BLOOD AND GLITTER: MONSTER SUBJECTIVITY IN A CONCENTRATION OF CAMP

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Christopher Paul Andrews

Martina Lopez, Director

Graduate Program in Art, Art History, and Design
Notre Dame, Indiana
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BLOOD AND GLITTER:

MONSTER SUBJECTIVITY IN A CONCENTRATION OF CAMP

We are all queer to one another, we fear the neighbor as ourselves. When one sees Queerness a choice arises, embrace the alien of the other and of the self, or reject the difference and claim to be the original. Death is the supreme alien to us. We live. Our sensual experience of existence and our comprehension of our consciousness inevitably succumb to the grave. To be dead is to be unknowable, yet death is known. Goth is a sensibility that embraces the reality of existence and in a paradoxical fashion does more to embrace life. The art that reflects this sensibility is becoming increasingly more distinguishable as global culture encounters the claustrophobia of the neighbor and of the alien inner-self. Shamin M Momin describes the gothic sentiment that typifies certain motivations in contemporary art as well as the condition and psychological character of the artists.

“The apocalyptic associated with the turning of the millennium has stretched into the new century, and emerged prominently in the work of a younger generation unpacking a fascination with horror and death. These artists engage a Gothic sensibility that revels in a voluptuous, sensual materiality. Decay and fragmentation, ruin and dislocation describe both the specific forms as well as their allegory of a moral, corporeal, emotional or socio-political state. They explore familiar transgressive symbols, often mined from contemporary culture – heavy metal music, video games, horror and science fiction movies –not as ironic appropriation, but as ritualistic emblems for alienation and nihilism. Simultaneously melancholic and ecstatic, their work materializes ruptures in mainstream society that acknowledge both sides of the coin: themes of menace, death, repression and violence can be both chilling reminders of the state of the world and an inverse means of access to the passionate sublime through dark beauty, melancholy and explorations of extremes (such as lust, fear and despair).
Ultimately, they seek the extremes of human experience lost in the emotional ‘blanding’ holding contemporary society in its grip.\textsuperscript{1}

It is the desperation to cling to life that has expressed a human desire to create a god, that is to say a meaning. To have a god/life that claims to be the origin of all things is to negate that death is a part of existence and the termination of consciousness. In the life-eternal/original death becomes reduced to a symptom of sin and life within our bodies becomes a school of conditioning. The gothic eye sees time and departure; God sees timelessness and originality. The Devil’s eyes are gothic ones they behold the rain falling on the righteous and the unrighteous alike. God’s eyes see only himself. If he be the only and the original then he can behold nothing there is no void for which he can gaze into, there is no departure no differentiation, thus he is and always has been blind. The claim of the original was the mistake of God. The enlightenment of difference was the fall of Lucifer.

“...How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation...I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” (Isaiah 14:12-14) \textsuperscript{2}

The glamour of existence, the masks of being, typified as a heterosexual compulsory ideology guilds a false sense of authority or, an acknowledgment of performance to which there is a irony of play and contrivance - the real woman verses her sister the drag queen, the serial killer beneath the clown. This rupture caused by the mask engages the queerness of human desire beneath the surface of heterosexual normativeity while homosexual normativeity can appear as resolute and separate from its heterosexual counter-part. In this plural relationship, a superficial visage is ascribed to an individual as being merely their sexual orientation reducing a characterization based off of one aspect of the individual. Thus the sparkling surface both typifies meaning as well as produce


\textsuperscript{2} http://www.biblegateway.com Exodus 3:13-15
artifice as sexualized glamour. This glamour is like glitter. Glitter is a peculiar thing.

   For most it is viewed as a low form of inducing drama and a cheap way towards spectacle. Glitter looks seductive and resolute at a distance, it shines on a stage it dazzles us from afar. Up-close glitter looks cheap, contrived and crafty. There is a subtle horror in glitter, much how the fear of clowns operates; one knows what is behind the glitter, one knows the human behind the face-paint. If glitter is used on a child’s valentine one can see through the glitter and see a heart of construction paper. Because of its overdone sparkling flashiness glitter never seems integrated into the form it is on. One always sees through the glitter, sees through the contrivance. The smile of the clown hides the bodies in the cellar and makes the brown teeth underneath look all the more gruesome. The activity of looking at glitter is always a seeing through something. Glitter is always on something. Its appearance holds even more complexity. The billions of microscopic particles all shining like mirrors show the dazzling cheapness of matter as reduced to surface value creating hollowness, a void within and underneath. It is no wonder why God filled the blackness of the heavens with stars. It is not a mystery why a drag queen can getaway with head –to-toe glitter and a real woman remains banal and envious that she cannot maintain such a shimmering spectacle.

   We either blindly follow Authority or play the game with it. In terms of ideology, there becomes manifest a third option, described in the space between any opposites; we blindly play the game, "Forgive us Father we know not what we do." The Subject is suspicious of the mask the individual wears but cannot bear the hollowness of removing it. The Logos, the Word itself is the mask, the word is language. When a name is given there is a violence, and division. It is a compulsion to understand binaries, the queer is to the straight, the male from female, the perverse to order, the author to the reader. The Difference gives meaning. The meaning derived is often viewed as authority, the original, The Father. "(Moses Asked)...What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM..." (Exodus 3:13-14)
"I Am What I Am" is a track from the second album *Macho Man* by the Village People. It was released as a single in 1978 from their album *Macho Man*....

It is the “I” that allows for the very power of horror. The power of horror describes a return to undifferentiation, to namelessness. It is the seeing of an otherness. The very declaration of the “I Am” is the ultimate act of differentiation. Here is the primordial violence of the subject. Once the name is given unto oneself the onset of horror becomes potentialized. The mythology of gendered mutation found in Matthew Barney’s *Cremaster Cycle* speaks of the return to the horrific realm of undifferentiation, a plane of fluid existence in which Lucifer, the primordial pervert, involving an incestuous relationship with God the Father. This Order of the Father is the same psychic space, which denotes colonialism from its other. It is the very same principle that the same becomes alienated for the other. God the Father is the religious symbol that is easily understood in western culture and simultaneously has become the Freudian father, the Lacanian Father, the Father from which all individuals must rebel against or slay in order to become a truer subject. Judith Butler provides a concise description of how the subject encounters its own subjectiveization as well as how language creates the subject account of itself.

“…a critical analysis of subjection involves” (1) an account of the way regulatory power maintains subjects in subordination by producing and exploiting the demand for continuity, visibility and place; (2) recognition that the subject produced as continuously visible and located is nevertheless haunted by an inassimilable remainder, a melancholia that marks the limits of subjectivization; (3) an account of the iterability of the subject that shows how agency may well consist in opposing and transforming the social terms by which it is spawned. (Butler 1997b: 29)....Jagger p. 93

Borrowing these few examples of the Father verses the subject, there is created a simplified understanding of a great human question involving existence: who am I? The drama set forth is how the subject differentiates itself from the source of definition from whence it came. This model can be easily noticed in the familiar angst of the teenager rebelling to find herself, or the black man naming himself in opposition to the

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3 Wikipedia… Macho Man 12/09/09
white man’s burden. Without exploring the reasons behind it, humans have been preoccupied with differentiation and the complex behavior of naming things. Once the neighbor is recognized in the twilight the shadows cast will reveal the terror of otherness. One says to the self, “This is not me, there is something outside of myself, there is another ‘I’.”

