

THE BESIEGED EGO

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by

Caroline Deborah Ruddell

Department of Film and TV, School of Arts
Brunel University

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Abstract

'The Besieged Ego' critically appraises the representation, or mediation, of identity in contemporary film and television shows through a thorough analysis of split and fragmentary characters. As I show, the prevalence of non-autonomous characters in horror, fantasy and psychological based film and television products calls into question the very concept of a unified, 'knowable' identity that can be traced progressively through time with continuity.

I use psychoanalysis as an interpretive tool and model in order to effectively understand representations of identity that are not 'whole'; psychoanalysis arguably allows for, and engages with, a splintered or fractured identity as its very premise lies in unknowable psychical forces such as the unconscious. The concept of 'ego' is particularly useful as a concept through which to analyse onscreen representations of identity; the differing definitions of Freud's ego (realist and narcissistic) alongside Lacan's delusional ego allow for an understanding of identity that shifts and is deeply enigmatic, unknowable and in essence confusing. However, representations of split identities can only be fully examined in light of social and cultural contexts; I therefore employ an eclectic range of approaches and methodologies throughout the thesis in order to ascertain what is at stake in the representation and meaning of the double.

The form of the double, and cinematic modes and rhetorics used to denote fragmentary identity, is addressed in the thesis through a detailed analysis of texts drawn from a range of industrial and cultural contexts. The double carries significant cultural meanings about what it means to be 'human' and the experience of identity as a gendered individual; I argue that the double, or split identity, has become a 'new myth' that expresses in fictional form our problematic experience of the world as a social, and supposedly whole and autonomous, subject.

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The Besieged Ego

Introduction

Imaginations have consistently been ensnared by the mystery and magic afforded by the supernatural in the realm of fantasy and horror. Fascination with the supernatural occurs throughout various cultures, locations and history; imaginary figures such as the vampire, witch, werewolf, ghost or doppelgänger have a special power to lure our interest. While these figures might appear incongruous in the high-tech contemporary world they are nonetheless featured regularly in various forms of popular culture. I argue in this thesis that such figures do important cultural work by providing the imaginative means of testing rationality, sensing the boundaries of identity and working out what makes us 'human'. All supernatural figures potentially endanger human identity; either through threat to the mental or physical; through replication, annihilation or even seduction (the vampire, for example, seduces victims to their death). From the Ancient Greeks' preoccupation with the Gods, to Grimms' fairy tales through to contemporary television series, themes that hinge on the 'unknowable' and irrational, and narratives that test the boundaries of the 'human' hold a continual allure for storytellers and their audience. As oral and written tales of Gods and monsters inform flights of the imagination, so cinema has the capacity to visually realise these stories for us. It is the cinema's capacity for illusion and spectacle that provides the perfect forum for playing out narratives that centre on fantastic and magical events and figures; narratives that potentially provide escape from the prosaic qualities of everyday existence. While in the context of fantasy, horror and the supernatural, figures such as the vampire or werewolf are perhaps the most well known as anti-heroes, it is the double or doppelgänger who increasingly frequents the screen in contemporary times. How is the representation of human identity disrupted by such figures onscreen? Or perhaps identity is reinforced by the representation of the 'non-human'? How is identity, subjectivity and the 'human' represented or mediated onscreen through a split between the 'human' and the 'non-human'; between a protagonist and their double? This thesis aims to provide

a thorough analysis of split characters in film and television in order to ascertain what is at stake in the representation and meaning of characters that have lost a sense of wholeness and autonomy in fantasy, horror and psychologically-based texts.

Academic studies of film and television have often focused on psychological horror and fantasy based themes, narratives and characters, particularly in areas such as psychoanalysis, gender studies and queer theory. What frequently unites such studies is regard to these genres' preoccupation with 'otherness' which is rendered literally through the figure of the monster. A commonly cited example is Robin Wood's discussion of the role of the 'return of the repressed' in the American horror film (1986). He suggests that the repressed continually strives to return and is embodied in the figure of the monster. Following Wood's logic, the monster as 'other' is therefore representative of that which society represses¹, some examples of which are women, children, homosexuality etc; for Wood the monster as the repressed 'other' has a 'normative' function because the monster is usually despatched at the close of the narrative. In a similar line of enquiry Harry Benshoff (1997) argues that the monster as 'other' in horror can be seen as an allusive representation of homosexuality. Benshoff suggests that in some horror films 'homosexuality becomes a subtle but undoubtedly present signifier which usually serves to characterize the villain or monster' (Benshoff, 1997: 15). Analysis of horror, psychological-horror and fantasy is therefore focused often on the 'otherness' that the monstrous represents; often 'otherness' is discussed in terms of the complex meanings involved in the representation of gender identity, sexuality and the body; many critics have argued that the monster as 'other' is polarised with the 'human' of the protagonists. However, I contend that many of the existing works on the relationships between horror, gender and sexuality do not evaluate in

¹ Wood refers to both Freud's work on repression and also to a Marxist view of basic and surplus repression, drawing on these he suggests that society can only exist by repressing on a basic level, however surplus repression is employed by the dominant order to ensure its position as the dominant order, i.e. by keeping minority groups or 'Others' in 'their place', suppressed by the dominant discourse (Wood, 1986).

sufficient detail what is at stake in representations of identity in genres such as horror.

Much of the existing work on horror and gender touches on the fundamental question of what it means to be human and how human identity is experienced; such discussions often only implicitly consider identity and skirt around the rather difficult, although central, question of 'humanness'. It seems logical that academic debates about film and television have tended to avoid this central question of identity as fantasy; horror and psychological-based narratives themselves are often only implicitly concerned with the 'human condition'. In horror and fantasy based genres definitions and explorations of what it means to be human are played out through a sharp contrast with what it means *not* to be human, however this distinction is usually within the context of a more central storyline. For example in *X-Men* (Bryan Singer, 2000, USA) a chasm between the human and non-human is apparent in the 'mutant' characters being shunned by many of the human characters; there is also a split between the mutant characters' human façade and their 'true' superhuman status. However, the distinction between the human and non-human appears in the shadow of other storylines and wider narrative arcs; in *X-Men* the central narrative arc consists of the superheroes' battle with a terrorist organisation led by villain Magneto (Ian McKellen). In film and television, the implications of the split between the human and the non-human also frequently lurk in the subtext; the vampire, for example, can be seen as a shadow to human characters but a viewer can easily disavow such a reading even if academics and critics may be quick to pull the subtext to the foreground.

I argue that increasingly a split between the human and the non-human takes centre stage in many horror, psychological horror and fantasy-based narratives. For example, in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997 – 2003, USA) 'bad' Willow's sadistic turn as a black magic addict features as a major

storyline in season six. Her transformation is alarming and fascinating to watch both because of her change in appearance and because she seems to have lost any compassion or empathy for friend or foe alike. In simple terms it is bad Willow's loss of humanity and 'goodness' that sets her up in complete contrast to her usually lovable, caring and very human, vulnerable character. Bad Willow works to highlight Willow's customary humanity and to highlight the unstable nature of identity that provides a central theme and narrative driver of shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, where characters often face opposing or shadow 'selves'. In film supernatural figures in general (such as vampires or werewolves) often revel in the lack of boundaries that define the 'human' and 'humanity'; their contrast to the human characters is a necessary axis that many horror-driven narratives use to create dramatic tension. Spectacle, then, is often produced by the (personal or) internal psychology of characters and their inter-relationships (or intra-relationships in the case of split characters), and in addition provides a means of displaying acting skill. Split characters also key into cultural concerns and anxieties around fundamental definitions of who we are. Increasingly the split between a character and their double, or fragmentary identity, is the central narrative drive of many horror and psychological based narratives. The texts discussed in this thesis display split identity as either the central theme and narrative drive, or as one of the pivotal story arcs of a given film or television show; all texts explicitly represent fragmentary identity through a prominent character.

Representations of identity are realised in film and television primarily through characters; identity in relation to most characters is figured as the representation of a (human) 'self'. While I am not concerned with spectatorship in this thesis, I maintain that the 'humanness' or the 'self' that characters represent is integral to how viewers identify, and this identification plays a core role in providing viewer pleasure. However, film and television representations of identity, of the 'self', are, for the most part, contradictory; arguably, figures such as the action hero are near perfect versions of the human, yet other genres posit a different view of identity altogether. Across

genres character identity is played out in many different ways: in mainstream genres the hero is primarily fully in charge of his² narrative, driving the action forward just as Laura Mulvey discusses in relation to classical Hollywood (Mulvey, 1989). What is often most apparent about lead characters in many mainstream genres is that they are autonomous, in control of their body's pain and action to the point of being almost 'inhuman'. For example, the stunts and exploits accomplished by characters such as John McClane (Bruce Willis) in *Die Hard* (John McTiernan, 1988, USA) are achieved through incredible body strength, intelligence, ingenuity and wit as well as a little luck: these are attributes not many could claim ownership over (not over all at least). Yet, the 'human' attributes of such a character as McClane is evident in the vulnerability of his personal life; his wife has left him to pursue a successful career leaving him feel unwanted. Characters such as John McClane are familiar in mainstream film, and most viewers are accustomed to watching incredible (near-perfect) versions of 'humanness' onscreen. These 'ideal' characters certainly provide one of the pleasures in watching cinema; they bolster a collective audience sense of empowerment. Perhaps as viewers we feel strengthened through aligning ourselves with such powerful and daring figures³.

It can be useful to view hero characters (such as McClane) in light of Freud's notion of 'wish fulfilment'⁴ (Freud, 1900); such characters play out many hero qualities which the audience can gain pleasure from if they identify with characters such as McClane. Ideal characters are not quite so common in horror, fantasy and psychological-based genres however. The Slasher sub-genre can lay claim to the 'final girl' who, while not being fully in charge of her destiny does usually manage, in the end, to thwart the killer and save

² Traditionally lead characters in 'physical' genres (such as the action or western film) are male, although over recent years female protagonists have featured more in the action genre.

³ I am drawing on Mulvey here who argues that Classical Hollywood provides a protagonist who is empowering for the audience to identify with. The spectator identifies with the hero who drives the narrative forward; she specifically refers to the star system as creating ego ideals which masquerade as 'normal' people (Mulvey, 1989)

⁴ Freud discusses 'wish fulfilment' in relation to dreams.

herself⁵. Yet it is far more likely that psychological-horrors and dramas posit character identity as unstable, changeable and ultimately split. This is a far cry from the capable characters (who determine their own destinies) depicted in many films, particularly in 'physical' genres such as the action film and the western.

A central plank of this thesis is that psychoanalysis can further our understanding of the meanings at work in dualistic and fragmentary characters, particularly as psychoanalytic concepts are often actually used in the horror and fantasy, psychologically-based genres I am focusing on. Since the 1970s psychoanalysis has been an academically sanctioned mode for analysing film and television texts. As a framework it has been used to discuss many aspects of film debate from issues around the representation of gender to understanding how we as spectators engage with screen-based fictions. Film theorists and academics have used psychoanalysis as a means of understanding the gender economies at work in horror from the 'monstrous-feminine' (Creed, 1993) to the 'hyper-masculine' (Krzywinska, 2000)⁶. Psychoanalysis as a tool for understanding economies of gender in cinema has been the cause of fascination, argument and debate: penis envy

⁵ In *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* Carol J. Clover suggests that a staple of the Slasher film is the 'final girl' who manages to escape the attacks of the killers. Key examples are Laurie in *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978, USA), and Sally in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974, USA) (Clover, 1992).

⁶ Barbara Creed argues that in the horror film women are often represented as the 'monstrous-feminine' in the form of the witch, possessed body, vampire, archaic mother etc. Creed pursues several lines of enquiry in analysing the representation of women in horror using psychoanalytic concepts such as Kristeva's abjection theory (Creed, 1993). One of Creed's prominent arguments follows Carol J. Clover's view that the possession film can be regarded as feminine. Clover argues this in relation to the idea that the female body has inner places, or 'internal space' that can be possessed (Clover, 1992: 111-2). Tanya Krzywinska opposes this view of the possession film as feminine, as she argues that such films depict the possession of both male and female bodies. Her central argument, however, is that the possession film is governed by the possessing force, which Krzywinska argues is a 'demon daddy' or 'an (imagined) archaic and primal masculinity' (Krzywinska, 2000: 36). She goes on to suggest that '[a]lthough these films [possession films] raise questions about morality, identity, rationality, faith and evolutionary shifts, they do so under the aegis of an embodied fearsome, castratory primal father. Whatever shape the possession takes, the demonic invader is rendered as hyper-masculine, and therefore it is a mistake to call the possession film a "feminine" form' (ibid: 66).

conflicts with womb envy⁷; the types of power offered by masculine and the feminine positions; the economies of binary oppositions and active/passive relationships⁸. Some theorists have used psychoanalysis to analyse how the body is represented and how such representations key into cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity⁹. Along the way questions are posed about how the subject is constructed or the social subject¹⁰, and how this might affect different types of spectatorship¹¹. While these areas of interest are clearly useful in attempts to understand cinema, psychoanalysis as a method for analysing cinema has been attacked as both elitist and partial in its views. It is my intention to show that psychoanalysis is still a valid mode of thinking through issues of identity and representation in audio-visual media.

The title of this thesis refers to a psychical projection of 'self' that frequently comes under attack, and this can be viewed in two ways. Firstly, in

⁷ Freud argued that girls experienced 'penis envy' in the process of realising the difference between the sexes. Firstly the young girl realises that she does not possess a penis and wishes to have one (Freud, 1925). Later, during the Oedipal phase, the girl either wishes to have the penis in the form of sexual intercourse or in the form of having a child (Freud, 1917a: 301).

Melanie Klein, however, adds to this argument with her view of womb-envy, which operates in a similar fashion to Freud's view of penis envy. For Klein, the boy is jealous of the girl's ability to give birth to and nurture children. Klein argues: 'As in the castration complex of girls, so in the femininity complex of the male, there is at bottom the frustrated desire for a special organ. The tendencies to steal and destroy are concerned with the organs of conception, pregnancy and parturition, which the boy assumes to exist in the womb...' (Klein, 1986: 74).

⁸ See Laura Mulvey's highly influential article, entitled 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', for more on this (Mulvey, 1989).

⁹ Mulvey's arguments generated a wealth of debate in the field of psychoanalysis and the representation of gender in the cinema; most arguments are based around sexual difference or the binary oppositions of masculine/feminine. Many arguments could be discussed here but it is worth noting that work has also been done on the male body as spectacle, as well as the wealth of feminist work (such as Mulvey's) on woman as object. See for example, Richard Dyer argues in relation to the male pin-up, or Steve Neale who also writes on the subject of 'Masculinity as Spectacle', and agrees with Mulvey that the governing 'look' in the cinema is male (in mainstream film) (1992).

¹⁰ Debates about the social subject attempted to move away from the attention that psychoanalytic film theory paid to sexual difference or the binary of masculine/feminine. Some concerns are race and class, as well as sexual preference. It seemed evident after the Screen debate of the 70s and 80s that 'difference' also needed discussing in other areas than just the sexual.

