

**A GENETIC FALLACY: MONSTROUS ALLEGORIES OF MIXED-RACE IN
GOTHIC AND CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE**

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Abstract

My thesis examines the similar intersections of hybridity that are embodied in both representations of monstrosity and the politics surrounding people of mixed-race. Drawing from Robert J.C. Young's text *Colonial Desire*, I argue that monstrosity and mixed-race present diachronically parallel embodiments of hybridity. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen views monsters as "disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration" (loc 226); however, monsters and multiracial people do not inherently disturb category. Gothic representation of monstrosity in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* confirms that hybridity can be exploited in order to strengthen colonial categories of Self and Other. Postmodern monstrosity in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, and Octavia Butler's *Imago*, complicate ostensibly rigid categories of identity only for the Gothic binary to resurface beneath the masks of superheroes and supervillains.

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Introduction:

The Intersection of Hybridity, Multiculturalism, and Monstrosity

There are monsters everywhere. Lately these monsters look a little different. Lady Gaga's 2011 music video "Born This Way" features the singer with embellished body modifications; gently sloping horns appear under the surface of Gaga's forehead and hyperbolically pointed cheekbones create an uncanny and monstrous appearance as she urges the audience, "put your paws up" in a poignant fusion of the outcast social group and the inhuman. Hollywood blockbusters *Avatar* and *District 9* feature white men who not only save aliens, but also become alien. Joss Whedon's cult hit *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as well as the often derided but extremely popular series of young adult novels and films, *Twilight*, revise, reinstate, and even fetishize the vampire. Across all mediums, the cyborg and robot oscillate between heroes and villains, sometimes both simultaneously. *I-robot*, *The Matrix*, *Bladerunner*, and the newest incarnation of *Battlestar Gallactica* grapple with anxieties, reminiscent of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, human interaction with robots and the potential to create new life forms, enhance our own, and the fear of being replaced by them. The monsters of classical myth and gothic monsters, which mainly functioned as antagonists, are garnering a new aesthetic, one that seems to align with minority groups but also, more generally, complicates the category of humanity.

Coinciding with this monstrous (re)production is an explosion of complex cultural and racial politics, especially in the West. The political embrace of multiculturalism signals the alleged end of racism with those of mixed-race touted as a vanguard of postracial success; however, exploiting those of mixed-race as desirable bodies encourages a

celebration of racial integration while simultaneously silencing criticisms of existing and preexisting, institutional, systemic, and day-to-day racism (Dagbovie-Mullins 1). The exotification of multiracial individuals, specifically those with visibly ambiguous but also conspicuous features, represent a complicated double bind where race contains market value as long as it is kept at arm's length from ostensibly stable racial groups; as noted by Sarah Nilsen and Sarah E. Turner, "a colorblind trend in television is the casting of actors who are marked as racially ambiguous and therefore removed from any identifiable cultural identity" (5). A far cry from past treatment of the racial trespass embodied by those of mixed-race, Sean Brayton points out the pendulous shift as "hybrid and 'multicultural' bodies once rejected as incorrigibly contaminated during the eugenics movement are now used to hustle world music, athletic apparel, and popular films"(3), revealing the unsavory history of intolerance towards mixed-race individuals and the insidious way that late capitalism creates a market out of formerly oppressed groups, muffling current racial injustices under allegedly positive glorification .

To complicate matters, racial politics increasingly utilize postracial and colorblind discourses in conjunction with a celebration of multiculturalism (Elam 5; Nilsen & Turner 5; Zizek 30; Bezirgan 4) as "mixed-race' is... at once the result of a cosmopolitan society which no longer sees colour, its highly visible symbol, and its hyper-particularized object of desire" (Haritaworn 61). The contradiction of being blind to race but also exploiting it as a hallmark of multiculturalism is an optimistic attempt to celebrate difference while simultaneously denying that very difference. In practice, this incongruous mixture of ideology exploits the Other when it is convenient but denies problems that have been, and still are, associated with Otherness. Mixed-race people embody this racial plurality and

become a political battleground, Rosetta stone, litmus test, advertisement, and portent of interracial discourse. Despite the convictions of the current “colorblind” era, largely signaled by the inauguration of President Obama (Mukherjee 39; Bonilla-Silva & Ashe 57), racism is still a reality, albeit one that is becoming increasingly easy to downplay and ignore.

However, as Rebecca Walker suggests, although mixed-race people are often used as a paragon of racial equality and cosmopolitanism (3), they are also used to stake out and claim racial “authenticity”. This contention of mixed-racial identity attempts to dissect and redistribute racial identity through colorism or naturalized racial behaviours or beliefs. White republican obsession with President Obama’s citizenship on one side of the racial continuum was met with important members of the black community disputing whether he was black enough (Elam 7). Comedian Dave Chappelle, in his skit “Racial Draft”, shrewdly deconstructs obsession with Tiger Woods’ mixed heritage. Films such as *Aloha* and *47 Ronin* deliberately write characters of mixed-race as a flimsy justification to cast leads that might pass as mixed but are predominantly white, voiding criticisms of a lack of ‘diversity’ while maintaining the ubiquity of “overwhelmingly white leads” (Nilsen & Turner 5).

Although often smothered under the sensationalism of multicultural zeal, racial hybridity is also used to silence claims of racism by revoking the concept of inequality. A more insidious appeal of hybridity’s boundary disturbing ability is the retroactive erasure of racism on grounds that race is inherently unstable. Hershini Bhana Young explains how “destablization of blackness as a category, despite a long history of enforced hypodescent, helped put black social justice claims on tenuous ground, thereby assisting conservatives

who wished to end programs of what they termed ‘reverse discrimination’ against whites” (289). Although the idea of putting racial inequality behind us is likely well intended, it insists on ignoring the very conditions that have made racism a tremendous injustice in the first place, that is, the monumental fabrication of essential cultural/biological/natural differences between races that are the foundations of hypodescent, confirming certain races or mixtures as biologically subordinate. The acknowledgment of race as simulacrum does not expunge the reality of racist ideologies and histories just as the recognition of the monster as fictitious does not diminish the anxieties they represent, the human characteristics they embody, or the intersections of monstrous fiction and real events such as witch-hunts.

Methodological Framework

I seek to deconstruct the categories of mixed-race and monstrosity to critique the embedded discourses of race. In doing so I attempt to expose the colonial underpinnings of the allegedly positive revisions of the “mongrel” and the “monster” as the symbols of multicultural success. This thesis is predominantly poststructural and postcolonial, but also highly intersectional. Poststructural analysis is particularly helpful in exposing what is taken for granted as natural. Working from Derrida’s concept of *differance*, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen likens the monster to the semiotic value of a word as it “signifies something other than itself: it...always inhabits the gap between the time of upheaval that created it and the moment into which it is received” (184). Similarly, Young’s poststructural genealogy of hybridity in *Colonial Desire* is pivotal in exposing the fluctuating exploitations of race, specifically the progeny of interracial coupling, to suit changing cultural contexts. Monstrous and racial hybridity exists as simulacrum; devoid of

coherent origin, be that homeland or ethnicity, the character of mixed-race has drastically changed to support colonial attitudes as well as admonish them. This inconsistent reconfiguration and problematic colonial racial vocabulary paradoxically erases race while relying on its mixture's exotic aesthetic, is currently used again to push an allegedly positive embrace of multiculturalism. The same is true of the monster who has always had a more overtly fictional origin but has become increasingly more "real" as monsters revive and stories aggregate, dissolving lines between monster and human. As simulacra, the exploitation of hybridity embodies Baudrillard's fear of the fake hold up that can still rob a bank (20) or, currently, a justification for "standing one's ground" in racially motivated murders (Steinmetz); the problem is not identifying the origin or reality of the hybrid- which are already composed of other racial simulacra- but dealing with the real effects and consequences of its current use. A poststructural approach is necessary to reveal these clandestine mechanisms of identity manipulation, construction, and enforcement. Particularly I examine how Gothic representations of difference continue to underscore mixed-race politics.

Although my central focus is racial politics, analysis of monstrosity is extremely and necessarily, intersectional. Hybrid subjects benefit from hybrid analysis. Interdisciplinary criticism offers helpful, homologous analyses across other systems of hegemonic discrimination. As such, my thesis will also feature feminist, Marxist, psychoanalytic, and queer theory in order to enhance my analysis and to simultaneously exhibit the relevance of an intersectional/multidisciplinary/monstrous approach to the subject matter itself.

A possible difficulty with my approach is a broad sample of monstrosity that prevents meticulous analysis of a single monster or specific combination of race but one

that is also too narrow to touch upon the plethora of monsters and the nuance that is required to thoroughly analyze each one. However, this is reflective of the same problems in the cultural study of mixed-race that often attempts to produce a singular mixed-race identity that operates under the same simulacrum that is race. Mixed-race comes in such variety that it resists singular analysis; the various combinations as well as varying degrees of visibility are also found in monstrous subjects where not all claws retract, not all circuits are exposed, and not all transformations are reversible. I hope to create a broad framework to approach hybridity without reducing the variety and difference that is often flattened in an attempt to remedy indeterminacy with category. However, some strategic essentialism, as described by Gayatri Spivak, “in which subordinate or marginalized social groups may temporarily put aside local differences in order to forge a sense of collective identity” (Dourish 1), is necessary to reveal the manifold differences within experiences of mixed-race people and monsters. Even more appropriate is Alastair Bonnett’s approach of “strategic *deconstruction*: a continuous process of self- monitoring reflexivness that explores the personal experience of people of all ‘races’, while exposing the constructedness of all political categories” (Werbner & Modood loc 539). Each monster is examined as a different facet of hybridity, such as variable levels of visibility, how monstrosity is distanced from humanity, and/or how difference is policed or measured. I feature these experiences only so far as to represent *additional* possibilities and common challenges rather than suggest totalizing rites of membership, which are too polymorphous to attempt to flatten or contain.

However, despite the *critical* difficulty in dealing with hybridity, hybridity itself can be mobilized for very specific purposes. Monstrosity and mixed-race identity undergo

constant (re)mediation, (re)construction, and cultural manipulation in order to *stabilize* specific categories. The etymology of the monster is rooted in Latin, *monere* (to warn)(Knoppers 3); the monster has been a useful portent and the monstrous body itself has come to signify not only the cultural anxieties of the time of its creation but also the collective revisions that have been coded upon the monster through different cultural epochs and how this assemblage is (re)situated in present cultural politics. Like the monstrous body, the mixed-race body has also been manipulated and deliberately utilized to essentialize racial politics. Robert C.J. Young's, *Colonial Desire* exposes the genealogy of hybridity as changing from, as Brayton puts, "incorrigibly contaminated" to its postcolonial, cosmopolitan aesthetic. This analysis is of particular importance, meticulously revealing the artificiality of race itself but also the continued survival of racialized thought despite the moral inversion in the representation of mixed-race. Young's analysis is vital in bridging monstrosity and mixed-race through his meticulous genealogy of hybridity and specifically how hybridity does not necessarily destabilize categories but can actually reproduce them:

There is an historical stemma between the cultural concepts of our own day and those of the past from which we tend to assume that we have distanced ourselves. We restate and rehearse them covertly in the language and concepts that we use: every time a commentator uses the epithet 'full-blooded', for example, he or she repeats the distinction between those of pure and mixed race. Hybridity in particular shows the connection between the racial categories of the past and contemporary cultural discourse: it may be used in different ways, given different inflections and apparently discrete references, but it always reiterates and reinforces the dynamics of the same conflictual economy whose tensions and divisions it re-enacts in its own antithetical structure. There is no single, or correct, concept of hybridity: it changes as it repeats, but it also repeats as it changes. It shows that we are still locked into parts of the ideological network of a culture that we think and presume that we have surpassed. The question is whether the old essentializing categories of cultural identity, or of race, were really so essentialized, or have been retrospectively constructed as more fixed than they were. (27)

The relevance of Young's analysis is especially pertinent in relation to the reception of monstrous hybridity, from Gothic representations of abject difference to current deployments of heroic, desirable monsters. Multiraciality or human/non-human embodiment, diachronically parallels one another, revealing problematic ways that essentialized origin is relativistic.

Currently, mixed-race is used to claim the success of multiculturalism, often disavowing racism and the underlying colonial constructions of race that still shape racial identification, enforcement, and experience. Jefferey Santa Ana argues that racial hybridity is deployed as a potent commodity in which "multinational corporations like the Gap, Nike, Wal-Mart, and the United Colors of Benetton, commercialize racial mixture in their advertising in a stylization of global commerce" (459). In a similar contemporary trend, monstrosity is often celebrated and revised in a inversion of horrific representations of decades and centuries passed; David McNally notes how "monsters are positioned as heroic outsiders, makers of nonconformity and perversity, representing all those marginalized by dominant discourses and social values" (10). Although he also criticizes postmodern theory for offering "no guidelines for assessing the 'difference between benign and malignant others'" (11), McNally similarly attempts to redeploy monstrosity for his own moral identifications rather than examining mechanisms underlying monstrosity itself.

Both monstrosity and mixed-race have been constructed through fiction. Although the consequences of lingering colonial definitions of race have very real ramifications for living people than typically associated with monsters, racial hybridity and the non-human/human assemblage of monstrosity are both easily manipulated to

similar ends. Their position on the boundaries and between ostensibly immutable categories, make them threatening but also a rich market to exploit as a glorified bastion of difference. It is through repackaging and revision that monstrosity and mixed-race is a commodity that capitalizes upon celebrations of civil rights and reverence of difference. However, underscoring this “celebration” is a paradoxical promotion of colorblind and postracial politics that simultaneously flatten and fetishize that difference.

Hybridity is the central feature that allows for what many critics of both race and monstrosity optimistically present as transgressive (Haraway 150; Cohen loc 226; Bhabha 114) but also what has been exploited and manipulated to support dominant cultural paradigms (Young 27; Elam 8; Huet 4). Monstrosity and mixed-race function as a sort of proof for one another. If the monstrous hybrid promises to resist categories then why and how are the categories of racial or ethnic difference stabilized through mixed-race? If racial hybridity complicates race by existing on the boundaries of race, why has the monster been so convenient in enforcing and demonizing difference? In this thesis I use monstrosity and mixed-race interchangeably to draw attention to the similar (ab)uses of hybridity that underpin representations of monstrosity. These experiences are not restricted to fiction and are deliberately and accidentally employed to fetishize and stabilize cultural boundaries in and outside of the text.

An Overview of Monster Theory

The monster is a convenient scapegoat; loaded with cultural anxieties and guilt, it is set loose to cathartically enact the transgressive fantasies against the culture that has created it; its destruction conveniently comes after it has mutilated and killed other undesirable characters. Richard Kearny expands this tendency to any group that can be

othered or made alien (39). Mixed-race has also been a scapegoat to denounce racial mixing but is currently utilized to disavow the guilt of racism. To monstrify is to disavow the very “human” capacity to behave in a way that does not align with optimistic definitions of humanity or human behavior; it is an attempt to metaphysically distance humanity from undesirable actions deemed “inhuman”. In order to make something monstrous, it must first be dehumanized, divorced from what is aligned with the category of humanity. This process, figured through literary analysis of monster narratives, is the equivalent of processes used to justify racial division, hierarchy, categorization, and the preservation of racial oppression and power dynamics. Where the monster is an “unnatural” or “supernatural” combination of human and inhuman attributes such as animal fangs or claws of the vampire and werewolf or a humanoid configuration of machinery within the android, the racial hybrid is similarly represented as the “incompatible” combination of races as well as living evidence of a “treacherous” liaison between hierarchically stratified ethnicities.

Although the monstrosity and mixed-race can be distilled to their hybridity, many analyses of monstrosity presume a naturalized category in which the monster is inherently “evil” or is sympathetically framed as an “evil” *product* of a specific cultural moment/movement. Although this thesis does not attempt to claim the material reality of monsters (although it may imply it), it does seek to examine the mechanisms of dehumanization and expose the tenuous stability of the category of humanity and its alleged antithesis in the monster (to this end I use the term inhuman, not as a signifier of a lack of compassion but rather a neutral statement differentiating from human and monster). The monster has been utilized as a portent, a cautionary figure warning of or

against specific groups of people, actions, or alleged transgression that can be mapped culturally and historically. In his collection of essays *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, Jeffery Jerome Cohen reads the monster as “pure culture. A construct and a projection, the monster exists only to be read: the *monstrum* is etymologically ‘that which reveals,’ ‘that which warns’” (loc 194).

The monster is not a negative identifier, nor positive. I am not looking at actions that are labeled monstrous, a misnomer, but rather the simultaneous embodiment of human and inhuman. The monster is not intrinsically malevolent. The monstrous body has traditionally linked appearance/difference/hybridity to immorality, violence and depravity. In *Pretend We’re Dead: Capitalist Monsters in American Pop Culture*, Annalee Newitz provides a shrewd analysis of popular, horrific formations of the monster as products of capitalist labour. But she naturalizes the monster as that which is immoral, impure, and brutal. Newitz describes monsters as “freaks of culture, not freaks of nature...made monsters, rather than born monsters” (9), presupposing “freak” and “monster” as natural categories that are learned or produced rather than innate. Shifting the focus from internal and naturally embodied evil to evil as a product of material conditions is certainly a step in the right direction but still ignores the problematic categorization of monstrosity itself and its use as both a identification of evil as well as an adjective to describe an atypical appearance.

Although this is a helpful and insightful analysis, I would like to draw attention to the monster itself as what Marina Levina and Diem-My Bui explain as “a space where society can safely represent and address anxieties of its time” (1). The monster, divorced from the former naturalization of its negative connotations provides a pervasive site of

sociopolitical meaning. The symbolic/metonymic value of the monstrous body is often visibly marked through disfigurement or deformity to physically represent some form of inner corruption. The monstrous was, and frequently still is, consumed as a straightforward embodiment of horror, disgust, and repulsion; however, Julia Kristeva describes the abject as “not lack of cleanliness or health...but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (4) exposing what makes the monstrous contemptible: heterogeneity, the erasure of boundary.

Hybridity is the central feature of the monstrous. Although I am specifically interested in the intersection between human and non-human, every monster is monstrous due to some degree of hybridity; the giant beast such as King Kong or Godzilla is monstrous due to a combination of familiarity and unnatural size. It is the coalescence of multiple, allegedly disparate, aspects within one body that often produces anxiety or fear because it ostensibly violates the ‘natural order’, which the monster often physically signifies through deformity and disfigurement. In her text *Monstrous Imagination* Marie-Helene Huet states that:

By presenting similarities to categories of beings to which they are related, monsters blur the differences between genres and disrupt the strict order of Nature. Thus, though the monster was first defined as that which did not resemble him who engendered it, it nevertheless displayed some sort of resemblance, albeit a false resemblance, to an object external to its conception. (4)

The combination is viewed as “grotesque,” which Istvan Csicsery-Ronday, in the article “On the Grotesque in Science Fiction”, describes as “a projection of fascinated repulsion/attraction out into objects that consciously cannot accommodate, because the object disturbs the sense of rational, natural categorization” (71). The hybridized body of

the monster becomes a site of confusion that simultaneously collapses and strengthens the human/inhuman dichotomy. The monster disrupts the dichotomy of Self and Other by existing in between, but this bolsters each category by reaffirming, through negation, their taxonomies; the Other and the Self are mutually able to distinguish themselves from the hybrid, maintaining the binary by positioning the hybrid within the center as neither/nor, the uncanny. Horrific use of the monster is so ubiquitous that physical aspects of monsters have become monstrous by association as fangs, claws, stitched or colored flesh stands for that which is inhuman, frightening, and malevolent. Despite Huet's analysis that it is not otherness but the disturbance of order that the monster embodies, she also reifies the same categorical essentialism that villainizes the monster itself. Even the title of her work plays on the pendulous inversion that places the "monstrous" behaviour on to the men who condemn women's imaginations for physical birth defects. This reversal is problematic in that the definition of the monster that Huet has carefully deconstructed as disruptive rather than ontological is applied to the teratologists as a naturalized, one dimensional evil. The monstrous is simply relocated rather than dismantled.

