation. For instance, on an ideological level, the act of rape symbolically positions the "I" as feminine by putting the victim in "her" place, which is a place that has performatively become "hers" through repeated iterations, and the heteronormativity of the act ensures that the corresponding effect is the masculinisation of the perpetrator. As such, a variety of ideologies may be

present in the inducement of such an act, serving as the purpose for the act. In rape, these include binary logic and heteronormativity, where, even if the act is used as a weapon in attacks of a racial nature, the ideological purpose remains the same, which is to reduce the victim to the status of the abject feminine and to affirm the masculine power of the perpetrator.

By understanding violent bodily acts as constitutional, both of the "I" and the Other, this thesis works towards a recognition of the complex involvement of the body in the formation of identity. We are not simply our bodies but neither are we detachable from our materiality; by relegating the body as impure and base, and, through the logic of binary polarity, implicating the Other as a sign of this impurity, we risk alleviating ourselves of our responsibility for the Other, for ensuring the Other's rights to bodily sovereignty and the right to exist without fear of violence and injury. Coming into contact with literary monsters such as Frankenstein's Creature, we are not only warned of these implications, but made into monsters ourselves through the process of Becoming-monster that occurs when we read. Deleuze and Guattari argue that writing is a Becoming (89); while I agree, I also consider reading to be constitutional, precisely because of its affectivity. Affect is not merely emotional or intellectual, but is a bodily effect, one "that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel" (89). Indeed, it is very rarely possible to separate the emotionality or intellectuality of affectivity from the corporeal: that we cry, laugh, shiver, scream, or orgasm is certain proof of the body's involvement in Becoming. As social actors, what we do or say is of immense importance to the Becomings of others, but the question remains: what kinds of monster will we make of them?

End Notes

[1] To use Shoshana Felman's delicious phrase in *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with J. L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*.
[2] Such as Judith Halberstam's *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (1995) and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (1986).
[3] See for example Partha Mitter's *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reaction to Indian Art* (1977) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1985).
[4] I mean this in its literary sense, but also in the sense that the author is a speaking body that has the authority to wield language.
[5] This resistance of the monstrous body to signify anything but sign will be demonstrated in my analysis of two fictional monsters: Grendel's Mother in the Old English poem, *Beowulf*, and the Creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818).
[6] Which Austin already tries to keep apart in his inauguration of the performative.
[7] And between writing considered academic and creative, as Phelan's work epitomises.
[8] I use this bodily metaphor most consciously here, because this Becoming is also a Becoming-body.
[9] I am, of course, aware that there are overlaps between gender theory and sexuality theory, where to speak of feminine or masculine constructs is also pertinent to Queer Theory.
[10] The original is italicised.
[11] I should note that, at present, a colleague in UCC's School of English, Alison Killilea, is presently making the case for Grendel's Mother's *lack* of monstrosity, if not in a psychological sense, most certainly in a taxonomic sense. Killilea's research is based on her own intensely detailed translation of the original Old English text, where mine is based on extant translations, and her findings thus far point to a Victorian misinterpretation of the poem's context, and thus the view of Grendel's Mother as a monster. For the present, however, I will remain with the interpretation of Grendel's Mother as a monster in a taxonomic sense.
[12] These include the titular characters of both texts, as well as an evaluation of Modthryth in *Beowulf*.
[13] Again, I use the reproductive implications of the term most consciously here.
[14] *Excitable Speech* (1997).
[15] Austin could have no way of understanding the citational quality of language, given that he was working within a world framed by Structuralist ways of thinking.
[16] For there to be performance, there *must* be a body.
[17] Psychoanalysis would, in any case, contend that who the subject thinks s/he is is always in relation to the Other.
[18] I omit the dragon from this reading for the purposes of time, and because his taxonomy indicates his animalism: Grendel and Grendel's Mother both seem to me to be more monstrous, both by their absence of category (whereas the dragon belongs to a taxonomic group, Grendel and his Mother do not signify a specific category) and by the poet's lack of a physical description of either of the creatures.
[19] Insofar as documented monstrosities can be understood to be "real." I will be relying on Early Modern texts that document the existence of these monsters.
[20] As Derrida has done in *Limited Inc* and Butler in *Excitable Speech*.
[21] Gullestad notes Felman's view of Austin's "parasite" as a joke (303); in a book that is most certainly tongue-in-cheek in many places, I tend to agree to a certain point, although it is hard to say if Austin would have indeed been dismayed by Butler's "parasitism" of the performative or if he would have in fact found her hypothesis as intriguing as I do.
[22] "The Critic as Host" (1977).
[23] In this case, Derrida is speaking of scholarly writing, specifically Critical Theory.
[24] As with his earlier writing, which incorporates birth metaphors, Derrida uses language that is startlingly bodily to describe events that are anything but.
[25] For example, I first learnt of performativity in an undergraduate module in the Sociology of Gender and Sexuality, only coming across Austin in my MA year. Performativity was, for me, a term that described gender before it ever described the ability for speech to perform an act.