¹¹ For example, see Christian Metz and Jean-Louis Baudry for arguments relating to spectatorship; they analyse the 'cinematic apparatus' in relation to how a spectator might be implicated in how the cinema 'works' (Metz, 1982, and discussed by Creed, 1998). Key to apparatus theory is that the cinema (mainstream), with its seamless structures and continuity editing, provides a 'covering over' of how subjectivity is actually experienced as non-unified.

psychoanalytic theory the ego is consistently besieged, and secondly the protagonists (whom we can view as 'egos', as I shall go onto argue) that frequent horror and psychological-based texts have likewise been plagued by a number of hostile forces. The concept of 'ego' derives from the Latin word meaning 'I' and is used commonly in the general context of someone having a rather high opinion of her/himself; calling someone an egomaniac for example. It seems probable then, that our ego is who we see as ourselves. If someone has too big an ego they overvalue themselves, and if someone has no ego they must therefore have a low opinion of themselves. The Oxford English Dictionary explains ego as 'self' or 'self-esteem' (Hawkins, 1988: 157); an aspect then, that we will apparently never have in common with another, it is taken often to refer to the purely personal, or at least what *feels* personal. Sherif and Cantril suggest that the word 'ego' has been proposed by some as 'a substitute for the "soul"' (Sherif & Cantril, 1947: 92), which further suggests individualist connotations and relates therefore to cultures where individualism is celebrated or valued. By looking at the characters Angel and Spike in the popular television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* (1999 – 2004, USA), such a substitution would fall in with both characters acquiring a soul and becoming 'good'. As villainous vampires without souls, Angel and Spike are ruled by narcissism and the pleasure principle and therefore the id, but after gaining souls they become ruled by the reality principle and which changes the nature of their ego. It seems reasonable that the ego can be considered connected to values placed on individualism and underlies the way that we experience identity. However, terms such as egomaniac or egotist suggest that ego is not only how we perceive ourselves, but also links to how we wish to be seen by others or how others experience us.

The concept of ego is central to this thesis as it provides a means of understanding identity; however it is important to say that the ego in psychoanalytic discourse (which is largely conscious) is only one part of psychical functioning, with other elements playing a role in the equation. One of the creative and tantalising ideas of psychoanalytic thought is that we may

not really know who we are. Psychoanalytic models of the psyche show that the ego is a device that works to disavow the more truthfully fragmented experience of subjectivity and identity. Media has a symbiotic relationship with culture and it is my intention to show that the representations of identity in horror, fantasy and psychological genres resonate with issues that surround identity as a cultural construction, as it is actually experienced. This thesis aims to determine how (the concept of) a sense of identity is mediated in film and television; the model of ego is instrumental as it allows us to understand the fragmentary nature of identity and provides a framework for analysing representations of 'self' that are constantly and dynamically both undermined (besieged) and reinforced through media representations.

'The Besieged Ego' is a body of work seeking to explore how and why the psyche is so often represented as split in contemporary psychological horror-based audio-visual texts. Core to the thesis is the idea that psychical splitness is inherent to psychoanalytic understandings of the psyche, this is floridly apparent in Jacques Lacan's work. Jacques-Alain Miller describes succinctly 'the Lacanian "self": it is intimately related to self-punishment. In other words, it has nothing to do with unity, harmony, equilibrium, or enjoyment. Rather, it is already a divided self' (Miller, 1996: 8). I also look to Sigmund Freud and the splitting of the psyche into interweaving processes (id, ego and superego), or conscious / unconscious. Sigmund Freud, often labelled the 'father of psychoanalysis', acted as a starting point for some of the main concepts of psychoanalysis. One of his main and well-known concepts was his use of the terms the id, ego and superego, and he developed a system for mapping mental functioning that revolves around these three processes. Based on the general meaning of the ego, Freud described the function of ego as the 'coherent organization of mental processes' (Freud, 1923b: 355), essentially the (realist) ego mediates between the id, superego and external reality. As mediator it constantly wages a battle between the internal and external, the id and reality (Freud, 1923b). Freud had two different versions of the ego, which both Elizabeth Grosz and Susan Hayward refer to as the 'realist ego' and the 'narcissistic

ego' (Grosz, 1990: 24; Hayward, 2000: 288). As Grosz points out, Freud did not define or even acknowledge the two versions but simply discusses the ego in different ways throughout his writings.

According to Grosz, the realist ego is that ego that is in control and is equated by Freud to the rider of a horse, steering its path (Grosz, 1990: 25). The narcissistic ego is an ego that takes up itself, or part of itself, as love-object, or libidinal object, it loses touch with reality to a degree and cannot be considered autonomous in the way that the realist ego can (ibid: 28-31)¹². Chapter One will elaborate on this question of the two egos and subjectivity, while Chapter Two examines this in terms of representation, but it should be noted that the narcissistic ego is the ego that Lacan takes up in his theory of psychoanalysis. There is no one ego, both in terms of the various psychoanalytic theories, within which the ego is discussed, as well as the fact that it itself is split; the ego continually comes under attack, is besieged, fragmented, dissolved or in conflict. The ego can also be considered as the centre of 'drama' in terms of mental functioning, and can in this sense be useful for analysing allegorical, metaphorical and literal formations. What it means to be 'human' or the idea of 'self' is continually blurred with the perception of 'ego' in psychoanalytic thought. The ego, however, is not purely self; it is that part of the self that we are aware of and is connected to reality and society in many psychological accounts. In short, largely due to the theorisation of the ego, psychoanalysis is the only discourse that provides a theory of identity as fragmentary and problematic; it is therefore imperative to consider psychoanalysis as a creative tool in the study of fragmentary identity in fiction-based media.

¹² The realist ego is problematic in its relation to subjectivity and desire: 'The question becomes, if it [realist ego] is moderating between the id and its needs and reality how can the realist ego type take part in its own sexual instincts, be part of its subjectivity? How can it be a unified subject if it is the rational moderator standing outside, aloof, from the notion of desire?' (Hayward, 2000: 289). The answer is in the notion of the narcissistic ego that is, as Grosz describes, its own love object and linked to infantile narcissism. The narcissistic ego is 'not the unified subject' (as it appears to be in the form of the realist ego) but is divided' (ibid: 289).

Division and splitting is core to psychoanalytical discourse, with emphasis placed on the non-united psyche or discord between psychological processes. This plays an important role in understanding identification and fetishism in film. In 'The Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence' Freud suggests that the male ego splits through the disavowal of fear of castration, and fetishism is a 'covering over' of this psychological process (Freud, 1940 [1938]: 461-464). This is just one example of the many ways that psychoanalytic theory in general alludes to a 'self' that is not whole, autonomous and fully conscious of its psychological processes. In terms of representation split identities are, however, now worthy of a deeper exploration as a theme and a narrative form. This thesis demonstrates that the concept of 'ego', which is key in psychoanalytic thought to a *sense* of autonomous identity, is played out in film and television as a representation of 'self' (however problematic this may be theoretically); it is therefore necessary to ascertain exactly how identity is figured in film representations through a thorough examination of the ego as a literal rendering of selfhood. The meanings at play that are behind images of splitting and experiences of fragmentariness point to culturally specific anxieties and concerns that circulate issues of identity formation.

The concept of 'ego' is of significance as it often implies a sense of self (as noted above), which is to some extent misleading. Importantly, Freud himself likened the ego to the hero in narrative (Freud, 1908 [1907]); I suggest that the autonomous identity of this hero/ego is however often undermined in much film and literature. The conflating of hero, self and ego (and a sense of identity) can give us key insight into the multiple meanings at play in terms of identity; this conflation acknowledges that identity is transient, shifting and that identity is experienced differently at different times. The representation of identity on these terms (appraised through the framework of ego and its different meanings) will be explored in Chapter Two by analysing *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

As I will show, horror and psychological-based texts often literalise both the realist and narcissistic ego under attack; the 'ego' or hero/heroine often shifts between being in control of events and becoming besieged through being attacked by monsters or villains. Commonly the hero/ine defeats the monster or villain and goes back to 'normality' with, however, an awareness of this 'other'¹³. A splitting of the psyche, however, has become far more apparent in recent psychological horror-based film texts from a range of cinemas; a significant example is *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, but it is a trope common to all the texts I will be discussing throughout the thesis. Has the monstrous figure familiar to many horror fans been replaced with a bodily form that is harder to distinguish from the protagonist/ourselves?

For example Frankenstein's monster is a physically gruesome being; while he may resemble humankind he does not do so sufficiently enough to 'pass' in society without being noticed. Vampires, as in *Near Dark* (Kathryn Bigelow, 1987, USA) for example, appear as human but their monstrosity is apparent in their act of drinking blood and often in a change of facial appearance and superhuman strength seen, for example, in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*. Is the double also a monstrous figure or does the more exaggerated 'human' element of a doppelgänger remove any horrific element? Perhaps the constraints of the generic context of horror and psychological genres insist that the double be a sinister figure? Is the double intrinsically linked to both the doubled character and the spectator through identification? (For example, in *Fight Club* [David Fincher, 1999,

¹³ I am using 'other' here in the Lacanian sense of *autre* or other (*objet [petit] a*), in the sense that this other is not actually 'other' at all as it is bound to the ego, or is a reflection of the ego '- the ego is always an *alter-ego*' (Lacan, 1988b: 321) [italics in original], this other is different from Other (determined by the capital 'O' or 'A' as in *autre / Autre*), which Lacan terms as 'radical' and the 'real pole of the subjective relation' (ibid: 321). Lacan later terms the *objet (petit) a* as 'the object of desire which we seek in the other' (Evans, 1996: 125), it is the 'thing' of desire sought; it motivates desire (ibid: 125). The monster in horror can often be seen as a reflection of the hero or protagonist, and can in this sense invoke the *objet (petit) a*, the monster can also be seen as the locus of desire in horror (particularly figures such as Dracula): a desire that is 'different'.

Germany/USA] we are encouraged to identify with Tyler as well as narrator). Does the double played as 'human' rather than 'monster' in some instances of splitting render them harder to recognise as potentially villainous?

Andrew J. Webber argues:

The *doppelgänger* – innocently realistic in its apparent shape – is thus none the less akin to the monstrosity of such Gothic experiments in the miscreation of subjectivity as those of Jekyll or Frankenstein. If the double is both a triumph of mimesis and a monster, then there can be no easy distinction between subjectivity according to the reality principle and the fantastic forms of its altered states...The monster cannot be expressly distinguished from normal forms (Webber, 1996: 7)

Webber's argument expresses the difficulty in the recognition of the double as both human *and* monster, however doubles are not always monstrous. For example, an ego-ideal such as Tyler (Brad Pitt) in *Fight Club* is harder to identify as 'other' precisely because he is not monstrous, he is attractive and seductive; in fact the very premise for Tyler's existence lies in the fact that he is presented as ideal-ego. Where the double is played as 'evil', as for example in *Twins of Evil* (John Hough, 1971, GB), recognising the monster visually is problematic because the evil twin in this case is human; moreover, she continually gets mistaken for her good and virtuous sister – making therefore for much of the dramatic tension in the film. The double is increasingly prevalent in media; contemporary audio-visual texts revel in splitting characters literally down the middle. The representation of fragmentary character identity within contemporary film and television suggests self-awareness in the media industry in relation to psychoanalytical issues. The regular viewer of contemporary fantasy and psychological horror films is adept at recognising split psyches, *doppelgängers* and characters that mutate into different characters.

It is possible to see this trend as a form of replications through generic convention, and perhaps this 'knowing the rules' has a resonance that

speaks of self-referentiality and intertextuality in the recent discussion about postmodernism in the horror film, as Andrew Syder suggests:

Both postmodern theory and the horror genre are fundamentally concerned with parallel questions about how we perceive and make sense of the world around us, and as such both offer comparable models for ordering the knowledge we possess about the external world (Syder, 2002: 79)

Syder highlights the fact that postmodernism and the horror genre assist in an understanding of the 'external world'. Arguably, however, both postmodernism and the horror genre aim to make sense of our knowledge of the internal (psychical) world also (as well as the relationship between the external and the internal). In terms of a besieged ego, fragmentation of the psyche is a key criterion for this so-called 'postmodern' condition in audio-visual texts, as it highlights the role of desire and difficulty in making sense of both the external world and ourselves. Arguably it is mediations of the 'postmodern subject' that become the focus of horror and psychological genres; the postmodern subject contrasts to a humanist or modernist subject where a sovereign identity is central to subjectivity and governed by reason¹⁴. Rather the postmodern subject is in constant flux, and has no central mainstay of identity; rather than being self-governing, the subject 'is to be regarded as a process in a continual state of dissolution...' (Sim [2001: 366-7] quoted in Malpas, 2005: 57).

In horror, fantasy and psychological genres character identity is often 'in trouble' in that unknowable forces attack a (delusional) sense of core

¹⁴ In Humanist or Modernist thought, subjectivity is often understood in terms of a self-governing subject who can reason and has a unified identity that is central to his/her experience of the world. For example, Descartes believed that by stripping away all ideas and information that he had learnt, he was left with only his conscious act of thinking, which for Descartes proved that knowledge and experience can only be found through a central core of 'I', or an essence of soul, or even God. Simon Malpas suggests:

Stated in its more familiar terms, 'I think, therefore I am', Descartes' argument finds within human experience a principle that acts as the basis for a systematic knowledge of the world. Irrespective of how deluded or false one's ideas of the world might be, the fact that one is thinking at all serves to prove that one exists' (Malpas, 2005: 59)

Both postmodern theory and psychoanalysis question the notion of a subject that is all-rational and possesses a unified identity; the very act of thinking (which for Decartes proves an inner core of identity), feeling or acting in psychoanalytic thought might be the result of unknowable forces such as the repressed returning to haunt the subject.

identity. An example is the characters in *Lost Highway* (David Lynch, 1997, France/USA), who experience body swapping and have carried out actions they have no knowledge or memory of; here identity is far from sovereign just as it is in postmodernist definitions of the subject¹⁵. Psychological splitness has an important dramatic resonance in film, and is a useful device for developing tension and enigma within the contemporary psychological horror-based text. However, it also has a further reverberation in terms of a wider cultural context in that it relays fears and anxieties in modern culture and media, particularly when considering gender and the formation of identity: both internal and external conflicts are therefore mediated in a cultural and fictional realm.