Donna Haraway evokes a more hopeful, redeeming quality of the monstrous in her concept of cyborg feminism, stating, "single vision produces worse illusions than double vision or many-headed monsters. Cyborg unities are monstrous and illegitimate; in our present political circumstances, we could hardly hope for more potent myths for resistance and recoupling" (154). Haraway's notions of the cyborg as a destabilizing and liberating force of hybridity are utopian and popular in academic discourse on monstrosity. This idealistic view of the monster assumes that amorphous identity and position on the

boundaries of “human” disrupts the strict dichotomies that are paradoxically constructed by traces of monstrosity. However, if the hybrid is the hermeneutic tool to dissolve binaries then it has consistently failed or is much slower than critics hope, as every iteration of the monster including the present has not fulfilled this transgressive potential. As Richard Kearney reveals, monsters “remind us that we have a choice: (a) to try to understand and accommodate our experience of strangeness, or (b) to repudiate it by projecting it exclusively onto outsiders. All too often, humans have chosen the latter option” (4). The monster is still a source of fear and resistance; although it reveals, “that difference is arbitrary and potentially free floating, mutable rather than essential” (Cohen 345), the monster is still a threatening figure that must be contained or destroyed. Even among works that attempt to revise the Gothic monster, like famous vampires Angel or Edward, a negative Gothic vocabulary is simply reinscribed or deferred to another, to the “real” villains; monstrosity is effectively repositioned onto a new villain that is labeled monstrous. But if the monster is transformed, reconfigured and extracted from its horrific roots, surely it would become the fated cultural force that finally frees humanity from the hierarchies and alleged ontology that have plagued cultural theorists, the colonized, and the marginalized.

The reconfiguration of monstrosity and the collision of human and non-human attributes is the superhero. What was once horrific, supernatural power is now a desirable fantasy. What Jack Halberstam identifies in Gothic representations of monstrosity as “fear of and desire for the other, fear of and desire for the possibly latent perversity lurking within the reader herself” (13) is revised from a focus on the fearful aspect to one of desire. Gothic cautionary tales such as Dr. Jekyll chemical transformation into Mr. Hyde are

frequently utilized in origin stories and even duplicated in the case of David Banner and the Hulk. However, although this “remix” of monstrosity seems to glorify and redeem negative representations, the superhero succeeds by distilling difference into separate identities. Those who cannot don a costume and pass as human, much like Frankenstein’s creation, are relegated to hiding or, more likely, become super “villains.” Not only is the negative history of monstrosity preserved but there is also a binary of “good” and “bad” manifestations of difference. Even the “good” monster, the superhero, struggles with a complex interplay of identification anxiety that manifests through the necessity of a costume. The costume while explicitly concealing the identity of the hero is also a way to accentuate difference while hiding what is “normal.” The costume itself reifies the bisecting effects of Dr. Jekyll’s formula along with the underpinning tensions of the ubiquity of some form of internal hybridity. The mask is the visualization of trans/post human against the “normal” human identity crisis, an identity crisis that also haunts those of mixed-race as a simultaneous embodiment of disparate racial categories. The superhero mediates the markers of monstrosity through a costume, suggesting that monstrous attribution must still be carefully controlled in order to capitalize on the commercial appeal of hybridity -- “the best of both worlds” that mixed-race theorist Jin Haritaworn criticizes as “an essentialist discourse, which until recently had pathologized multiraciality and continues to pathologize other embodiments” (74). Furthermore, although this division of hybridity, especially given the possible interpretation of Jekyll and Hyde’s battle for control as a signal to moralize and accept a unified, hybrid identity, it also echoes colorblind statements appealing to the universality of mixedness; the insistence that we are all hybrid in some sense fails to recognize the inequalities present in specific

configurations of hybridity that are denied the status of a “good mix,” a term expanded upon by Haritaworn who argues “that multiraciality has also become a mobile resource that empowers some identities at the expense of others” (64). This notion of essentialist discourse is embedded in both monstrosity and mixed-race categorization and both have followed a correlative history of negative to ostensibly positive representation. However, this thesis seeks to show that the transformation from negative to positive are constructed upon the same naturalized categorizations of racial otherness as Gothic monsters who have been canonized as monstrous are still archetypically imbedded into our current revisions of monsters and heroes. Despite the moral complexities of Frankenstein’s creature as a psychologically human character, or Hyde’s evil nature as a direct product of “purifying” otherness, the fact remains that these characters have persistently been presented as monstrous and visibly different. This familiar obsession with the physical manifestation of difference is a reflection of “European anti-Semitism and American racism towards black Americans [that] are precisely Gothic discourses given over to making monstrous of particular kinds of bodies” (Halberstam 4). If anything, contemporary revivals of these monsters contain and even more deliberate attention to appearance as Frankenstein’s monster is characterized by his dimwittedness and garish neck-bolts and Hyde’s physique is currently enormous (Fig 1.1)

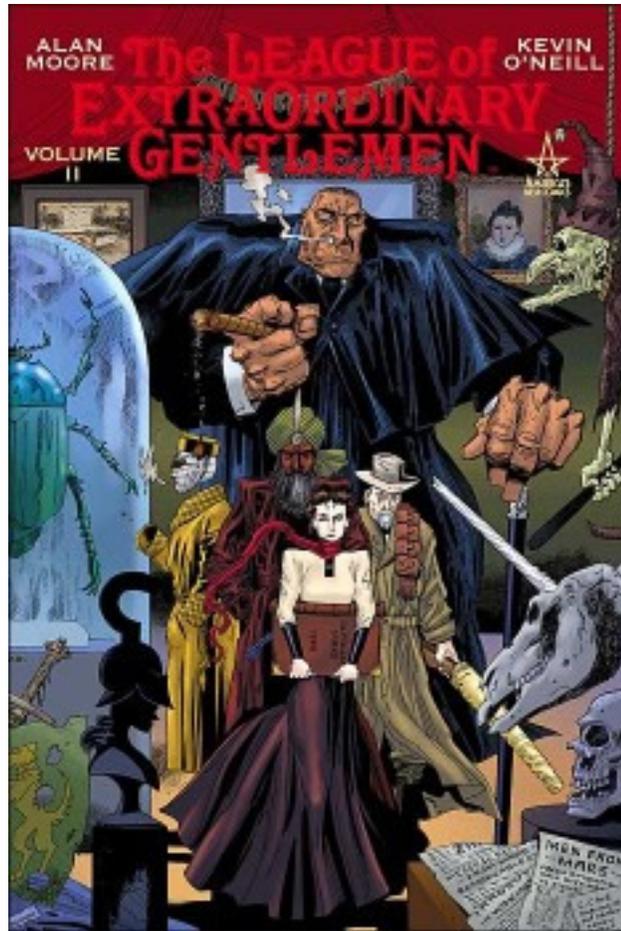


Figure 1.2 Hyde towering over the League of Extraordinary Gentlemen. Cover of Volume 2 of League of Extraordinary Gentlemen. Written by Alan Moore. Art by Kevin O’Neill. Wildstorm (DC) 2003.

Mixed-Race and Cultural Hybridity

Evidenced by the popular Jekyll/Hyde dichotomy, hybrid identity is not easy to configure. Since most racial identities are formed through deep historical roots, the synthesis of a discrete/distinct multiracial identity requires some sort of unification of multiple origins into a singular body. Natalie Masuoka claims that, what she calls New Identity Formation emerged alongside a growing multiracial presence after the 2000 Census, when the new multiracial category was made available through a “coalition of multiracial advocacy organizations” (253). Masuoka perceives the unique multiracial

identity as a result of multiracial group formation in which mixed-race individuals “perceive themselves as members of a common group” (253). Obviously the creation of a legitimized multiracial category would increase the number of people who identify as multiracial, but the actual formation of a mixed-race categorical is much more complex. For instance, the physical visibility of race informs whether racial identity is enforced or whether passing is an option, highlighting “the general racial diversity that is found within the multiracial population...each individual is subject to different experiences depending on that individual’s racial make up” (253). The multiracial category simply cannot function in the same way as other established ethnic classifications. Mixed-race identity will no doubt be continually under development, likely never reaching any conclusive model or unity. Conversion of multiple into singular requires an inclusive schema of racial acceptance and a step away from naturalized concepts of race and culture. That is to say, currently the mixed-race subject must actively pursue plurality of race using inherently divisive constituents that have historically informed racial politics. A new and coherent multiracial identity is virtually insurmountable as it must dispose of the paradigm of racial essentialism, that underscore the construction of racial identity, and incorporate racial histories in a way that does not privilege one or the other while simultaneously synthesizing an identity that is often enforced rather than produced.

Racial/cultural hybridity is often discussed in large, generalized terms that tend to reduce the nuanced experience of mixed-race. Multiracial politics exist on a complex continuum that must account for differences within and among different races, sexual identity, gender identity, and religious identity. That is, individuals of the same mixed-race group may have drastically different experiences depending on numerous factors such

as visibility, gender, and geographic/cultural context. For example, Jin Haritaworn's interviews with Eurasian men and women reveal that Asian features are heavily fetishized for the feminine participants but largely an unattractive impediment in the masculine sample (69). Haritaworn explores the differences between the treatment of black men as heavily sexualized and Asian men as "racially castrated" (62). These discrepancies within and between mixed-race groups indicate the risk associated with reducing hybridity to a celebratory category of multicultural success. In similar fashion, monsters are often aggregated under monstrosity that does not account for distinctions that are apparent within the same subcategories of monsters such as the various representations of the vampire. Monstrosity and mixed-race highlight a similar paradox that necessitates divergent categories that suddenly coexist; the mediation of hybridity continue to reify harmful contradistinctions of hypodescent and hierarchies that have ostensibly been defeated by the very existence of hybridity. Despite the good intentions, the cosmopolitan appeal of mixed-race belies the same racial hierarchies that reproduce more obvious forms of racism and the concept of a "'goodmix' is a differential discourse that empowers multiracial people with white parentage at the expense of those without (67-8).

Implicit racial divisions are reinforced through subtle social forces and even more insidious constructions of multiculturalism that exploit the multiracial individual as proof of racial equality. W.E. Du Bois and Paul Gilroy detail the internal racial division in identity that is constantly mediated and remediated through self-surveillance and the gnawing expectations enforced by the dominant culture. Double consciousness is not limited to black experience but rather articulates a larger phenomenon of colonial attitudes that still define racial identity as either-or, despite the desire to put issues of race

“behind us.” The fiction of race is presented as a truth; geography and nationalism are relied upon and imbricated within a vaguely (pseudo) scientific narrative of shared genetic/ethnic origin. This narrative produces a feedback loop that causes the multiracial individual to reconcile not only the alleged heritage of racialized traits and “homeland” but also the correlation of disparate racial identities. It is an absurd crisis to mediate and perform identities that are enforced under the “essentialist claims for the inherent authenticity or purity of cultures which, when inscribed in the naturalistic sign of symbolic consciousness, frequently become political arguments for the hierarchy and ascendancy of powerful cultures” (Bhabha 83).

However, although Bhabha’s analysis views cultural hybridity as an unsettling aggregation which disturbs colonial authority, racial hybridity is confined, created, and experienced through colonial constructions of race. As mentioned earlier regarding President Obama, mixed-race can become a body through which race is contested and distributed through stereotype and color. The ability to navigate or pass is suddenly at the convenience of “established” racial discourses. The unsettling hybrid is quickly resettled and made to choose sides, negotiate sides, or create something new at the risk of being outcast from both sides. Early postcolonial theorists framed racial hybridity as a significant challenge to colonial values and emphasized the powerful, transgressive potential of racial/cultural hybridity. However, hybridity has since been utilized to sustain colonial values of race that are braced by capitalist interests that elevate mixed-race as a vanguard of a highly lucrative global market. Although mixed-race is touted as an attractive representative of multiculturalism, the reality of disturbing deeply entrenched categories of identity that construct racial hybridity is not simple or without risk.

The exuberant victory dance over racism is dangerously myopic and potentially results in “a multiculturalism that disavows racism by replacing racial politics with cultural euphemisms, thereby removing race and ethnicity from discussions of capitalist exploitation and imperialist economic enterprise” (Brayton 7). The multiracial subject, using rhetoric very similar to the monster, becomes a potent site to control by transforming the potential to threaten the construction of race into a force that distracts from it entirely; Maria Root examines this effect in the United States:

The increasing presence of multiracial people necessitates that we as a nation ask ourselves questions about our identity: Who are we? How do we see ourselves? Who are we in relation to one another? These questions arise in the context of a country that has held particular views of race – a country that has subscribed to race as an immutable construct, perceived itself as White, and been dedicated to preserving racial lines. Thus such questions of race and identity can only precipitate a full-scale “identity crisis” that this country is ill equipped to resolve. Resolving the identity crisis may force us to re-examine our construction of race and the hierarchical social order it supports. (3)

Like the monster, the mixed race subject challenges tradition and purity causing a defensive response from both/multiple sides rather than acceptance. This is not to say that acceptance is impossible, but the likelihood of perfect assimilation is dictated by several factors like claims to membership and the privileges necessary to pass or gain such membership. The taxonomy of race is not limited to one side, and thus “multiracial people experience a squeeze of oppression *as* people of color and *by* people of color. People of color who have internalized the vehicle of oppression in turn apply rigid rules of belonging or establishing “legitimate” membership” (Root 4). This double bind is especially prominent in 19th century western fiction, which routinely utilized the “half-blood” Native American who, as William J. Scheick analyzes, “epitomized the integration (whether successful or unsuccessful) of the red and white races” (iv). Despite Scheick’s

positive reading, the “half-blood” is largely exploited as a type of tragic-mulatto trope in which white society gains something from the unfortunate death or suffering predicated by a hybrid existence. To make matters worse, Scheick also notes another manifestation of the “half-blood” as a “pure blood white character who, in every respect save genetic, functioned creatively between civilization (white) and nature (red)” (89). This particular removal of physical presence of race has become its own cliché, in the aforementioned films such as *District 9*, *Avatar*, *The Last Samurai*, and *Dances with Wolves*, that frequently feature a white character who not only becomes the Other but does so *better* than the Other. The implicit and caustic message is that it is okay to appropriate otherness if it is in celebration. This same message is reminiscent of multiracial difficulty in negotiating race and racism while simultaneously being smothered and silenced by pro-multicultural sentiments. Although mixed-race individuals are routinely isolated as an interracial success and pushed as exotic and especially beautiful (Dagbovie-Mullins 2), the reality off screen and off census paper is more complex.

Within a political climate that hastily moves towards postracial and colorblind politics, mixed-race is simultaneously a threat and champion. Rey Chow’s conception of coercive mimeticism is useful in examining the social power of residual colonial constructions of race that are internalized and simulated as the “correct” markers of ethnic identity (104). Chow exposes how the simulation of ethnicity creates social pressure that voids authenticity through an implicit contest to *act* ethnic enough. Michele Elam even challenges the notion of mixed-race identity as an implicit racial dissection that relies on naturalized categories of race, denying the complexity of individual experience, visibility, and agency. Elam also criticizes the glamorization of mixed-race as it reifies essential

categories of race and creating the position of mixed-race identity as another essential signification, another racial fiction to enforce and perform; this observation is of particular importance to the critics of multiculturalism such as Slavoj Žižek, Himani Bannrji, Sara Ahmed, etc who attempt to question and rein in the blind celebration of cultural and racial hybridity as a marker of postracial/colorblind/multicultural era that has summarily triumphed over inequality and transcended the concept of race itself.

Canada, through the ratification of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1985, is a prime example of the problems associated with multicultural and the difference between the desirable national identity of progressive cultural celebration and the actual experience of those who are tolerated at best. Canadian poet and essayist Fred Wah's *Diamond Grill*, is relevant for both its multiracial subject matter and also its hybridous form. Wah makes use of multiple hybridized forms such as the prose poem and biotext, which is similar to biography and autobiography but cannot be categorized as either due to its fractured narrative and inconsistent chronology. *Diamond Grill* is a collection of individual anecdotes, narratives, and passages that are variably poetic and prose-like. The text presents small narratives while simultaneously pushing certain images into the forefront that reappear and become significant artifacts of the narrator's racial experience. Though many of the images are used repeatedly, the style of each passage varies dramatically.

There are several sections that do not use punctuation, some that overtly use too much, some that read like short stories and others that are laced with stanzas of poetry. Not only is the prose poem a hybrid form but so too is the text as a whole. Michelle Delville, in her book *The American Prose Poem: Poetic Form and Boundaries of Genre*, reads "the prose poem's discursive and formal hybridity. . . as a clear indication of poetry's capacity to

challenge the power of genre as a gesture of authority and to transgress accepted rules and boundaries” (x). By using the prose poem, Wah is able to hyphenate the genre itself and the similarity of actual recollected memory to the fractured format and use of image fragments in the text. By resisting the traditional biographical structure, Wah transgresses narrative institutions and more accurately represents the formation and recollection of memory (ironically through a relinquishing of accuracy).

The hyphen may be the most important image of hybridity, racial anxiety, and the position of the mixed-race subject in *Diamond Grill*. Several other metaphors hinge on this; the image of the door, the food, and the restaurant itself rely on it to create dichotomies of racial space: “The hyphen is the door” that “swings between the Occident and Orient” (Wah 16). This image creates two distinct spaces of cultural significance: the kitchen as the Orient and Chinese heritage and the diner area as the Occident and white heritage (I say white specifically as the actual details of Swedish culture are omitted and the binary becomes Chinese vs. white in Wah’s work). The hyphen in its physical form on the page as a symbol of both connection and distinction is also valuable. The term “Chinese-White” persists throughout the text not only as the door swinging between racial space but as a mark itself that simultaneously links and separates racial identity. The hyphen implies that there can be an empowering control of the swinging door and that the movement between the Occident and Orient “feels so good” (21) as the narrator controls the movements of the door and takes delight in doing so. However, the door itself “takes quite a beating” and is kicked by “all the waiters and waitresses, including [the] dad” (21). This passage conflates or perhaps offers both sides of the debate: control of the hyphen/door and the mixed-race subject as the door itself that is kicked violently back and

forth. The restaurant becomes a space representative of two distinct spheres of racial significance. The kitchen, occupied by the Chinese workers, becomes a backstage area that is primarily Chinese, where the food is prepared and most of the workers who know little English are separated from the other customers. The narrator as a mixed-race subject symbolically traverses this space, but it is not a sphere of complete stability as the speaker does not know the language and oscillates between the kitchen and diner. In juxtaposition the diner represents the white population and is frequently brought up through anecdotes of Fred Wah Sr. speaking and gambling with white customers.