[26] Austin's use of "performance" as a homophonous history for his "performative," as well as his use of a certain kind of performance, that is, the performance of "serious" acts, is ironic because of his insistence on separating the "seriousness" of speech acts in life from "non-serious" acts that are described as purely performance.
[27] *Gender Trouble* has often been incorrectly criticised for claiming that gender is a performance that can be "put on" or "taken off" as one does clothing. Such criticisms lack an understanding of performativity, confusing the term with performance: this is the parasite at work, where the parasite is confused with the host because of its homophony as well as its theoretical reliance on performance to explain the performativity of speech acts.
[28] Nicholas Royle reminds us that Darwin's theory of evolution cannot work without mutation (*Literature, Criticism and Theory* 252).
[29] The *OED* defines the verb "etiolate" as "to give a pale and sickly hue."
[30] Prior to Austin's performative, speech had been understood in opposition to action, where linguists busied themselves with the truth-value of statements rather than the effect of speech on the world.
[31] Hence my referral to it as a "conception."
[32] I shall return to this in the next chapter, where I turn to the name and its various performative functions.
[33] Hillis Miller points out that Austin's provision of rules and doctrines for the felicitous enactment of performative utterances is itself inaugural (36).
[34] Even if modern medicine can now determine many of these things.
[35] I will discuss the monstrative qualities of naming more thoroughly in the next chapter.
[36] Taken to mean roughly the end of the Middle Ages to the beginning of the Enlightenment
[37] Dennis Todd's *Imagining Monsters: Miscreations of the Self in Eighteenth-Century England* tells Toft's unfortunate tale in great detail.
[38] One of which was "a lamb calved by a heifer" (Walsham 171).
[39] "especially Aristotle, Cicero, and Pliny" (171).
[40] Chiefly from England and France.
[41] Such as Margaret Homans in "Bearing Demons: Frankenstein's Circumvention of the Maternal" (1986).
[42] However, Killilea argues in her research that only Grendel is "*Caines cynne*," where Grendel's Mother is not, which would mean that Grendel's monstrosity stems from his paternal lineage instead.
[43] William St. Clair writes that by the mid-eighteenth century "the chances of dying in childbirth were one in ten" (*The Godwins and the Shelleys: The Biography of a Family* 142).
[44] I might add at this point that his experiment is also monstrous in a Derridean sense because it is entirely inaugural: Frankenstein is able to do something that has not yet been achieved by science.
[45] Moers writes that feeling fear is to "get to the body itself" (214).
[46] Shelley's mother, the proto-feminist writer, Mary Wollstonecraft, died 11 days after giving birth to her daughter.
[47] Because of its various translations and the loss of some of the Anglo-Saxon words, which has resulted in various interpretations of meaning, the *Beowulf* text cannot really be regarded as one text, but, rather like the body of Frankenstein's Creature, a hybrid amalgam of disparate categorical contexts.
[48] Their identities are literally constituted by the text because it is literary.
[49] Grendel's Mother's masculinity will be discussed in the following chapter.
[50] See the previous chapter for a detailed analysis of the anamorphic image.
[51] "Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay /To mold me man? Did I solicit thee /From darkness to promote me?" From Book X, l. 743-5.
[52] St. Clair notes that "proper precautions" needed to be taken when exposing women to certain texts, as their feeble minds were considered incapable of making fair judgements of fiction from reality (*The Godwins and the Shelleys* 219). A good example of the improper influence of the wrong sort of writing on women is Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (which coincidently was also published first in 1818). The writing of certain types of books, such as *Frankenstein*, would also have been considered improper by young ladies, and writing was, in fact, considered to be even more dangerous to women than reading, because women's writing "harbours disturbing possibilities for male conceptions of authority" (Botting 10).