In psychological and fantasy-based genres an array of characters are represented as fragmentary and non-autonomous; the frequency with which viewers are presented with split characters calls for a study that gives thorough examination of dualistic identities or characters that display two or more personalities. The films and television shows discussed in this thesis centre on primary characters that are fundamentally and irrevocably split. To give a few examples (of many), the villainous Green Goblin (Willem Dafoe) in *Spiderman* (Sam Raimi, 2002, USA) takes over Norman's (also Willem Dafoe) mind and body drowning out any sense of who he used to be. This is made clear by Norman initially forgetting what has taken place when for

¹⁵ According to Malpas, 'the way in which the idea of identity as a performance and the impact of the technological innovations associated with postmodernity produce even more radical assaults on modern subjectivity.' (2005: 74). For Malpas postmodernism interacts with the subject firstly through notions of performance (he draws on Judith Butler and her arguments regarding gender as a performance); identity is therefore not 'core' but taken on through cultural and social interactions. Identity and interactions with technology are key to the notion of a postmodern subject, he argues: 'The cultural productions that engage with the developments and challenges of science and technology frequently present pictures of a future in which human subjectivity and identity have become profoundly problematic' (ibid: 75). Discussing films such as *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982, USA), he goes on to say '[e]ach of these films presents a vision of the future in which the boundaries between reality and fantasy, the human and the machine, have become difficult to identify and must continually be renegotiated' (ibid: 75). Fragmentation and the dissolving of boundaries therefore seem imperative to postmodern definitions of the modern subject. Importantly, this can be seen in a positive light; a moving away from binaries and structured notions of identity (for example gender as masculine/feminine) can introduce multiplicity and perhaps freedom from boundaries, which is rendered possible through the fragmentary postmodern subject (ibid: 77/78).

periods of time his body is taken over by the Green Goblin. The splitting of the character (and Norman's realisation) is played out through a "mirror scene" where the Green Goblin (who is also Norman) literally sneaks up on his own mirror image. The use of the mirror reflection emphasises the fact that the character's identity is being split into two and that Norman will finally be obliterated by the supernatural presence (evident in the mirror reflection) of the Green Goblin. This taking over of a body by another being is a form of possession, which is often used as a narrative in films that centre on the supernatural. Mirrors (which I will show are often utilised to suggest a character's psyche is fragile) are also used in an astonishingly wide variety of film and television genre, from film noir to martial arts, from depicting psychological instability to hyper-beautiful images of characters (this will also be discussed in Chapter Three). Mirroring is a key idea in this thesis; visually mirrors often fragment a character literally in the frame, and this will be addressed in close detail in Chapter Three.

As another form of 'mirroring' or 'shadowing' (which works in terms of binary lives) twins are sometimes the centre of narratives that explore issues of identity. An example is *Twins of Evil* where one twin is depicted as initially curious and mischievous and finally positively vampiric and evil; the second twin is consistently virtuous and innocent. To use a contrasting example, twins were also used in the first episode of *Sea of Souls* (BBC 1, broadcast 2nd February 2004), which again situated one twin as good and the second twin as evil; she succeeds in stealing her sister's husband (and life in general) by taking over her identity. Texts that utilise twins as a narrative theme often invoke a psychological reading of one character that has been split into two binary lives; it is therefore possible to read twins as one character in psychological-based genres. Identity is not always presented as dualistic however; a film such as *Identity* (James Mangold, 2003, USA) uses many different characters to play out the psychic drama of one psycho-killer's mind.

The Lord of the Rings (1954) provides a dualistic representation of the character of Gollum; although he is posited as one character he can be read as two personalities. Gollum is written as a schizophrenic, dualistic character by J.R.R. Tolkien: the creature incorporates the hateful and venomous Gollum but also the rather pitiful Sméagol. The recent film trilogy, which are based on the books (*The Fellowship of the Ring* [Peter Jackson, 2001, New Zealand/USA], *The Two Towers* [Peter Jackson, 2002, New Zealand/USA], *The Return of the King* [Peter Jackson, 2003, USA/New Zealand/Germany]), illustrate Gollum's dualism through the use of reflections in water and creative shot / reverse shot techniques (usually deployed for conversation between two characters), giving the impression that Gollum is not one but two. While dualistic or fragmentary characters seem to be most common in fantasy, horror and psychologically-based texts, it is evident that such characters exist across a range of genres as diverse as art-independent film (for example *Adaptation* and *Being John Malkovich* [Spike Jonze, 2002 and 1999 respectively, USA]) and comedy (such as *Stuck On You* [Bobby Farrelly and Peter Farrelly, 2003, USA], *The Nutty Professor* [Tom Shadyac, 1996, USA] and *Me, Myself and Irene* [Bobby Farrelly and Peter Farrelly, 2000, USA]).

I do not wish to be exhaustive in my approach to split identity in the cinema; I have chosen texts that are exemplary of certain aspects of splitting in film and television (which will be explored in the main body of the thesis). Splitting as a theme and narrative drive is evident across a variety of genres (as noted above), as well as national cinemas. For example, clearly there is room to explore splitting in a genre such as comedy; such films often tend to be vehicles for actors such as Jim Carrey or Eddie Murphy to display their comic talents through playing a variety of characters. The texts examined in this thesis, however, all explore split identity as a *traumatic* experience as well as generally providing a literal double through supernatural means; such

texts usually fall into the genres of fantasy, horror and psychologically-based texts, which is my rationale for concentrating on such genres¹⁶.

Are split characters a dramatic device that provides narrative structure as well as visual spectacle? Is the range and variety of texts that deal with unstable identities through splitting testimony to the fact that meanings are not fixed in terms of identity representation in media, particularly across genres? One might expect that in a Hammer horror production twins will be split between good and evil as the horror genre is likely to make full use of a trope that will lend it structure and spectacle (the polarisation of good / evil mapped on to twin characters). The polarisation of good and evil in Hammer horror films (as well as many other Western horror films) begs the question of whether Western ideology and morality hinge around Manichaeism¹⁷? However, as I have already suggested, the schism between good and evil is not the case in representations of all split characters in film and television, at times ideal alter egos are created to 'assist' a character in their failures, as in *Fight Club*, *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976, USA) and *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (Michael Cohn, 1997, USA) (also the focus of Chapter Three).

How is identity represented in film and television through split characters? Part of the research question for this thesis is therefore how fragmentary identity is performed, what kinds of indications do filmmakers utilise to signify dualistic or unstable identity? I have already suggested that visual devices such as mirrors indicate fragmentary identity; however, can certain types of speech and voice indicate that an identity is not whole or complete? Perhaps speech that is not communicative in the traditional sense (for example

¹⁶ *The Nutty Professor* (Jerry Lewis, 1963, USA) slightly problematises this rationale as although the film is a comedy it is also somewhat disturbing and draws on elements of the horror genre; the film can in a sense be understood as dealing with identity as traumatic. However, largely comedy films do not treat the subject matter as such hence I am focusing primarily on horror, fantasy and psychologically-based genres.

¹⁷ Manichaeism invests in the polarity of good and evil. A religious system of belief that contends that God only exists in opposition to Satan and vice versa: one can either be a 'good' person or a 'bad' person.

screaming is an indication of pure emotion and is not an articulate expression)¹⁸ can be considered as a symptom of an identity that is not autonomous and in control of its speech acts. Freud's hysteric can be regarded as being 'in trouble' with language in that her symptoms manifest themselves bodily, for example Dora who suffered from loss of voice during periods of hysteria (Freud, 1905a [1901])¹⁹. Through analysing the character of Willow (Alyson Hannigan) in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* I argue in Chapter Three that Willow's use of speech, and increasingly powerful expression of magical language is expressly linked to her fragile identity; I will show that Willow's varying performances of speech acts (both magical and in everyday conversation) are therefore symptomatic of her split and fragile identity.

Split and fragmentary characters are a prime trope in recent cinema and television within certain genres. Is it a trope that is utilised in a variety of ways? This thesis will question how and why splitting is at play so frequently in film and television texts across horror, psychological-horror and fantasy (as well as other genres) producing a range of meanings. I argue in Chapter Four that non-autonomous, divided characters can be identified throughout much of literary history. It is also important to note that while several studies on the doppelgänger have been undertaken in literary studies, the figure of the double has remained largely neglected in film and television theory. Yet, it is evident in recent times that 'splitting' is apparent in contemporary cinema and media perhaps to provide spectacle and narrative structure, producing varying meanings and giving key insight into contemporary culture and its concerns. Can splitting in contemporary times be considered in a mythic sense; what is the function of tales of the formation of identity and is this connected to what is at stake in terms of what it means to live in contemporary society during specific times? A central focus of Chapter Four

¹⁸ Kaja Silverman discusses the nature of the female voice in cinema and suggests that the scream can be separated from voice. The female cry is extracted from the female voice in cinema; cinema attempts at great lengths to draw out this female scream (Silverman, 1988: 39/40). A scream can therefore be considered as a non-articulate expression that is different from the communicative function of speech.

¹⁹ Lacan also highlights the problematics of language and speech, particularly in the Symbolic realm of language and the law of the father ('since the law of man has been the law of language' (Lacan, 2001: 67)).

is the analysis of the splitting trope across culture; is splitting only apparent in Western culture or can it be detected in cinema from other regions such as Japan?

A principal research question of this thesis is: Do the meanings at play in images of split characters change across culture, particularly that of Eastern and Western cultures? Perhaps split characters have taken on a mystical resonance in fantasy-based genres, connoting varying meanings of identity. Are differing meanings of identity issues changeable across genre as well as culture? For example, the polarisation of good and evil is imperative to many Western horror narratives, is this also the case in horror from other regions? This question can be explored through focusing on the meanings that the double carries culturally. Does the representation of splitting as a narrative theme change according to cultural, generic and stylistic context? It is therefore my intention to employ both psychoanalytic theory and social and cultural contexts in order to get to the heart of the meaning of the double in film and television.

A focal question of this thesis is whether fragmentary characters and splitting as a narrative device can be considered as a 'new myth', and how this contemporary mythic status might be figured across culture. It is my intention to show that split and fragmentary characters have a traditional mythic status due to the prevalence of doubles in literature; however, doubles are now becoming more apparent in cinema and television as well as 'new' media forms (such as videogames²⁰), which suggests that there is likely to be contemporary concerns or anxieties attached to the doppelgänger. A central question is therefore, how is the double figured in contemporary times and why are they becoming such a familiar feature of contemporary psychological, fantasy and horror-based film and television?

²⁰ For example the recent *Prince of Persia* game splits the Prince (the character who is 'played') into 'good' and 'evil' counterparts.

Critiques of psychoanalysis are often concerned with its status as ‘real’ or even as a science²¹. However, if theorists take these criticisms into account, psychoanalysis remains a useful interpretive tool. Arguably some filmmakers also consciously make use of certain psychoanalytic ideas in some texts, which perhaps calls for the use of psychoanalysis in an interpretive mode. Freud himself posited psychoanalysis as needing methods of interpretation; it is in fact an interpretive art (Freud, 1913 [1911]), and Linda Ruth Williams emphasises the fact that ‘just as psychoanalysis was coming into being, it was coming into being as a form of *active interpretation* of the patient’s discourse as *text* (Williams, 1995: 8) [italics in original]. It is my intention in this thesis to use psychoanalysis as an interpretive ‘toolbox’ of concepts, or creative impetus, which can provide key insight into (and interpretation of) film and television texts that show an awareness of psychoanalytic discourse.

Some feminist critics have used psychoanalysis to discuss how gender is formulated and mediated in society and how this might relate to female oppression through ideology. Juliet Mitchell argues, for example, for the ‘importance of a return to the original project of using psychoanalysis to help understand the transmission of sexual difference within ‘ideology’” (Mitchell, 2000: xxvii). Perhaps psychoanalysis can be used to understand sexual difference in terms of discourse, for example in *This Sex Which is not One*, Luce Irigaray uses psychoanalysis to discuss sexual difference and how a

²¹ As Buscombe, Gledhill, Lovell and Williams state: ‘The assumption that psychoanalysis is a science seems to underpin the lack of a critical distance from it’ (1992: 35); their remark points to the ongoing *Screen* debate which began in the 1970s and continued for roughly two decades. This debate was preoccupied with psychoanalysis (generally Lacanian). A further criticism applied by Buscombe, Gledhill, Lovell and Williams stem from debates arising from Mitchell’s *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (referred to above). The above theorists argue that issues that evolved from Mitchell’s work was generally omitted in *Screen*, hinting that the debates at play in psychoanalysis across fields such as feminism and social / cultural studies may have been only partially taken into account in film and television studies (Buscombe, Gledhill, Lovell, Williams, 1992: 43). The implication here is that psychoanalysis is used in a field such as film studies in a ‘partial’ sense; perhaps theorists only use what is useful to them and ignore the wider question of psychoanalysis as a practice and the debates at work in that field.

female language may be different to that of a male language (Irigaray, 1985). In terms of media, cinema can be seen as a 'symptom' of culture, and psychoanalysis a way of providing a diagnosis for cultural and societal phenomena. Or perhaps psychoanalysis can be used to understand how the subject is constructed, or the relationship between 'cinematic apparatus' and the spectator as in cine-psychoanalysis (Metz, 1982). The debates that circulate around psychoanalysis are extensive and complex, and are explored thoroughly in Chapter One after a brief preface in this introduction.

Psychoanalysis is a problematic mode of approach. Over recent years psychoanalysis has come under attack in the field of film studies, being termed as irrelevant and ahistorical; Steven Shaviro suggests that 'we are tired of endless discussions of the phallus, the castration complex, and the problematics of sexual representation' (Shaviro, 1993: 66). Shaviro's dismissal of psychoanalysis as a relevant mode for current debate in film and television is grounded in his dislike of discussion being centred on representation. In contrast, Shaviro is preoccupied with the spectator's phenomenological and 'bodily' experience of the cinema such as shock, pleasure, or repulsion, and he does not believe psychoanalysis to be an appropriate method of construing thought in this arena. An argument enforced by Anna Powell in her essay entitled 'Kicking the Map Away', where she moves away from psychoanalysis to the theory of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (as does Shaviro) and their concept of Schizoanalysis, a theory preoccupied with the aesthetics of horror and the 'connections of spectator and text as they meld together in a molecular assemblage' (Powell, 2002: 57).

As Shaviro has stated, psychoanalytic debate is often preoccupied with representation (sexuality, gender etc). Shaviro maintains that a theory engaged with representation does not 'dig deep' enough to get at the heart of what might be at stake in film genres such as horror. However, film and

television studies are, if we take into account textual analysis, a study of visual representation (film and television shows are always representational mediations to a certain extent, never 'real')²². I would therefore contend that it is potentially rash to dismiss psychoanalytic theory completely as it can be utilised in many different ways and it seems likely that it will further an understanding of representations, particularly those bound up with psychological issues. However, it seems equally impulsive to dismiss Shaviro's argument regarding the inadequacy of representation; it seems highly possible that film genres such as horror have more at stake in terms of a spectatorial 'bodily' reaction to violent images that are likely to need explaining beyond the representational.

In the context of the research question of this thesis, it is important to determine what kinds of meanings are behind the representation of split characters in film and television. Are the texts' representations of a split in the psyche strongly linked to cultural and contemporary anxieties surrounding gender and identity? Perhaps the texts do not merely represent these issues but provide an allegory, metaphor or literal rendering of the external world and the spectators place in it²³.