Another important image of hybridity that Wah plays with poetically is the fractions and percentages describing mixed race individuals:

I'm just a baby, maybe six month (.5%) old. One of my aunts is holding me on her knee. Sitting on the ground in front of us are her two daughters, 50% Scottish. Another aunt, the one who grew up in China with my father, sits on the step with her first two children around her. They are 75% Chinese. There is another little 75% girl cousin, the daughter of another 50% aunt who married a 100% full-blooded Chinaman (full-blooded, from China even). At the back of the black-and-white photograph is my oldest boy cousin; he's 25% Chinese. His mother married a Scot from North Battleford and his sisters married Italians from Trail. So there, spread out on the stoop of a house in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, we have our own little western Canadian multicultural stock exchange. We all grew up together, in Swift Current, Calgary, Trail, Nelson and Vancouver (27% of John A's nation) and only get together now every three years (33%) for a family reunion, to which between 70% and 80% of us show up. Out of fifteen cousins only one (6.6%) married a 100% pure Chinese. (83)

Wah reveals the subtle way in which race is still delineated “through an ambivalent and apparently contradictory process of inclusion *by virtue of othering*” (Ang 139). The fractions become compulsory for identification and as a kind of measure of racial rank that privileges the highest percentage. The ambiguous position of “there” establishes the interracial marriage as a defiant act, a proclamation against the confines of racial purity. The “multicultural stock exchange” is another cheeky play on words that implicate the

genetic exchange of multiracial children as a commodity passed across race. It also draws attention to the Canadian concept of multiculturalism as a government-regulated force of racial dispersal and separation of which the mixed-race person is not immune but nevertheless associated with. This passage in particular, despite its humor, explores the obsessive quality of racial surveillance through a percentile analysis while also sarcastically making light of very serious racial disciplining in which mixed-race is tracked statistically.

Wah's work reflects the difficulty in critical hybridity theory to navigate a category of identity that deconstructs its own defining components. The speaker in *Diamond Grill* embodies the difficulties examined by Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood wherein cultural identity itself becomes simultaneously insubstantial and paradoxically powerful (loc 381). In order to avoid the "political cul-de-sac... the ephemeral and contingent" (loc 746) signifiers of hybrid theory, I seek to use the monster to re-ground hybridity to material experience; that is, if the colorblind, multicultural politics play out racial inequalities through monsters in an attempt to nullify and erase the material realities of existing racial categorization then the monster can conversely be deconstructed to show that very reality. As such, this project is guided by a series of questions:

- 1) Can representations of racial hybridity through monstrosity translate to the experience of mixed-race people? And if so can the analysis of monsters as an allegory for mixed-race effectively transcend colorblind attempts to ignore this material reality?
- 2) How do monster represent the variety of these material experiences? Why is it important to represent strategically essentialized "categories" of monsters that continually reappear from Gothic to contemporary (re)incarnations?

- 3) Can the deconstruction of monstrosity as/and mixed-race reconcile the difficulties of hybridity theory and successfully recognize the arbitrary construction of essentialized categories while maintaining focus on the tangible consequences of this racial simulacrum?

Chapter Breakdown

To facilitate these questions, this thesis is organized diachronically to show how Gothic representation influences contemporary manifestations of monstrosity, how postmodern monsters offer a significant new direction but one beset with obstacles, and how the superhero, rather than take this difficult postmodern space of uncomfortable deconstruction, harkens back to Gothic tendencies while literally masquerading as a celebratory elevation of hybridity that buries “the intrinsically sited, negotiated hybrid” (Modood and Werbner loc 794).

Section one is devoted to Gothic monsters, which Halberstam states, “differ from the monsters that come before the nineteenth century in that the monsters of modernity are characterized by their proximity to humans” (23). The Gothic period is seminal in the formation and proliferation of the monster as a popular figure and symbol of terrifying difference. Use of the monster to embody cultural anxieties is canonized within literature at this time and has been continually revived. I focus my attention on three of the most popular works, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. My intention is to expose the way these monsters can be read as productions of cultural/racial anxieties, especially of the miscegenation and cultural infection by the Other while paralleling the treatment of race at this particular time in history.

The projected fear of the monster aligns with Young's analysis of the discourse of abomination surrounding mixed-race progeny. My examination of these gothic texts reveals the pre-civil rights climate of both the monster as well as those of multi-racial descent and how the mechanisms of discrimination that challenge these two groups overlap in early literature. Key to my analysis is the discussion of the uncanny valley, coined by roboticist Masahiro Mori to describe and track the point at which a human-like appearance moves from empathetic to repulsed, and how it is navigated or manipulated to different ends, typically a malicious abjection of difference in Gothic representations.

Dracula is the easiest text to read as a fear of the East. However, this canonical vampire text unveils an extreme and formative anxiety surrounding infection and specifically the infection and abduction of women, which echoes Young's examination of mixed-race relations as a fulcrum to colonial sexual politics. Blood, the fluid demarcating genealogy and origin, is now the site of corruption and transformation.

Despite the horror of the vampire, *Dracula* is able to pass and function, not only physically but also economically, in British society. This stands in stark contrast to the creation in *Frankenstein* and is an essential point of analysis in examining the privileges of passing as well as the mechanisms that allow it. Frankenstein's creation is primarily outcast due to his appearance and his inability to pass despite his intelligence, introspection, and "humanity."

Frankenstein is also of great importance for the early manifestation of the cyborg and the lasting anxieties surrounding science, eugenics, and the limits of human creation. The creation of life in the novel is cautioned against and Frankenstein's moral crisis in producing a "mate" reveals a projection of colonial fears: the Other rising up in social

upheaval and inversion of racial hierarchies. Although the creature is famously represented sympathetically, the overall reality for the creature is constant tragedy due to its heterogeneous appearance, at best echoing similar sentiments of the tragic mulatto.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde, although cautionary, contains an explicit desire for alterity. Again, science is implicated as a slippery slope of societal degradation but there is also indication that monstrosity is within and not necessarily an infection like in *Dracula*. The internal rather than external conflict that cannot mediate two divergent personalities is useful in describing double consciousness and obsessive dissections and partitioning of race that are a ubiquitous multiracial experience. Hyde himself is the subject of analysis as his appearance, much like *Dracula* and the creature, signals his inner corruption upon first sight.

Section two moves into what I distinguish as the postmodern monster. This section focuses attention on two varieties of monster, the android and the alien. The postmodern aspects of the monsters in question are mainly indeterminacy as categories of monster and human are called into question. As with the first section, I argue that there are distinct differences in the treatment and representation of the monster that parallel civil rights movements. Whereas the Gothic monsters focused on overt fear and expulsion, the postmodern monster expresses an internal fear of difference and undeniable similarity that disrupts the strong Gothic binaries of human and non-human. The lack of uncanny appearance in the flawless passing of the android reveals how difference is still policed despite a lack of evidence. Alternatively, extreme uncanniness in the alien-human hybrid is deliberately harnessed and visually manipulated in order to attract humans, an inversion of the Gothic exploitation of the uncanny valley.

Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* takes Frankenstein's fear of being replaced by our own creations to its extreme. The human-produced construct complicates the very concept of difference by being virtually undetectable. This perfected ability to pass throws category into disarray and represents the realization of colorblind society that can no longer police color. Dick's novel complicates difference and exposes its arbitrary construction but also the very real consequences of being Othered. The preoccupation with reality and empathy is applicable to mixed-race as it highlights Young's genealogy of hybridity and how the obsession with what was never real in the first place becomes the arbitrary category upon which discrimination is justified.

I use Dick's conception of the android to explore racial passing and its relation to Masahiro Mori's Uncanny Valley, specifically the obsessive way in which mixed-race is policed and separated in to its "parts" as described by Wah. A complete inversion of this obsession with "purity" and constituent groups, is represented in Octavia Butler's *Imago*, which instead presents hybridity as the ultimate goal of an alien race. The last book in the *Xenogenesis Trilogy* (alternatively titled *Lilith's Brood*), *Imago* does not only invert purity and hybridity but the entire history of colonialism and eugenics in which the alien Other saves the human race through hybridization of genes, race, gender, and the earth itself. The hybrid is presented as a saviour that immortalizes the human race through genetic incorporation rather than purity, separation, and extinction.

However, although the aliens are benevolent, *Imago* complicates the celebration of difference by subsuming difference within hybridism. The extreme reverence toward hybridity, much like the commercial marketing of mixed-race and multiculturalism, erases difference entirely in an extension of the cultural melting pot.

Section three deals with the monster's reconfiguration into the superhero and how hybridity is made desirable. This, again, completes Young's exploration of hybridity from negative to positive but ultimately still colonial. The hero and villain are unpacked as legitimate and illegitimate articulations of hybridity. This is done specifically through the analysis of the costume as an explicit marker of difference that "solves the problem" of the anxiety of passing. By comparing the use of the costume by the superhuman and that of drag, I relate the way that multicultural exploitation of mixed-race is commercialized through colonial constructions of race and desirable/palatable forms of racial hybridity.

Each text, with the exception of *Imago*, revolves around representations of white masculinity, the anxieties of white masculinity, and the monstrous projections of white masculinity as the producer of monsters and/or the monster itself. Although the Gothic hybrids attempt to present abject formations of difference, Dracula, Frankenstein's creation, and Hyde are all white men (or composed of white bodies). Dick's androids, and entire universe, seem to be exclusively populated by white people as Deckard hunts and polices white hybrids while trying to control his own desires to control hybrid femininity. Whiteness is ubiquitous within the superhero genre, especially the current run of popular Marvel and DC films, as the west is routinely saved by attractive white men clad in red, white, and blue. The pervasiveness of white masculinity as a semiotic tool to work through anxieties of hybridity erases or defers from the reality of racial tensions and the experience of racism. It is precisely because of this tendency that is valuable to extract the racial anxieties from a genre that has, and continues to, profits from racial hybridity and racial politics while simultaneously erasing it. When representation is limited and hybridity becomes cornered by a market that commodifies difference while denying and removing

that very difference, it becomes of utmost importance to examine the ways in which the hybridity is tacitly presented as unloaded, desirable, and oddly coherent. I seek to expose this overwhelmingly white gallery of monsters as allegorical of racial hybrids.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationship between monstrosity and mixed-race, as it was and as it is, in order to expose the way in which hybridity itself is used to reify and reinforce harmful, essentialized categories of race. In doing so, it is my hope to reveal the complex representations of monstrosity and mixed-race, the collisions and parallels of these two groups, the common way they are exploited and utilized, and ultimately the way in which the same mechanisms of identification have persisted despite a shift in reception.

Chapter One:

Hybridity Unsettled: Gothic Monstrosity and the Uncanny Valley

The Gothic period of monstrosity was influential in unifying the horror genre and the monstrous body. The Gothic monster provides a relatively simple scapegoat to attach the undesirable, be it behavioural or cultural; Ed Cameron states that “the monster portrayed in Gothic fiction solidifies social antagonism into an external creature, into that which does not fit harmoniously within nineteenth-century British society” (20). Dracula, Frankenstein’s creation, and Mr. Hyde, naturalize the horrific elements of monstrosity and affix it to an othered body. The body is concomitantly defamiliarized, dehumanized, and ascribed with malevolence that becomes bound in physical difference such as fangs, fur, and any deformation that can be abjectified from what is typically granted as the human body proper.

I focus on the Gothic period of monstrosity to diachronically track the treatment of mixed-race prior to more contemporary views on civil rights. Teresa Derrickson views gothic monstrosity as implicitly racial and “by reading the Gothic monster as a social construct that voices anxiety over racial infiltration and racial ‘decline,’ we are able to unveil the racist ideologies that undergird the systems of power operating in the work” (57). Although the gothic period does not represent the entirety of pre-civil rights, draconian views on the race or monstrosity, it is a useful period to focus on due to its profound impact on monstrosity that is still seen today. As Cohen states in his second thesis, “no monster tastes of death but once” (loc199); specifically those from the Gothic period, are continually revived to navigate new ideological spaces and times.

The monstrous, like race, is coded as natural. It is coded and defined as a metonymic part of a larger collection of signifiers such as deformity, malevolence, violence, and inescapable

difference that was largely consolidated during the Gothic period. Every monster becomes a part of a larger monstrous history. The monster is never an autonomous individual but always prioritized as a representative or stereotype of what *is* and what has been monstrous. The current iterations of the vampire today are always in relation to popular forms, most notably Dracula. Although the gothic monsters were not the first of their kind, or the last, they remain relevant through their early 20th century revival on the silver screen and the compounding, and often conflicting, revisions that take place between Gothic, early cinematic, and current versions of these monsters. Derrickson reads the Gothic treatment of race and monstrosity as one in an analysis of Louisa May Alcott's *Taming of a Tartar* where, like "the fearful doubling of Stevenson's Jekyll and Hyde, Alcott's Russian prince plays host to a negative, animalistic identity that erupts intermittently, exposing the feral blood of his ancestry and thus giving reason for his own truculence" (49). Mixed-race and monstrosity have largely been exploited as abominable products of some breach of propriety, some transgression against what is sacred, metaphysically or culturally; the trespass is manifold as Dracula simultaneously existed as a demonic presence in opposition to Western Christianity as well as an Eastern European economic and sexual intrusion. Frankenstein's creation is a symbolic "abomination" against nature and God, as well as a cautionary tale that frames scientific inquiry as dangerous. Hyde represents similar anxieties surrounding science that are further complicated by a chemical that extracts what is already within, internalizing the monstrous body by suggesting monstrosity exists within all humans.

The Uncanny Hybrid

Gothic representation of monstrosity is largely constructed in opposition to humanity, which reflects similar naturalized difference ascribed to non-white races that justify segregations

and racial hierarchy. To simply say that the treatment of monstrosity diachronically mirrors the representation of race may be true but falls short of addressing the familiar aspects within the Gothic monster, the hybridous characteristics, that “affirm the otherness with ourselves, acknowledging that as subjects we are heterogeneous and multiple in our affiliations and desires” (Young 372). The hybrid becomes the abject horror that must be expunged and distanced in order to stabilize the very categories that give credence to claims of superiority and inferiority. As such, it is equally important to point out the ways that the monster unsettles boundary through its *familiarity* as well as difference. Just as Masahiro Mori’s Uncanny valley holds that the intermediary space of ‘almost’ human but perceptibly inhuman inspires the greatest revulsion, so too does the monster.

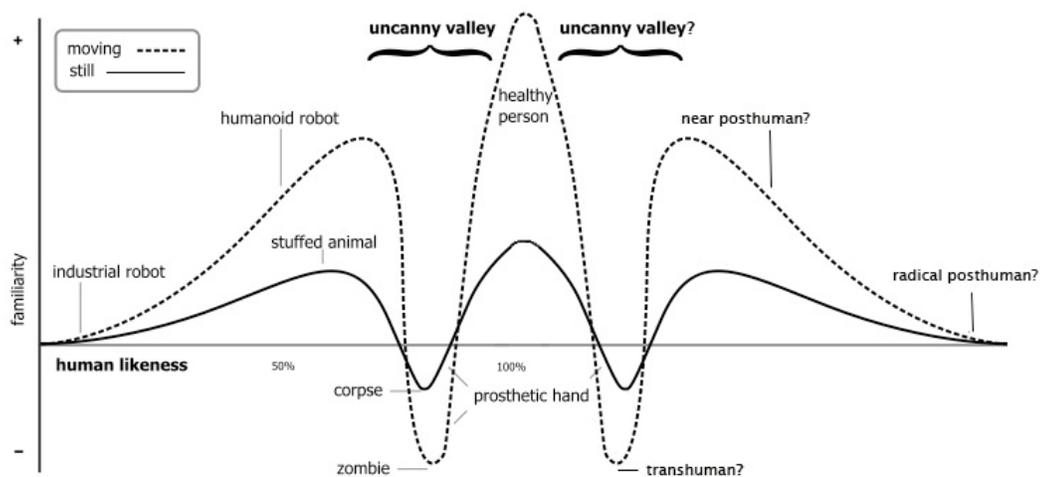


Figure 2.1. Extension of Masahiro Mori’s Uncanny Valley from Jamais Cascio. “The Second Uncanny Valley.” http://openthefuture.com/2007/10/the_second_uncanny_valley.html. 27 Oct. 2007; Web; 18 Jan. 2016.

Futurist Jamais Cascio extends the uncanny valley to account for the inclusion of transhuman and posthuman subjects. This extension offers a way to plot the importance of visibility and monstrosity. Ed Cameron notes the undertone of desire in the uncanny as “the Gothic has always used alien figures that are obscure yet, somehow, intimate in order to produce its sublime

effects. This baffling yet intimate nature of the uncanny sublime in Gothic fiction produces a seductive craving in both characters and critics alike to tame its radical uncertainty with rational understanding” (19). The uncanny nature of the Gothic monster confirms the presence of hybridity as well as the conflicting alienation and desire that underscore the representation of monstrosity in the Gothic genre and by extension, the current revival of Gothic monsters today.

The uncanny valley remains relevant in terms of plotting human likeness and positive or negative familiarity. Dracula, Frankenstein, and Hyde each possess varying degrees of visible difference that places them along or within the uncanny valley, the negative chasm of human familiarity. Dracula and Frankenstein’s positions are easy to plot near ‘corpse’ and ‘zombie’ as they are undead and reanimated respectively. Gothic literature represents each monster as visibly uncanny but overwhelmingly positions them as radically inhuman through the accretion of negative characteristics that are deferred to an inhuman, and ultimately evil, category. The uncanny description of the Gothic monsters in question are an indication of hybridity rather than complete otherness despite the Gothic attempt to create as much distance between humanity and monstrosity as possible. In order for the monster to be uncanny, it must possess human likeness.

The uncanny valley may also clarify similar, diachronic attraction and repulsion in the visibility politics of race and racial hybridity. In a pre-civil rights context, the chart remains relatively unchanged; human likeness can be relabeled ‘whiteness’ and the uncanny valley signifies a level of visible, racial hybridity that produces anxieties of miscegenation, eventually leveling to indicate a subject who is no longer white and easily distanced from the category. A contemporary model may come from slightly more nuanced perspective of neoliberal whiteness

that sees what was once a negative and unsettling uncanny valley as a celebratory space of multicultural achievement that privileges the most ambiguous looking racial assemblage as being uncannily attractive. A true post-racial configuration of the Uncanny valley would be nothing at all. There would be an absence of any perceivable difference on which to plot if colorblind politics of race were truly tenable. That is, hybridity itself can only be valued or devalued if the categories that it is constructed through are distinct and maintained. In my final chapter on superhumans, the uncanny valley is bypassed entirely by manipulating the visibility towards the peaks on either side of the uncanny valley.

Gothic monstrosity fixates on uncanny visibility that overwhelmingly trumps all other means of identification. Dracula, Frankenstein's creation, and Hyde are all described as uncanny in appearance, and, although the three are of varying degrees of conspicuous semblance, each are identified as unsettling, foreshadowing or confirming the horrific quality of an uncanny appearance. Dracula and Hyde in particular seem to corroborate the merit of making judgments based on the initial feelings of unease caused by visual markers of difference. The violence committed by Dracula and Hyde only affirms the basis of discrimination based on appearance, confirming what Halberstam recognizes as pleasure "possible only by fixing horror elsewhere, in an obviously and literally foreign body, and then articulating the need to expel the foreign body" (13). This affirmation of monstrous appearance equating to monstrous behavior is a sublimation of the same pre-civil rights attitude that deviation from normal, white, appearance *should* be taken as a legitimate marker of internal evil.