The queering effect that one experiences is created by recognition of the neighbor, the identification of the thing, the naming of the other. This is an act of seeing. The queer of sex and sexuality become an exquisite signifier for the queer effect. The communities involved in queer identification hold the tropes and symbolic systems to describe otherness in conflict with sameness. The queer sensibility becomes a structure of logic, rather than a system of rules, that readily divine the recognition of the neighbor, the thing, the object, the other.

Queer culture, homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, gender-fuckers, and the whole lot of queers, in the guises of racial identites, operate as shamans of culture in performing out the masquerade and the mask itself to an audience of fear. Queers are the masters of masks and mirrors; because of their societal displacement they see the world more readily in terms of signs. The same sign that gives difference a name, hatred and separation. The masquerade of queerness is the link to horror, undifferentiation, evolution and terrifying freedom.

New Eyes, New World!

“…Your vision has been corrupted! – your eyes have been conditioned to view a world in which the mechanisms therein have not been fashioned to construe. It is the vision of the heterosexuals, the outsiders. They have painted and hued our eyes to see a bright existence that contains no mirror or sparkling surface that bare your reflection.

Your diseased eyes have beheld their privileged world for too long. Come to me, you who have no sight of refuge or sanctuary. Turn to me! – I will tear out those rotting orbs that have been so wrongly conceived to possess that vision, that is an absolute Abomination to your divine nature. Come to me and I will give you New Eyes, a glittering fierce gaze that will chastise those outsiders who were blind to you.
You have been scattered! You are a flock without a shepherd. Hear my voice and follow me. You, who have been exiled, shut out from those arrogant gleaming gates, have been given names and identities from a world that does not love you. Know this, that I love you. I will give you a place to rest, an honorable feast, and abundant drink to quench your thirst – Be comforted and know that I will soon sit at the head of every table.

Come, and partake of the New Wine. See those decadent colors that were once used to shame you Transubstantiated into running fields of profusion, beauty, and shadow. Step into Eden reformed and sing its new song; a Melody that is chaotic and dissonant – a song of a realm that is ours – a realm that is both Perfect and Poisonous…”
LUCIFER IN LAVENDER DRAG

The Lavender Manifesto is a fictional component included in my artistic narrative, which is written in the voice of the compassionate, yet despotic Queer Dictator: the central character in my iconography. He is a drag persona, a mask to wear, a falsity bearing a sinister aspiration to re-form reality. The drag persona is synonymous with the fictional self, an idealized version of oneself that fulfills the unrequited desires of the individual. The importance of function of the drag persona and/or the fictional self is not only to re-form reality via fantasy but to activate the very understanding of reality and of the subject.

The Dictator takes on many forms: fascist, tragic clown, and antichrist. All of these performative costumed projections serve the aim of monstrosity as being the unmitigated embodiment to reorder reality, invert knowledge and power systems, and murder God. The mask of the monster in the most formidable in that it contains the fear of the viewer while showing that it is not the surface of the ghoulish appearance that produces the terror but what the monster-spirit of the mask shows the viewer about themselves. Here glitter and the monster become activated in ontological self-reflection by becoming a device to show the surface of experienced reality (the status quo of normative social behavior) and the inherent construction of it as a falsity created by ideological complacency. A drag queen is an artifice of a stylization of that is social deemed as the true signifiers of a real woman. In an interview Butler discusses the complexities revolving around the ideas of drag performativity:

“"The problem with drag is that I offered it as an example of performativity, but it has been taken up as the paradigm for performativity. One ought always to be wary of one's examples. What's interesting is that this voluntarist interpretation, this desire for a kind of radical theatrical remaking of the body, is obviously out there in the public sphere. There's a desire for a fully phantasmatic transfiguration of the body. But no, I don't think that drag is a paradigm for the subversion of gender. I don't think that if we were all more dragged out gender life would
become more expansive and less restrictive. There are restrictions in drag. In fact, I argued toward the end of the book that drag has its own melancholia.4

Frank Browning writes in *The Culture of Desire* about the seeming disconnectedness of the queer community because it is invested within countless aspects of culture, it is everywhere and in every community. Browning asks if there is a Unifying queer characteristic common to us all. He concludes that it is drag - but more importantly it is the self-awareness of its performance that creates Queer unity. He writes: “As variegated as the many gay (subcultures) may be in their inversion or exaggeration of the masculine and feminine display, what unifies them is an ironic sensibility in the construction of the mask and costume…”5

The performative of female impersonation is taken to extremes in some cases for a glamorous fantasy of make-up and costume and in other cases the costumed performance cuts into reality in that the imitator becomes one-in-the-same with what is imitated. Where does drag end and the transgender and/or transsexual begin? This question and its rhetorical game of viewship and otherness is what the Dictator signifies and how the monster character operates towards non-monster entities. The game being the boundaries of reality and fantasy that are eradicated via the creative act of performing the constructions of belief, that is to say gender and faith that maintain invisible unnamable deities and their mandates of physical and spiritual behavior, and becoming what the drag/mask/monster subject performs outwardly to the viewers while simultaneously creating potential boundaries of alienation and otherness while exposing the fantasy of the viewer’s subjectivity.

In Sontag’s *Notes on Camp*, she addresses the unmistakable connection between gay culture and the sensibility of camp.6 Glitter being pure artifice is in direct contrast to

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4 Extracts from Gender as Performance: An Interview with Judith Butler Interview by Peter Osborne and Lynne Segal, London, 1993 [http://www.theory.org.uk/but-int1.htm](http://www.theory.org.uk/but-int1.htm)


blood and all of its well-rehearsed metaphors. The gay subject is a being of flesh and blood whose culture seemingly owns the properties of artifice and style. The reduction of a flesh and blood the gay subject as the performer of camp has contributed to the creation of the queer subject’s monstrosity. The pandemic of AIDS begat the legacy of fearing blood, particularly stemming from the fear of gays and their blood, rather than blood being the life force and redemptive sacrament. Here is created an intersection of the gothic, camp, and queer sensibilities. The obvious collision is the vampire, a monster replete with seduction, homophobic infection, perverse transformation, and glamour. The Dictator and his subjects flirt heavily with the Goth drag of the vampire. The fictional legacy of vampire mythology in literature and cinema play a crucial role in the hybridization of the masquerade of being as overly performed style and the profane rebellion of divine order that the Dictator embodies.