In films that centre on identity as a theme, experiences of fragmentation are often played out through supernatural or 'unnatural' means. Representation

²² Textually a film text is always representative Metz argues that '[t]he cinematic signifier... is itself fictive and 'absent' (Metz, 1982: 66), going on to say '[i]f the cinematic part is fastened once and for all to its interpreter, it is because its representation involves the reflection of the actor and not the actor himself, and because the reflection (the signifier) is *recorded* and is hence no longer capable of change' (ibid: 68)

²³ I argue that representation is key to how narrative devices such as allegory and metaphor 'work'. Representation is key to film and television, however, horror and psychological genres often provide layers of meaning through fantasy-based story arcs. For example the werewolf film can be considered as an allegory and/or metaphor for growing into adulthood and experiencing adolescence. I argue that split identity in the cinema is a *literal* rendering of cultural concerns that might surround identity. I find reading split identities as a literal rendering of the experience of fragmentary identity (in the world) particularly useful in this thesis as it allows for understanding the specific relation such images have to fears about identity formation. Aspects of myth and storytelling also potentially allow for understanding the popularity of splitting in the cinema and why there are so many fragmentary characters represented. See Chapter Four.

plays a key role here in that issues of fragmentary identity are figured through literal means: the representation of a body that is split into two provides insight into societal fears circling fragile identity and loss of psychological control. Through literalising feelings of fragmentariness the films provide an escape from societal pressures to constantly inhabit an identity that is whole, autonomous and in control. Representation is also key to how identification 'works', for example in *Fight Club* the spectator is encouraged to identify with both Narrator (Edward Norton) and Tyler Durden as separate characters through representational devices (they are quite literally figured as two separate people); the final revelation that they are the same person actively disrupts 'normal' identification with a single self-governing character. Through literalising fragmentary identity the film transgresses a simple interpretation of character identity, this cannot, however, be separated from the representational aspects of character, *mise en scene* and cinematic modes in general.

In terms of a psychoanalytical status in reading these texts, several questions must be considered. Is psychoanalysis an attempt at a diagnosis of contemporary cultural issues such as identity and gender? Or can we subvert this notion and ask has it helped us perceive the world in a certain mode that has aided a further understanding of the external world? I suggest the latter has more relevance in the texts I will be discussing throughout this thesis, as it must be considered that both viewers and filmmakers are aware of some of the psychoanalytical issues that become apparent in the fabric of the films. It is then reasonable to consider that the texts have been produced with these cultural issues in mind and are an attempt at a further understanding and enlightening of these issues. Film and television are in one sense products of both culture and discourse, and arguably aim to engage audiences with 'recognisable' issues such as how identity is experienced in the world.

While psychoanalysis as a methodology has come under the most attack from theorists (this will be explored more thoroughly in Chapter One), it seems necessary to briefly introduce several other methodologies that are made use of in this thesis. Formal strategies are employed in order to effectively analyse the visual material in the thesis; formal analysis is particular to film studies and it seems unwise to ignore such a tool which effectively gets to the heart of the visual onscreen. The other most prominent methodology put to use in this thesis is social and cultural context, which is particularly useful in Chapter Four where I analyse films largely from Japan. Socio-cultural context is a constructive methodology as it takes into account the context that films are produced and consumed in, and allows for an understanding of why films might be popular at certain times (which is also linked to industrial context). It is also constructive when combined with psychoanalysis as it counters some of the criticisms against psychoanalysis such as ahistoricism and allows for thinking through wider issues and contexts, while arguably psychoanalysis is a 'text-based' approach (or is often used as such). The postmodern subject is also referenced throughout and is relevant to the thesis; as with psychoanalysis, postmodernism allows for fracture and disintegration within society and within subjecthood. Postmodernism is particularly relevant to films such as *Fight Club* where consumerism and loss of ideals form a major thematic focus of the film (explored in Chapter Three).

It is in the context of narrative function that many characters are rendered split; fragmentary identity in film and television often provides the narrative drive that pushes a story arc to its conclusion. Key to many of the texts that will be discussed throughout this thesis is that by playing with characters' identity, films often centre the drama of the story on a character's psychological state of mind. It is through the drama of unstable identity in many of these given texts that films and television might invite the audience to try and decipher the mystery of identity in the film. For example in a film such as *Identity* it is apparent that something is amiss and it is tempting to

wish to 'solve' the film by looking for clues. This is a well documented pleasure of watching film and television, a series of puzzles are set up and a pleasure offered to the viewer is the gradual solving of each enigma as the film draws to a close.

Jean Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis make the point that some of the key factors in Freud's thinking, such as the primal scene, castration and seduction, are '...all related to the origins. Like collective myths, they claim to provide a representation of and a 'solution' to whatever constitutes a major enigma for the child' (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973: 332). For example castration phantasies relate to 'the origin of the distinction between the sexes' (ibid: 332); origins are undeniably bound up with the formation of identity and in this sense psychoanalytic theory can be useful as a psychological framework in terms of understanding identity, or at least acknowledging the enigma of identity and explaining how narratives work to engage us via enigmas. Certain genres make use of identity as an enigma; identity in film can be set up as an (un)solvable puzzle in a similar way to mystery or thriller narratives in order to keep the audience intrigued. How might audience pleasure be gained from the solving (or non-solving) of identity issues on film and television?

It seems likely that certain texts go some way to recognising a search for a solution to these enigmas or a desire for resolution: a significant spectatorship pleasure is offered here. This fits with Barthes' view of the Hermeneutic code whereby the narrative in literature or film allows for this playing out of puzzles and codes being solved, we are kept intrigued by the narrative as we desire to know what will happen next (Barthes, 1990: 61-63; 75-76; 209-210). Many films play on the 'erotic' structure of an enigmatic narrative by keeping the viewer in a state of suspense until the closing stages of the film. In terms of splitting, the 'solving' of enigmas in film gives the viewer a sense of coherence and unity. In mainstream film where loose

ends are tied up and disequilibrium is righted, a sense of unity and 'wholeness' is more likely in viewers than in watching a film that remains enigmatic and 'unsolvable'. Mainstream film is perhaps more inclined to 'fill in the gaps', which might bolster a sense of equilibrium, agency and unity. Genres that make use of splitting as a narrative theme perhaps highlight the actuality of the problematic experience of identity, more so than genres that efface identity as an issue and depict heroic 'whole' characters who themselves solve enigmas/problems within the fabric of the film.

Alternatively films about identity may work 'ideologically' in that if they solve the problem of identity by the close of the film, any remaining identity issues have been righted and leave no question for the viewer about the apparent 'wholeness' of identity in general. For example in many twin narratives such as *Twins of Evil*, *Man in the Iron Mask* (Randall Wallace, 1998, UK) or *The Dark Mirror* (Robert Siodmak, 1946, USA) the 'bad' twin is despatched by the close of the narrative (either through being killed or being imprisoned) leaving the 'good' twin to live on with no remaining evil half to contend with. The audience is therefore safe in the knowledge that firstly identity is after all one and complete rather than dualistic and fragmented, and secondly that perhaps we are all capable of dispelling the 'bad' aspects of our personality²⁴.

This thesis aims to look at contemporary psychological, fantasy and horror-based film texts using an eclectic mix of approaches (such as formal, psychoanalytic and socio-cultural approaches) in order to understand the phenomenon of splitting in fiction-based cinema and television. Part of the research question for this thesis is whether cultural context combined with

²⁴ Lucy Fischer discusses twin narratives in film where she focuses on female twins and doubling. She discusses the differences between male and female doubling and suggests that female twins posit one twin as good and virtuous in a traditionally feminine role, while the other is more sexual and 'dangerous' (Fischer, 1989: 180/1). She also argues that the audience are encouraged to identify with the 'good' twin (ibid: 182/3), Fischer then goes onto discuss female doubling in light of feminist and psychoanalytic debate (ibid).

psychoanalysis can further our understanding of the engagement between the problematic and differing representations of identity in psychological horror-based texts and the varying cultural meanings at play. Psychoanalysis and cultural context are not approaches that are often seen as 'fitting' together, psychoanalysis often being perceived as ahistorical and presuming a universal psyche. The status of a psychoanalytic reading for this thesis is to use certain key psychoanalytic concepts as a creative and interpretive tool. Mulvey uses psychoanalysis as a 'political weapon' in her famous article 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1989) and she argues from the standpoint of psychoanalysis as being 'real', her point being that it may help to highlight the reasons behind the oppression of women. It is not my intention to treat psychoanalysis as 'real' but as a useful tool to analyse deeply psychological film and television shows; psychoanalysis is a key method of understanding the internal world that many film texts explore.

As previously mentioned, these are film and television texts that arguably use psychoanalytic concepts to create drama and spectacle; it would therefore seem unwise to negate psychoanalytic theory when filmmakers are perhaps consciously using it. Finally, psychoanalysis engages with the complexities of the formation of subjects, and it is the aim of this project to determine the meanings behind the representations in media of the formation of identity. Key to this complex issue however, is that human identity can only be clearly examined in terms of culturally and socially specific environments. In this sense, through marrying psychoanalysis and cultural contexts it is the aim of this thesis to give a thorough examination of the cultural concerns that circulate the difficulties in determining identity, and how these are mediated through contemporary film and television. (The analysis of splitting across culture will be the focus for the final Chapter through examining horror and psychological-based films from various cultural contexts.)

'The Besieged Ego' is a thesis focused on the relation between the fragmented psyche (as represented or literalised in contemporary media) and the cultural context texts are produced in. As noted previously, while much work has been carried out on the double in literature, similar studies have largely been neglected in film, television and media. My investment in the subject of the double and split characters lies in their ability to literalise feelings of fragmentariness. It is often considered in contemporary society that a 'whole' identity and coherent agency is 'normal', while the experience of identity as more difficult and even unknowable is either disavowed or aligned with mental illness. I find that the fantasy context of certain genres allow for a literal rendering of how identity might be more truthfully experienced in the world, through fragmentary characters.

In analysing the representation of problematic identity in film and television I find that psychoanalysis offers key insight into understanding identity, as it is the only discourse that allows for identity as split and analyses the beginnings of identity in terms of creation and the problems this raises. As an interpretive tool, psychoanalysis is a source for creative thought, which is particularly useful when analysing cultural products that invite interpretation. As discussed above, psychical splitness has an important dramatic resonance in film, and is a useful device for animating tension within the contemporary psychological horror-based text; however it seems likely that the double also carries significant cultural resonances. The following chapters approach these issues from several different viewpoints and go some way to exploring the fragmented psyche in its many forms in current cinema, a study that has not been undertaken before. The magical intrigue of narratives that centre on fragmentary characters is intrinsically bound to the enchantment and spectacle that is afforded by cinema to visualise dark doubles and ideal shadow selves.

Chapter One

Analysing Psychoanalysis

What has captured the imaginations of many is that psychoanalysis presents the psyche as a murky reservoir of repressed desires and unfathomable fantasies thought to exist in the unconscious mind of each individual. The basic premise of psychoanalysis hinges on a dualistic mindset: a conscious world more attached to reality and an unconscious world inhabited by the unknowable and the deeply repressed. Psychoanalysis as a practice can be concerned with 'solving' the enigma of the unconscious or perhaps bolstering an ego to assist its defence mechanisms (as in 'ego' psychology). Psychoanalysis as a theory however, has provided an array of debate among theorists and is often concerned with 'difference', for example the long debated dichotomy of the masculine and the feminine.

Perhaps psychoanalysis is an attempt to decipher the construct of identity and how we came to exist, a model used to account for the origin of the psyche and sexuality. As Laplanche and Pontalis suggest, 'the development of Freudian research and psychoanalytic treatment display at the outset a regressive tendency towards the origin, the foundation of the symptom and the neurotic organization of the personality' (1973: 15). Juliet Mitchell, on the other hand, suggests that a psychoanalytic focus on origins can be accredited to Lacan who draws from Freudian theory. She argues that 'Lacan dedicated himself to reorienting psychoanalysis to its task of deciphering the ways in which the human subject is constructed – how it comes into being – out of the small human animal' (Mitchell, 1982: 5). A fascination with 'beginnings' perhaps explains to some extent the appeal of psychoanalysis as a theory (and therapeutic practice) as its concepts are designed to go some way to explain or interpret the establishment of identity for the individual.

A preoccupation with beginnings and origins is also integral to understanding art forms (such as film) that focus on identity; psychoanalysis (as a possible means of interpreting issues surrounding identity and the origin of a sense of identity) is an important method for analysing film and television that embed within them ideas and concepts of identity formation and concomitant issues that arise. Psychoanalysis is arguably primarily concerned with subjectivity; any discussion focusing on issues of identity should at least consider using psychoanalysis as a means of interpretation. It is the aim of this chapter to examine the key debates that psychoanalytic thought has sparked in order to consider the merits of using psychoanalysis as a method for analysing film and television, and more specifically the split subject as an artistic and creative rhetoric.

As such, it is also the aim of the following Chapter to establish to what extent filmmakers employ psychoanalytic concepts. For example, many heroic figures in film and television can be considered as a representation informed by the psychoanalytic concept ego. Such representations are problematic due to the differing accounts of Freud's ego (realist and narcissistic), as well as the fact that Lacan takes up only the narcissistic ego in his theory of psychoanalysis. For Lacan, the ego can never be attached to reality and in control, as is largely the case with Freud's realist ego. The hero as ego is key to the research premise of this thesis as a means by which to understand representations of identity that struggle in remaining autonomous; both Freud and Lacan's account of the ego are instrumental in allowing for understanding identity as problematic. Many texts utilise the model of a fractured and unstable identity to create drama, particularly in horror and psychological genres.

This thesis contends that the premise of the narcissistic ego often neatly describes the hero/ine's struggle in horror/psychological-based genres (which is often based on a splintered identity), rather than more mainstream

physical genres (such as action or the western) that display the hero as a more in-control realist ego. The fact that often the notion of the ego problematically implies selfhood suggests that this may be key to how audiences identify with hero / lead characters and can be indicative of cultural issues surrounding identity formation. Central to this thesis is Lacan's theory that identity is fictional, delusional and based on a false premise; I argue that identity is understood and played out as such (as fractured and misconceived) in much of horror and psychological-based film and television.

Freud and Lacan

Suggesting a return to Freudian theory, Lacan 're-read' Freud's writings through Structuralism and Hegel and added his own unique ideas to the equation; the following account of some of both Freud and Lacan's main concepts will go some way to exploring the key aspects of psychoanalytic theory and suggest the significance of this field in the discussion of identity in the cinema and television.

In the 1914 paper 'On Narcissism', Freud evasively suggested that something must occur psychically in order for the ego in its entirety to be born, or begin existing in the psyche of an individual as a unified agency. Freud's basis for this argument is grounded in his notion that narcissism is closely tied to the ego and libido; in short (I will return to narcissism in Chapter Two), the libido, or energy deriving from the sexual instincts, turns back on itself and is directed inward to the ego rather than outward to an external object (such as another person) (Freud, 1914). The ego can be understood as housing a mass of libido that can be sent outwards towards exterior objects (such as the state of being in love), but the ego can also

take in this libido as if it were to flow back in from an outside object (Freud, (1923a [1922])). The basic premise lies economically in energy surging either outward towards an object in reality (presumably a 'normal' fixation) or returning inward towards the ego and therefore 'self' love (Freud here conflates self and ego); Freud distinguishes between these two states by describing 'an antithesis between ego-libido and object-libido. The more of the one is employed, the more the other becomes depleted' (Freud, 1914: 68), the implication here being that the more ego-libido is engaged (narcissism), the more removed from reality and from external objects and attachments one becomes.