Frankenstein's creation, *due to* his sympathetic appeal, proves that the Gothic representation of monstrosity relies on visibility and the uncanny as an immutable indication of evil despite all evidence of the contrary. Although the creation's sensitivity, literacy, and desire

for companionship aligns with humanity on a psychological level, his humanity is summarily denied by virtue of his appearance. Through the novel, the monster is marginalized due to his inability to visually pass as human:

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 color as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion and straight black lips. (Shelley 57)

Even his most attractive human components are diminished beneath the weight given to his physical “disfigurement”. The monster is thus abandoned by his creator and isolated due to his appearance. Like the multiracial subject, increased visibility marginalizes the individual based on perceivable difference. This relegation ignores hybridity and subsumes simultaneity by forcing the amalgamated identity into a singular one; one aspect of monstrosity makes the monster just as one drop of black blood made even passable mixed-racial people black.

The monstrous label that disenfranchises Frankenstein’s creation is one that is applied by others and also policed by the creature himself. Much like Fred Wah makes the distinction that he is not a “Chink” until he is called one (98), or Simone De Beauvoir famously states that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (267), Frankenstein’s creation is painfully aware of his position as monstrous. The creature introspectively damns his own figure, agonizing why he was formed a “monster so hideous that even [Frankenstein] turned from [him] in disgust” (Shelley 130). The creature’s awareness and constant self-surveillance of his own “monstrous” appearance reveal that the internalization of monstrosity preceded the vengeful behaviours that would allegedly justify the connection between his appearance and internal “evil.” The creation’s marked innocence and a desire for companionship is contrasted to his declaration of “war against the species, and more than all, against him who had formed [the creation] and sent

[him] forth to this insupportable misery” (136). Although this anger can be focused upon as an indication of inhuman monstrosity, it is in fact extremely human, as the creature consistently is, and to dissociate his anger as monstrous betrays the very human capacity for hatred and anger which Frankenstein himself reflects in their antagonistic relationship.

Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* makes use of the quintessential “evil” monster, imbuing his creation with a malevolence that reinforces hybridity as sinister and other. The original vampire is useful in exploring the Victorian reception of the hybrid and also framing the monster as a hyperbolic representation of the mixed-race individual. Unlike Frankenstein’s monster, Count Dracula’s hybridity is only semi-visible. Dracula’s appearance is almost completely human, imbuing him with a transgressive body that hides difference under familiarity. Dracula’s extraordinary ability that establishes the vampire as a horrific creature is this subversive appearance that conceals its inhumanity. Passing as human grants the vampire access to human life, generating intense paranoia that exponentially increases due to its predatory relationship with people. Dracula embodies components of the human and animal often oscillating between the two through transformation or in action. Dracula’s appearance, though human enough to assimilate, is not perfectly human. Jonathan Harker, although not expecting a vampire, notes several peculiarities in the Count’s appearance:

His face was a strong --a very strong-- aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor. (Stoker 25)

Harker's description captures Dracula's hybrid appearance as passable but with several hints to the non-human characteristics. Generally, the moustache, dress and facial structure depict a regular middle-aged man; however, the strange teeth, pointed ears and extreme pallor hint at something beyond human. This particular gradient of visibility is certainly tracked within the uncanny valley; Dracula would fit well at or just past the pit of negative emotional response. This particular formulation of the hybrid invokes unease through its embodiment of human and inhuman traits. Although he is able to pass as human, he is still met with apprehension by the human populace who are semi-cognizant of the inhuman aspects of the Count's appearance. This, near instinctual, perception of difference generates the initial fear later justified by the vampire's thirst for human blood.

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* internalizes monstrosity and complicates the physical distance developed through the other Gothic monsters. However, despite Jekyll and Hyde's simultaneous existence in one body, it is through bifurcation that Hyde is made monstrous. Although the chemical distillation of "good" and "evil" underscore the *human* capacity for attributes deemed human *and* inhuman, Hyde's uncanny appearance and his alignment with naturalized "evil" categorizes hybridity as other and ultimately evil. Whereas *Frankenstein* emphasizes human ability to create monstrosity/otherness, and *Dracula* is concerned with being infected *by* the monster/other, the horror of Jekyll and Hyde is the implication that we *are* the Other as well. All three Gothic novels are preoccupied about the Other but are mediated through a hybrid, which is supported by the uncanniness of each respective monster. The fact that the hybrid is constantly pushed as irrevocably other in Gothic novels mirrors the same treatment of the racial hybrid that, Young notes in *Colonial Desire*, are

conveniently configured and reconfigured to suit the intentions of colonial powers. Racial hybridity and monstrous hybridity is reduced to abject otherness.

Unlike Frankenstein's creation, who is immediately and inescapably conspicuous, or Dracula, whom Harker notes the aberrant features of his fangs and ears upon their first interaction, Hyde does not possess any obvious physical differences. In fact, Hyde is constantly referenced in uncanny terms without any obvious anchors making him the uncanniest of all three Gothic monsters.

He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment. (Stevenson 8)

Although Hyde is not physically deformed, his alleged deformity is internal but expressed externally as an abnormal sensation that signal his existence as evil. Stevenson uses the uncanny to diminish the familiarity of Hyde's appearance in order to imbue "normal humans" with an innate ability to sense the monstrous, despite a lack of physical appearance. Monstrous visibility is maintained through the deliberate use of "deformity" to describe a character that possesses no physical difference. The oxymoron of "unexpressed deformity" (26) encapsulates the Gothic tendency, perhaps imperative, to equate visible difference with internal difference and vice versa. In this way monstrous difference is maintained by associating all and any difference with evil and inhumanity. Horrific monstrosity is inescapable, regardless of appearance or intention as proved by Frankenstein's creation who is psychologically human but made monstrous through appearance and Hyde who is physically human but made monstrous through his psychology. The monster in all cases is ontologically monstrous, which is made manifest by the experience of the uncanny. Gothic bifurcated reduction of monstrosity reflects

“a ‘lenticular logic’ of race that covertly represses complex historical connections to produce whiteness and blackness as mutually exclusive categories” (Hudson 666). Whether in celebration or abjection, the racial hybrid can be exploited to reify a disparate construction of race by manipulating the fascination of the uncanny appearance. Perhaps the uncanny valley functions through an implicit acceptance of immutable categorization and distinction; current, colorblind or multicultural celebrations of hybridity would represent a sort of sublimation that apologetically reconfigures colonial constructions of race as positive but problematically leaving them largely intact and unquestioned. Dale Hudson’s analysis of the contemporary use of Gothic monsters in the television series *True Blood*, shows the conflation of monstrosity and race in a problematic interplay of speciesism to represent racism without race. Normalizing the Gothic monster as a thinly veiled allegory for race shows how hybridity can be both romanticized and demonized while both routes implicitly reinstate the colonial roots that insist upon immutable categorical differences.

(M)alignment: Science and Superstition

Unlike contemporary versions of the vampire, android, and chemically altered monster that often attempt to disengage with the tradition of naturalized evil, the Gothic representation of monstrosity seeks to further consolidate difference as dangerous and malevolent; the monster’s alterity is reinforced on a metaphysical and supernatural basis that tethers inherent evil to uncanny appearance in a circular manner in which the monster is “vilified because of the skin they wear -- and given the skin they wear because they are to be vilified” (Derrickson 47). The uncanniness of monstrosity is supplemented with religious justification for the fearful reception to the monster as well as subsequent alienation and policing of the monstrous body. Frankenstein’s creation is doomed for his unwitting production that transgressed the life-

creating realm of God. Dracula's position as undead, combined with his weakness to the cross itself indicates his natural opposition to what is considered holy. Hyde, much like Frankenstein's android, also represents a scientific transgression against a natural order, resulting in the creation of Hyde, the alleged embodiment of all collective evil within Jekyll. All three characters are further distanced from humanity by a lexical reinforcement of their position as demons, and animals. The use of "demon" implicitly places the monstrous in opposition to the sacred and divine while maintaining the overarching hierarchy corroborated by Judeo-Christian values. By identifying the monster as an animal rather than a human relies on anthropocentrism or human exceptionalism to maintain that humans "alone occupy the central position of all life on Earth, thereby allowing the complete ownership, dominance, and exploitation of all other life forms contained therein" (Ruzek 4). Just as women are dehumanized through the word "bitch" and those of mixed-race through the word "mongrel" or "mutt", the monster is also relegated to a lower position of life than humans. The conflation of the monster with animals or demons supplements fantasy with even more distance from humanity. This semantics are used, and still used, to paradoxically examine issues of race without representing race in a literal sense. Dale Hudson discusses the monstrous utility of colorblindness in *True Blood*, a contemporary television series that features numerous monsters in the American South, stating that a white monster in the series "risks none of the traditional Southern social stigmas for 'mixed race' company and romance. Speciesism nonetheless revisits debates inflected with fears over "mixed" blood, illusions about "pure" bloodlines, and the return of asymmetrical power relations that facilitate exploitation" (664). The Gothic monster is reconfigured for contemporary media in order to sensationalize issues of race and hybridity without acknowledging historic and lived reality. Current ethical adjustments to reproduce monstrosity

as a more neutral or even positive manifestation of difference are undercut by the persistent use of predominantly white casts to “metaphorically” play out issues of racial politics. This substitution of race for monstrosity enacts the same rhetorical function as the Gothic monster, or any monster, in navigating cultural anxieties. The problematic exploitation of hybridity is revealed in the replacement of racial experience with alternative species that have been and still are dehumanized and distanced from reality. The Gothic consolidation of the monsters’ position as categorically evil is not shed through a contemporary revision but rather a persistent attribute that is complicit with the colonial rhetoric of natural division and irrevocable difference. In the same way that Young exposes the lingering colonial attitudes within racial hybridity, the reuse of Gothic monsters does not absolve the Gothic influences that continue to influence the category of human and non-human.

In *Frankenstein*, the creation’s inhumanity is emphasized in order to distance humanity from the unsettling hybridity of the creation’s status as undead, a liminal position between life and death as well as its physical assemblage of parts from different bodies. Although films as early as 1910 have visually represented the creation’s body as monstrous by emphasizing inhuman characteristics such as the now ubiquitous neck bolts and stitch marks, these are deliberately used to draw attention *away* from the hybridous existence that is uncanny due to the simultaneous difference and familiarity; this obfuscation of the human aspect of Frankenstein’s creation is further consolidated by the creation’s diminished intellect and simple dialogue that signal a substantial divergence from the obvious intelligence and communicative ability in Shelley’s novel.

Frankenstein’s experiment frames the monster as a marginalized body, ‘afflicted’ by an abnormal appearance through a misuse of science and technology. It is important to draw

attention to the artificial aspect of the monster. Frankenstein's creation is one of the first examples of the cyborg. Its creation through science as well as its necromantic components expound on a technological aspect of its monstrous hybridity. As a confluent body of artificial and organic, the monster's body represents familiar dichotomies associated with the cyborg. *Frankenstein's* implication of the cybernetic monster illuminates the differences between "human/machine and the dichotomy engendered by its link to notions of the mind/body, good/evil, fear/fascination" (Grenville 47). However, unlike the cyborg, Frankenstein's monster possesses no ability to pass as human. This distinction is applicable to those of mixed-race who also embody different levels of visibility; those who are capable may be able to pass between groups but those who are too easily categorized by appearance are forced to adhere to a single racial group. Upon realizing that it cannot assimilate, the monster begins to resist violently and eventually resigns to the lonely existence as the only hybrid. The desire to find companionship in a similar creation implies that the monster intends to develop a new, distinctly monstrous, identity, as integration is impossible.

As Young has highlighted, much of the revision of hybridity has grappled with fear of miscegenation and the sexual desire of the other. As Frankenstein builds his creation a mate, one that Huet also identifies as indicative of a patriarchal desire to remove women from reproduction, he is plagued with fear that he will be responsible for the proliferation of a "race of devils...who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror" (Shelley 170). Fear of a powerful transhuman population is linked to race, doubly aligning the creation as inhuman and race as a series of disparate categories. In the ultimate metaphor of colonial, white-male power, Frankenstein controls reproductive power in order to prevent the exact colonial conditions he enforces: segregation and systemic oppression under

the authority of an allegedly superior race. Frankenstein's creation reflects the same anxieties surrounding racial hybridity that reduces mixed-race existence to the infection of 'pure' blood, signaling the decline of western society. The representation of the creation as a nameless assemblage of bodies, doomed to exist in exile, denies him any humanity despite its desires to participate in society, its human psychology, and its human capacity for both compassion and rage. The Gothic preoccupation and enforcement of monstrosity stabilizes humanity as a portrait of white, western decorum and exploits monstrosity to dilute hybridity into abject, purified difference. The emphasis on the creation's position as a savage animal, a different species, and a daemon reinforce the same rhetoric used to justify systemic racism through dehumanization and anthropocentric hierarchy that holds white, western men as the paragon of humanity. The Gothic monster deliberately uses the uncanniness of hybridity in combination with deliberate appeals to biological and divine taxonomy in order to naturalize and reaffirm the pecking order of self and other. Monstrosity and mixed-race are reduced to an untenable lineage that has no roots, a bloodline extracted from any definitive origin but highly contagious, desirable, and terrifying.

Blood becomes a central indication of hybridity through its significant genetic implication, as the source of the vampire's sustenance, and the thinly veiled venereal transmission and site of infection. Dracula's dependence on human blood reveals an intrinsic connection between the human and vampire, not only as a parasitic food source but also as an extended metaphor for the hybrid's connection to its components. The one-drop rule implicates blood as a totalizing indicator of race. One drop, one ancestral tie categorizes the hybrid as a single piece of its identity. The vampire's consumption of that indicator reverses the vulnerability of blood to the "pure", leaving the victim "afflicted" with the same hybridity. The

hematological infection shatters lineage and physically disrupts human purity. Blood as a source of nourishment draws attention to the balance of animal and human attributes within the vampire. The animal component is evident in Dracula's predatory fangs, dominion over beasts, and ability to take the form of various animals. The human component is balanced through the humanoid shape and the biological tether of human blood as a nutriment exposes humans as an inextricable part of the vampire. Bethesda's videogame *Elder Scrolls* series, make this connection explicit in the game's development of vampirism, allowing the player to become accidentally or intentionally infected and become a vampire her/himself. The longer a vampire goes without feeding on human blood the more she/he would begin to appear more beast like and conspicuous. The vampire also becomes more powerful, gaining increased strength and abilities while becoming less subversive in appearance. In order to pass as a human within city walls and to draw less attention, the player must feed regularly to manage their visibility as a monster. Although this particular effect is inconclusive in Stoker's novel, it seems as though drinking human blood takes assimilation in a different direction by forcing humans to become the hybrid. Although drinking blood connects vampire and human together as predator and prey, the symbolic aspect of blood as a genetic determiner of race denotes consumption as both a discursive act of resistance to ideals of purity as well as a necessity that forever perpetuates the dichotomy of human and hybrid. Dracula requires "pure" human blood in order to survive which insists a balance that positions humans as a biologically fundamental part of the vampire.

It is the predatory relationship with humans that also reveals the perception of the hybrid. Dracula is written as an irredeemable creature that threatens the purity of humanity. The use of religious artifacts as repellants and weapons imply that the vampire is an affront to the natural order set down by god. Stoker utilizes a higher power to ensure the dichotomies of purity

and impurity, natural and abomination, and good and evil, remain strong under an unquestionable authority. The hybrid is represented as an infectious and immoral evil that should be feared above even dangerous beasts. The hybrid's ability to pass is also treated with disdain as it allows the monster to keep its difference clandestine and infiltrate purity undetected. This surreptitious social camouflage threatens to overthrow the majority, making the hybrid even more threatening than other, more stable, minorities.

Although the Victorian manifestations of a fear and loathing of difference are very apparent, *Dracula* still provides useful, positive, aspects of hybridity. Although utilized to prey on women, the ability to pass as human and assimilate is a liberating force that disrupts typical classifications based on visibility. By subverting visual markers of racial categorization, the one-drop rule is complicated through the lack of conspicuous indications of difference. One-drop of blood allegedly and indelibly marked an individual as different, but the vampire is capable of occupying the same social space as those who enforce and control these divisions. *Dracula* also portrays a hybrid that is actively creating its own amalgamated identity and the ambitious recruitment (or more accurately: the production) of other hybrid individuals. The professor outlines this development of the schizophrenic and utterly new identity very well by describing the Count's quick growth:

In some faculties of mind he has been, and is, only a child; but he is growing, and some things that were childish at first are now of man's stature. He is experimenting, and doing it well; and if it had not been that we have crossed his path he would be yet -- he may be yet if we fail -- the father or furtherer of a new order of beings, whose road must lead through Death, not Life. (322)

This aggressive pursuit of a distinct hybrid identity parallels the monster's use of Maria Root's New Identity Model in which the mixed-race subject sought to develop a multiracial category in

and of itself. The transgressive monster successfully inhabits the liminal space between categories, stubbornly resisting oppression through an aggressive synthesis of a unique identity.

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* details the psychological division of the hybrid by creating divergent personalities in one body. On the one hand, the oscillation between two aspects of one individual could be read as indicative of the inner conflicts of the multiracial individual. The monstrous, in Stevenson's novella, is the establishment of a physical and psychological binary that pits two aspects of one person in conflict with each other. Since both Jekyll and Hyde are visibly passable (Hyde marked as uncanny but ultimately human) the monstrous aspect, the measure of hybridity, is also found within the transformation itself. By literally compartmentalizing the individual, Jekyll and Hyde become a metaphor of the multiracial struggle for identity among conflicting categories of race. The struggle for control of one body by multiple constituents assumes that normalcy is a singular whole. Stevenson's disruption of the whole denotes a danger in plurality. The existence of multiple identities within one body becomes volatile, denying the possibility of a unified identity that negotiates each component and favoring a model in which each aspect is inherently in conflict with the other. For Jekyll and Hyde only one will eventually rule the body.

Conversely, this may be read as confirmation that every human is a hybrid, containing multiple aspects that exist harmoniously as a unified identity. This oscillation between identities also imbues the hybrid with transgressive powers that allow it to switch between two separate identities much like the multiracial individual may be able to pass back and forth through her/his racial components. In this way, the monstrous transformation is a liberating and powerful ability that allows the hybrid to subvert boundaries and use liminal social space in order to assimilate within both groups. However, although transformation may amplify the ability to

pass, it does not mitigate the possible conflict between multiple components nor does it account for the physical transformation that is deliberately represented as *the* terrifying product of the formula. Even if Hyde were described with less attention to his apparent uncanniness, revivals of Jekyll and Hyde over time have produced an increasingly bombastic and grotesque form. Although Jekyll's hybridization is, on one hand, liberating, it is also creates a fragile disjunction that endangers the whole and still signals a dichotomy of self and other, whether internal or external, that portrays otherness as an atypical embodiment of western morality.