There is a line in the film Interview with a Vampire that provides one important clue to the logic of the Dictator’s mythology and subject position as a monster. It is when the vampire Lestat had just bitten and transfused his own blood with his newly found companion Louis that Louis dies as a human and is reborn as a vampire:

Lestat says, “Now look at the world with your new vampire eyes.”

The stylization of the Dictator and his court is modeled after the look of the undead. Pale skin, fierce intense eyes a preternatural beauty all speak to the differentiation of what is the waking life. The isolation of the heterosexual from the homosexual includes a cultural covenant with procreation as moral superior to the baseness of homosexual activities and their pleasures. The fact that homosexual intercourse does not result in offspring, making heterosexual intercourse intuitionally validated, serves as a dead-end to sexual acts and

51. The peculiar relation between Camp taste and homosexuality has to be explained. While it's not true that Camp taste is homosexual taste, there is no doubt a peculiar affinity and overlap....not all homosexuals have Camp taste. But homosexuals, by and large, constitute the vanguard - and the most articulate audience - of Camp... 53. Nevertheless, even though homosexuals have been its vanguard, Camp taste is much more than homosexual taste. Obviously, its metaphor of life as theater is peculiarly suited as a justification and projection of a certain aspect of the situation of homosexuals. (The Camp insistence on not being "serious," on playing, also connects with the homosexual's desire to remain youthful.)...For the aristocratic posture with relation to culture cannot die, though it may persist only in increasingly arbitrary and ingenious ways. Camp is...the relation to style in a time in which the adoption of style - as such - has become altogether questionable.
can relay formative notions to heterosexual normative society as a gothic activity.

Richard Dyre describes the cultural link between aspects of gay experience and the gothic romance of vampire mythology:

“In most vampire tales, the fact that a character is a vampire is only gradually discovered – it is a secret that has to be discovered. The analogy with homosexuality as a secret erotic practice works in two contradictory ways. On the one hand, the point about sexual orientation it is that it doesn’t ‘show’. You can’t tell who is and who isn’t just by looking; but on the other hand, there is also a widespread discourse that there are telltale signs that someone ‘is’. The vampire myth reproduces this double view in its very structures of suspense.” p.111

“…often the vocabulary of queer spotting has been the languid, worn, sad, refined paleness of vampire imagery…This imagery derives in part from the idea of decadence, people who do not go out into public life, whose complexions are not weathered, who are always indoors or in the shade. It may also relate to the idea that lesbians and gay men are not ‘real’ women and ‘real’ men, we have not got the blood (with its very different gender associations) of normal human beings.” p.114

The campy masquerade of the undead is merely a device through which to express the inherent drag that governs all, yet it’s through the elaborate institutions that regulate gender appropriate clothing etc., that life-affirming productivity becomes buried under artifice. Here the Goth drag of the vampire exposes this; it is one artifice in exchange for another, deeper signification, however, without the irony that is played with through monster-drag or gendered-drag the two artifices become meaningless. Sontag writes,

“Camp is a vision of the world in terms of style -- but a particular kind of style. It is the love of the exaggerated, the "off," of things-being-what-they-are-not. Thus the Camp sensibility is one that is alive to a double sense (a double vision) in which some things can be taken. But this is not the familiar split-level construction of a literal meaning, on the one hand, and a symbolic meaning, on the other. It is the difference, rather, between the thing as meaning something, anything, and the thing as pure artifice.”


What is accomplished in the images and characters of the Dictator and his subjects is the synthesis of various ideas concerning queer/monster embodiment with theories of Luciferianism and the psychoanalytical concept of the gaze. In the Lacanian Gaze, to mirror the ordinary world of signs and laws, “the symbolic order,” induces our impulses to produce a fantasy from which we form our model of identity.

The gaze through which we attain desire predetermines our fantasy as it assists us in creating our identity, which will result in a successful assimilation into society. For Queer monsters this model resembles a drag performative subjectivity and a camp/Goth sensibility, from which queer monsters, while being unreservedly and ironically aware of its artifice and hollowness, create and stage a perverse visual identity to the world audience. Butler describes the fantastic qualities of surface and meaning in relationship to gender performativity, she writes:

“The redescription of intrapsychic processes in terms of the surface politics of the body implies a corollary redescription of gender as the disciplinary production of the figures of fantasy through the play of presence and absence on the body’s surface, the construction of the gendered body through a series of exclusions and denials, signifying absences.” (p. 416)⁹

In the Dictator’s mythology the gaze is refashioned as being the ultimate form of drag desire and the epitome of the camp/Goth sensibility. The perception of the outer world operating within this lavender gaze reflects a drag model from which queer subjects create their imaginary identity – Although, because of the perverse condition of this queer gaze subjects are offered an opportunity to conceive of the original authoritative gaze, from which the subjects see themselves, as hollow, artificial and void. As stated in the Lavender Manifesto, when queer individuals model their identities from the dominant heterosexist world they formulate their drag/identity as an ultimate sacrilege of their queer vision. Queer vision allows the representation of monstrosity. Theorizing that the queer gaze embodies the Luciferian Character and successfully differentiates itself from the false and outmoded, and politically enforced, Natural Law and the Order/Name of the Father, the viewer subject witnessing the monstrous

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subjectivity in action experiences the subjective stance of the other-ing thus becoming differentiated from their own reality and sense of authenticity. The inherent hollowness of those symbolic narcissistic projections, succumb to a fantastic transformation in the arena of reality: a reality not supported by binaries, rather a reality that is a fluid continuum. “That one comes to ‘be’ through a dependency on the Other –an Hegelian, and indeed, Freudian postulation –must be recast in linguistic terms to the extent that the terms by which recognition is regulated, allocated, and refused are part of the larger social rituals of interpellation.10

Therefore, queerness and monstrosity purely represents an idealized perversion, which surpasses the deathly glare of material reality. Whosoever gazes this way can enter into authenticity and self-autonomy via a self-constructed fantasy of being modeled after societies monsters. In this monstrous space the fantasy world in which one subject adopts their expressed reality and performance of it the systems of belief and being are exposed as being constructed thus the individual subject can become reformed as well. Concerning plurality of the gazer and the object of the gaze, Butler provides an explanation of how the performative activities operate within gazing and being hail by bening identified:

“Compulsory in the sense that ‘acting out of line with heterosexual norms brings with it ostracism, punishment, and violence, not to mention the transgressive pleasures produced by those very prohibitions’ (Butler 1991: p.24)…This then ‘can become an occasion for a subversive and proliferating parody of gender norms in which the very claim to originality and to the real is shown to be the effect of a certain kind of naturalized gender mime’ (p.23)…Furthermore, “[t]his perpetual displacement constitutes a fluidity of identities that suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization: parodic proliferation deprives hegemonic culture and its critics of the claim to naturalized or essentialist gender identities”11


THE CHRIST MONSTER

In the chapter “The Suffering of Christ” in *On Ugliness*, Umberto Eco includes the writings of St. Augustine to explicate the horror of Christ’s torn body and the sublimity of his suffering. In *The Deformity of Christ* St. Augustine describes how Christ operating in the Trinitarian authority of the Father deformed himself in order to embody the wretchedness of sin and to give “shape” to the faithful by misshaping his body. Eco also includes the writing of Hegel where he discusses how the misshapen Christ cannot adhere to the Greek forms of beauty that display beauty as a totality of perfection through imperfection and mutual embodiment of all virtue. In the Greek mode of beauty one who is ugly or deformed has simply an inner beauty demonstrated by intellectual rigor or philosophical complexity and clarity. For Hegel, the shredded flesh of Christ shows only the negative, the inverse of God, that is to say man as the base incarnation of the divine.