Freud goes on to state:

I may point out that we are bound to suppose that a unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start; the ego has to be developed. The auto-erotic instincts, however, are there from the very first; so there must be something added to auto-eroticism – a new psychical action – in order to bring about narcissism (Freud, 1914: 69)

Freud's argument that narcissism is intrinsic to the formation of the fully developed ego lies in his suggestion that narcissism develops as a phase between autoeroticism²⁵ and 'object-love' (Freud, 1914), where the object of love is posited (as presumably a person) in the exterior, real world; for narcissism to exist the ego must also exist as there has to be some agency for the libido to flow back to. Freud never ventures to suggest what this 'new psychical action' that brings about the fully unified ego (and therefore narcissism) might be. Lacan, however, does offer a solution, and it is a solution that is indicative of Lacan's general view of the ego and also his ideas about selfhood. It is no accident that Lacan picks up the formation of the ego at the point of Freud's discussion of narcissism; Laplanche and Pontalis suggest (on discussing the division between instincts obtaining satisfaction independent of each other, and narcissistically where the ego is

²⁵ Where the subject gains sexual satisfaction through attention to his/her own body without any external object, for example masturbation. Freud specifically relates this to early infantile behaviour as later once the ego has developed, such behaviour is more characteristic of narcissism (narcissism dependent on the image of a unified body as realised in the agency of the ego) (Freud, 1914; 1912-13)

taken up as the object of love) that it is necessary to 'make the period of infantile narcissism's dominance coincide with the formative moments of the ego' (1973: 256).

Lacan's answer to the origin of the ego lies in what he originally termed 'The Looking-Glass Phase' (Bowie, 1991: 17), but is generally referred to as the 'mirror phase' or 'stage' (*stade du miroir*). According to Lacan the 'mirror stage' occurs between the age of six and eighteen months and is the point of origin of the ego. A child sees him/herself or his/her behaviour reflected in another person (such as a carer or another child), and for the first time has the realisation that the gestures emulated by the other person are indicative, or a reflection of a unified person that the child will see as 'I'. Lacan compares the child's reaction to that of a monkey, suggesting that while the image holds a fascination for the child, the chimpanzee quickly tires of its own image:

This act [looking at the mirrored image], far from exhausting itself, as in the case of the monkey, once the image has been mastered and found empty, immediately rebounds in the case of the child in a series of gestures in which he experiences in play the relation between the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment, and between this virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates – the child's own body, and the persons and things around him (Lacan, 2001: 2)

Lacan's suggestion is that there is an immediate fissure between what the image holds and the reality of the child's experience, which Lacan specifically relates to the 'child's own body'. Even at the start of Lacan's writing on the 'mirror stage', and psychoanalytic theory in general, the focus is already on fracture, splitting and the subject as divided.

Lacan goes on to suggest:

We have only to understand the mirror stage as *an identification*, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image – whose predestination to this phase-effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytic theory, of the ancient term *imago*.

This jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject (ibid: 2) [italics in original]

There are three key points of Lacan's theorisation of the 'mirror stage' that are referred to here. The first is that the stage is an identification, which has the implication that the child is therefore identifying with something 'outside' of him/herself; Lacan also suggests that the child has a very specific relationship to the image: 'To 'assume' an image is to recognise oneself in the image, and to appropriate the image as oneself' (Evans, 1996: 81). The second key point is that the child is still incapacitated and reliant on others for survival; he or she is not yet in control of his/her body. Lastly, the 'I' (which can be taken to mean a [delusional] feeling of selfhood in this sense) is realised in a primitive fashion before it enters the social realm of the Symbolic.

Returning to the first point, the image that the child identifies with is regarded as a unified 'whole', which is a major contrast to the experience of the body as out of control by the child in reality. Lacan refers to this whole bodily image as *gestalt* and stresses the importance of its exteriority as well as its seeming autonomy (Lacan, 2001: 3); Dylan Evans clarifies this complex idea in the following way, '[i]t is by identifying with the unified gestalt of the body image that the ego is formed in the 'mirror stage'. However, the imaginary unity of the ego is constantly threatened by fears of disintegration, which manifest themselves in images of the fragmented body' (Evans, 1996: 75). The image of the unified body is therefore incorporated into the psyche as the ego. Evans refers to Lacan's stress on the division in the subject between a visual *gestalt* image that can be identified with and the feeling of a fragmented body, which the child experiences as his/her body in 'bits and pieces'.

Lacan, however, defines the concept of the fragmented body in terms of the visual; he characterises 'the images of castration, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, bursting open of the body, in short, the *imagos* that I have grouped together under the apparently structural term of *imagos of the fragmented body*' (Lacan, 2001: 13). Images [*imagos*²⁶] such as these are intrinsic to human thought, according to Lacan, and will continually threaten the apparent unity of the ego; the ego is persistently besieged in that it is trapped between a fallacy of wholeness and the horrific threat of total annihilation. Bowie succinctly describes the ego's exigent position:

Caught between delusional wholeness and infernal disintegration, the ego leads a doomed life. Whatever it is that gives the ego its normal buoyancy, and allows the individual to do such straightforward things as formulate and then execute a plan, has been moved to the margins of the theoretical picture (Bowie, 1991: 28)

Bowie here highlights the difficult position inhabited by the ego in light of Lacan's arguments. However, he also draws attention to the problem of how the ego is dealt with in subsequent discourse, a problem that is ever more challenging when the ego is caught not only between 'delusional wholeness and infernal disintegration' but also between Freud and Lacan.

The 'mirror phase' is the point of development of the ego as suggested by Lacan, it is the emergence of what *feels* like a sense of self once the subject looks in the mirror and sees a unified (delusional), whole self. This proposition is in many ways a return to Freud and his allusion to two versions of the ego: the narcissistic ego and the realist ego, as mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis. Lacan focused on the narcissistic ego, maintaining his dislike for the idea of the realist ego, which was conceived of as autonomous and is able to balance the demands of the id and external reality. The narcissistic ego appealed more to Lacan; as an ego based on

²⁶ This term refers to a visual image and its subjective relation to the individual; *imago* 'includes feelings as well as a visual representation' (Evans, 1996: 84). The concept of the fragmented body is an *imago* as it conjures up a visual image of the mutated body but it produces real effects in the individual such as alienation.

libidinal excesses it in no way could distinguish successfully between the id and the external. In fact the external world in many ways slips away from the narcissistic ego: 'The libido that has been withdrawn from the external world has been directed to the ego and thus gives rise to an attitude which may be called narcissism' (Freud, 1914: 67). Freud here is referring to the Greek myth of Narcissus: the Thespian who fell in love with his own reflection and pines away before drowning in his own reflection, as he can never possess what he desires: the beautiful reflection of himself in the water (Graves, 1992).

The narcissistic ego is that ego that has turned back on itself and regards itself as a libidinal love object, and this is the ego that Lacan favours and is born out of the 'mirror phase':

...we must accommodate our thinking if we are to understand the nature of aggressivity in man and its relation with the formalism of his ego and his objects. It is in this erotic relation, in which the human individual fixes upon himself an image that alienates him from himself, that are to be found the energy and the form on which this organization of the passions that he will call his ego is based.

This form will crystallize in the subject's internal conflictual tension, which determines the awakening of his desire for the object of the other's desire... (Lacan, 2001: 21)

Lacan is suggesting that there is an 'erotic relation' between the person and the image; in many ways this erotic relation is what drives the individual, or at least provides the energy for the ego to exist. Where the individual is 'alienated from himself', a continual split is created in the subject; arguably it is from this conflict, where the ego is born, that the individual's plane of existence will commence. In other words, the fate of an individual in terms of division and fracture is sealed at that moment of identification with the image that is outside of oneself. As shall be seen, all of Lacan's subsequent arguments can be traced back to this shattering yet unavoidable splintering moment, which is the genesis of the ego and provides the building block and condition of identity formation.

Lacan's view of the ego is that it is 'paranoiac': because it has been constructed from the individual identifying with an image that is outside of him or herself the subject becomes alienated and the ego is formulated or structured as paranoid (Lacan, 2001: 20-22). He also stresses that the ego cannot be aligned with reality as Freud's realist ego can, by suggesting that 'the ego (*moi*) can also be a flower of rhetoric, which grows in the pot of the pleasure principle' (Lacan, 1999: 56). Arguing that the ego is associated with the pleasure principle, Lacan implies that the ego cannot be linked to the reality principle as it is in Freud's theory; for Freud, the ego is the hallmark of the reality principle while it is the id that provides the backbone for the pleasure principle (Freud, 1911a; 1923b). Lacan's conception of the ego is that it is removed from reality and is, instead, an illusion, an entity made up, like Frankenstein's monster, of internalised external components.

Perhaps the most important point regarding Lacan's theorisation of the ego is that it introduces duality into the individual, which is based in the formation of the ego during the 'mirror stage'. Lacan argues that:

It [the mirror stage] brings to light the nature of this aggressive relation [related to narcissism] and what it signifies. If the aggressive relation enters into this formation called the ego, it's because it is constitutive of it, because the ego is already by itself an other, and because it sets itself up in a duality internal to the subject. The ego is this master the subject finds in an other, whose function of mastery he establishes in his own heart. (Lacan, 1993: 93)

The ego as master here refers to the ego as formulated in the 'mirror stage' where it is born out of a desire to be in control of one's body (a body which at this stage is familiar only in its feeling of being out of control), and because it appears whole in the other.

It is important to establish the meaning of the Freudian realist ego in more detail to provide a point of reference for the narcissistic ego (and Lacan's concept of ego). The realist ego, according to Freud, is 'a coherent

organisation of mental processes' (Freud, 1923b: 355) and is the process that essentially intercedes between the wishes of the id and the superego, and also the external world. The term 'ego' is important as it implies a sense of self, as mentioned previously, however 'ego' and 'self' by no means signify the same thing, although they are often linked. The Freudian (realist) ego takes note of external influences and is both conscious and unconscious (though largely conscious).

It is to this ego that consciousness is attached; the ego controls the approaches to motility – that is, to the discharge of excitations into the external world; it is the mental agency which supervises all its own constituent processes, and which goes to sleep at night, though even then it exercises the censorship on dreams (Freud, 1923b: 355)

The (realist) ego then is constantly vigilant in its 'supervision' of the id and also the 'excitations into the external world', it even censors dreams; the ego is constantly watchful over many aspects of mental functioning according to Freud. In his view, the ego works as part of a systemic process that involves the id and superego, the three processes are constantly engaged in the psychological functioning of all individuals.

Id, as ruled by the primary process, is a reservoir of unconscious repressed desires and fantasies; it seeks pleasure and is relentless in such a pursuit, 'it contains the passions' (ibid: 364). Within this system, superego acts as a kind of parent figure over the ego; it can inflict guilt or support and also communicates with the ego for the id. Superego is often described by Freud as an internalised parent (father) figure deriving in part from the Oedipal stages of the subject's life.

it [superego] is the heir to the Oedipus complex and has thus introduced the most momentous objects into the ego...it nevertheless preserves throughout life the character given to it by its derivation from the father-complex – namely, the capacity to stand apart from the ego and to master it (ibid: 369)

Such a view as Freud's on the realist ego provides a model that can be applied to the way in which a person experiences conflict between their individual desires and external constraints; I would argue that such a conflict often provides a basis for the narratives used in popular cinema. This thesis

maintains that both the realist ego and the narcissistic ego provide models for analysing the formation and representation of identity in psychological horror based texts (as well as mainstream film), albeit that they offer different theoretical and interpretational slants.

Although Freud's realist ego may seem more familiar (as it is often discussed as a nucleus of the self successfully mediating between the id, the superego and reality), certain theorists lean more towards the view of the narcissistic ego, suggesting that it has more relevance in contemporary society. For example, Zizek notes:

The deadlock of globalisation is felt most strongly in countries like Russia, which, as it were, got the worst of both worlds: Communist 'totalitarianism' as well as capitalist liberalism. Back in the 1940s, Theodor Adorno pointed out how, in the late capitalist 'administered world', the classical Freudian notion of the ego as the mediating agency between the two extremes, the inner drives of the id and the external social constraints of the superego, is no longer operative: what we encounter in today's so-called narcissistic personality is a direct pact between superego and id at the expense of the ego (Zizek, 2000: 61)

Although Zizek is working to uncover the mechanics of political and socio-cultural ideology, the statement clearly has relevance to this discussion regarding the individual and indeed the protagonist in recent psychological-horror based texts. (Zizek's argument also goes some way to arguing against the ahistorical nature of psychoanalysis as he effectively argues for the changing use of the term ego.) The ego as fragile is a view that seems to be supported by many of the (psychological-based) film representations of central characters as narcissistic, losing touch with reality and only fascinated with the attractive, whole, and beguiling mirror image that can at times be persuasive, empowering and seductive. Travis Bickle (Robert De Niro) of *Taxi Driver* is one such example of an ego losing touch with the 'real' and becoming disillusioned by his persuasive mirror image, which entices him into a vengeful massacre.

Perhaps one of the most prominent differences between Freud and Lacan is their differing view of the ego and the function of the ego. While Lacan seems to be very sure of his view of the ego as narcissistic and delusional, Freud is unclear about how he views the ego. It is in the 1914 paper 'On Narcissism' that Freud starts to fully address the question of the ego and its function (although he had often referred to the ego prior to this), however, his later paper 'The Ego and the Id', written in 1923, seems to take a different view of the ego altogether. Freud is unclear about which of these differing accounts of the ego is to be favoured, if indeed one should be favoured at all. Laplanche and Pontalis point out that in his early writings Freud does refer to the ego, using the expression *Ich* 'in a rather unspecific way – usually as a designation for the personality as a whole' (1973: 131). Angela Richards has a similar view in her Editor's Note for 'On Narcissism' where she suggests that '[a]t first he [Freud] used the term without any great precision, as we might speak of 'the self' (1984: 63). The ongoing conflation of ego and 'self' is one of the fundamental problematics of the ego as a concept, and one that shall continually be addressed throughout this thesis.

As the ego is often posited by psychoanalytic thought generally as a more conscious agency than both the id and the superego, the ego is constantly aligned with selfhood, a feeling of identity and even with the person him/herself (Freud himself is guilty of this conflation as well as others in discussing the ego). However, Laplanche and Pontalis note that 'it seems inadvisable to draw an outright distinction between the ego as the *person* and the ego as a *psychical agency*, for the very simple reason that the interplay between these two meanings is the core of the problematic of the ego' (1973: 131) [italics in original]. While often holding the banner of being one of the more coherent and identifiable agencies in psychoanalysis, the ego is in fact a slippery term that has different meanings in different flavours of psychoanalytic theory. This discussion has gone some way to establishing the theory and problems behind the concept ego, but how does Lacan view other psychical agencies and processes?

Lacan views the unconscious mind in terms of linguistics, language and speech. Freud's relation to language and speech is perhaps best analysed in light of his method of analysis, which is simply a patient and analyst conversing; the only way to get to the heart of a problem is to 'hear' the unconscious when resistance is met with by the conscious mind. For example, slips of the tongue or a certain choice of word/s used by a patient might lead an analyst to a conclusion about the unconscious mind. Alternatively, a patient might relay dreams to the analyst in order for them to be analysed. In Freud's method of 'free association' the patient will eventually come to a standstill in his/her chain of words, which might lead the analyst to a conclusion. The patient and analyst are therefore relying on speech to explore the occulted realm of the unconscious.