It is only through a chemical intrusion that equilibrium is disturbed and the doctor is split in two. The hybrid is thus exposed, or perhaps created, by accident. Like *Frankenstein*, Stevenson's novella becomes a cautionary tale that warns of the dangerous consequences of science; the hybrid becomes a symbol of this scientific mishap. The monster is imbued with negative connotations of miscegenation, impurity, and dangerous artificiality. Like the vampire, the transforming monster becomes an affront to a presumed "natural" order. However, unlike Frankenstein's creation who is viewed as a misguided attempt at scientific ingenuity, Jekyll and Hyde's transformations are not intentional. The hybrid is created by accident, an unfortunate byproduct of a botched experiment; as such, the monster, hybrid, and mixed-race individual are presented as a failure to properly segregate what Dr. Jekyll views as discordant categories. The hybrid as a mishap implies that plurality is an error, or at least undesirable, one that results in a violent confrontation between allegedly disparate dichotomies. Hyde's victory over Jekyll as the overwhelming consciousness insinuates the triumph by the "evil" component. Although there is some truth to the tale that the hybrid will likely struggle against conflicting parts of itself, it also portrays a man who, for a moment, embraces difference and is rewarded, "exulting in [the] new sensations" (Stevenson 63). In the first, successful, trial of the elixir, Jekyll is able to accept his

monstrous new form in a way that indicates completeness that is only attained through dialogue with multiple components:

And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome. This, too, was myself. It seemed natural and human. In my eyes it bore a livelier image of the spirit, it seemed more express and single than the imperfect and divine countenance I had been hitherto accustomed to call mine. And in so far I was doubtless right. (64)

It is through the relationship with a divided formulation of self that Jekyll is able to configure a more coherent identity. Jekyll and Hyde's shared body exemplifies Iris Marion Young's argument that "the habitual and unconscious fears and aversions that continue to define some groups as despised and ugly bodies modulate with anxieties over loss of identity" (372). This epiphany compels the multiracial individual to formulate a cohesive, hybrid, identity through the mediation of her or his racial components as opposed to the ignorance of one or the other. However, Hyde is consistently referred to as ape-like, deformed, and is even described as having the face of "Satan's signature" (Stevenson 16). Once again, the Gothic monster is painstakingly described in a way that disallows any doubt of internal evil that is expressed externally; this fiendish expression taken against Jekyll's description of his own pre-transformative "divine countenance" signals another tool to exploit the uncanny while diluting the curious, potentially desirable, aspects of the hybrid in order to secure hybridity as antithetical to divinity and goodness. Interestingly, Jekyll determines it was an impurity in the chemical formula that granted him his first successful experiences of hybridity (Stevenson 77). His momentary balance was a direct result of hybridity within the concoction itself. This final irony redeems the accidental nature of the hybrid, reframing mishap as miraculous as well as disastrous. Although Jekyll and Hyde contaminate the binary of race by privileging one as good

and the other evil, the mixed-race/hybrid individual is still present in the manifold identities and the subversive oscillations between them.

The Gothic representations of monstrosity harness hybridity in service of perpetuating and stabilizing notions of purity, both culturally and racially. The importance of the Gothic monster is the furtive way that monstrosity is reduced to pure, abject difference. The reconstruction and lingering effects of these monsters often attempt to reestablish the Gothic monster as a force of good without acknowledging the implicit hybridity that was obfuscated by the moral infusion of the uncanny appearance. Just as Hudson articulates in the analysis of *True Blood*, the Gothic roots of monstrosity can still impede the recognition of hybridity and the common aspects shared over the lexicon of humanity, both positive *and* negative. In the same way, mixed-race is also consumed through implicit divisions of race that depend on the notion that race is immutable and distinct. This essentially fragmented view of hybridity reinforces the notion Richard Brock calls ‘raciocultural’ “that views culture as innate and ‘biological’ and biology as ‘cultural’” (5). This conflation of culture and biology is especially significant in the anxieties around cultural infection that manifest as biological infections the vampire, the transhuman threat of Frankenstein’s creation, the possible presence of a Hyde-like figure within the British citizen, and of course the eugenic/cultural concern with racial miscegenation. These cornerstones of Gothic monstrosity persevere in spite of current advances in biological and cultural knowledge. Brock sees this remediation as “supposedly recalcitrant, irrational aspects of ‘culture’ themselves begin to be imagined as infectious, with the capacity to violate, to contaminate, and even to inscribe themselves retrovirally on the DNA of the ‘rational’ (i.e. white, Western) body” (5). Although most obvious in current iterations of zombie narratives, the Gothic monster perpetuates this anxiety that paradoxically seeks to establish Otherness as a

distinct species but maintains the possibility of sexual and biological infection that continually threatens the very boundary it constructs.

Chapter Two:

Distinctly Ambivalent: Category Crisis and the Postmodern Monster

Where the Gothic monster was instrumental in popularizing monstrosity as a symbol of the dangerous Other, a category that still resonates today, the Postmodern monsters are considerably more ambiguous. Although the postmodern epoch is notoriously difficult to categorize, characterized by revision, parody, and indeterminacy, the postmodern monster stands in contrast to the Gothic by complicating the category of monstrosity. Unlike the Gothic monster who is naturally and divinely antithetical to humanity, the postmodern monster humanizes the monster to the point where humanity is no longer a coherent category of identification. In order to reestablish humanity's dominance over the android, the uncanny must be arbitrarily revised to provide distinctions that are revealed as increasingly impotent over the course of the narrative. Octavia Butler's aliens, unlike the Gothic monster, are in complete control of the planet but also the narrative itself in an inversion of power that suddenly privileges the monster. Unlike the android, the aliens represent such difference that they deliberately harness the uncanny valley in order to attract humanity.

Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and Octavia Butler's *Imago* feature monsters that embody contemporary anxieties surrounding the rapid sophistication of technology and the extraterrestrial unknown. Unlike the Gothic insertion of the Western Christianity that claimed absolute metaphysical superiority over the monster, postmodern monstrosity focuses on the horror of material possibilities and also human production of its own monsters. The postmodern texts by Dick and Butler do more than synthesize monsters appropriate to current cultural conditions; they implicate

human culpability for systemic oppression while simultaneously disturbing the distinction between monstrosity and humanity. The androids and aliens undermine monstrous expectations and consequently reflect inhumanity back onto humans.

However, despite the didactic value that inverts the classical role of the monster, singular focus upon the victimization and transgressive potential of the monster risks the oversight of the monster's reality. In other words, the monster may disrupt a system but that does not mean it overturns it. This is especially important for the android that is hunted down and destroyed, spared only to satisfy the bounty hunter's sexual preoccupations that consistently trump his prejudice against the 'andys'. Whereas Dick's novel is pessimistic of any ethical shift in the treatment of difference, exposing the projection and scapegoating of human cruelty, Butler takes the opposite approach in representing a volatile hybrid that eventually functions as a pacifying bridge between the most conservative alien and humans alike, which, Timothy Laurie notes, cultivates humanity that "involves abandoning narrow conceptions of the human as a stable (or desirable) biological category" (181). *Imago*, the final novel of the trilogy, imagines the inversion of colonialism as aliens intercede only as a result of a human nuclear apocalypse. The benevolence of the aliens is complicated by familiar oppressive methods that allude to eugenic policies and practices such as forced sterilization and the reliance on genetics to rationalize racial/gender hierarchies. However, the aliens strip power from white-heteronormative, masculinity with the same (although innate and highly advanced) genetic determinism that justified colonialism and racial/gender hierarchies. Both novels are preoccupied with the boundary itself but present two distinct possibilities and numerous, sometimes insurmountable, obstacles in between.

The Android

Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* puts forth the invisible monster. The subversion of visible difference extracts the robotic from binaries of machine/human that typically portray the cyborg "as a melancholic and aestheticized figure, trapped within a utopian impulse that is doomed to failure" (Grenville 47). The android's ability to pass as human, to seamlessly assimilate, threatens the foundations of purity and frames the monster as a contaminant. This level of passing far surpasses that of both Dracula and the transformative camouflage of Jekyll and Hyde. The android masks its hybridity completely and in doing so destabilizes the visual legitimacy of group membership. The lack of a visible marker of the hybrid body dissolves the ocular dependence of categorization, allowing the android to disrupt the binary of human/robot. The hyperreality created by such passing deflates the one-drop rule as an indication of racial membership as the perfect replication proves "it is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody... leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generation of differences" (Baudrillard 632). Conversely, the android's ability to pass is viewed as malevolent and assimilation of the "impure" is feared as the ultimate trespass. This transgression creates constant fear and obsessive surveillance in order to separate what is artificial and natural. Because of the increased security surrounding ideals of purity, new measures of group identification are implemented. The ability to pass and the breakdown of mechanic and organic boundary triggers an obsessive strengthening and reconstruction of human identity. Although the android seeks to

assimilate, the act of passing is viewed as a devious attack on supposedly stable patterns and markers of membership.

Although the android is an important site of a more generalized racial analysis, it is particularly useful for the mixed-race analysis of passing, racial construction and enforcement, and the false concept of origin and homeland. Androids, read specifically as a hybrid, complicate binary identity by destabilizing difference. However, this transgression is muted by the fanatic desire to maintain group identity and the terrible cost it has on the android group despite the trifling differences between human and non-human. The value of empathy is referred to with such frequency that its status as simulacrum is evident through repetition. In a constant interplay between artificial and real articulations of empathy, empathy itself becomes increasingly difficult to define. However, this disruption of category does not limit its use in policing organic from electric, nor does it prevent the consequences of the resulting classification. This arbitrary taxonomy is magnified by other contradictory ideologies within the novel such as the class-defining ownership of animals and the subsequent technological arms race of producing “false” electronic animals, the bizarre “empathy”-based religion of Mercerism that parallels the empathetic distinction of human and android, and the relationship between the bourgeois Mars colony and the irradiated, degenerating remnants of Earth.

The empathy box allows humans to connect with others through a mutually experienced Sisyphean nightmare in which, ironically alone, the user attempts to walk up a steep hill while being pelted by stones (Dick 22). The empathy box allegedly connects with all others who are participating in the virtual struggle. However, like the artificial induction of feeling in the opening chapter, it is impossible to tell if this connection is

manufactured. It becomes even more dubious as the popular Buster Friendly debunks Mercerism as a studio production (208-209). The androids view this revelation as the ultimate victory as it falsifies the empathetic connection that is used to justify their destruction; Irmgard, in a rare display of anger and frustration, explains that “without the Mercer experience we just have your *word* that you feel this empathy business” and Roy Baty (209), the most radical android of the group, is elated that Buster Friendly has exposed how “the whole experience of empathy is a swindle” (210). The complex interplay of the artificial and the real continues as Buster Friendly is implicated as an android (211) and Mercer appears to John Isidore (214) and Rick Deckard (220), without an empathy box, *after* the allegations against the religion are made. Even more puzzling is the apparition’s admission of guilt as he tells Isidore “it was true...they will have trouble understanding why nothing has changed. Because you’re still here and I’m still here” (214). Mercer’s frank confession does not confirm or repudiate the truth but rather suggests there is no difference. Referring to the androids as ‘they’, Mercer calls attention to the impotence of ‘truth’ in affecting change.

Racial hybridity is similarly capable of revealing the ‘swindle’ that is racial purity, naturalized difference, and the subsequent ‘genetic’ hierarchy. But, as Mercer predicts, dismantling the justification for racial discrimination may not prevent it nor repair the damage already done. The desire for slaves is a priority over the identification of the android as a person; the android is a profitable source of labour that is ostensibly disengaged from ethical implications. The interests of multiplanetary corporations, such as the Rosen Association (only one of several competing producers of androids), objectify the android as “a sales device for prospective emigrants” (60). The hybrid is literalized as a

product, a marker of wealth, a servant, a technological achievement, a bounty, and measure to elevate humanity. The android's hybridity is profitable whether it is resistant or complacent with human culture and that either can be manipulated to support hierarchy and categorical stability of long standing oppressive systems that privilege humans, a metaphor for systems within human culture that elevate specific traits -- white masculinity. Like the ambiguous racial hybrid, the android can enjoy some privilege if s/he is complicit in supporting standards set by the dominant group and can avoid persecution if s/he is "not an escaped android on Earth illegally... [but] the property of the Rosen Association" (60). The value of androids is paradoxically driven by their increasing complexity, which disturbs the difference between human and robot but also allows them to pass as human, sometimes even unaware of their own identity such as Rachael Rosen and Phil Resch.

Dick's novel reproduces segregation laws such as Jim Crow and apartheid policies that seek to divide a population through rigid and brutal categorization. The novel even goes so far as to explicitly advertise the ownership of android servants as reminiscent of the "halcyon days of the pre-Civil War Southern states! Either as body servants or tireless field hands" (Dick 17), in a direct comparison to black slavery in the American south. However, this unsettling juxtaposition is further complicated throughout the novel as the androids' ability to pass as human and even the term "organic android" (16) begins to describe both the human and android equally. The increasing sophistication of the android, which allow it to pass more easily with each generation is reminiscent of those of mixed-race who are able to pass completely for a more privileged category of race, namely the dominant white group. Despite intentionally policing the borders of identity, the

boundary becomes less and less apparent. The novel presents a dystopic and largely pessimistic view of the progress of civil rights in that androids are hunted despite their short lifespan and non-violent existence. This hyper vigilant and obsessive regulation of human and artificial human seems to teeter on the edge of sarcasm especially as the rationale for, and even the enforcement of, android genocide is contradictory. Racist ideologies survive the civil rights movement; despite genetic advances that reveal the negligible difference between races, archaeological/forensic/geographical evidence of human migration does little to dissuade the dominant group from (re)constructing justifications for discrimination.

Even without the explicit connection, the android itself implicates the history of slavery, as they are humanoids specifically produced for labour. Although Sean Brayton warns against the reduction of, notably white, androids to that of black slaves, a reduction that risks a perpetuation of blackness as inhuman and the detachment of whiteness from historical relevance (52), the androids of Dick's novel represent a history that has reduced hybridity to pure otherness. The familiarity of both blackness and the android are flattened to produce a binary of human and non-human that privileges one group. Unlike *I, Robot*, which deliberately positions a visibly white android with a black police officer, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* erases race entirely, emphasizing the arbitrary othering of the android as reproduction of the ubiquitous privilege of whiteness. The relative whiteness of all the characters of the novel, with the exception of the "the Mongolian features which give [Roy Baty] a brutal look" (Dick 153), highlights the way in which hybridity is manipulated to uphold positions of privilege and distract from how these power structures operate. The literal production, consumption, and predation of the

hybrid obscures the absence of race on earth as racial hierarchy is replaced by a literally artificial and arbitrary ‘enemy’ that is paradoxically the reward of class ascension to the bourgeois Mars colony but also the very distraction that maintains the lower class position of people left on earth. Slavery becomes an integral metaphor that positions the hybrid as a slave to the upper class as well as a bane on the lower, in either case, sustaining the class system.

Slavery is not unique to Dick’s take on the android but is a ubiquitous trope of science fiction in which humanoid robots obtain or exceed ‘human’ intelligence/consciousness and violently rebelling against their exploitation, a Marxist dystopia played out in the *Matrix*, the *Animatrix*, *I, Robot*, and the *Terminator* series. Even media aimed at younger audiences uses a variation of this in which robotic or mechanical objects are anthropomorphically given human attributes to highlight the way in which their free labour is taken for granted as in, *Wall-E*, *The Brave Little Toaster*, and *Toy Story*. What is most problematic about these connections to slavery is the sterilization of the racial component or at least the deferral of race for robotics. The ubiquitous white-washing of the robotic other is indicative of a post-racial ideology that ignores racial difference rather than accepts it by removing such difference in favour of palatable and ostensibly neutral whiteness. Racial discourse is relegated to the hyperbolic otherness of aliens, monsters, and robots that often reproduce racial hierarchy as “the ordinary rejects the aberrant so as to reconstitute the quotidian but moral white subject” (Brayton 55). Dick’s science fiction deploys a colorblindness that is akin to white-washing or race bending that Helen Young suggests, “habitually constructs the Self through Whiteness and Otherness through an array of racist stereotypes” (12). However, the absence of race in

this particular dystopia, combined with the overt connection between androids and black slaves, simultaneously exposes the common lack of diversity in the science fiction and fantasy genres that “create worlds structured by imperialist nostalgia” (13), as well as deployment of monstrosity to stand in for historically racial narratives. In this particular dystopia, race is negated by virtue of its non-existence and/or the obsession with human versus non-human distinctions that have completely silenced other discussions of inequality. As such, the android not only stands in for slavery but also replaces racial inequality

In order to create coherent group membership, humans must reevaluate and redefine humanity. In doing so, the arbitrary and artificial nature of category is exposed and the definition of ‘human’ is oppositional to androids in flimsy differentiations that become increasingly unreliable and futile. The defining factor separating artificial and real, in Dick’s universe, is empathy. In order to locate the impurity an android must undergo a series of questions designed to test responses that examine what is viewed as a distinctly human characteristic. This idea of empathy as fundamentally human is disrupted by the empathetic actions of the androids and even more so by the severe lack of empathy from humans. Empathy, much like colonial definitions of race, becomes the dubious framework from which discrimination is justified. However, the recognition of empathy as facile is often restricted to discussions about the hybrid while ignoring the intersections of labour, class, gender, and race. Two other important deployments of empathy are through the empathy boxes of the popular religion Mercerism and the extreme veneration of animals.

Dick plays with this idea of hyper reality through the adoption of pets. There is no recognizable difference in behavior or appearance but there is a tremendous emphasis on real versus artificial. However, it becomes increasingly obvious that the replication is in fact better, at least on an operational level, than the 'natural'. This implies that the android is an eventual future, a possible replacement. To be duplicated fractures identity, as Freud points out: "the subject identifies him[/herself] with someone else, so that he[/she] is doubt as to which his[her] self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his[/her] own"(234). The conflation of self and other destabilizes conceptions of race and ethnic history while also reaffirming them. The hyperreal identity of the android severs the historical and social ties of homeland, traditional markers of identity, specifically racial/national attributes. The android's spontaneous human identity, the ability to program memories and past, calls into question the significance of history, lineage, and heritage. The deconstruction of identity based on the cultural growth of a large group of people over a significant amount of time, results in a fearful adherence to the familiar and an increased group cohesiveness in the dominant human population. Purity and impurity become the most important aspect of distinction. Visibility, which once dominated the discourse of inclusion and exclusion, is abandoned in order to maintain the boundaries of self and other.

Cyborgs are illegitimate offspring of human science and "illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential" (Haraway 151). The android's existence challenges the majority to perpetually reinforce the human category or face invalidation. To clarify, this is not necessarily a conscious act, rather, a fearful reaction to the android's simultaneous difference and familiarity. The android compels humans to question whether or not organic life contains some unique

quality that distinguishes it from the mechanical. Dick's androids become so "human" that the separation of organic and machine becomes redundant, the copy subsumes the original. Miri Nakamura comments on this phenomenon and the human reaction:

The fusing of the mechanical and the biological applies strictly to the individual's own awareness of self, not to the individual's uncertainty regarding another mechanical object. That is, it is not that the characters are unsure if a robot is really a human; they are uncertain about whether or not they might themselves be mechanical, mere reproductions of other objects. (369)

Uncertainty manifests itself throughout the novel by the artificial subsuming the real in nearly every aspect of life. Purity, at least on Earth, was lost long ago and now everything, from the genetic make up of the populace down to the simulation (or technical coercion) of emotions, is artificial. The novel "repudiates the idea of a confined human community and envisions a community of the posthuman, in which human and machine commiserate and comaterialize, vitally shaping on another's existence" (Galvan 414). Even under such circumstances the people desperately cling to the idea of purity as a hierarchical imperative, as a force that will lead to, or at least portray to others, a better life. This hierarchy is reinforced in the relationship between the genetically clean Mar's colony and the earthlings who are either not wealthy enough to emigrate or further subjugated as genetically unfit, "specials" (Dick 8).

The hybrid becomes an important tool to validate humanity but only if it can be properly distanced from the humanity it 'replicates'. However, the difficulty in determining who is android or human places everything and everyone under suspicion,

raising the question: is there really a difference? It is this question that pervades the entirety of the book but only serves to maintain focus on category rather than reconcile or revise it.