The divine transference of what is ugly into what is beautiful would be a simple analogy in the relationships between binary systems of power exchange and subjectivism in the metaphors of God and Satan or the monster and the mob. Yet, in the instance of Christ becoming misshapen to fulfill divine ontology in the perfection of the will of God, the perfection through Christ’s suffering as beautiful, creates a peculiar space for perversion and mutation between flesh and spirit, sin and death, life and resurrection. The instances of martyrs being driven in a diabolical competitive fashion to attain the most gruesome of mutilations and deaths in an effort to receive a high place within the ego esteem of God attests to the monstrosity that the potential saint enacts to achieve such apotheosis. The idea that the torn Christ becomes all that is base and monstrous through embodying the sins of the world shows the violence of differentiation of God the Father and his corporeal existence as a human through his only begotten son. That is to

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say Christ becomes the ultimate monster that the Father must forsake. Christ does not merely become a representation of sin and the flesh of man but becomes them in all their lowly completion. The incarnation of regressions through Christ becomes all that separates, meaning all that differentiates. If God’s ontology is self-referential originality, then he is, according to Christian orthodoxy, the point from which all things find their name or more specifically their otherness. If the separation of man from God is sin (otherness) then the death of Christ, God made flesh is all that is sin and otherness, then otherness dies with Christ. It is in this space that God sees otherness looking back at him as his own death. God is no longer blind, save seeing himself through all that is, but sees himself as the great Other that now must die. Christianity cannot have any blasphemy against it: it is its own blasphemy. Christ and the moment of his death becomes the queer monster that rearticulates the queer subjectivity to the queer subject and reconstitutes the divine universality and returns it to the horrific nameless field of queerness.

In the case for imaginary and symbolic Drag Personas performing the redemptive return to potentially autonomous subjectivity, the Queer Dictator operates as a perverse Messiah, an Antichrist in the truest sense as replacement for Christ, or as Lucifer the Gnostic serpent redeemer. He represents abolition from the gaze oppression of the failed heterosexual ideology, which includes a heterosexual beloved God, and thereby releasing queer vision and self-authoring imagination openly and abundantly to a famished new world of potential social reconstruction. From the nationalistic stance spurned by queer social and political oppression the queer subjective mode awakens the heterosexual ideological sleeper as an individual in need of queerness to evolve to their humanity and to glimpse into universality.

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14 Slavoj Zizek, “The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?” (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press), 82. Zizek writes, “It is therefore crucial to note how the Christian modality of ‘God seeing himself’ has nothing to do with the harmonious closed loop of ‘seeing myself seeing,’ of an eye seeing itself and enjoying the sight in this perfect self-mirroring: the turn the eye toward ‘its’ body presupposes the separation of the eye from the body is a perspectival, anamorphically distorted image of myself: Christ is an anamorphosis of God.”
QUEER WITHIN A BLACK MODEL

The formation of the Lavender Iris as a Metaphor for the Queer Gaze, stemmed from a reading of *The Bluest Eye* by author Toni Morrison. Within *The Bluest Eye* the tragic character of Pecola Breedlove, a self-hating Black girl, desired nothing more than to possess blue eyes thereby ingesting whiteness into her being and her performance of her subjectivity as validated with a physical component of her political body. This *Anglophila* and self-hatred fetishized within the eye, illustrated a jealousy of white peers, perceived as being happier, more attractive, and complete subjects – things not available to an individual of otherness via the illusory completeness held in the ideology of white and heterosexual privilege. Adjacent to Pecola’s sexual abuse within the story, her characterized Christian guilt, her ugliness becomes internalized as self-loathing and projected onto her blackness, her victimization thereby creating a state of subjective monstrosity. It was as if she became simultaneously the God of authoritative subjectivity and the Christ-as-deformed-objectivity creating the insane construction of viewer and identifier of inequity and the sacrament to which the sin must be placed. Pecola’s double vision here allows for an example of the monster to see itself via the internalized gaze that induces an introjection within the subject to cope with the trauma of other-ing. The fetishizing of the eye, the core of Freudian desire, becomes the vehicle to translate one’s objectivity into a monstrosity that enforces more monstrousness than socially regulated subjectivity. In other words, the subject is made an other and sees itself as an aberration, overcorrects the monster-ing by fetishized introjection of the very element that induces the other-ing (blue eyes), then becomes more of a monster than before.

In the end of the novel, Pecola believes herself to have blue eyes creating a moment where the monster fantasy of the perverse combination of unnatural physical characteristics becomes invested into the maddening core of her performative subjectivity. Otherness, Blackness, non-whiteness, non-straightness, becomes an identity as unloved as the village monster chased by mobs and torches. If the monster of the little
black girl could transform, she would be loved, beautiful and official. However, becoming what one is not is central to the understanding the monster as self-hating. For Pecola and the Dictator the coveted blue eyes were the symbol of the power and authority of the white gaze, the very objectifying gaze of the mob, and the officiating of the Name of the Father, universal authenticity. The desire to destroy what one covets is a common monstrous trait. Frankenstein’s monster craved a mate to reconstitute the rupture of his perverse creation via a genesis apart from the natural womb of a mother or a sperm and egg. Both the Dictator and Pecola share the destructive impulse linked within their shared interest in dolls as being vehicles to play God, in creation on destructive fantasies. Morrison writes this about Pecola’s experience receiving white dolls as gifts. Her thoughts projected onto the body of the doll were internalized as the ubiquitous validation held by the privilege of whiteness that systematically remains unobtainable to a monster, a black person, a queer, an other looking inward.

“The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll…all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl-child treasured…I destroyed white baby dolls…. The truly horrifying thing was the Transference of the same impulses onto little white girls.”

The creative manipulation of dolls serves as a refuge for queer and Goth fantasies of translatable identity. This transformative practice became symbolized in the Queer Dictator’s offering of physical modifications, via elaborate surgeries, to create what he deemed as the queer body in tune with the queer subjectivity. In the mind of the Dictator persona, the dolls are replaced with human beings. Like Pecola’s destructive transference onto white girls, the lavender gaze of the Dictator is not limited to the wretched ontologically blind queers - Heterosexuals would have to answer to their errant values and past sins. If any heterosexual subjects were to survive in the queer utopia of the Dictator they would have to undergo the mandatory eye transplants as well. Yet, they would not receive the glorious lavender eyes, that is a purely queer honor, they would receive a version of their own eyes deemed suitable and representative, to the queering of their straight subjectivity. This power/gaze exchange is synonymous with the reluctant

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transformation of the mild-mannered man into a ferocious werewolf or the virgin into an erotically charged vampire. The recognition of the monster creates, in a way, not only the toxic displacement of other-ing, but is an insight into the latent desire to be released from the compulsory subjective occupation in which the subject has invested their performative identity within that structure of local ideology within specific avenues of culture.