Freud also attempts to distinguish between the unconscious and conscious mind by referring to 'words' and 'things' and how they are represented in the psyche; he suggests that 'the conscious presentation comprises the presentation of the thing plus the presentation of the word belonging to it, while the unconscious presentation is the presentation of the thing alone' (Freud, 1915b: 207). Freud goes on to argue that the attachment of the word to the thing is indicative of a 'higher' status in the organisation of the psyche and would therefore merit a place in the secondary process, which is that of the preconscious or conscious mind (ibid: 207). Lacan, however, has a rather different view of language and, working with Structuralist conceptions of language, goes as far as to suggest that the unconscious is structured as a language is structured. He argues that '[i]t is the world of words that creates the world of things' (Lacan, 2001: 72).

Two of Lacan's writings are key to examining this seemingly eccentric claim, 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis' (1956)

and 'The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud' (1957), both of which attempt to reformulate Freud's work and emphasize his apparent stress on language, words and speech (Bowie, 1991: 79). In the former essay, Lacan lays emphasis on the uses of speech and language, particularly during analysis; as is often the case with Lacan, he uses Freud's theory as a base and then builds on this by introducing language as a system. For example, Lacan explains how Freud relies on the patient's relaying of dreams to unlock the hysteric's psychical trauma behind her symptoms, which Lacan takes on but through emphasizing how unstable language can be, and its tricky relationship to the past: 'Hypnotic recollection is, no doubt, a reproduction of the past, but it is above all a spoken representation – and as such implies all sorts of presences' (Lacan, 2001: 51). Lacan not only highlights the possibly unreliable nature of recollection (which must rely on speech as communication) in his use of the term 'reproduction', but he also hints that as a 'spoken representation' it is therefore automatically heavily loaded with further meaning than that which is most apparent. Lacan argues:

We always come back, then, to our double reference to speech and to language. In order to free the subject's speech, we introduce him into the language of his desire, that is to say, into the *primary language* in which, beyond what he tells us of himself, he is already talking to us unknown to himself, and, in the first place, in the symbols of the symptom (Lacan, 2001: 89)

This is an indication of Lacan's views on language as a whole; that it entirely engulfs the social subject and that language as a system is the key to unlocking the unconscious. According to Lacan, even before analysis speech is laden with meaning unknown to the subject, or speech can be indicative of something quite other than that which is intended by the subject. Lacan suggests that 'I have, precisely in so far as I have this language in common with other subjects, that is to say, in so far as it exists as a language, to use it in order to signify *something quite other* than what it says' (ibid: 172) [italics in original].

A central plank of Lacan's theorisation of the unconscious is that he draws on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic concept of the sign, which is split into signifier and signified. The signifier is, for example, letters, a word or the sound of a word ('sound image') that might be used to denote something (the signifier can also be gestures, sentences etc), while the signified is the actual concept. The signifier and signified have an arbitrary link (Lacan, 2001: 165-166), meaning that there is no logical connection between the two (this is demonstrative of the constant instability of language, and identity, in Lacan's line of thinking). Lacan differs from Saussure, however, and suggests that the signifier is more important than the signified; the link between the two is also unstable. Evans clarifies: 'Lacan argues that the relation between signifier and signified is extremely unstable...Lacan asserts the existence of an order of 'pure signifiers', where signifiers exist prior to signifieds; this order of purely logical structure is the unconscious' (Evans, 1996: 183). The signifier is therefore given precedence over both the signified and the sign (Lacan, 2001: 164-168). The question, therefore, becomes how is meaning created if the relation between signifier and signified is so unstable? Lacan provides an answer through introducing the terms of metonymy and metaphor into his theory, which are instrumental in how meaning is carried through language.

For Lacan, meaning is created through chains of signification, which is more of a process than a series of relationships between signifiers and signifieds and key to this is the 'incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier' (ibid: 170)²⁷. Lacan suggests that 'no signification can be sustained other than by reference to another signification' (ibid: 165), and he goes on to suggest that the signifying chain is akin to a necklace: 'rings of a necklace that is a ring in another necklace made of rings' (ibid: 169). There is

²⁷ There are points ('anchoring points') where the signifier and signified cease to slide away from each other and Lacan calls these '*points de capiton*' or 'quilting points', which is where the signifier and signified are attached, he says 'we should see that this is the point at which the signified and the signifier are knotted together' (Lacan, 2000: 268). Bowie refers to these as 'upholstery buttons, or places where the mattress-maker's needle has worked hard to prevent a shapeless mass of stuffing from moving too freely about' (Bowie, 1991: 74).

therefore a constant chain of significations, where the signifier is dominant: 'it is in the chain of the signifier that the meaning 'insists' but that none of its elements 'consists' in the signification of which it is at the moment capable' (ibid: 170). Metaphor and metonymy refer to the vertical and horizontal axis of language; metaphor is the replacement of one signifier for a different signifier (ibid: 173), while metonymy is the order or connection of words in a sentence (ibid) (this is a classical Structuralist take).

It is through these two processes that meaning is created and not created in language, as Evans clarifies 'the production of meaning, which Lacan calls 'signification', is only made possible by metaphor. Metaphor is thus the passage of the signifier into the signified, the creation of a new signified' (1996: 112), and in metonymy a new signification is not produced as the 'resistance of signification is maintained' (ibid: 114). The 'fiction' of stable meaning is created through 'anchoring points' (*point de capiton*)²⁸ and ultimately socially driven conventions, which explains why meaning is subject to shifts and changes, as Anika Lemaire argues:

The first network, that of the signifier, is the synchronic structure of the material of language in which each element takes on its exact usage by being different from the others. This applies at every level revealed by linguistic analysis from the phoneme to composite phrases...

The second network, that of the signified, is the diachronic whole of discourse. It reacts historically upon the first network, just as speech influences language, but in reverse order, with the signifying network commanding the advent of speech through its laws of structure. A dominant characteristic of speech – signification – is born of taking the set of terms together and of the multiple interplay between signifier and signified (Lemaire, 1996: 38-9)

Key to Lacan's line of enquiry is that the individual is communicating certain things unknowingly, which are evident in the metaphoric and metonymic aspects of language (as they are indicative of the unconscious, much like Freud's notions of displacement and condensation, i.e. the selection of a word [metaphor] is driven by unconscious forces). Lemaire summarises:

²⁸ See Footnote 27 (above).

The human being enriches his vocabulary with personal psychological notes; the patient does the same but, first, he does so unawares and, second, his creations are sometimes unwarranted given the distortion he imprints upon his human experience. Slips of the tongue are the typical example: an incongruous word suddenly springs up despite the global context which rejects it, another word is called for in vain and refuses to come to mind, yet another word is deformed. These are so many cracks in conscious discourse which remain incomprehensible to their author without deep analysis (ibid: 49)

It is evident from Lacan's theorising of the unconscious that meaning, both for the individual and universally, shifts and alters; this further informs the equally problematic and 'slippery' notion of identity, which becomes here an affect of language.

Before moving on to Lacan's account of the Symbolic, Imaginary and the Real, it is worth noting here how frequently Lacan refers to the history of the subject (which implies the origins of the subject), and how important this is in terms of analysis: 'Analysis can have for its goal only the advent of a true speech and the realization by the subject of his history in his relation to a future' (Lacan, 2001: 96). Aside from suggesting that speech is the only tool an analyst has to work with, Lacan also emphasises the importance of the subject accessing his/her history, which he explains as a 'realization', in terms of looking toward a future. Lacan goes on to say:

What we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history – that is to say, we help him to perfect the present historization of the facts that have already determined a certain number of the historical 'turning points' in his existence...

Thus, every fixation at a so-called instinctual stage is above all a historical scar: a page of shame that is forgotten or undone, or a page of glory that compels. But what is forgotten is recalled in acts, and undoing what has been done is opposed to what is said elsewhere... (ibid: 57/58)

In one sense Lacan's position here is very similar to Freud's in that he acknowledges that understanding the subject's history might help to understand the unconscious. Perhaps repressed memories and thoughts in the unconscious are integral to understanding Lacan's reformulation of

Freud's work here (for Lacan the repressed is also explained through linguistic terms²⁹).

Jacqueline Rose highlights the importance of an individual's history in her essay on Dora (which shall be discussed in more detail below), where she discusses Freud's attempt at curing hysteria:

... cure of the symptom and completion of memory were synonymous – psychoanalysis defined here as the creation of a full history to which the subject would be restored. It is a concept also present at the beginning of Lacan's work on the idea of full speech, retranscription of the history of the patient *through language*... (Rose, 1990: 141-142) [italics in original]

I contend here that a 'full history' for the subject is synonymous with an identity that is recognisable and can be traced progressively through time³⁰. Juliet Mitchell also emphasises Lacan's constant attention to the fact that psychoanalysis is about origins and the history of the individual: 'psychoanalysis should not subscribe to ideas about how men and women do or should live as sexually differentiated beings, but instead it should analyse how they come to be such beings in the first place' (Mitchell, 1982: 3). Lacan also describes how such historical facts for the subject are indeed history: 'they have been recognized in one particular sense or censored in a certain order' (Lacan, 2001: 58). In this respect, the facts are 'finished' and have been pocketed away; what is therefore disturbing about Lacan's theory

²⁹ For Lacan signifiers are repressed rather than the signified, the example used by Lacan is the subject and Other in the first initial splitting of the subject and the alienation that ensues, he suggests that 'We can locate this *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* in our schema of the original mechanisms of alienation in that first signifying coupling that enables us to conceive that the subject appears first in the Other, in so far as the first signifier, the unary signifier, emerges in the field of the Other and represents the subject for another signifier, which other signifier has as its effect the *aphanisis* of the subject. Hence the division of the subject – when the subject appears somewhere as meaning, he is manifested elsewhere as 'fading', as disappearance. There is, then, one might say, a matter of life and death between the unary signifier and the subject, *qua* binary signifier, cause of his disappearance. The *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is the binary signifier' (Lacan, 1998: 218). Lacan goes on to say that this signifier passes into the unconscious and is then the site of appeal for other repressions; it is therefore a signifier that is the locus of all repressions in the unconscious, according to Lacan (ibid: 218)

³⁰ Representations of identity in media follow this reasoning. For example, in *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2000, USA) and *The Machinist [El Maquinista]* (Brad Anderson, 2004, Spain) both protagonists have problems remembering their former actions and events in the narrative and due to this their identities are understood as fragile and read as such by viewers.

here is that he describes such facts as 'scars' and that they are constantly evoked in everyday acts, and are therefore unavoidable. The implication here is one that constantly crops up in Lacanian thought: that there is very little that can be done for a subject who is divided at the point where the ego is created and is therefore also divided in language, where language is the only key to addressing this division; what remains is a 'scarred' subject. Both Lacan and Freud seem to be preoccupied with the history of the subject, which indicates that key to psychoanalytic theory (and practice) is the origin of the individual and the explanation of that origin; this is inseparable from the emergence of the ego.

The topography of Lacan's theory is apparent in his assertion that there are three orders that the subject is constantly immersed in; these are the Imaginary, Symbolic and the Real. The Imaginary is closely linked to the shaping of the ego during the 'mirror stage', as this stage is closely bound to identification (as the subject identifies with the mirror image), identification is key to the Imaginary order (Evans, 1996: 82). The Imaginary is bound up with images and 'is the scene of a desperate delusional attempt to be and to remain 'what one is' by gathering to oneself ever more instances of sameness, resemblance and self-replication; it is the birthplace of the narcissistic 'ideal ego' (Bowie, 1991: 92).

In some ways the Symbolic order lies in opposition to the Imaginary order, in that it identifies the subject as separate from the ego; in the Imaginary the subject is striving to unite these two in the hope of feeling autonomous. The Symbolic is 'an order of language' (Lacan, 2001: 73) and is aligned with the social structure and the social subject. The Symbolic is given supremacy over the Imaginary (and the Real) (Ibid: 215-6), and is the place of the law or 'name of the father' (ibid: 74); the Symbolic signifies a moving away from dualistic identifications in the Imaginary and towards a socially constructed subject with three-way identifications that include the (Symbolic) father. The

Symbolic is the realm of language, the signifier, the unconscious and the Other³¹ (Evans, 1996). Evans summarises 'it is only by working in the symbolic order that the analyst can produce changes in the subjective position of the analysand; these changes will also produce imaginary effects, since the imaginary is structured by the symbolic. It is the symbolic order which is determinant of subjectivity...' (1996: 202-3).

The Real is perhaps the hardest of these orders to define, however in many ways the Real fills or is the gap in the Symbolic; the Symbolic is the order of language and the Real is therefore 'outside' of language. Because the Real is always outside of language it is therefore unable to be described or even imagined. Lacan therefore terms the Real as the 'impossible', he suggests: 'since the opposite of the possible is certainly the real, we would be led to define the real as the impossible' (1998: 167). The Real can incorporate reality, as in the external world i.e. the 'real' father, as well as the mental, internal world as well. The subject is continually caught up in these orders.

Lacan's emphasis on the Symbolic order as attempting (but unable) to preside over the Real and the Imaginary has much to do with his concept of desire. As suggested above, the Symbolic is the realm of the signifier, and according to Lacan the chain of signifiers (chain of signification) is kept in motion through desire. Lacan's theory can be seen as being about desire (and lack, see below), and again this can only be articulated through speech and language, he suggests:

³¹ The Other (identified by the 'O' or 'A' for Autre in French) is often referred to as the 'big Other', 'which represents a radical and irreducible alterity' (Evans, 1996: 125). While the other is closely linked to the subject and can be considered as a mirror image of the ego, the Other is described in terms of the Symbolic (other = imaginary), and is far more removed from the subject; the Other is therefore often aligned with speech in the realm of the Symbolic where language reigns. Lacan suggests that 'the unconscious is the discourse of the Other' (2001: 190); it is in this sense that speech (in the Symbolic) can access the 'language of desire' in the unconscious. [The Other can also represent another subject 'It is thus only possible to speak of the Other as a *subject* in a secondary sense, in the sense that a subject may occupy this position and thereby 'embody' the Other for another subject' (Evans, 1996: 125)]

...the function of language is not to inform but to evoke.

What I seek in speech is the response of the other. What constitutes me as subject is my question. In order to be recognized by the other, I utter what was only in view of what will be. In order to find him, I call him by a name that he must assume or refuse in order to reply to me.

I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object (Lacan, 2001: 94)

It seems that Lacan is discussing the 'other' here (rather than 'Other'); he is perhaps alluding to the other (*objet [petit] a*) as the locus for or object of desire, or later as the very cause of desire (see Introduction for definition of 'other'). In this sense then all spoken utterances are indicative of desire in the subject, but desire can never be fulfilled, Evans explains, 'a denotes the object which can never be attained, which is really the cause of desire rather than that towards which desire tends... *Objet petit a* is any object which sets desire in motion' (1996: 125) [italics and caps in original]. Taking this into account, Lacan argues that 'I' is identified only in language; this can only be achieved by becoming 'lost' in language as it defines us; the process of language for the subject allows gaps for desire to creep through (for example in hesitations during speech). The fulfilment of desire is never achievable; once again Lacan seems to bring us to a full stop in terms of what can be done for a subject that can only be identified in language but is nevertheless divided in language. A crux of Lacan's theory in this respect is his idea of 'lack'.