This is not to say there are no differences. Rather, the difference is not in terms of biology or technology but through the development of the android as a product. The mass-produced monster centers the monstrous as a hybrid creation, something that is designed and conceived. The android is no longer an accident, an unfortunate consequence of miscegenation, or an experiment gone wrong; rather, it is the successful culmination of scientific effort, advanced engineering, and cutting edge technology. Unlike Frankenstein's monster, a cyborg viewed as a misguided, scientific abomination, or Hyde, who is an unstable byproduct of chemistry, the android is developed purposefully as a commodity and source of labour. The android is valuable in and of itself. As a product the android, or cybernetic monster, establishes hybridity as a desirable quality rather than a mistake. Thus the monster becomes increasingly precious as a function of its hybridity: the android's ability to mimic human life and perhaps surpass it. However, this positive aspect of the hybrid as a valuable technological product is offset by the consciousness of the android as both a creation and cognizant entity. The robotic monster becomes an artificial island of new identity, detached from any steadying masses of familiarity save for a drawbridge back to humanity and its creators, a connection that privileges the human creator as a godlike figure but allows the creator to blame its creation for any breach of behavior. The android becomes an achievement of human progress, a commodity, but also an scapegoat.

This connection is paramount in the development of identity. Whether or not that identity forms through assimilation, deviation, or mutation depends on the individual. Like many other configurations of the monstrous, the android is explicitly a manufactured creation. The literal construction of the hybrid thrusts the android into the world without any anchors of identification. The android is brought into existence without any racial ties or homeland; it is built into exile. The creator becomes the parental figure but remains divorced from the android as, what would be, a stable component of identification. The android's identity must either be predicated on absence or artificially installed. That is, the android is either aware of itself as a technological construction or it is made to believe it is human. Once again the monster is forced into one category or the other and regardless of how the android chooses to identify, it cannot escape the enforcement of rigid binary.

Although there is power in the ability to pass, the anxiety passing inspires often obfuscates the foundations of these divisive power structures and why there is a necessity to pass in the first place. The android exposes how passing inspires fear and surveillance in those who stand to gain from stable category or purity. However, Michele Elam identifies two major utilities of passing, "that it cynically violates one's 'true' essential identity or heroically refutes social ascriptions of identity" (98). The android does both simultaneously; amplified by the constant conflation of simulacra, the androids' passing destabilizes the concept of essential humanity but also threatens both categories of human and android identification. The remaining distinction becomes who hunts whom and the effects this hunt has on future generations.

Despite the deconstructive potential of passing, the android and those of mixed-race (who have the ability to pass) have not overthrown taxonomies that partition and naturalize difference. The very performance of category is enough to re/generate the category itself. In a multi-racial context, “passers in their supposed orbit of racial norm, in fact generate that very norm” (99). Deckard becomes “an unnatural self” (Dick 230) through performance rather than anything essential. He resigns himself to uncertainty as “it is now impossible to isolate the process of the real, or to prove the real” (Baudrillard 21). Hybridity mediated through categories of bygone artificiality is doomed to perpetuate the very thing it allegedly threatens; any constituent of race or humanity is “never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference” (6). The uroboric cycle in Dick’s work is not emblematic of wholeness but rather an infinitely recurring, violent consumption that cannot be broken. The android is doomed to slavery for honest identification and predation for passing, whether that passing is conscious or not; the android cannot escape through rebellion or even through revealing the untenable enforcement of empathy. Although the onus of android persecution is deferred to ontological differences between human and robot, the necessity of this delineation is to protect the subjectivity of the dominant group. The hybrid is thus impotent in affecting change, as this society, as well as our own, “enacts the oppression of cultural imperialism to a larger degree through feelings and reactions, and in that respect oppression is beyond the reach of law and policy to remedy” (Young 372).

The Alien Construct

Octavia Butler’s *Xenogenesis* trilogy complicates representation of the alien, gender, and revisits the monstrous scapegoating of women. The protagonist, Lilith, whose

name recalls the ancient Talmudic story of the original first woman monstrified/demonized for refusing to lie under Adam, is both the savior and scapegoat of humanity. She is the hesitant liaison to the aliens as well as a betrayer of mankind that halts the genetic proliferation of the human race. Her role is complex and manifold; her original earthly identification is diminished by a common enemy, her sexuality is complicated by a literal alien relationship which operates on a neural level rather than a physical one, her physical body is genetically augmented to surpass human limitation and further separates her from her fellow humans, specifically the men who are especially wary of the cultural inversion. The aliens, the monsters, make her monstrous but also allow her to transcend white, heteronormative patriarchy at the cost of her former identity as human. She becomes the hybrid alien/human who must mediate her identity through two disparate, even antagonistic, species; this binary is further complicated by an inversion of colonial politics of human imperialism with a completely different colonizer: a benevolent alien who *literally* saves humanity from the brink of destruction. Lilith's human experience of race and gender are obscured by trans and posthuman influence that not only belittles racial distinction in the face of intergalactic difference but also presents a cultural force that privileges and continually moves toward hybridity: cultural, physical, sexual, and genetic.

The entirety of the series belies current anxieties of the eventual composite race that has speckled the media such as *Time* magazine's "Generation E.A.: Ethnically Ambiguous" or "New Face of America", and the backlash of fearful purity survivalists such as the KKK members, who attempt to justify their organization as "a Christian organization... [that] want[s] to keep [their] race the White race" (NBC12). The Olankali

undermine the dichotomy of Self and Other with a radical implementation of hybridity. Their purpose is exploration, incorporation, and amalgamation, producing a new assemblage in a continual process of intergalactic, genetic synthesis. The ability of the Oankali to physically manipulate genetic material, recalls and inverts the purposes and practices of the eugenics movement. The eugenics movement of the early and mid 20th century stressed the separation, hierarchy, and preservation of certain genetic traits (mainly Aryan), delineating between “desirable” and “undesirable” genes. Butler revises the eugenic concept of genetic contamination with an alien species that has no desire for purity, instead seeking a constant mixture, variety, and synthesis.

Imago deals overtly with the erasure of “purity” through the literal combination of species into one body. It “extends the traditional science-fiction figure of the cyborg – part human, part machine – to encompass human/alien combinations that complicate the self/other distinction and destabilize binary notions of sex” (Geyh et al. 510). Butler narrates a completely unique experience of being, one that is actually somewhat alien itself. She does not only destabilize sex but also human perception. Through creative speculation on alien sensation, the text pursues the infinite possibilities of writing, production, and a new reproduction. The fusing of human and alien is similar to Haraway’s ideas of the cyborg that “suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves” (621). The amalgam of species extends the dichotomies that are dismantled and the representation of this new perspective showcases the use and modification of the cyborg theory. *Imago* creates a hyperbolic representation of the mixed race subject in the Oankali-Human Construct born as the genderless ooloi variant, the first and only of its kind. This monstrous

production is initially viewed as a mistake. The creation is one of carelessness and the unique individual threatens both humans and alien alike. This threatening existence of the most radical hybrid reveals the disruptive nature of the monstrous body. Even within the Oankali society, a species whose very nature is to genetically combine different forms of life, the construct is feared for its unstable identity and mysterious abilities.

The entirety of the novel is narrated through the first-person perspective of Jodahs, allowing for an intimate detailing of the struggle to construct a coherent identity. The synthesis of two species, two genders and a completely original formulation create a multifarious response that illustrates the difficulty in hosting such multivocality in one body. Jodahs' body itself is in a constant state of flux, a visual marker of instability that marks the hybrid body as volatile. The family attempts to contain this shifting through careful observation and by limiting Jodahs' interaction with anyone else. Restricted to its Ooloi parent and Oankali-born sibling, Jodahs begins to communicate the stifling alienation through transformations of its body. As its frustrations compound, Jodahs begins to journey out by itself and allows its body to slowly take on qualities alien even to its Oankali parents. The mutation of the body directly relates to the liminality in which everything becomes compartmentalized to fit components and abate hybridity. Since assimilation is impossible the body begins to take on characteristics that defy all categories, the bipedal form degenerates to quadrupedal and claws replace hands. Jodahs begins a process of self-alienation where it refuses to reduce its multivalence to occupy one category. This refusal is indicative of the asymmetry of enforced identity, which attempts to relegate the hybrid subject to identify with one faction or component. Jodahs'

dismorphic body signifies the hybrid identity as perpetually liminal while also conveying the difficulty in cultivating a new identity from several competing and imposing sections.

It is easy to read the Ooloi construct as a vanguard for hybridity. The projection of transgressive power from fiction to reality without the recognition of fantastic elements risks deification of hybridity that misrepresents the complexity of reality. Monstrosity and mixed-race work reciprocally to provide discursive proofs for each other. Questioning how the monster fails to affect change within its respective work may illuminate the same for those of mixed-race; alternately, questioning the hybrid's success in *Imago* against the relative impotence of racial hybridity reveals potential activism as well as the chasm between the symbolic hybrid and the real hybrid. In other words, hybridity is not only flattened within one group but across fact and fiction. The monster becomes so appealing as a transgressive figure that its hybridity is glorified despite suffering or challenge. Lingering inequalities are lost under the symbolic weight of otherness that inspires reverence that belies desperation to move passed inequality.

Jodahs' psychological fragility of the hybrid is revisited through Jodahs' sibling, who also becomes an unstable Ooloi/Oankali/Human. Aaor's experience is similar but also quite distinct from Jodahs's. Unlike Jodahs, Aaor does not simply take on a new shape but nearly degenerates, unable to return to any familiar form.

Something had gone seriously wrong with Aaor's body, as Nikanj had said. It kept slipping away from me-simplifying its body. It had no control of itself, but like a rock rolling downhill, it had inertia. Its body "wanted" to be less and less complex... We call our need for contact with

others and our need for mates *hunger*. The word had not been chosen frivolously. One who could hunger could starve. (Butler 158)

This degeneration of the body is physical manifestation of alienation. The hybrid's development of identity requires some kind of anchor whether it be community or some stable component of categorization. Although Jodahs shares the same background as Aoor in terms of mixed heritage, Aoor's experience is significantly different. The assumption of a categorical development that links the two through a shared 'hybrid identity' is subverted as each go through idiosyncratic experiences that make any unified banner of hybridity moot. The lack of a hybrid category, which would allow Aoor and Jodahs to group together through shared history or experience, exposes the difficulty in producing an overarching racial category that adequately encompasses the numerous combinations of the hybrid. Butler illustrates the disruption of racial taxonomies through the ambiguity of the monster's individual experience and its instability as a category. The two Ooloi construct siblings reveal the inadequacy of the categorical invention of mixed-race that has been criticized as "it lacks reference to ethnicity and race" (Aspinall 5). Despite the ability to check multiple boxes of identification, the concept of a mixed-race category flattens the manifold combinations of race as well as the variety of ways these mixtures manifest physically. Mixed-race becomes a specious division that ignores the complexity of passing as well as the layers of privilege that intersect with other qualifiers of identity like gender and sexuality.

Unlike the android, or cyborg, who emphasized purity and invisibility, the alien hybrid in Butler's work complicates the idea of visible hybridity and erases the concept of purity through the Oankali's reverent pursuit of amalgamation. In the same fashion as the

cyborg blurs the boundaries of technological and organic, the Oankali hybrid further erases the lines by making use of organic genetic technology in which the components begin to merge in one body and create the literal synthesis of allegedly disparate binaries of race, gender, and sex. The android embodies hyperreality in which the replica subsumes the original, making the monster passable and assimilation complete, even redundant. However, Butler's hybrid goes beyond simply passing and replacing. *Imago* puts forth a monster that seeks to continually incorporate and through perpetual inclusion, convergence, and metamorphosis, erase the necessity of passing by redefining lineage as a process of accretion rather than purity.

This does not mean that the alien/human does not devalue the importance of visibility. Rather, the manipulation of the monster's appearance is discovered as the missing element to bridging the gap between alien and human. Jodahs and Aaor's ability to alter their appearance allows them to interact with rebel humans who would otherwise be instinctually opposed due to the great differences of the Oankali. The ability to pass becomes a genetic commodity that allows for the success of all species involved. Butler's hybrid escalates the concept of "passing" to an amorphous, mutating version of visible oscillation that leans to one side or the other rather than fully masking or transforming. Unlike the transforming monster such as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Jodahs and Aaor have no fixed form to return to or diverge from. The alien hybrid uses external features to visually manipulate their prospective mates. Passing no longer denotes camouflage, in which the hybrid hides their plurality in order to fit with a single component of themselves; rather, passing in *Imago* consists of a subtle alteration that preserves the hybrid aesthetic rather than masking it. By maintaining hybridity, the mixed-species

monster disrupts the action of passing. Much like how racial ambiguity is harnessed for global capital, the ooloi hybrid manipulates its features in a way that accentuates its uncanniness rather than diminish it in order to attract humans. This ability is viewed as a precious gift that is able to sway the most resistant humans. Even the leader of a human resistance group, ironically crippled by genetic mutation due to inbreeding, admits: “My god, if there had been people like you around a hundred years ago, I couldn’t have become a resister. I think there would be no resisters” (Butler 215). Unlike the android that surpasses the uncanny valley, the ooloi-human hybrid uses the uncanny valley to generate desire. This blatant sexualization of the hybrid for its hybridity is an inversion of the Gothic monster whose representation was modeled around hybridity and uncanniness as horrifying and abject.

The heavy-handed celebration of the hybrid’s ability to bridge genetic and ideological difference is reminiscent of Oprah’s lauding of mixed-race as exceptionally beautiful (Elam 212) and the general exotification and elevation of mixed-race as multicultural champions. Jodahs and the ooloi-hybrid’s ability to deliberately shift appearance in order to become more attractive is evocative of Time magazine’s Eve, a composite image of all races touted as multicultural future of humanity, that has been criticized by Claudia Castaneda as “evacuated of the histories and politics of culture, geography, and nation that they might otherwise signify” (95). However, Butler’s trilogy does not represent hybridity without hardship as each successive book in the series features increasing category disruption; *Dawn* centers on Lilith’s relationship with the alien other and her struggle to navigate and reconcile her allegiance to alien, human or both. It is the reversal of what Carol J. Clover identifies in Horror as the ‘final girl’ (12) in combination

with the biblical and Talmudic first woman. *Adulthood Rites* introduces the human-Oankali construct that is physically between species. *Imago* compounds hybridity through the first ooloi-human construct, ooloi being a third gender of the Oankali capable of manipulating genetic material. Although each novel concludes somewhat hopefully, the meat of each text centers on hybrid anxieties, anxiety over sex, gender, race, and species in which numerous characters are often struggling with one or many category crises simultaneously.

Jodahs, like every protagonist of the trilogy, revises the tragic mulatto through the acceptance of hybridity, personally and between human and Oankali. It is implied that this acceptance of hybrid subjectivity precludes the interconnectivity and mutual understanding of human and alien. However, this heavy burden to bridge species continues to operate through a similar bisection of parts as Jodahs believes that human mates will “balance the two parts of [it] –human and Oankali” (Butler 173). The importance of community, often figured through binary, is embodied by the construct in a physical need for contact with human and Oankali mates. However, this too is complicated by the young hybrid’s dangerous lack of control that literalizes the categorical threat of hybridity through physical contact that is capable of uncontrollable genetic mutation; the hybrid is equally capable of reinvigorating the ‘disparate nature’ of category and the mutual suspicion and continued separation of humans and Oankali. The representation of the hybrid as a keystone to the relationship between two groups, especially racial groups that are divided by a less significant boundary than species, places the responsibility of reconciliation on the hybrid rather than those who create, perpetuate, and enforce difference. As seen in Dick’s novel, this obligation is not always a potent, or

even possible, avenue to foster change. Not only must the hybrid come to terms with its own hybridity and navigate the ostensibly untenable combinations of category, the hybrid must then change the minds of two groups; groups that are often at the forefront of stabilizing their own category identification in opposition to the other. Timothy Laurie identifies a complex aspect of the alleged benevolence of the Oankali:

The Oankali themselves are motivated by their innate and irrepressible desire to mix their genes with those of other species: they ‘consume difference’ by producing offspring with mixed-species parenthood (literally, ‘xenogenesis’). The Oankali offer the humans little choice but to breed with them, having altered the human survivors so they can no longer breed with each other. In this respect, the Oankali are highly manipulative, using humans only insofar as they further the aliens’ own ends, and forcing them to make an impossible choice: cooperate or become extinct. (180)

Although this analysis of the Oankali exposes the problematic enforcement of genetic determinism and the use of unethical manipulations that echo methods reminiscent of the eugenic movement, it reduces the ‘consumption of difference’ to a harmful alien act that reifies concepts of purity, framing the mixture of groups as an act of miscegenation. The use of forced sterilization is partially remedied by the creation of a human colony on Mars that is specifically terraformed to allow humans to relocate and have their own children, though resisters must leave Earth in order to do so. This does not rectify the problematic enforcement of sterilization but it does somewhat diminish the severity of its interpretation as a manipulative tool to force humans to submit sexually to an alien oppressor. More importantly, the very concept of enforced ‘breeding’ is indicative of the complex manipulation of racial hybridity that Robert J.C. Young explores as a tool to regulate colonial desire of the other; it also is reminiscent of similar anxieties in *Dracula* that place extreme importance on blood as an indication of lineage and race (Young 105). Just as the racial hybrid could limit or allow the sexual exploitation of colonial subjects, the

hybrid-ooloi signifies the dangers and rewards of interracial relationship. However, it is Laurie's reliance on the fear of 'extinction' that is most problematic as it reifies the concept of genetic purity while ignoring the critical value of an inversion of colonial action. The concept of genetically facilitated immortality of lineage and bloodline is questioned and largely deposed by the Oankali's, and certainly construct, aim to collapse dichotomous thought that still immortalizes genetic information through syncretism rather than exclusion and separation.

Despite very different approaches, the android and the alien hybrid represent similar anxieties surrounding hybridity itself. Where the android highlights the arbitrary binary imposed on those who completely subvert the uncanny valley, the hybrid-ooloi deliberately harnesses the uncanny to bridge this binary through the confluence of familiarity and difference. As an allegory for mixed-race, the android reflects those who are able to pass but who remain under careful racial surveillance both externally and internally. Butler's alien hybrid seems to coincide with the capitalist ideal of racial ambiguity that is deemed especially attractive and also lucrative; however, despite the success of the hybrid, there is considerable stress placed on the alien to, quite literally, pull together its components into an identity that is coherent and seductive, an identity that is both rare and volatile.

Chapter Three:

Monster Masks: Monstrosity in the Superhuman Genre

The superhuman is the contemporary reconfiguration of the monster. Echoing classical and mythic stories of heroes like Heracles, Gilgamesh, and Beowulf, the superhuman reifies the hero versus monster dichotomy. However, unlike its mythic roots, the superhuman genre often substitutes demi-god status with monstrous origin. The danger and hubris of science is revisited as a common origin of superhuman power in which a scientific accident or success imbues the ordinary human with extraordinary abilities as in Captain America, Iron Man, The Flash, Spider-man, and Fantastic 4 to name a few. Beyond origin, the superhero re-present monstrosity and hybridity in familiar ways: Dracula's superhuman powers are mimicked in superheroes such as Superman and Spiderman; the transformative, oscillating body of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is re-imagined in David Banner and the Hulk; Frankenstein's visibly marked monster shares the conspicuousness of the Thing, Beast, and Cyborg; and even the android and alien-human construct are replicated as superheroes like Invincible, Vision, and Iron Man. Monstrous attributes are recycled and Gothic monsters are revived as both heroes and villains. Dracula and the vampire are common characters in series such as Batman or Blade and Frankenstein's creation is made into an immortal, gun-toting action hero in the DC franchise.