The eye fixation is seen again in another that grew out of Black experience, this time in the famous work of W.E.B. Du Bois. However, keeping with the notion of monstrosity the black vision that Dubois describes is transferable within the language that typifies key aspects of queer theory. The intersecting discourses are directed towards a conceptualization of the subjective monster-ing that the Black subject must encounter in a white ideological and hegemonic system. DuBois uses vision, the act of gazing outward, to describe a subjective experience of other-ing, he writes in *The Souls of Black Folks*:

“… the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,— a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, —an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder…The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, —this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self.”

The doubling of vision is relatable to the doubling gazing within the sensibility of queerness through a model of camp in that the understanding that the artifice of surface aesthetics can lead to a profundity of meaning –the physical characteristic of race as the artifice and meaning. Black skin is a surface that is well integrated into the very being-ness of the subject and subject to the identification of the gazer and the reiteration of the subject. The self-referential trait of Authority, God being only capable of seeing himself, the ubiquity of white western privilege, is self-referent and therefore invisible save for the

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other who gazes inward. This subjective cloning oneself is in effect a horror unrealized by the self until the void in which is self is seen in a reflection. The panoptic gaze of the Almighty does not include a place for divine ego instead Lucifer’s differentiation provides a dark mirror in which God can see all that is separate form him, that is to say, an other. To see an other and to see a reflection of one’s self is to potentially recognize the ego. Slavoj Zizek writes in *Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Clone*;

> “Here it is crucial to reassert the old Lacanian lesson of the mirror-phase: I constitute myself as Ego ony by recognizing myself in the mirror-image –that is, by encountering my virtual double, with whom I then engage in an ambiguous love-hate relationship (loving him because he is like me, hating him for the very same reason, because he threatens to occupy my place). So, in that way there is no Ego without its clone double. The uncanniness of the double, however, hinges on the fact that the subject (as opposed to the Ego or the Self) is in itself ‘barred’, empty; that it is a unique point of self-relationship which has no double no objective counterpoint: the horror of encountering a double is horror at the prospect that I will encounter the objective counterpoint of my subjectivity.”

Unlike race-d individuals, the sexual normative and/or gender transgressive individuals lack physiological characteristics. A monster is easily identifiable by its perverse appearance or perverse adjacency to the natural and/or to the living. Proposing that if queer people possessed a unique physiological feature, it would operate similarly to how the hues of Latino skin, the lines of Asian eyelids, the texure of Black hair, all confirm their otherness in relationship to the godly white blindness to otherness. If the subject is physically differentiated from its counterpart otherness would be visible and perceived as natural to its own being. The abhorrent phenomenon of phrenology typifying the lowliness of the Negro provided physical evidence within a pseudo-science to validate the oppression and bigotry of less-than humans although phrenology is a failed pseudo-science, the racist poison still ligers in the 21st century. The question of choosing to be a pervert would no longer be regulated to Queer people. If Queer people had such a specific physical feature perhaps an acknowledgement on what is deemed a natural phenomenology of being different, therefore inherent to meaning. The ex-gay

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movement among some religious groups is based on the idea that homosexuality is not a physiological or genetic trait of the individual but a pathology that lies internally as a spiritual matter. The same suspicion of an internalized pathology begets the mistrust and denial of transsexuals as natural and transgender people as complete.

The work of Matthew Barney set the foundational model and inspiration for the mythical autobiographical universe of the Queer Dictator and the transsexual model of a hermetically and linguistically sealed fate in response to the subjection. Within Barney’s filmic Opus Within the theoretical blueprints of *The Cremaster Cycle* (1994-2003) one encounters the theory of Perversion and Luciferianism as dependant factor in a humanistic evolution via authoritative and biological transgression. The operatic art films signify transexuality *in utero* as a biological symbolic model that becomes the most creative force for escaping the tyrannical Order of the Father. The circular narrative of *The Cremaster Cycle* is centered on an abstract nameless being whose motivation is to surpass its evolutionary fate and escape the “natural order”. Its freedom from the natural order would allow this being to exist in a perpetual state of pure creativity and pure potential. Barney embodies a fantastic transsexual ability to change form at will or keep sexual definition in a tacit state defies the order of God-the-Father and the authority of language activated by the gazer’s iteration and reiteration. It is this diabolical escape form the natural law that provides the human evolutionary freedom from the theocracy of God, and freedom for the Queer/monstrous subject from oppressive institutions of heterosexuals and their systematized compulsory prescribed behavior and restrictive language, and gender/sexual expression through performance.

Providing the Luciferian ideal of the monstrosity of otherness in relationship to the biblical symbol of a universal authority prescribing the codes for identity offers a striking model for antonymous subjectivity as a rebellion. An early influence for Barney’s theory and the basis for the queer/monster-subjectivity of the queer Dictator were taken from the book *Creativity and Perversion* by Psychoanalyst Janine Chassegue-Smirgel. She writes:

> “Man has always endeavored to go beyond the narrow limits of his condition. I consider that Perversion is one of the essential ways and means he applies in order to push forward the frontiers of what is possible and to unsettle reality… the pervert attempts to take the Father-Creator’s place in order to make a
new universe from chaos and mixture, a universe where anything becomes possible… The model of demiurgic character trying to dethrone the Father God-Creator is Lucifer"18

“To unsettle reality” in its conventional status, Is that not the passion burning inside the monster? Chasseguet-Smirgel describes Lucifer as the ultimate monster, the proud rebel that seeks the very throne of the Father-Creator. His hubris prompts his dark realm of chaos to spin the Order of the Father into amalgamations of new monstrous forms. Lucifer’s brand of perversion is one of hybridity, a propensity to shape the solid matter into non-form, to blend all sacred boundaries, to profane the sacred. This devilish activity of deformation is the same character of Kristeva’s horror of abjection which the “I” terror elicited comes from the I/subject exposed to the formlessness of being, a codified entity rotted within a world system of ideological complacency. A Luciferian character is one who desires to manipulate nature, ideology, codified subjectivity and objectification and break it free from a stranglehold containing creativity and human antonymous subjective capability.