[53] This is not to say that William Godwin or PB Shelley had *no* understanding for the volatility of the sovereign "I" but that the conception both men had of the precariousness of autonomy could not have been bodily in the same manner in which Mary understood it, precisely because they had no experience of pregnancy and childbirth and the bodily/identificatory loss associated with both.
[54] Wilson describes him as "a perfect baby" (13).
[55] Which is ironic given the parasitic nature of the foetus to fool its mother's immune system.
[56] What is more, his use of language here makes him sound exactly like an etiolated plant.
[57] One should bear in mind that the term derives from the Latin *monstrum* and therefore has no known translation in Old English.
[58] This is excepting the term *aglæca*, which does not seem to have a direct translation in modern English. This term will come under more scrutiny later on in this chapter.
[59] Heaney's translation describes her as "a queen outstanding in beauty" (1940-1).
[60] Butler seems to confuse iterability with citationality here.
[61] I find Butler's use of "remembered" compelling, particularly because her work in *Excitable Speech* is so centred on the echo of bodily trauma in injurious speech: if we, in a sense, re-member the trauma of repeated speech acts, it would seem that the injury implied in the act happens precisely because we relive it in a specifically bodily sense –we re-member it, we give the injury a body to hurt.
[62] Grendel's Mother is referred to as *aglæcwif* at 1259.
[63] *Aglæcwif* is translated as "monstrous hell-bride" (1259) by Heaney, which not only sexualises her, but paradoxically also ensures that she is in a permanent state of virginity, rather like an inverse Madonna.
[64] While Beowulf, Sigemund and Victor Frankenstein are arguably monstrous, I am classing the "monsters" of these texts as those figures that are treated by their human Others as frightening, aberrant, and unrecognisable, which, for the purposes of this argument, are Grendel, his Mother, the dragon, and Frankenstein's Creature.
[65] I realise that the dragon also has no proper name; due to time constraints and the dragon's animalism, I will have to unfortunately leave him out of this analysis.
[66] As I mentioned earlier, the textual elements that constitute the change in Beowulf's behaviour are exemplified by the exchange between occupying forces in the text: the monsters' narrative begins with Grendel's unwelcome arrival in Heorot, followed by that of Grendel's Mother, followed by Beowulf's invasion of her mere, and finally, by Beowulf's conquest of the dragon's cave.
[67] Besides Modthryth, whose monstrosity is also indicative of "inappropriate" behaviour by a woman, and which I will shortly discuss.
[68] Killilea's research is ambivalent about Grendel's Mother's monstrosity with regard to her "inappropriateness" in avenging her son, pointing out that female warriors, while uncommon, were not unheard of in Norse mythology (which *Beowulf* exemplifies). Killilea rejects this reading, asserting that Grendel's Mother's actions were only regarded as "inappropriate" by the poem's Victorian audience (the poem was first published in modern English in the nineteeth-century).
[69] 103 refers to Grendel as *mearc-stapa*, "wanderer in the wastes" (trans. Fulk).
[70] She is a "bad" mother according to Dockray-Miller, who proposes that by her inability to save her son from Beowulf, she has failed in her maternal performance (96).
[71] I have chosen to name him Creature as Being is confusing in a thesis that focuses on ontology.
[72] Which the OED states means "great size" and "ferocious appearance."
[73] Using the 1818 edition, "fiend" appears on pages 60, 65, 67, 103, 105, 112, 114, 117, 118, 119, 122, 128, 131, 132, 133, 136 (twice), 137 (twice), 141, 142, 143 (twice), 144 and 154; "monster" on pages 35, 37 (twice), 38, 60, 65, 99, 104, 105, 112, 116, 122, 126, 127, 131, 133, 136, 138, 139, 141, 146 (twice) and 153; "demon" on pages 15, 48, 54, 65, 101, 111, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 131, 138, 140, 142 (twice), 144, 145, 153; and "wretch" on pages 34, 35 (twice), 48, 49, 65, 115 (twice), 128, 154 and 155.
[74] "*þa se wyrm onwoc, wroht wæs geniwad;/ stonc ða æfter stane, stearcheort onfand feondes forlast*" (*Beowulf* 2287-9) –Orchard's translation is "Then the dragon awoke, strife was renewed; he hastened along the rock, the stout-hearted one discovered the footprints of the foe" (Orchard 30).