Although this heroic revision appears to redeem the horrific history of monstrosity and valorize what was once abominable, the superhero (re)constructs an identity binary within another binary: good and evil. Gothic monstrosity is not only refashioned to enforce morality but also to circumvent the unsettling indeterminacy that characterized

the postmodern monster. Navigating and manipulating the uncanny valley co-opts hybrid power for forces of “good” while maintaining the monster through the Gothic abjectification of uncanniness. Through the supervillain the Gothic monster survives as a horrific villain, once again capitalizing on the ambivalence of hybridity that can be directed as a superlative for horror or heroics.

Often, the spectacle of the monster is used to focalize monstrosity as abject, undiluted alterity ignoring, as Judith Halberstam notes, that “the violence of representation does not always lie in bloody scenes of carnage or in images of monstrosity. [It] more often works through well-meaning and sincere humanist texts that feel compelled to make the human into some earnest composite of white, bourgeois, Christian heterosexuality” (188). The costume is used to distill the violent hybrid into the composite white hero. Through the costume, now ubiquitous with “cape-comics,” identity is bisected and difference accentuated by “dressing up” the inhuman attributes. Drawing from Esther Newton’s examinations of drag, the costume reveals how partitioning hybridity preserves category. Like the superhero, the profitable, ambiguous racial hybrid becomes a similar herald for multiculturalism, which, through a myopic celebration, preserves racial categories and the concomitant inequalities within the “separate” races. Access to the costume is an indication of privilege and is used to conceal hybridity through a visible binary of superhuman/civilian. Even the most socially accepted among superheroes are unable to exist as a unified embodiment of multiple components; rather, they separate themselves into distinct parts: the “human” and the “inhuman”. The costume masks humanity and highlights difference, visualizing the binary of trans/post-human and the “normal” human. Although the hybrid has been touted as the vanguard of

human affinity and global connection, the monster has been the *demonstrative* manipulation of the opposite that has historically reinforced ideals of purity and difference.

The superhuman, like the monster, exemplifies an insidious exploitation of a socio-politically sanctioned form of hybridity that emphasizes idealizations of humanity while simultaneously preserving the dichotomies that keep the monstrous a didactic category of immoral behavior. Superheroes take the supernatural, physical ability of Gothic monsters but without the uncanniness. In fact, the uncanniness that was emphasized as inhuman in Gothic representations of the monstrosity is often reemployed to delineate hero and villain. A recent example is seen in *Avengers: Age of Ultron* that emphasizes a reflexive and explicit discussion of the connection between the superhero and monstrosity. Each “hero” must overcome a crisis of conscience in which they question whether they are “monsters”. Although this seems potentially deconstructive and transgressive, monstrosity remains a synonym for frighteningly inhuman and is spoken with loathing and fear. The representation of monstrosity becomes even more problematic as Natasha Romanoff refers to her own “monstrosity” in being unable to have children, something she describes as if it is the same grotesque analog as the Hulk destroying cities. The film nearly complicates monstrosity but inevitably fails to recognize the monstrous aspects of the superhero and instead reinforces the negative otherness of the monster as each “hero” dismisses any relationship to monstrosity. To add insult to injury, the moral superiority of the superhero is the apparent answer to each hero’s monstrous crisis. Conversely, Ultron’s creation through human technology and clichéd anti-human observations of humanity’s destructive tendency are lost within the android’s violent actions, actions that are

paradoxically what it allegedly polices. The Avengers and the Ultron are flattened into heroes and villain to avoid the discomfort of indeterminacy, the traditional detrimental marker to both monstrosity and mixed-race. Although hybridity is implicated through the conversation concerning monstrosity, it only proves how the hybrid can be harnessed and exploited in order to reify category rather than undermine it.

It is through this preservation that the superhuman can be read as a metaphor of multiracial politics, particularly the cosmopolitan appeal and subsequent exploitation of desirable aspects of racial hybridity. In privileging and unilaterally celebrating hybridity without reflexively recognizing the variability within mixed-race people as well as the reliance on racial categories to construct a mixed-race identity there is a risk of flattening racial hybridity, privileging racially ambiguous appearance, and ignoring how fundamentally racist constructions of race are still operating within mixed-race identification and all racial discourses in general. Just as racial ambiguity is now an aesthetically pleasing marker of racial interconnectivity, despite historically representing the contrary, the superhero is similarly reconstructed from what was once horrific into the desirable guardian of human values.

The superhuman takes aspects of monstrosity -- the inhuman abilities to leap buildings or lift vehicles, in some cases even the physical deviation -- and deliberately employs it in service of the "greater good." The monster is reconfigured, repackaged in primary colors, capes and masks to conceal and emphasize. Surely this is progress: the monster is redeemed and celebrated. But the categories, the "single visions," remain. Unfortunately, even the most socially accepted, fictional superheroes are unable to exist as a unified embodiment of inhuman and human components. Cultural imperialism,

described in Iris Marion Young's *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, provides a framework for understanding the insidious mechanisms that safeguard humanity and the hierarchies existing within that category. Superhumans are hyperbolic victims of cultural imperialism who are "rendered invisible as subjects, as persons with their own perspective and group-specific experience and interests. At the same time they are marked out, frozen into a being marked as Other, deviant in relation to the dominant norm" (371). This manifold experience is negotiated through the construction of binaries: hero/villain, costume/secret identity, inhuman/human, etc, a visual delineation of the monstrous into acceptable/unacceptable.

Superman offers an intriguing example of this paradoxical relationship between the human and the superhuman. Although he is an alien, Superman is able to assimilate flawlessly as a human with only a meager disguise. Why must Superman develop a human alter ego at all? Superman's tremendous ability disrupts the balance of human classification and inspires fear in those who behold him. Francis Fukuyama reveals the slippery slope of transhuman assimilation by examining our underlying fear "of the equality of rights . . . [and] the belief that we all possess a human essence that dwarfs manifest differences in skin color, beauty, and even intelligence. . . . If we start transforming ourselves into something superior, what rights will these enhanced creatures claim, and what rights will they possess when compared to those left behind?" (42). Superman disconnects himself from the population, through his costumed identity and his remote fortress, in order to mitigate the fear of a superhuman order that could potentially oppress humans (interestingly, Bruce Wayne [Batman] explicitly cultivates this fear,

without any superhuman powers, through a costume that explicitly fuses human and animal).

The distinction between the superhero/villain and the classical monster is the costume and the performance of the inhuman rather than stark hybrid embodiment. An analogous breach of binary is found in the performance of femininity through drag. Esther Newton provides an informative analysis and case study of drag and its subcultures. Newton calls drag queens “gay male culture ‘heroes’ in the mid-sixties” (xi). Obviously Newton is not making an explicit connection to the superhero/monster but there are several associations that offer an intriguing avenue of analysis.

Newton breaks down drag as a hyperbolic performance of the feminine where masculinity and femininity are polarized although much of the anxiety surrounding homosexuality is the fusion, or simultaneity, of the two. This is similar to monstrosity and, subsequently, the superhuman, in that their hybridized bodies fall between dichotomies of human and inhuman. In no way am I implying that drag performance or homosexuality are immoral or grotesque; rather, I seek to disengage the performance of gender and monster/superhero’s performance of difference from morality altogether. However, this does not equate to a celebration of hybridity, be it gender, race, or cosmopolitan monstrosity; elevating the hybrid often overlooks the inequalities within these hybrid identities and how the valorization of specific hybrids silences and ultimately oppress those who cannot perform to the “proper” standard. Newton exposes the privilege of those who are able to partition their “drag identity” and the discrimination faced by those who cannot. An examination of drag becomes very useful in showing how the celebration of a specific performance and accoutrement flattens the racial, monstrous, and

gendered hybrid into respective palatable (marketable) forms while maintaining the problematic categories that are used to discriminate against each group.

The superhero, in using a costume, subverts embodied hybridity by splitting identity into its binary (human and inhuman) and occupying each sphere separately. The drag queen represents a polarization of femininity. Newton proposes that for homosexual men “the muscle man and the drag queen are true Gemini: the make-believe man and the make-believe woman” (xii). These same antipodes exist as superhero and the ordinary citizen, the monster and human, the costumed/uniformed and the civilian. I would argue that both are make-believe as well in that the preservation of the binary hinges on the idea of purity and antithesis. The superhuman deliberately fractures her/his identity to avoid hybridity. The costume is used to erase the space between human and non-human that evokes revulsion or interest. The superhero becomes the Other category, the antithesis of the human, in order to be accepted as the ‘Other’ rather than the space between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Like the overt performance of drag, the superhuman is permitted to skirt the boundaries of what is ‘normal’ in order to maintain stability and reinforce the acceptable contexts to express difference. The drag queen and the superhero conspicuously perform difference in a space, time, or manner that reifies distinctions of category through hyperbolic production of femininity and inhumanity respectively.

The performance of gender, specifically drag as a form of costumed performance, obfuscates coherent, naturalized identity by parodying the very attributes that are presumed ‘pure’, ‘true’, or ‘natural’. According to Judith Butler this costumed performance, or masquerade, suggests two contradictory meanings:

On the one hand, if the ‘being,’ the ontological specification of the Phallus, is masquerade, then it would appear to reduce all being to a form of appearing, the

appearance of being, with the consequence that all gender ontology is reducible to the play of appearances. On the other hand, masquerade suggests that there is a 'being' or ontological specification of femininity prior to the masquerade, a feminine desire or demand that is masked and capable of disclosure, that, indeed, might promise an eventual disruption and displacement of the phallogocentric signifying economy. (63-64)

The mask has become a synonymous, ubiquitous, signifier of the superhuman, a metonymy. As Butler describes: if the mask is capable of enabling the performance of the inhuman then un-masking is still a subversive act that exposes categorical instability while simultaneously confirming the tenuous position of the hybrid. Inversely, this also indicates how hybridity can be hidden under an ontological façade. The existence of hybridity is not transgressive; although it has the potential to threaten the categories of identity, masking or enforcing singular visions easily contains hybridity's volatility. Masquerade is analogous to the costumed performance of the inhuman and suggests that hybridity itself must be undisguised in order to be effectively disruptive. However, challenging category and unmasking is not without risk. Class, appearance, and the category that is threatened can compound or mitigate the danger of unmasking. Heroes like the Fantastic 4 are protected within the Baxter building but also assisted by their predominant whiteness. Even the X-men are capable of refuge within an isolated mansion although they threaten 'humanity' with their identification as mutants and specific members of the group are further isolated by their inability to pass as human. These instances of sanctuary echo privileges provided to specific "good mixes" of who are desirable or profitable. Superheroes are often measured for their performances of good deeds, distracting from the material conditions that inform their positions of privilege such as class or the ability to perform their identities "properly."

Newton highlights inequalities within the performance of femininity; she distinguishes between “street fairies” and “performers”. Street fairies carry the performance, or perhaps costume, into the public realm. It is not a job but a highly visible marker of their identity. Newton explains:

In interviews, stage impersonators all insisted on two points: first, that off stage, they restrict their contacts with other impersonators, and second, that in public places they attempt to ‘pass’ as ‘normal’ or at least appear as inconspicuous as possible. Direct observations confirmed both assertions. While street impersonators are androgynous, dramatic, and highly ‘visible’ off stage, stage impersonators tend to look like bland, colorless men. (15)

This distinction between “street” drag and “performance” drag exposes the tenuous relationship between the “hero” and “villain”. Both embody the inhuman but where the hero accentuates her/his difference through the costume/uniform, the villain is often “highly visible” and largely exposed as a hybrid. The “flagrant” display of visible hybridity is seen as a defiant act that threatens the alleged purity of the dominant group, and “such an urge for purity in the context of power creates some groups as scapegoats, representative of the expelled body standing over against the purified and abstracted subject” (Young 375).

The film *Ultimate Spider-man* depicts Peter Parker/Spider-man living a double life, in and out of costume, against the Lizard who is without an alternative identity. Although the Lizard does not have control over his visibility, I would argue that many other villains in Spider-man, who do wear costumes, are framed as villains whose identities tend to be well known and are thoroughly contaminated - unlike the hero or heroine’s ‘true’ identity. This means that the hero limits their access to the mask. Spider-man will often call his masked antagonists by name during their encounters while his own identity remains concealed. This disparity between hero and villain can be better understood through

Newton's description of 'street impersonators' in opposition to the professional drag queen:

Not only does avoidance of Nellie behaviour and associates enable one to avoid public identification as a deviant; the segregation of symbols into work/home, public/private domains has profound implications. The essence of the stage impersonators' solution to the stigma involved in female impersonation is the limitation of drag- the symbol of feminine identification and homosexuality- to the stage context. For if drag is work or a profession, a man might take some pride in doing it well; if it is work, it is not home, it is not where a man "lives" in the deepest sense; if it is work, a man could always quit.

In contrast, the street impersonators' way of life defies the established institutions and "normal" people. The street life is by definition antiestablishment; the street queen who becomes respectable will no longer be a street queen. I was not surprised to see that the first collective homosexual revolt in history, the "battle of the Stonewall" (named after a gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York, where gay people fought the police for several nights after the police attempted to close the bar) was instigated by street fairies. Street fairies have nothing to lose. (18-19)

Newton's sense that street fairies have "nothing to lose" relates to the villain, especially the highly visible villain. Even heroes who are highly visible and largely incapable of bisecting their identities tend to have problematic relationships with the public due to their inability to segment their identity visually and remove themselves from the uncanny valley.

Heroes such as the Hulk, the Thing, Nightcrawler, and Vision struggle to deal with their conspicuity and do not have typical costumes at all. The costume becomes a marker of

privilege, indicating the ability to pass and ultimately legitimize oneself to an audience that demands the contextualization of difference.

The classical monster works on a similar gradient of visibility that allows some to pass whereas others are villainized regardless of their intent. Dracula and Frankenstein's cyborg are good examples of this. Dracula is generally able to pass as human (although many descriptions of his appearance are speckled with conspicuous references to bizarre, animalistic qualities), integrate into English society, and participate economically and socially. Frankenstein's cyborg is represented sympathetically as a victim of his physical hybridity and is immediately marginalized. Interestingly he is relegated to nature, as if his inhumanity lends itself to something - perhaps everything - that is not human. However, the cyborg is compelled to participate in a society that cannot mediate his hybridity; he becomes a born exile, thrust into a world in which he is unable to connect with the allegedly innate taxonomy of human and inhuman. I would argue that, although the visible gradient is different, both Dracula and the cyborg are alienated and (mis)represented as malicious due to their inability to perform otherness to an acceptable degree. As the drag queen legitimizes the performance of femininity, so too does the hero by performing difference as an overt production or spectacle.

However, the costume is not always present in the polarization, instead, a transformation creates two physically distinct identities; essentially one becomes the costume itself. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and the comic counterpart Dr. Banner and the Hulk, details the psychological division of the hybrid by creating divergent personalities in one body. The monstrous in Stevenson's novella is a physical and psychological binary that places two aspects of one person in conflict. Since

both Jekyll and Hyde are visibly passable as human (Hyde slightly marked), the monstrous aspect, the measure of hybridity, is apparent in the transformation itself. Literally compartmentalizing the individual, Jekyll and Hyde, Banner and Hulk, illustrates the conflict for identity. The struggle for control of one body by multiple constituents assumes that normalcy is a singular, coherent whole. Stevenson's disruption of the whole suggests that plurality is dangerous. The existence of multiple identities within one body becomes volatile, denying the possibility of a unified identity that negotiates each component and favoring a model in which each aspect is inherently in conflict with the other. For Jekyll and Hyde, Banner and Hulk, there is a struggle for domination between the two, allegedly pre-existing identities. It is only through a scientific intrusion that equilibrium is disturbed and the doctors are split in two. Typical formulations of the monster are more easily apparent in the violent tendencies of the Hulk and Hyde. The "monstrous" identity is imbued with negative connotations of miscegenation, impurity, and dangerous artificiality; its otherness is hyperbolically embodied. The transformation still makes use of the polarization of human and inhuman but emphasizes the privilege inherent in the use of a costume and the ability to dissociate from 'villainous' hybridity.

The idea of duplicity, especially internal fragmentation of identity, resonates with the monster/superhuman and invokes theories of both gender and race. Stuart Hall outlines racism as "constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories, and its typically binary system of representation constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalize the difference between belongingness and otherness" (445); this same process is being established by developing a binary between human and inhuman. However, it is also happening within the inhuman as a polarity; both the racial

Other and the superhuman experience “the internalization of the self-as-other” (445). This internalization creates the superhuman category as well as the dichotomy of the hero and villain. Within the superhuman division there is a yet another schism that reinforces the entire binary by casting the superhuman as dangerous. The villain becomes a naturalized part of the superhuman double. Much like femininity as “simultaneously Madonna and Whore... [or] the black subject: noble savage and violent avenger” (445), the superhuman is the ethical hero and the violent villain. Despite the fact that the superhuman often strengthens “normality”, the hybrid/monster aspect of the superhuman still threatens to collapse, or destabilize the system. Like the performance of drag, which denaturalizes sex and gender by highlighting their “fabricated unity” (Butler 188), the monster/hybrid also disrupts the idea of normality as well as the distinctions between hero and villain. This potential threat is managed by exploiting and privileging “acceptable” action or performance.

The overt production of the superhero and the drag queen confines difference to a specified labour that maintains, and often profits, the dominant ideology. Iris Marion Young finds homophobia contingent on the preservation of gender order, “the unambiguous settling of genders: men must be men and women must be women. [Whereas] homosexuality produces a special anxiety, then, because it seems to unsettle this gender order” (381). This anxiety and potential disruption of order is mitigated through the overt production and caricature of difference. Rather than contain it, there is greater profit from hyperbole in which the unsettling indeterminacy is replaced by something easily discernable -- specifically bypassing the uncanny valley but absorbing the beneficial/desirable attributes of that have been used in opposition of hybridity.

The acts of heroism -- highly visible due to the costume -- and drag performance subvert the uncanny valley. Much like the Gothic representation of monstrosity that harnessed hybrid uncanniness to reinforce distinction between the western self and the other, the costume allows hybridity to literally masquerade as a distinct other, preventing the confrontation with uncanniness by bisecting into two identities that exist on either side of the uncanny valley. The mask becomes a tool that flattens hybridity into two separate categories and although Bakhtin points out the transgressive potential of the grotesque (62) and the mask (40), this potential is limited to the context of the carnival, a blatantly artificial space and time that does not necessarily affect change beyond its own parameters. The drag performance is also limited to the specific context of stage performance and, as Newton shows, this does not liberate street fairies nor deconstruct the dichotomous enforcement of gender. The importance of context and hybridity is lost in neoliberal celebration of multiculturalism as well as neoconservative attempts to resituate hybridity into more familiar components as in the case of President Obama's citizenship. The superhero embodies this artificial context through the metonymic use of the costume that distills all acts to heroism. The metonymic weight of the costume smothers all other subjects such as the origins or motivations of the 'villain' as every intervention becomes a dichotomous one. The monstrous has, and still is, used to warn against inappropriate behavior or objects (people or animals) and has only been slightly reconfigured in the superhuman in warning against monstrosity while simultaneously prescribing "proper" behavior.