Lack cannot be separated from desire, and neither can be separated from the very fact of human existence; in other words, according to Lacan we are trapped in both lack and desire at all times (in that we are trapped in language). Lacan suggests that '[d]esire is a relation of being to lack. This lack is the lack of being properly speaking. It isn't the lack of this or that, but lack of being whereby the being exists' (Lacan, 1988b: 223). Desire is different from both need and demand, and functions to position the subject in a continual state of both lack and therefore desire. Lacan goes on to argue that:

Desire, a function central to all human experience, is the desire for nothing nameable. And at the same time this desire lies at the origin of every variety of animation. If being were only what it is, there wouldn't even be room to talk about it. Being comes into existence as an exact function of this lack. Being attains a sense of self in relation to being as a function of this lack, in the experience of desire (ibid: 223/4)

What seems unclear here is how the continual insistence of lack and desire on the subject comes about; certain key ideas of Lacan's theory explain this status of the subject, and they are multi-faceted in origins.

Firstly, Lacan is alluding to that original splitting of the subject in the 'mirror phase' that creates an irreconcilable rift between subject and other (identifying with image outside oneself); the gap (or non-gap) between self and other. Therefore, lack and desire is also related to the ideal ego, which we do not have (lack) but think others do (and desire it). Furthermore, on entry into the Symbolic where the subject is divided in language and is irreconcilably alienated (the place of the ego formed as outside oneself is carved in stone in the Symbolic), a gap is apparent between the Symbolic and the Real; the Real is that which has not been divided by language, '[i]n all its modes, it successfully resists the intercessions of language' (Bowie, 1991: 110). In the realm of the social, both desire and lack are key conditions of capitalism; consumerism relies on the desire for products based on a sense of lack or 'incompleteness' without such products. A final point about desire is the desire to be 'pure', where there is no desire or the subject is dead; death is also 'the eventual triumph of the Real', even though it has Symbolic and Imaginary dimensions (ibid: 100).

Remembering that the other can be considered as a reflection of the ego as well as the locus of desire, two key points emerge: that the subject is undeniably split through the creation of the ego as a delusional sense of self, and the subject is therefore continually bound by desire. Identity, according to Lacan, is inseparable from delusion and desire. Lacan argues that: 'It is therefore always in the relation between the subject's ego (*moi*) and the 'I'

(*je*) of his discourse that you must understand the meaning of the discourse if you are to achieve the dealienation of the subject' (Lacan, 2001: 98). This statement alludes to the division of the subject between the ego, which Lacan seems to be referring to as a sense of self (*moi*), and the 'I' that is apparent in discourse and the Symbolic, the 'I' that is therefore identifiable only in terms of language and the Other, a social 'I'.

The final fundamental element of Lacan's theory that warrants a brief discussion (as it will prove important for subsequent analysis of splitting in cinematic representation), and is a concept that gives the impression it might fill the gap of lack, is that of the phallus, which relates specifically to desire. According to Lacan, and what is confusing for many feminist theorists, the phallus is not the male organ (and therefore the phallus is not simply aligned to the male) but rather the Symbolic or Imaginary representation of the penis. He argues that what is apparent is 'a relation of the subject to the phallus that is established without regard to the anatomical difference of the sexes' (2001: 312). The phallus is instead a 'pure' signifier (*ibid*: 316), it plays a part in both pre-oedipal relations as well as in relation to sexual difference: Lacan argues that '[i]f the desire of the mother *is* the phallus, the child wishes to be the phallus in order to satisfy that desire' (*ibid*: 320) [*italics in original*]. In Lacan's theory castration is evoked by the father figure (as it is in Freudian thought), as he refuses to allow the child to identify with the phallus (in the Imaginary). The child must therefore give up the possibility of being the phallus for the mother in the Imaginary and must instead accept the possibility of a Symbolic phallus. This process varies for the male and female: the male can accept the Symbolic phallus as he already has it (the law of the father is equated with the Symbolic order), but he must give up the Imaginary phallus. The female must accept that she does not have the Symbolic phallus, and she must therefore accept this lack (Evans, 1996: 140-144). The concept and implications of the phallus in Lacanian theory will be explored in more depth below.

In conclusion to this summary of Lacan's key ideas it is evident that the initial stages of the individual's experience is defined through a fundamental fracture and division. The emergence of the ego through identification with an image that is external to the subject is a moment that provides the individual with a blueprint of later experiences and existence. In other words the origin of the subject's ego is the foundation of the subject's totality of experience; totality perhaps being an inappropriate term considering the individual is profoundly made up of fragments of identifications. My argument that the ego has such weight in Lacan's theory (as well as Freud's) is evident firstly in Lacan's theorisation of the 'mirror stage', where he lays emphasis on the alienation and paranoia of the ego, as well as the erotic and aggressive tensions between subject and ego.

An emphasis on the ego and origins is also evident, however, in the theory of the Symbolic, which is given precedence over the Imaginary and the Real. In the realm of the Symbolic the subject effectively gives up trying to equate him/herself with an image that is experienced as outside (formation of ego) and supposedly accepts that subjecthood is undeniably split. In the Symbolic the individual's fractured state is crystallised and the ego will forever be experienced in an alienated form, the compensation for this loss is the acquisition of language and the opportunity to become a 'social' subject with its concomitant channelling of identity positions, including gender prescriptions. A key feature of the Symbolic for the subject is therefore division.

Desire and lack, which are so central to Lacan's work, are equally inseparable from the initial splitting of the subject. Desire and lack are what drive the subject, this can be seen in two ways: firstly the split nature of the subject produces tensions that Lacan argues drives the individual. The drive can be seen in terms of desire for the other, which is the ultimate object of desire (or cause of desire), as the other can be equated with the ego in this

sense the desire is to be whole; lack is felt as the experience of selfhood is not whole or autonomous. Secondly, these initial experiences of desire and lack can be seen as the beginning of the continual chain of signifiers that desire incites in the Symbolic. Desire is unable to be satisfied, which echoes the continual split nature of the individual. It is the contention of this thesis that key Lacanian concepts can be explored and partially explained through the origin of the ego, which cannot be separated from identity, the origin of the social subject and selfhood; the split individual is therefore at the frontline of Lacanian thought and influences potentially much of psychoanalytic thought.

Both Freud and Lacan have been accused of phallocentrism, whereby they have been charged with producing theories that centre on male experience, something that might be said to be the product of the social and thereby language. The following section outlines some of the debates that have sprung from psychoanalytic thought; there is much critical analysis of psychoanalysis in academic writing and its application to cinema, the debates I shall discuss have a direct impact on the arguments that inform this thesis and my analysis of split subjects as character types in recent popular culture.

Debates in psychoanalysis: Feminism and sexual difference

Perhaps the most prominent debate in the field of psychoanalysis is how it has been used in feminist discourse; some feminist critics, such as Laura Mulvey, have used psychoanalysis to acknowledge, diagnose and battle against what is in their view a patriarchal society, and in Mulvey's case a patriarchal film industry and cinematic apparatus. While Freud has sparked a significant volume of writing and debate on the subject, it was the subsequent Jacques Lacan who has provided much of the controversy surrounding psychoanalytic debate in terms of feminist discourse as well as in film studies.

In feminist thought psychoanalysis can be seen either as a means to explain and give insight into a patriarchal hold on society, or as a product of such a patriarchy which buys into the subordination of women in both a conscious and unconscious way. While this thesis is not preoccupied with the broad area of feminist theory in general, it is necessary to outline exactly how psychoanalysis has been used in feminist thought as it has a significant bearing on the difficulties and problems of psychoanalysis as well as the headway that might have been gained in both a practical and theoretical arena such as feminism; this is particularly relevant to this thesis as psychoanalytic debates within feminism link the uses of psychoanalysis as a theory to issues of identity in general, as well as societal concerns about the body, representation and what it might mean to live in a certain society or culture during a certain time. The question that needs answering here is: why has psychoanalysis continued to fascinate and fuel feminist thought, what is the hook that lures feminist thinkers into this potentially crushing phallogocentric theory?

In 1885 Freud went to Paris to study with Jean Martin Charcot, whose interest at this time was primarily that of hysteria and hypnosis. Freud,

whose medical background had shaped research areas such as the uses of cocaine in medicine, became engrossed in hysteria and hypnosis while working with Charcot and later Josef Breuer (Strachey, 1991). In terms of the development of psychoanalysis it was the idea that a psychological conflict may produce somatic effects that began to fascinate Freud. Charcot was more interested in the notion of hysteria as a neurological condition; it was Freud's later work with Breuer that developed hysteria as an affliction linked to psychological discord. Later Freud moved away from the use of hypnosis in treating a condition such as hysteria (as its success rate was sketchy at best) and began to treat patients using the method of 'free association', which is where the patient says whatever comes into his or her mind in response, often, to a stimulus provided by the therapist from the client's 'history'. At points the patient would be unable to continue, as the word associations would cease to flow, which Freud argued indicated a resistance from the unconscious. Free association allowed Freud to identify the nature of unconscious drives and also resistance to such drives, resistance that Freud suggested stemmed from the conscious mind (ibid: 18-19). In the case of hysteria, free association and the analysis of dreams would in theory lead to a psychological trauma that was buried deep in the unconscious (the patient being unaware of this psychological conflict) and was causing bodily symptoms.

Freud later distinguished between two types of hysteria, 'conversion hysteria' and 'anxiety hysteria', the former is associated with several female patients, many of which are well-known, bordering on famous, cases such as Anna O or Dora³². Conversion hysteria transfers a psychological trauma into a

³² Freud's famous case of Dora occurred at the beginning of the 20th century. Freud wrote up the case in 1901 but it wasn't published until 1905. The case comes after Freud's theorisation of the unconscious and dreams and before his later work on sexuality. Dora's father (a former patient of Freud) brought her to Freud with a loss of voice, a cough, nervousness and lack of appetite. Dora broke off the analysis after three months; Freud thought the failure was due to his not taking into account the 'transference' in the case, i.e. that Dora was placing Freud in the role of her father. The case: Dora's father was having an affair with Frau K, which Dora knew about, Frau K's husband (Herr K) courted Dora but was rejected by Dora. Freud finds it difficult to accept Dora's rejection of Herr K, and he seems to side with Herr K over this. Freud believes Dora to be caught up in an Oedipal triangle. This is problematic as Freud does not consider that Dora may be in love with Frau K.

symptom that manifests itself as a bodily affect. For example, in the case of Dora, her psychological problems in coming to terms with her father's affair and her perceived position as a 'trade off' for Herr K. led to several somatic symptoms, such as a persistent cough and loss of voice. Anxiety hysteria is more closely related to external objects and is generally aligned with phobias. For example, Freud suggests that in the case of Little Hans the young boy's fear of horses is a working through of the boy's castration and Oedipal anxieties; these anxieties are projected outwards onto an external object (phobia of horses) rather than manifested in bodily symptoms, which would be the case in conversion hysteria (Freud, 1909). Freud's research into hysteria has provoked a large area of work from feminist writers, who are interested in the formation and construction of gender. Jacqueline Rose, in discussing Dora's case, suggests that there is a problematic 'dialogue between psychoanalysis and feminism' (Rose, 1990: 128); the problem lying in whether psychoanalysis sanctions patriarchal thought, or highlights or diagnoses it for the benefit of a feminist agenda. Hysteria is key to a feminist mode of thought as the hysteric, who is 'in trouble' with language, is also 'in trouble' with her gendered identity.

The term hysteria derives from a Greek word *hysteros*, which means womb (Ragland-Sullivan, 1992: 163). Hysteria is therefore directly linked to women through a physical and gender specific association, as Williams states '[p]sychoanalysis begins with women, in the sense that it is predicated on the reading of hysteria' (Williams, 1995: 3). Freud suggests that hysteria is based in contradictory identifications in the Oedipal phase (identifying with the father and mother makes the hysteric unsure of her gendered identity) (Freud, 1905a [1901]), and can therefore be seen in both men and women potentially. Lacan argues that gender identity is more complicated than signifying the anatomical differences between the sexes. The hysteric has no basis for codifying gender identity; she doesn't want to be slotted into one or the other gender (Lacan, 1993). It is in this 'in-between' sense that the hysteric is in trouble with gender identity, as Ellie Ragland-Sullivan suggests '[t]he hysteric's gender question – 'Am I a woman or a man?' – links

sexuality to identity: her discourse reveals the fundamental impossibility of reducing identity to gender in the first place' (1992: 163). Despite Ragland-Sullivan's suggestion that it is impossible to associate identity purely with gender, both sexuality and gender in current cultural climates seem vital to a sense of identity if popular culture mediations are anything to go by. Gender is a fundamental, if culturally determined, rhetoric of structuring difference. It is also noteworthy that the hysteric can be regarded as a split subject, caught between different gender identities.

In terms of identity being bound up with gender, Rose argues that psychoanalysis can show the constructed nature of femininity and it can therefore explain and describe it. However in so doing it may reproduce or sanction it (Rose, 1990), although it has the potential to radicalise it by demonstrating its non-essentialist formation. Rose suggests that Freud is actually imposing a particular femininity onto Dora, that femininity automatically implies heterosexuality, and also that femininity can only operate as an exchange between men. Rose believes that Dora is resisting her position as feminine and heterosexual, and that Dora was also resisting her position as an object of exchange; Dora believed that she was supposed to appease Herr K while her father and Frau K met (ibid). Freud, however, puts the failure down to the incomplete analysis, (she 'dismissed' him) (Freud, 1905a [1901]). Feminists have contested Freud's failure as either a form of early radical feminism or as a product of Freud's failure to address this issue of counter-transference (when the analyst feels what the analysand feels: a result of influence on the analyst's unconscious feelings so the feelings that the analyst has when conducting an analysis may be a projection of the patient's).

Dora's diagnosis by Freud as a hysteric means that her symptoms are, in a way, to be understood as being 'outside' of language, her symptoms are bodily and 'leak out' as apparently unexplainable phenomena. According to

Freud there is no organic reason for Dora's coughs and loss of voice; they are in fact produced by the unconscious. In opposition to Rose's view, Hélène Cixous suggests that hysteria is a language that can only exist outside of patriarchy; Cixous believed hysteria to be a way out of patriarchy and that hysteria is a language that exists only as a female discourse (Cixous, 1996), however Catherine Clément argues that hysteria is the affect of the patriarchal order in her dialogue with Cixous (Clément, 1996). According to Cixous it is a language of the feminine, a female discourse and hence empowering (often referred to as *L'écriture féminine*). Hence the only way out of the Symbolic order, according to Cixous, is through this hysteria, madness or psychosis (ibid); the way to reject the Symbolic (patriarchal) order is through a bodily rejection of traditional (masculine) discourse³³. Cixous and also Julia Kristeva have come to look at the unconscious as a means of disrupting the Symbolic order as defined by Lacan (Cixous, 1996; Kristeva, 1984). For example, *L'écriture féminine*, with its 'different' rhythms, could be a way of disrupting the rationality of the symbolic (masculine rationality), which is key to the Symbolic order.