[75] See the last chapter, where I compared Milton's Adam to God, having been made in His image, and where Adam is the prototype for humanity and masculine authority.
[76] This is certainly indicative of the abuse with which the Creature is treated by Frankenstein.
[77] Heaney and Fulk both translate "*ellor-gast*" or "*ellor-gæst*" as "alien spirit" or "spirit from another world."
[78] The Old English poem, "The Wanderer" describes the pain of exile as a fate worse than death.
[79] At least for a pagan such as Beowulf.
[80] See the first chapter of *Mary Shelley* (2008).
[81] Puccini did not "invent" Butterfly; his opera, although the most well-known version of the story, is based on the short story "Madame Butterfly" (1898), by John Luther Long.
[82] Although, it has been pointed out that the technological abilities of many "Oriental" countries was far superior to the West long before the European "voyages of discovery."
[83] An excellent literary example of the slippage between the representation of a hypersexual, rapacious Asian male and colonial crisis is in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924), where an Indian doctor is accused of the rape of an English woman during the British withdrawal from India.
[84] Unless if what Wong means by the ethnicization of gender is that women have been conceptualised as cognitively alien to masculine ways of thinking, as if the gap that differs men and women includes highly disparate cultural differences, which I do not think it has; there is textual evidence, for example that the conceptual differences between men's and women's bodies have only been exaggerated since the eighteenth-century.
[85] c. 960-1279.
[86] Men, of course, can also be raped, by other men as well as by women, but rape statistics indicate that rape is usually perpetrated by men against women.
[87] And which has been compared to their "war on terror" in Afghanistan and Iraq –both countries where, it can be argued, an Orientalist narrative has been used to vindicate US occupation.
[88] If you will forgive the terrible pun.
[89] When I speak of an audience, I am merely postulating about an imaginary audience rather than actual spectators of a specific performance of the play. Because I am using the play text rather than a performance or series of performances, it is important to remember that what I am writing about (the play text) is only a blue-print for the finished piece, which may look and feel very different each time it is performed, depending on the director, cast, props and sets of each performance.
[90] The play is remarkably adept in using aural signs to invoke both familiarity and a sense of the exotic, for obvious textual reasons but, also, as a way in which to juxtapose hearing and seeing. The use of excerpts from Puccini's opera makes the familiar sound of Western music seem strange when contrasted with the look of its setting, because of the integration of sound and performance from the Beijing opera. While Beijing opera sounds unfamiliar to the Western ear, its use at strategic points in the play denaturalizes the coupling of Puccini's opera with an Asian aesthetic, where the effect is a deconstruction of the Western usurpation of Asian narrative and the relocation of an Asian voice. Much more could be written about aural signification in the play, particularly with regard to its relationship with visual signs and narrative, but this analysis is unfortunately not within the scope of this thesis.
[91] Butler has a tendency to read all drag as parody, which disallows other playful uses of drag and which imbibes it with a seriousness of meaning that might not be the intention of its actor or even the outcome of the act.
[92] If one is, of course, speaking about Christian/Western weddings.
[93] In *Lemony Snicket's Series of Unfortunate Events* (Paramount/DreamWorks 2004), one of the ways in which the antagonist, Count Olaf, tries to rob his charges, the unfortunate Baudelaire children, is by concocting the performance of a play in which he marries his cousin, Violet Baudelaire. Olaf convinces the town judge, a lawful solemniser of marriage ceremonies to "play" the judge on stage, while obtaining a lawful marriage certificate and ensuring a large crowd of "witnesses" for the event, in order that he may actually marry his cousin and thus obtain her inheritance. While his plan backfires when Violet's brother, Klaus, manages to burn the marriage certificate, what Olaf's plot reveals is that there is nothing much to separate performative acts on stage from those in life, as long as the "appropriate" people perform the ceremony and the correct props are in place.