A monster is a being that holds this un-holiness at its core. Within horror films the monster represents all things humanity or the ticket holder keeps taboo, their dark secrets and social anxieties kept away. This monster mirror can be reflected towards a deeper relation on our hidden things, mainly our inherent queerness and the recognition of the neighbor. If the monster signifies us, and Lucifer is the ultimate pervert/monster, then society and its subjects are in league with a satanic rebellion – we subconsciously desire to overthrow all the establishments that we unwittingly perceive to define and confine us. The monster within is the general appeal of the horror film. We desire to see a spectacle of our forbidden longings, our blood thirst, our moral convictions, and our unrectified guilt. On a basic level, the monster relates to us our inverted blindness as we posses a potential inherent proclivity for monstrosity as being a society comprising others. This monstrosity is not a description of a violent drooling friend, rather a symptom of a universal disposition to becoming increasingly cognizant of our evolutionary progress, it is a perversion within us calling to reform our subjective and

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political stances into a form more fitting to our increased secular and religious knowledge molded continuously by our understanding of the phenomenon of consciousness. The monster intrudes on the established order, our sanctified institutions, our physical corporeality, ethics and our morals. Queerness and Luciferianism being equated with the monster is appropriate in considering that in the horror film, the monster’s main abode typifies the theater of the unseen, which is to say the blank white screen of our potentiality subjectivity.

The monster thus becomes heroic and human life is not necessarily a thing worth preserving because of its artifice and dislocation to true subjectivity. In many instances in cinema the monster is the most human and draws out empathy from the audience. While there are countless monsters in cinema, their stories of abominable stasis, for the most part, have transformed them into crowded pleasing anti-heroes. The monsters of the millennium, no matter how fiendish, become the moneymakers rather than do the virginal youths waiting an imminent slashing or ingestion. Generally it is clearly accepted that the monster, whether it be a psychotic human or an acid-spitting-chest-bursting xenomorph, is the most intriguing aspect of the horror movie. However, there is a tribe of monsters, so socially reviled, that their presence can transcend horror and even rear its ugly head in a romantic comedy. The homosexual, transsexual, or any other form the god-forsaken queers take, become the last frontier in the motley assortment of monstrosities.

In his book Imps of the Perverse Michael William Saunders writes on the inherent monstrosity of queerness typified in film. In the text Saunders relates the queer experience both in life and in fiction as a state of being a monster of society. However, he does not limit the description of what is monstrous to what is horrific but also to what is evolutionarily redemptive in regards to self-authored subjectivity. This idea is parallel to the central theme within Chasseguet-Smirgel’s text on perversion; Saunders views queerness as chaotic yet creative field of the human experience.

“The idea of the monster derives from two fundamental etymological myths: that monsters are anomalous creatures that serve as signs indicating the consequences of deviating from the natural order (Look what happens when you do bad things!); and that monsters are marvelous, monumental manifestations of the power of God (Look what God can do!). The monster is, by its very nature, most
fundamentally an image whose purpose is to reveal the power and more importantly, the terror, of divinity.”

Merging the philosophy of monsters with the perversion theory of Chasseguet-Smirgel with the monster stasis described by Saunders, the perverse, the Queer, the monster become analogous with one another, interchangeable and unified. Thusly, it can be asserted that Lucifer is the queer side of God; the queer side of order is perversion; the monster is the avatar of the perversity sought by those who desire to evolve, queers are the ultimate monster. One could provide a clear lineage with all the monsters of horror film throughout history and place their theatrical and ideological significance solely related to perversion and queerness. Their queerness/ perversion is what makes the monster. A monster that adheres to the social and moral order of the society around it would not be a monster—it would be a Black neighbor, a monster of difference but nonetheless tolerated. It must be an aberration from the order that conceived it. The distance and differentiation relationship between the monster and its origin determine how monstrous it becomes. The fruit must be distant from the tree; in fact the fruit must in some decisive way impose transformative power directed towards its tree. The dead must walk; the innocent conspire with corruption, blackness must impose on whiteness, the hallowed must be defiled, the heterosexual opposes the homosexual, for a monster to be, the binaries that distinguish must converge.

The act of recognition is what formulates the monster’s subjectivity as a form of gazing that desires to differentiate the self from the other as queer. To see the queer is to solidify the self and its subjectivity. The action of the gaze, as in the queer looking back onto the subject that recognizes the monster/queer, produces an inversion of the projected monstrosity from the queer to the normalized subject. Gazing is an act of authorship of self that writes the language that in turns describe therefore writes the very definition of

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19 Michael William Saunders, “Imps of the Perverse: Gay Monsters in Film” (Westport Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 2. Here there is a direct connection to the theory of perversion and the idea of queerness as inherently monstrous.

20 Janine Chassegue-Smirgel, “Creativity and Perversion” (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 11-17. Chassegue-Smirgel continues to describe the Luciferian character; among them are Caligula, artist Hans Bellmer, and the fictional H.G. Wells character of Dr. Moreau. She note the Bellmer is perverse for the fact that he crafted the female body in ‘continuous human anagrams.’
the other. Gil Jagger writes in *Butler Matters*, “Since we are products of discourses, language and significations that structure the acts in which we engage and through which we are constituted as subjects, and as ourselves, what we can do is to aim at alterative significations in the course of our repetition of these acts.”\(^{21}\) When the monster gazes it is activity of the void, the very horror of abjection, which destabilizes or iterates the boundaries produced by language providing a now normalized subject with authority and un-queer subjectivity it holds as it absolute truth of its being. For the monster to be seeable informs an equalization that is produced by the phenomenon of light that both the normalized non-queer subject and the queer subject can inhabit in order to activate the physics of gazing. There is an inherent idea that the monster sees through a veil of darkness whether it is a physical shadow or a condition of being within a psycho-space of evil. The monster sees you from beyond the daylight, a hellish space of chaotic and indefinable intention. The same can be said for the gazing of the homosexual male onto a heterosexual male who in turn becomes dis-centered by the act of potential desire that is not articulated within the inner psychology of the straight subjective ideology. This “homo-panic” is a fear of a gaze from a void of horror. Saunders writes:

“… the visibility of gay people is what makes them dangerous. As long as we don’t admit we see them, gay people aren’t all that much of a threat. A long as “they” keep their sexuality private, we can admit that they can do good… and contribute responsibly to the welfare of the nation. It is when gay people insist on being seen, on being recognized…that they represent a threat to social order. As long as “they” don’t insist that we see them, “we” can pretend that they don’t figure in the shaping of society… the visibility of gay people is a “monstrous” thing in the most traditional senses of the word…”\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\) Gill Jagger, “Judith Butler: sexual politics, social change and the power of the performatve” (London: Routledge, 2008), 34. Jagger continues to write, ‘Since compulsory heterosexuality and phallogocentrism as epistemological and ontological regimes are significant sources of the acts which constitute gendered embodiment, the route to change in this area is through repetitions that subvert dominant gender norms in hope of destabilizing these regimes.’