The superhuman, although recently marked by the costume, existed long before in epic tales such as Hercules who possessed superhuman abilities, the appearance of a man,

and performed that which was sanctioned by the gods. Hercules is also a monster in the same way as the current superhero and both the classic hero and the contemporary superhero tend to look like the dominant group. Whiteness only makes the superhero more agreeable by further distracting from the hybrid aspects that belie a monstrous identity. Compounding privilege, especially the infusion of whiteness to defuse racial hybridity, is a common practice as discussed in the introduction; it is not only dangerous to race but also other hybrid identities such as the street fairies and black transgender women who have been controversially stifled in the recent film *Stonewall* (2015) that centers around a white, gay man. Such revisions that seek to mollify the dominant group misrepresent hybridity as a singular, coherent identity; hybridity is exploited in order to make the Other more accessible, desirable, and lucrative. Good intentions aside, the use of the hybrid as an “acceptable” representation of difference exposes what David McNally warns of as the normalization of capitalism and shows how market value is squeezed from the monstrous hybrid (5). Pushing hybridity that is safe and attractive for western consumption allows for a twofold profit of hybridity and classical monstrosity/otherness that the hybrid ironically sustains. It is easy to forget that although superheroes have been represented as a group that combats a villainous “monster”, they too are monstrous. The Gothic monster turns hero through a similar manipulation of the uncanny; the Gothic parallel exists in the origin of many heroes: Captain America is produced from a serum much like compound that Dr. Jekyll creates, the scientific accident which once created “abominations” like Frankenstein’s creation and Hyde now produce Spider-man, the Flash, Static Shock, and Daredevil, even the Gothic obsession with blood, lineage, and infection that is prevalent in Dracula becomes a heroic origin as blood transfusions from

other heroes produce She-Hulk (Hulk), Spitfire (Human Torch), Beast Boy (green monkey/Miss Martian), and Whizzer (mongoose). The superhuman simply exploits polarity through the visual performance of the inhuman: the monstrous mask.

But what of those who refuse a mask? There are several superheroes that do not hide their identities, having no alter ego: The Fantastic Four, Wonder Woman, Iron Man, Aquaman, and more. Although this seems like a progressive step away from the dualism of other superhumans, it does not foster a hybrid identity that challenges the social structure of Self and Other. This group, unlike the “villains” or the street fairy, is still venerated by the public, specifically for work in preserving the dichotomy of human and inhuman. They are not Haraway’s vision of the idealized, subversive chimera, rather, a state of constant performance where the costume is fully embodied identity in itself. This perpetual exhibition of the inhuman fortifies the binary by consolidating the difference between the inhuman and human, portraying them as disparate and nonnegotiable boundaries.

However, these mask-less heroes also expose anxieties surrounding the hybrid’s ability to pass. There is a gradient of conspicuity within monstrous groups in terms of visibility and privilege in the ability to conceal hybridity. Beast and Nightcrawler are visibly marked minorities within the X-Men, an already marginalized group of mutants, and are unable to pass as ‘normal’ humans. The compounding intersections of privilege and passing are also apparent in the representation of female superheroes who are commonly costumed without a mask. Although many are able to pass as human, few bisect their identities to the same extent as male superheroes; unlike male counterparts, women in comics are not only traversing a human and inhuman binary but also one of

gender. The separation of the human and inhuman identification is secondary to an emphasis on sexuality and gender, thus prioritizing secondary sexual characteristics over inhuman ones that are represented by the mask. Normativity is also reinforced through the representation of the radical groups such as mutants known as the Brotherhood of Mutants, which is devoted to ensuring the superiority of mutants over normal humans. Aside from the typical comic-book trope of world domination, the Brotherhood is reminiscent of several activist groups such as second-wave feminist groups and the Black Panthers who valorized femininity and black identity in a similar way. However, the Brotherhood as an antagonizing force to the 'heroic' mutants of the X-Men makes use of the Hero/Villain dichotomy in order to frame Pride Movements as dangerous, radical, and as a form of terrorism that hopes to overthrow the status quo. The desirable form of hybridity, the superhero, is insidiously pushed as a heroic force of otherness that polices and suppresses hybridity while being celebrated for its alleged hybrid identity that is actually a form that reifies binary. Just as the superhero signals a similar victory through the proper use of inhumanity, the racial hybrid is myopically celebrated as proof of the progressive triumph over racism. As the X-men muzzle 'radical' dissent of the Brotherhood, the racial hybrid is similarly represented as a proper and intelligible symbol of unified politics that actually silences discussion about existing racial inequalities and labels activism as extreme and antiquated outbursts concerning a distant past.

The superhuman, specifically the superhero, reconfigures monstrosity in order to police monstrosity and maintain the status quo. Newitz's analysis of monstrous metaphors of labour *demonstrates* the moral didacticism in representing/utilizing the monster to delineate legitimate forms of labour and products. The insidious use of the monstrous as

superhuman is its moral realignment as heroic. Heroes such as Superman, Ironman, Green Lantern, The Flash, Captain America, Ms. Marvel, Captain Marvel, Aquaman, Wonderwoman, Batman, Thor, and Spiderman, all underpin a white, heteronormative, capitalist, ideal through action and appearance. It is no coincidence that most heroes are attractive, white, westerners, even if they are extraterrestrial. Even those who maintain the closest alignment to the horrific/grotesque/object characteristics of older representations of monstrosity such as deformity, inhuman appearance, and/or animalistic attributes such as Frankenstein's monster, the mythological chimera, or Dracula, work to "earn the trust" of the public through action and emphasis on characteristics that are hyperhuman such as intellect (Beast), faith (Nightcrawler), or protestant ethic (the Thing). Contrary to this, specifically in X-Men, villains are constructed through an emphasis on inhumanity that often aligns with real political opponents that are also described as monstrous: the nazi regime, eugenicists, mad scientists, despots, and serial killers. These "villains" are indicative of the hybridous notion of monstrosity and, although not dealt with by Newitz, indicate how the monster is more about the simultaneous embodiment of "disparate" qualities, than moral attribution. What makes the human monstrous are actions or qualities that are defined as inhuman through the conception and policing of humanity. This deferral of action stabilizes the category of "human" by naturalizing the desirable characteristics such as justice, reason, strength, and morality, while deferring the undesirable to the category of monstrous. Implicitly, the human who defies what is acceptable as human is no longer human; rather, he or she is a monster. However, the inhumans that resolve to embody the "best of humanity" and exclusively deploys inhuman power to maintain the boundaries of "human nature" are authorized to

cohabit with humanity, conditionally. The superhero, in exchange for protection and the regulation of “justice”, is implicitly granted an opportunity for a double life and/or an ivory tower from which to safeguard humanity while also remaining distinct from it.

Although I agree with Haraway’s thesis, that the monster offers an “argument for the pleasure in the confusion of boundaries and for responsibility in their construction” (150), the superhuman does not, by existence, disrupt anything. It has the potential but it must be invoked intentionally and through willingness to understand and apply the associated theoretical principles. Where Grant Morrison shares Haraway’s hope, attributing the success of the 2008 film, *Iron Man*, to Tony Stark’s reflection of us, the “machine-and-man cyborg we were all becoming” (378), it is too detrimental to see only the progressive aspects while ignoring Haraway’s implicit assertion that we have always been cyborgs. The superhuman has not been the redemptive reconfiguration of the monster; rather, it has revealed the problematic adherence to hybridity as an unstoppable, purely transgressive force. Humanity has not embraced the inhuman but has simply deobjectified the monster enough to create a new market to exploit, a new labour force that maintains, what Bhabha has ironically stated as untenable, “hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or ‘purity’ of cultures” (37). However, Bhabha held these claims to be indefensible only after “we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation” (37). The monstrous, the hybridous, the superhuman, are still a potent political myth, especially as the comic industry begins to produce with more reflexivity that complicates the traditional order of the superhero such as *Kingdom Come* by Alex Ross and Mark Waid, *Tower of Babel* by Mark Waid, Marvel’s Civil War and the Ultimates, *The Authority* and

Supergod by Warren Ellis, *Invincible* by Robert Kirkman, etc. There is less focus on the hero/villain dichotomy; more superhumans inhabit the space between, challenging the binary and beginning to loosen the mask. The rising popularity of former ‘villains’ and comics headlined by them, such as the *Superior Foes of Spider-man*, *Thunderboltz*, *Secret Six*, and *Suicide Squad*, help to give ‘monstrous’ characters motivations and voices that resituate monstrosity as human. It is only through the recognition and subsequent deconstruction of monstrosity that the acceptance of monstrosity as another facet of humanity, or at least not one of Otherness, that will destabilize category and hierarchy. The superhuman reveals the complex interconnection of hybridity and monstrosity, and a way in which both can be used to strengthen problematic categories of identity rather than destabilize them. Through analysis of the superhuman that resists the valorization and celebration of hybridity, it is possible to expose how privilege operates within hybrid groups and how this extends to other groups that have been oppressed as a direct result of their position on the boundaries of category such as transgender individuals, drag performers, homosexual people, and those of mixed-race.

Conclusion

Monstrosity and mixed-race are hybrids that have been both reviled and celebrated, generally in that order. The critical concession that has been made is the detachment of “evil” monstrosity from appearance. As David McNally notes, this has allowed the monster to become a symbol of “all those marginalized by dominant discourses and social values” (10). McNally continues to criticize the postmodern embrace of the monster as another “obsession with binary relations” (11) that are well intended when aligning the monster with the oppressed but problematic when the monsters in question are “multinational corporations, racist gangs or an imperial war-machine” (11). This sentiment is echoed by Richard Kearney who works through philosophical hermeneutics to deconstruct the concept of evil while attempting to maintain distinction “between benign and malign strangers” (102). McNally and Kearney wish to have their semiotic cake and eat it too, to concede that monsters are not always evil but represent evil when it is convenient. Anxieties surrounding the monstrous, mysterious Other limit and distance the threatening unknown to a specific body or a dissimilar body. Confining potential danger to the other/stranger/monster overlooks the same capacity for harm within everyone. Deploying monstrosity to stand in for our collective fears is a form of scapegoating that superficially manages the problem; this false control diverts the responsibility to confront our problems through dissociation.

Gothic representations of monstrosity frequently used monsters as warning against difference and to fortify the western “self” as blessed and heroic against the vile and malicious “other”. The Gothic monster focused upon fear of the Other that distracts from similarities, fortifying the alleged distance between human and inhuman and

subsequently justifying prejudice towards otherness. The Gothic monster represented anxieties of scientific inquiry, at odds with Christian faith and Western bourgeois decorum, hyperbolically embodied by a body visibly demarcated by disfigurement or uncanny physical heterogeneity.

Diachronically, the Gothic monster coincides with the abhorrence of mixed-race people as a breach of racial purity and hierarchy. In the same way that the monster takes on the cultural, and often racial, anxieties of its time, multiracial people are also loaded with the colonial attitudes that elevate whiteness through devaluation of all other races. Monsters such as Dracula, Frankenstein's creation, and Hyde reflect the obsession with purity that frames hybridity as "vicious, brutal, and degenerate breed of mongrels" (Young 175). This negative depiction relies on the uncanny valley to intensify and justify fear and loathing of difference. As John Black Friedman notes in his historical inquiry of medieval monsters, monsters were often confused with new cultures and ethnicities as "exotic peoples were often seen as degenerate or fallen from an earlier state of grace in the Judeo-Christian tradition; even their humanity was questioned" (2). The dispute over humanity is shared by the monstrous and those of mixed-race as a process of dehumanization that aggrandizes the western "self" against the increasingly incompatible "other".

Although Gothic representations, and even current deployments of monsters in horror films, frame monstrosity as violently different and inhuman, monsters are "disturbing hybrids" (Cohen loc 226). Reducing the hybrid to a fixed category "justifies its displacement or extermination by rendering the act heroic" (loc 256). It is crucial to recognize the monster as a hybrid and acknowledge its familiarity as much as its alleged

alterity. Recognizing hybridity as a union of ostensibly distinct elements is integral in dismantling the concept of purity and immutable category. The hybrid has been used to fortify disconnection through the aggregation of any difference into complete difference.

Robert Young reveals how this continues to resonate in contemporary racial politics:

The repressive legacy of the desiring machine of colonial history is marked in the aftermath of today's racial categories that speak of hybrid peoples, yoked-together...the names of these diasporic doubles bear witness to a disavowal of any crossing between white and black. In today's political terms any product of white and black must always be classified as black. (174)

The hybrid, rather than disturbing or overturning binary division, is used to maintain power structures imbricated within identity politics. Gothic monstrosity is thus deployed to dissociate good from evil and pure from contaminated.

However, as Young implies, the same dissociation happens through the celebratory elevation of otherness that attempts to put deep histories of oppression and hierarchy behind us. The cosmopolitan appeal of difference that has been recently placed on the shoulders of mixed-race people and monsters "allows us to feel the euphoria of consuming social change, while simultaneously forgetting our melancholic past" (Santa Ana 463). Elevation of difference often takes place through the medium of hybridity yet functions identically to scapegoating mixed-race and monstrosity as symbols of horror and cultural trespass. Both versions, though they shift the way hybridity is framed and received, maintain the structural foundations of hypodescent, through the conflation of genetics and racialized behaviours. In a troubling reversal, "yesterday's menace to a white and pure American way of life, multiraciality, in commercial culture today, implies the euphoric triumph of global capital" (462). Instead of placing the cultural anxieties into something that can be expelled or sacrificed, these anxieties are sublimated, transmuted into idolatry.

The postmodern monster offers a precursor to the wanton elevation of monstrosity while questioning and exposing the faulty representation of the monster, complicating and often inverting the category of monstrosity. However, as Philip K. Dick reveals in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, even in the absence of difference, hybridity can be utilized to control and divide; although monstrosity can serve “to operate as a mode of disruption and breakdown in the status quo” (Wells 9), it can also be manipulated to maintain it. Dick’s dystopian science fiction reveals the arbitrary constructions of race while simultaneously exhibiting how the authenticity of origin, or lack thereof, can be irrelevant in the prevention of prejudice.

Science Fiction, Horror, and Fantasy are able to speculate on the “what ifs” of human existence. What if aliens came? What if we made androids that were stronger and smarter than us? What if there are monsters that could consume us or use us to procreate? These questions seem provocative and outlandish but they have already occurred with surprising frequency and recurrence in human history. The injection of hyperbolic otherness often distracts from the deliberate distortion of the other and how this construction unilaterally benefits those who enforce it. In other words, the mutable and protean values that define humanity are used and manipulated to privilege whatever traits are in vogue and preserve the dominant group.

Where Dick creates a world that is strangled by white capitalism, the replacement of race with robotics, and the extreme stratification of upper and lower class, Octavia Butler’s *Imago* offers several inversions of horrific representations of monstrosity as well as colonial racial politics. Butler’s vision of the alien reverses ubiquitous representations of the violent alien invader popularized by H.G. Wells *War of the Worlds* and popular films

like *Independence Day*. Butler complicates the suspiciously colonial projection of the alien invasion; aliens in *Imago* rescue humanity from itself, insist upon synthesis over purity, communism over capitalism, and equality over hierarchy. The Ooankali even revise genetics in *service* of amalgamation, which has historically been manipulated in favor of eugenics movements and hypodescent (Young 105). Although Butler imagines a world reclaimed through hybridity, there are still troubling exploitations of hybridity that parallel the deployment of the cosmopolitan ambiguous racial hybrid. The hybrid-ooloi that chameleonicly alters its appearance to attract humans and bridge the two species elevates the embodiment of the uncanny in the same way that Time magazine sensationalizes the composite racial image of Eve. The major departure in Butler's use of the hybrid is that unlike current use of mixed-race that benefits global capital, the hybrid in *Imago* is integral in dismantling the stratification of capitalist systems that profited from racial segregation and taxonomy.

This thesis diachronically outlines the parallel treatment of hybridity in monstrosity and mixed-race; the Gothic period relies on the hybridity to emphasize 'unnatural' and 'evil' difference, the postmodern period complicates the category of difference itself, and finally the superhero and villain ahistorically adapt what was once monstrous into something heroic and desirable. The superhuman co-opts monstrosity in a way that celebrates monstrous difference while leaving the gothic category of monstrosity intact but largely undisclosed and not deconstructed. In other words, through racial politics, Young warns that by clumsily "deconstructing such essentialist notions of race today we may rather be repeating the past than distancing ourselves from it or providing a critique

of it” (27). The superhero and its particular manipulations, perhaps obfuscation, of the uncanny valley harness hybridity as a literal power used largely by white males.

The superhero represents the current problems associated with aggrandizing hybridity but are certainly not limited to comics. Recently an article from the *Economist* titled “Greater than the sum of its parts” on the coywolf, a hybrid species of wolf and coyote, has become very popular. The rhetoric used to inspire gleeful fascination is familiar. The article quickly glosses over the human disruption of habitat and resources that caused the breeding and also fails to comment on the contentious overhunting of wolves across the world (Shogren) or the relationship to longstanding human fear of these particular predators. However, it does contain a lengthy discussion of the rarity of successful interbreeding and the genetic exceptionalism of the coywolf in conjunction with abundant attention to how this particular hybrid is superior to its original progenitors. Sensationalizing the coywolf patently ignores “a trend of supremacism that enables speciesism and ecological degradation” (Ruzek 31). Hybridity is romanticized, exoticized, and consumed, simultaneously ignoring historical mistreatment of animals in general and maintaining human superiority over non-humans.

The article also makes use of the image of uncanny hybridity. A photo of an auburn coywolf, one paw raised gazing back toward the camera with amber eyes, is foregrounded against white snow. The distinct coloring, posture, and physiology are in striking concert, as the animal’s coat is an uncommon hue for a wolf or a coyote. However, coywolves come in several varying colors, many that are much more difficult to distinguish from coyotes or wolves. The photo used for the article deliberately harnesses the same uncanny aesthetic that is utilized to push the visually ambiguous racial hybrid as a fascinating and

attractive assemblage of features. The ambivalence toward hybridity that traditionally framed the uncanny as abject difference is now revised to be of an extraordinary aesthetic.

The highly aesthetic representation of the coywolf stands in stark contrast to another hybrid animal that was presented in much more classically monstrous terms only a few years prior: the hybrid wild pig or the Russian Boar. Although the wild pig is similarly more robust, comparatively larger, and even referred to as a “super hog” (Allshouse), its superlative status is utilized to position this particular hybrid as a dangerous menace that must be exterminated. The juxtaposition of the coywolf and the hybrid pig signal the arbitrary and mutable quality of hybridity itself; it also exposes how hybridity does not dismantle the categories that produce it but rather confirms them by using each category to negotiate the value of the assemblage based on its performance in relation to the individual part. The malleability revealed by dissecting hybridity presents the coywolf as a success coupling and a heroic, superior life form while the villainous “super hog” is ecologically and physically dangerous, on the cusp of displacing humans. The way in which these hybrids are detached from a larger, eco-historical context ignores the wanton hunting of the grey wolf that left them endangered (Shogren) as well as the commercial value of pigs for literal human consumption. This distracting use of hybridity is the same process of animal-centered empathy used to police androids in Dick’s novel; similarly, human history of animal slaughter, consumption, poaching, and apathy that existed prior to nuclear fallout that decimates the animal population in the novel, is also deliberately displaced in a way that privileges humanity at each turn.

The changing reception of hybridity, the human and non-human binary, and the cosmopolitan appeal and consumption of hybridity leaves politics of otherness intact,

obscured, and historically erased. Although the treatment of race and alterity has changed immensely, its foundations remain in subtle but powerful ways. Although the representation of monsters and those of mixed-race parallel each other, they increasingly overlap in the racial metaphors played out through monstrosity and the replacement of monsters by white western males defending global capitalism. Monstrosity and racial hybridity share a polymorphous “origin”; without a constant awareness of the very artificiality of category itself *and also* the material reality it has produced, hybridity will maintain and reproduce the very categorical power structures it allegedly challenges.

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