[94] Bearing in mind that in Elizabethan England, the golden age of English drama, women were not allowed on stage and women's parts had to be performed by men; also, that in Chinese opera, of which Song is a star, women's parts are also played by men.
[95] See chapter one.
[96] The apotropaic qualities of the erect phallus have been well-documented by Classicists, not just in Greek and Roman mythology, but in the everyday use of phallic totems to ward off evil.
[97] I say "feminine" here instead of "female" because rape is not only committed against women (as the last chapter demonstrated, men can also be victims of rape), but it is an act that feminizes its victims, whether or not its victim is biologically female.
[98] Including essays by Sheila Croucher (2002), Jacklyn Cock (2003), and Kevin J. Graziano (2004).
[99] By Rita Barnard (2003), Lucy Valerie Graham (2003), Kimberly Wedeven Segall (2005), and Maria Lopez (2010).
[100] Including *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997), *Precarious Life* (2004), *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005), and, most recently, *Parting Ways* (2012).
[101] There are various types of harassment women (in particular) are faced with in the public sphere, which include street harassment (which is itself comprised of various types of behaviour), sexual harassment, and harassment on the internet, which has gained unfortunate ground in the past ten years, and which specifically targets women within the public eye, including female videogame developers, academics, media personalities, and celebrities.
[102] Akin explained in a televised interview that in instances of "legitimate rape," pregnancy concerns are groundless because "the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down" (qtd. in Williams 2012). Akin's comments were anti-abortion in their focus and used to counter the view that women who are raped should have access to abortion.
[103] WikiLeaks founder, Assange, was accused of rape by a woman with whom he had already had consensual sex, who testified in court that after having consensual sex with Assange, she woke up to find him having intercourse with her while she slept.
[104] He probably bases this in her name, Melanie Isaacs, and the names of her family members, especially that of her sister, Desiree. Also, "coloured" was a term used by the apartheid government to describe persons of mixed race, rather than of strictly black African descent; coloured people are thus quite likely to have European surnames, such as Melanie's.
[105] Original text is italicised to denote Lurie's thoughts.
[106] Startlingly, in every case, the victim was aged between only ten and fourteen years at the time of the assault, and two out of three cases were resided by a female judge (Rawlinson 2013, Zuckerman 2014, Slifer 2014).
[107] Original text is italicised, again to denote Lurie's thoughts.
[108] Coetzee writes of Lurie's station in the university as "Once a professor of modern languages, he has been, since Classics and Modern Languages were closed down as part of the great rationalization, adjunct professor of communications. Like all rationalized personnel, he is allowed to offer one special-field course a year, irrespective of enrolment, because that is good for morale. This year he is offering a course in the Romantic poets" (*Disgrace* 3).
[109] As well as *Disgrace*, other novels of Coetzee's that focus on the colonial relationship with land include *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), and *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life* (1997).
[110] Many love poems from the English tradition use hunting as a theme in which to convey the poet's desire for sexual union, such as Thomas Wyatt's "Whoso List to Hunt" (1557).
[111] In this case, a young Indian woman and her friend boarded a bus that was ostensibly headed towards her home, where instead, she was brutally gang-raped and he was assaulted, before being thrown from the bus without clothing. The young woman later died from the injuries sustained during this attack (Mandhana and Trivedi 2012). Like Lucy's rape in *Disgrace*, the behaviour that constituted this case is what many people consider to be the only definition of rape.
[112] Technikons are institutions much the same as Irish Institutes of Technology.
[113] And, let us not forget, much of the rest of the world.
[114] Pollux is one of the three men who are present in the room when Lucy is raped; whether or not he actually does the deed is not made clear, as Lucy remains tight-lipped about her ordeal and Pollux's involvement in it. By her behaviour at Petrus' party, it is, however, confirmed that

he was at least present in the room; when Lurie asks "And the third one, the boy?" Lucy replies, "He was there to learn" (159).

[115] The Byronic hero can also be found in many later texts, including Heathcliff from Emily Brönte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Dracula from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), and even later texts such as Morpheus from Neil Gaiman's graphic novel series, *The Sandman* (1989-96), and Angel from Joss Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) and its spin-off, *Angel* (1999-2004).

[116] The original is italicised to denote Lurie's thoughts.

[117] Nikolai Stavrogin is one of the protagonists of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Demons* (1872), also known as *The Possessed*, and Humbert Humbert is the narrator of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955). Both narrators justify horrifying acts of paedophilia and torment, and the links between their behaviour and Lurie's is not accidental on Coetzee's part.

[118] Many of these bestiaries were based on Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, a monstrous manuscript that documented the history and thus meaning of many words, including the names of animals (as its title suggests). Many of these etymologies were purely conjectural, which led to some interesting speculations about many animals.

[119] Freud writes that this occurs when the boy child sees his mother's lack of a penis, thereby producing castration anxiety, which he based on the horse phobia of a patient called "Little Hans," whose fear of horses were regarded by Freud as metaphoric representations of the phallus.

[120] Although, this is not always necessarily the case, either; for example, the 2008-2014 set of performances named *Walking in the Way*, allowed performers, Pauline Cummins and Frances Mezzetti the experience of occupying urban spaces as men. Although imitation was the mechanism by which Cummins and Mezzetti were able to become men, the point was not to pretend to be men, but to negotiate public spaces in a way that affected the performers' bodies and gendered identities.

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