\(^{22}\) Saunders. Michael William *Imps of the Perverse*. The notion of the closeted gay person becomes an issue of denial of a hetero-normative society. This idea also accounts for the formation of “family values” as being an iteration of society as a whole, which excludes any subject that does not attribute social order to compulsory heterosexual subjectivity.
QUEER GODS AND MONSTERS

The plight of the Wolf Man echoes the closeted behavior of any queer basket case. Frankenstein’s Bride was conceived by two men. A vampire’s bite seems an all-too-coded term for a male succubus to penetrate another male and consume his life in liquid form. The list of queer codes within horror films is a vast one. However the instances of the queerness-perversion-monster connection is a thorny one to place. Adopting a lavender gaze will yield such readings. Fellini’s *Satyricon* (1969) possesses an exquisite monster functioning on multiple levels of queerness and perversion. In the film the demigod Hermaphroditus is discovered by the pathetic protagonists granting prayers to freaks and untouchables while residing in a languid state of sorrowful divinity. Where the perversion lies is not necessarily in the bi-sexed body of the albino god but within the brokenness and failure in which his patrons regard him. Hermaphroditus cannot speak, stand, or care for himself, it is as if his very existence is excruciating and his monstrous genetic fusion has betrayed him. His queerness is terrifying in that he is a sexualized monster that is theologically higher than mortals, yet he is weak. The order that he breaks is the notion that gods are powerful, omnipotent. He is dolorously beautiful but corporally victimized. Symbolically his character would be like Christ tacked onto the rear end of a raunchy 1960’s disco, pathetically stripped of any glorious potency however lovely his deformed scared body is, even as the flashy mirror-ball sparkles. In the film the quasi-homosexual-impotent heroes abduct the demigod, only to discover he has died of exhaustion and exposure on their miserable trek.

Fellini creates Hermaphroditus as a compounded perversion. Physically, the god is child like yet his/her genitalia are beyond an innocent cherubic portrayal. He/she is also an individual with theatrically exaggerated albinism, complete with the biologically fictitious pink eyes, a condition that makes him/her appear ethereal and mystical as well as physically abnormal and disfigured. This description is not unlike that of a vampire or the Dictator. One could suspect that *this* Hermaphroditus is not of divine origin, but
rather a pasty white, intersexed, mentally retarded, paraplegic. In either case, the queerness portrayed is one of pitiable failure. The dismal god embodies a divinity (Order of the Father) that has failed: the union of genders can only exist as a corrupt, physiologically unsuccessful body and the human expectation of differentiated order from chaos is a myth prescribed by culture and not evolutionary success (the inert monstrosity of queerness). While Fellini’s Hermaphroditus is tragic and a pure departure from what is considered to be a horror film monster, he is no doubt monstrous.

The notion of the failed masculine, the ideological logic of the Name-of-the-Father, is present here as the strong undercurrent that tends to create the most gruesome of monsters in and out of horror films. Hermaphroditus can be easily viewed as failed maleness, bodily corruption, and spiritual castration. The implication of the relationship between masculine failure and monstrosity is that one creates the other. Perversion is merely a state of being that exists when a precinct of order, in this case the male gender performative, is disrupted and translated into new socio-culturally terrifying performances. To be a whole man one must be a mutilation of one’s complete self. A real man must learn to remove femininity from him and purge all that is ascribed to the gender of women. Whole masculinity is a paradox. Further, if a real man can only exist as a mutilation of himself then that, by the orderly laws of order, make him a monster, a perversion in his own right. By this notion of the masculine paradox the formation of the monster can be reduced to a universal threat of masculine corruption and an attack on the sovereignty of God. Monsters are mutilations of order and become archetypal personas that pose a threat to maleness and the elaborate socio-psychological device non-queer men utilize to formulate themselves. What makes the monster mask so terrifying is that it shows the darkness, the secrets, we keep from ourselves. This is the essence of ideology.

It has been apparent throughout most histories that queer men are perceived to be failed men, if not an inversion of them. To embrace the abhorrent dismissed feminine into the sexual domain of penetrate-able masculinity is to corrupt the codes of self-

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Saunders. Michael William *Imps of the Perverse*. Saunders brilliantly described male wholeness as a paradox and further relates that manhood must be sought after. Once the feminine parts are stripped away, the fledgling male must seek out his rights of passage and monuments of masculine performance. p. 21.
mutilation real men require to be complete. As an aside, by this reasoning the man who is penetrated by another man embraces the archetypal feminine as the one who is penetrated and thus is placed in a role that includes engaging in the inherent femininity therein and becomes more whole.

The most direct symbol of queerness/failed masculinity is found in the mutilation and body gore in visual representation. It is obvious why monsters are usually departures from traditional physicality and psychologies; it is the aberration that makes the monster, again the Luciferian departure from the Order of the Father. 24

One of the best examples of queerness representing the mutilated-whole male paradox is in the Cenobite characters in Clive Barker’s Hellraiser films. For instance the nefarious Pinhead is a mutilation of the human being he once was. Pinhead is a demonic dandy sporting a fetishized priestly cassock. His bodily elegance and British eloquence places him outside the Freudian stab-happy killers before him. Instead the audience is provided with a monster that is gracefully poised and into leather. One cannot say if Pinhead is explicitly gay, that is irrelevant, however what his attributes describe fits nicely into a gay culture of marginalized sexuality and spirituality. What is known is that his creator Clive Barker is gay. That is very relevant. The leather sub-culture found within gay culture constitutes one of many performances some adopt to express their acknowledgement of the theatre of identity. Leather becomes a device for expressing hyper-masculinity and a nod to a propensity for violence and violent sex, or the impression of aggressive sexuality held in fetish for skin.25

"Skin, I will argue with reference to certain nineteenth-century monsters, becomes a kind of metonym for the human; and its color, its pallor, its shape mean everything within a semiotic of monstrosity. Skin might be too tight (Frankenstein’s creature), too dark (Hyde), too pale (Dracula), too superficial

24 Serlin, David. Disability, Masculinity, and the Prosthetics of War, 1945 to 2005, from the book The Prosthetic Impulse edited by Smith and Morra. In this article Serlin describes the parallel between veterans who are disfigured or who have lost a limb and the social climate to rehabilitate them via prosthetics to preserve their bodies and their masculine wholeness. pgs. 155-183

25 Frank Browling, The Culture of Desire. Browning describes the unifying trait among the queer community as being a willful manipulation of the performitive identity and the inherent perception of it nurtured into queer individuals. This notion also implies that heterosexual society, or the non-queer, are ignorant of their own masks of performance. p.212.
(Dorian Gray’s canvas), too loose (Leatherface) or too sexed (Buffalo Bill). Skin houses the body and it is figured in Gothic as the ultimate boundary, the material that divides the inside from the outside. The vampire will puncture and mark the skin with his fangs, Mr. Hyde will covet white skin, Dorian Gray will desire his own canvas, Buffalo Bill will covet female skin, Leatherface will wear his victim’s skin as a trophy and recycle his flesh as food. Slowly but surely the outside becomes the inside and the hide no longer conceals or contains, it offers itself up as text, as body, as monster. The Gothic text, whether novel or film, plays out an elaborate skin show…” 26

To be draped in the flesh of a once living being is to express a delightfully primitive inclination of the human sexual condition food-chain supremacy. In the case of Pinhead and his ghoulish peers, the leather habiliments operate in pure fetish and direct violence to intermingle with taboo pleasures and kinky sex. Along with the gay origins of the Cenobites, the disfigured bodies of the Cenobites operate in the realm of representing the corruption of beauty and humanity. In all the Cenobite costumes their flesh has been sliced, stretched, and wickedly incorporated into the design of the garments themselves as bloody embellishment attesting to excruciation glamour. With Pinhead – the nails that have been driven into his scalp and skull become a piercing allusion to a Saint Sebastian, the patron saint of homoeroticism and male-to-male phallic penetration (doubting Thomas fingering the gash in Jesus’ side, or an abstraction of Christ’s crown of thorns. Barker literally created a character with gay sadism eternally on his mind. The idea that the Cenobites are mutilated, distortions of what they once were; yet somehow hellishly complete and diabolically autonomous, stands to reason that they are queer monsters, exposing the paradox of male wholeness, regardless if their sexual dispositions are explicitly a Queer/monster-subjectivity.

DIVAS, DOLLS, DRAG AND THE DEVIL

There is a phenomenon within gay culture to idealize divas, theatrical women who possess an uncanny ability to circulate queer glamour and embody the performance of portents. The queer dictator is a puppet of influences; Goth and camp sensibilities comprise his nature, for him, to be posthuman is to transgress the ideologies of a compulsory heterosexual code of being and to become a liberated monster that fractures their ideological foundation. In the dictator’s realm gazing queerly is to be queer, mimicking a diva is to become divine. For the gay psyche, a woman, a void of subjectivity within failed but continuously reiterated masculine semiotic constitution, that has become more than herself as an icon of performative and artistic self-creation and formulated subjectivity, is a symbolic persona that can in turn be embodied and impersonated leading the queer subject towards freedom and self autonomy. The performativity and subjectivity in which gendered and sexed individuals exists is based on the social structures that support the iterations and reiterations of the codes of being. The queer-eyed subject sees the void of the self through the perforamtive and subjective acts of language forming the very self as it ascribes to an identity formulated through the avenues of language and recognition. The Queer sees the other-ing through self reflection and exposes the actives of other-ing as contrived and linguistically substantial and also as having the same sensibility of camp, a meaning through artifice, “…the difference, rather, between the thing as meaning something, anything, and the thing as pure artifice.”27 The artifice of the self become the artistic performative form that constitutes self and the language of the self, thereby the authorship of the subject is beheld to the subject an entity of linguistic acquiescence and/or a subversive character that re-appropriates the signification of language. The diva shows the game of performance and is also the performance. She becomes an icon of subjectivity and

therefore being itself. To the queer psyche the introjection of the diva becomes a sensibility to form reality and one’s own subjectivity.

The diva of subjective introjection in the case of the queer dictator is Blind Mag, a fictional character from the post-apocalyptic Goth opera Repo! The Genetic Opera. Blind Mag, a world-renowned operatic diva, played by English soprano Sarah Brightman, is a monster in her own right. She was originally born blind until she was given cybernetic eyes by entwining herself into a Faustian contract with GeneCo, a global supplier of biotechnologically enhanced human organs. Blind Mag’s appearance is that of a vampiric porcelain doll, whose fierce eyes resemble that of a demon’s that can digitally project holograms of memories into physical space. As with most operas filled with twists and tragedy, the sub-plot of Blind Mag tells of her profound conflict with GeneCo as they violently repossess the organs of their delinquent costumers. No longer willing to endorse such brutality Blind Mag wrenches out her eyes while performing her dolorously beautiful aria. This Oedipal blinding of oneself is symbolically connected to the psyche of the queer dictator’s eye fixation and to the monster gazing from within the shadows. The hollowness induced by the gazing within a non-queer world has been the affirmation that the vision with which the dictator has seen reality and himself belongs to the heterosexual ideological reality. In the film-opera of Repo! the hollow nature of the diva was portrayed in a terrifying close up of Blind Mag after she pulls out her eyes, the orgasmic countenance of her face coupled with her psychological release from guilt and GeneCo, holds the idea that her hollow eye sockets provide her with more authenticity in blind vision and dark autonomy than the artificial eyes that afforded her sight and the monstrous spectacle of holograms. The idea that Blind Mag was a opera singer adds to the alien vacancy that the human voice reveals in the subject. The highly trained vocal facility of a soprano over-emphasizes the super-human ability of song and vocal fortitude. The voice of the diva does operate as phallus entombed within the throat. The Diva’s voice is her own; save for the case of a castrato, the powerful female voice exists beyond the masculine realm of language and centers the diva in direct opposition to the almighty disembodied voice of God.

Wayne Koestenbaum’s book The Queen’s Throat, describes the monstrosity of the diva’s voice, Koestenbaum writes; “According to mythologies of operatic singing,
the voice comes out from a fathomless vacancy. Does the diva know where her sound comes from? Or is she a doll, an unconscious commodity? Divas are my dolls…” With dolls and Divas the queer subject can play God and maintain a gaze of self-reflection not afforded to the creator. The queer subject can view the performativity and hollowness of the diva as a vessel for subjectivity formulated through performativity and introjection of a glamorized ideology. The queer god, a demiurge of self-directed subjectivity, is not an ordinary god of law and order, but an untamed and audacious god that knows no boundaries, revealing how little and cowardly the former god is. The Father’s voice commands the light that only produces division from the abyss; a diva’s voice, a divine horrific voice, commands the chaotic void that could swallow him up within the inverted phallus that is the throat.

Koestenbaum writes further “The diva is demonized: she is associated with difference itself, with a satanic separation from the whole, the clean, the contained, and the attractive. Mythically, she is perverse, monstrous, abnormal, and ugly…”28 The Diva must be seen, it is not a matter of proud insecurity or attention seeking, but rather an issue of social obligation to help along and accelerate the Enlightenment of the ordinary world around us. The divine voice causes a fall from the high mountain as a liberated pervert, the queer subject is allowed to embrace the crooked horns and cloven hooves so that it may stomp out the incendiary authority of the Almighty, and sing out that I am queer, free and strange from you.

_Chromaggia_

Once, a long time ago,
Lived a bird, the fatal bird,
Chromaggia.
She flew towards an archer’s
Arrow off the Islands of St. Paul.
For years, she had run
from the arrow believing that it was

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28 Wayne Koestenbaum, “The Queen’s Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire” (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993). Koestenbaum writes further to describe that in times of public homosexual panic he longs to become a diva that impersonates a destructive force upon a hateful world. Indeed the psyche of the queer dictator shares in Koestenbaum’s offensive stance.
chasing her.
Chromaggia, Chromaggia,
They asked, why not continue to outfly
the danger? They could not see that
the arrow was tied to her wing. She
flew to untie it, and free them both.
By dragging the arrow,
Others are wounded by my
carelessness, my carelessness!
Down! Towards the devils
mouth! His arrow, my eyes.
Chromaggia, Come take these eyes...!
I would rather be blind!²⁹

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