For example, Kristeva suggests that some forms of writing try to escape the Symbolic and move into a pre-Symbolic space, where differences are not present, and a way of moving into the irrational. Kristeva argues that this is possible through the *chora*, which orders the semiotic drives (this can be

³³ An important argument or dialogue between Catherine Clément and Cixous in *The Newly Born Woman* discusses the potential for a radical feminist reading of hysteria. Cixous suggest that Dora violently rejects her position in patriarchy; her madness is a direct result of the patriarchal order. Hysteria is therefore (in Cixous' view) a rebellion against the dominant order. Another argument is put forward by Rose who suggests that the body can never speak in an unmediated form, it can only be read in the symbolic, and therefore it can never lie or exist outside of patriarchal discourse. Hence Rose rejects the notion of such a feminine unmediated discourse as (if we follow Lacan) the unconscious is also structured like a language. It is formed on our entry into the symbolic and it is an effect of language. There can be no outside, no way of reading anything outside. Clément argues that the hysteric (here conflated with sorceress) works dually: she contests that in a way she undoes conventions and family ties and is disruptive, but at the same time, through her containment, she also serves to strengthen institutions such as the family. Clément, although insisting that she likes the hysteric, also claims that they no longer exist, that they are in fact obsolete, a product of desire. Clément seems to be up-rooting the inadequacy of the concept of *L'écriture féminine*, the probable reasons and impossibility that a feminine discourse might exist. Cixous sees the hysteric as a radical, ambiguous and disruptive figure, whereas Clément sees her rebellion as having a conservative function (Cixous & Clément, 1996).

understood as being opposed to the Symbolic): she argues that ‘the *chora*, as rupture and articulations (rhythm), precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality, and temporality. Our discourse – all discourse – moves with and against the *chora* in the sense that it simultaneously depends upon and refuses it’ (Kristeva, 1984: 26) [italics in original]. For Kristeva the *chora* becomes a way of going against the Symbolic in terms of its opposition to rationality; it relies on unconscious activity (ibid). However, other feminist critics using psychoanalytic concepts (such as Clément, Mitchell and Grosz) call for a feminine discourse that does not reject reason; they argue for keeping reason but changing the status of femininity as a negative term, as well as moving away from ‘gendering’ rationality (Mitchell: 2000; 1982; Grosz: 1990). Rose also argues against *L’écriture féminine* suggesting:

Woman is excluded *by* the nature of words, meaning that the definition poses her as exclusion. Note that this is not the same thing as saying that woman is excluded *from* the nature of words, a misreading which leads to the recasting of the whole problem in terms of woman’s place outside language, the idea that women might have of themselves an entirely different speech. (Rose, 1982: 49) [italics in original]

For Rose, the very idea of a female language that is outside traditional discourse is a misunderstanding of Lacan.

A final point in this debate is the status of the phallus in feminist enquiry of Lacanian psychoanalytic thought. The concept of the phallus is highly controversial and has been the subject of numerous works on how sexual difference might be constructed (and enforced) through unconscious structures. As explained above, the phallus is a signifier that has no signified, but is largely thought of in terms of power and authority as well as lack. Contradictions seem apparent in Lacan’s theorisation of this concept: he states that the phallus is not simply aligned with the penis and is therefore not necessarily aligned with the male position, however at the same time the phallus is undeniably conceived of in terms of a masculine form. The ambiguous status of the phallus might be said to serve a patriarchal masculinist agenda as a kind of fetish, where the fetish operates in a putative way to fill the gap of lack. The phallus is also crucial to

theorising sexual difference that stems from the Oedipal complex, which suggests that while the phallus is in no way synonymous with the male organ, it is inseparable from the male position and a view of masculine authority (the two are generally equated in cultural notions of gender and sexual difference).

The phallus is a signifier and is inseparable from desire (in the Symbolic), in the Oedipal phase the male position must learn to give up the Imaginary phallus and take up the Symbolic phallus, while the female position learns that her lot is to accept not having. Rose suggests: 'The duality of the relation between mother and child must be broken...In Lacan's account, the phallus stands for that moment of rupture' (Rose, 1982: 38); the 'moment of rupture' is entry into the Symbolic. As with Freud, the phase of Oedipal and castration tensions results in the gaining of cultural notions of gender difference and sexual difference that are cemented at this time. Rose discusses how the phallus links to sexual difference:

Sexual difference is then assigned according to whether individual subjects do or do not possess the phallus, which means not that anatomical difference *is* sexual difference (the one as strictly deducible from the other), but that anatomical difference comes to *figure* sexual difference, that is, it becomes the sole representative of what that difference is allowed to be. It thus covers over the complexity of the child's early sexual life with a crude opposition in which that very complexity is refused or repressed. The phallus thus indicates the reduction of difference to an instance of visible perception, a *seeming* value (ibid: 42) [italics in original]

Sexual difference is understood and organised in the Symbolic, but this understanding of sexuality is taken away from any 'natural' or biological 'pre-given' notions of difference, as Rose suggests this is a 'strength of the concept of the symbolic' (ibid: 45). Elizabeth Wright summarises the strength of this argument when she suggests that '[a] central part of the theoretical importance of psychoanalysis for feminism is its contention, now almost a cliché, that anatomy alone does not determine one's sexual identity, any more than sexual difference can be reduced to the cultural' (Wright, 2000: 17). Key to psychoanalysis is therefore its premise for allowing for culturally and/or socially produced (gender) identity; it is my contention that

psychoanalysis can allow for understanding or theorising of the origin of a sense of identity, an enigma that is continually played out in a mythic and dramatic sense (the myth of origins) through cultural products.

There is, however, a major problem with a simple use of psychoanalysis for discussing how sexual difference might be understood as socially constructed in light of the Symbolic rendering of difference, which lies in Lacan's emphasis on division in the subject. Rose argues that Lacan's earlier writings (notably *Écrits*) allow for the idea of 'full speech, of access to the symbolic order whose subjective equivalent is a successful linguistic exchange' (Rose, 1982: 45/46). She goes on to suggest (and as I have argued) that Lacan increasingly laid emphasis on the division of the subject, particularly in language (the Symbolic), which undermines the notion of language as successful communication, plus the illusions at work on the part of the Imaginary in relation to self and other. The idea of unity within the subject is a fantasy, as well as the idea that loving another will 'complete' oneself and make two into one (*ibid*); the very concept of a whole subject would 'close [...] off the gap of human desire' (*ibid*: 46), it is this division in the subject that causes the continuing chain of desire and lack. Rose emphasises the fact that meaning can be created only when the subject is in language, in the Symbolic, this is the prize against which lack and division is set. For Rose, this undermines the sexual element through which meaning is supposedly only apparent, she suggests:

Psychoanalysis states meaning to be sexual but it has left behind any notion of a repressed sexuality which it would somehow allow to speak. Meaning can only be described as sexual by taking the limits of meaning into account, for meaning in itself operates *at the limit*, the limits of its own failing (*ibid*: 46) [*italics in original*].

According to Rose, meaning is therefore an attempt at covering over the continual 'failing' in both language and sexuality, as well as between self and other (*ibid*: 46/47), hence Lacan's assertion that there is, in fact, 'no such thing as a sexual relationship' (Lacan, 1999: 71) and his crossing through of *The Woman*. It is in the sense that the Symbolic in many ways attacks the

Imaginary (division in the Imaginary leads to a Symbolic disavowal of this split) that a weakness in terms of a feminist agenda is detectable; woman is subjected to the Symbolic where the man positions the woman as the seat of his fantasy (Rose, 1982: 47). Rose goes on to argue: 'Lacan moved away, therefore, from the idea of a problematic but socially assured process of exchange (women as objects) to the construction of woman as a category within language (woman as *the* object, the fantasy of her definition)' (ibid: 47). Because the male position disavows lack (and division), he places this onto woman and she becomes a symptom (ibid: 48).

Many theorists describe the female position of lack, just one example is Mulvey's attempt at deconstructing Classical Hollywood; for Mulvey the female position in mainstream film is representative of castration (lack) that must either be punished (sadism) by the male position (for example the demise of the femme fatale in film noir) or covered over (disavowed) through fetishism (Mulvey 1989). Lacan argues that:

when any speaking being whatsoever situates itself under the banner "women," it is on the basis of the following – that it grounds itself as being not-whole in situating itself in the phallic function. That is what defines what? Woman precisely, except that Woman can only be written with a bar through it. There's no such thing as Woman, Woman with a capital *W* indicating the universal. There's no such thing as Woman because, in her essence... she is not-whole. (Lacan, 1999: 72/73)

He goes on to suggest that 'woman' is in fact a signifier (ibid). Initially such a theory seems to enforce an overwhelmingly phallogentric and sexist viewpoint even if it diagnoses the logic of culturally made language, into which we are born, and through which we gain identity. However there are 'loopholes' apparent in Lacan's thought that feminists have attempted to use to their advantage.

Firstly Lacan argues that no one actually has the phallus, the boy only imagines that the father has the phallus and that he will inherit this if he gives up the Imaginary phallus (being the phallus for the mother, or giving up

love for the mother). In many ways the male position of 'having' the phallus is only an illusion and is a condition of agency. The girl attempts to 'be' the phallus for the man, as Lacan argues '[e]veryone knows there are phallic women' (Lacan, 1999: 71), and she is often perceived as an object of desire; she can 'be' the phallus for the lacking man. Secondly, because the male position is perceived as 'having', in that it appears he has the phallus and does actually have a penis, he is usually not associated with lack. However, this does not mean that he is not open to the *fear* of castration and lack (more so because unlike woman he has not accepted lack); feminists have made use of this castration anxiety in attempting to theorise both masculinity as well as the representation of femininity (see for example Barbara Creed and her argument that women represent a threat of castration and male fear of being devoured [Creed, 1993]). How positive such an argument can be in feminist thought is, however, debatable.

Lastly, Lacan does suggest that women have something 'more', an extra or '*en plus*', albeit this is in terms of the male imaginary (Lacan, 1999: 73-77). This 'something more' is described as feminine *jouissance* and Lacan suggests that the woman is not fully in the phallic function, but simultaneously in one way she is (as she can 'possess' a man and therefore have the phallus; she can be the phallus for the man) (ibid: 73/74), Lacan describes this as a 'jouissance beyond the phallus' and is seen from a male perspective/Imaginary (ibid: 74). Through these various arguments, it is possible that psychoanalysis allows feminists to analyse how women are positioned in society and culture. However, Rose's arguments, as outlined above, point to the continuing problems of Lacanian analysis in terms of a feminist agenda, this is grounded in the subject as divided yet disavowing this split; such a problem is likely to be related both to Lacan as a male theorist as well as culture generally.

Further criticisms of Lacan's theory is that it is essentialist, for example Stephen Heath's article titled 'Difference'³⁴ argues that Lacan's view of sexual difference is essentialist because of the terms 'phallus' and 'penis'; arguably, however, Lacan shows how the phallus/penis equation works on essentialist lines rather than advocating it. Heath argues that there is a contradiction in Lacan's theory as while the phallus is not supposed to denote the penis, he argues that:

the phallus is a signifier, is not an object, not the penis, but the latter nevertheless is its consistence as symbol; the phallus is said to symbolize the penis which, strikingly visible, is the condition of that symbolization. Lacan is often no further than the limits of pure analogical rationalization in this respect (Heath, 1992: 50).

Furthermore, castration theory is based on 'seeing', on what is visible, which Heath sees as a reversal of seeing sexual difference in terms of cultural and social factors as it reverts sexuality to the 'natural': 'The vision, any vision, is constructed, not given; appealing to its certainty, psychoanalysis can only repeat the ideological impasse of the natural, the mythical representation of things' (ibid: 50). It is evident from Heath's discussion that while psychoanalysis is useful for providing insight into subjectivity and gender identity, one argument is that there is a reliance on the concept of the phallus to theorise sexual difference, which can only be understood in terms of man striving to have and woman lacking. However, there is also the position that Lacan merely highlights essentialism apparent in gendered identity and is not necessarily sanctioning it.

It is evident from the debate about the status of psychoanalysis in feminist thought that depending on one's view psychoanalysis is useful for either providing radical insight into sexual difference, or it is a damning theory that highlights patriarchal institutions while simultaneously offering no solution. There is no simple answer to how constructive psychoanalysis has been in feminist thought, however, for the purposes of this thesis I would contend

³⁴ First published in *Screen* (Autumn 1978, vol. 19, no. 3).

that psychoanalysis has offered feminism a key theorisation of how gender identity might be constructed and is tied to broader concerns about subject formation. Psychoanalysis has offered theorists a 'toolbox' of ideas that allow for thinking through issues of identity (gender is a major factor in this issue). Perhaps more importantly in terms of film analysis, it is also a theory that allows for thorough textual analysis in terms of representation as well as addressing issues of spectatorship and how viewers might gain pleasure from watching film and television. Psychoanalysis also offers an understanding of how pleasure in watching film might be based on lack, in a consumer sense we are offered representations of what we might desire (as in advertising). Psychoanalysis also invites us to look at our own disavowals and knowledges.

Psychoanalysis has been attacked for being overly complex and obscure, however, arguably subjectivity and an understanding of identity is equally complex and perhaps a theory that allows for such complexity is preferable to one that might overly simplify subjectivity and its formation and relation to culture. A further problem that arises from using psychoanalysis in a wider sense is that it is often argued as being 'an abstract body of thought' (Bordwell & Carroll, 1996: xiii). Psychoanalysis has been attacked for being abstract and obscure; ahistorical and incapable of analysing cultural products; ignoring industrial contexts; presuming a universal subject; only allowing for reading film through the concepts of fantasy and desire; and valuing subjectivity over objectivity or a more 'conscious' line of enquiry. The following section will take these criticisms into account.

Reflecting on 'the vagaries of Grand Theory' - psychoanalysis in the age of 'post theory'

In *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality* Buscombe, Gledhill, Lovell and Williams point out three major criticisms of the use of psychoanalysis as a theory and particularly as applied to film³⁵. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the first major criticism is that psychoanalysis is often presumed as a science and is therefore unquestioned or applied with no 'critical distance' (1992: 35). Their second criticism is the actual discourse of psychoanalysis in that it is often unintelligible, not only in terms of the work of key theorists (notably Lacan) but also in how contributors to *Screen* themselves discuss and apply such ideas. The four members of the editorial board also expressed concern over how useful an analysis of film using psychoanalysis might be when it is based on 'critical interpretation' often applied using psychoanalytic methods of clinical analysis (ibid: 39/40); they similarly criticise attempts to understand the spectator's relationship to film using psychoanalytic theory (ibid). These criticisms of how psychoanalysis might be used in film theory are valid and point to the status of theory at the time (during the 1970s and 1980s). However, it is my contention that if these points of criticism are taken into account then psychoanalysis can be used effectively to further an understanding of how film might operate in society and what constitutes its ability to engage viewers. Equally, many critics do in fact take great pains to be critical and reflect upon the 'conditions' of psychoanalytic rhetoric, which is often embedded in a psychoanalytic approach to knowledge promoted by Lacan's discourse of the 'University'.

The claim that psychoanalysis is a science is indeed unfounded and despite Freud's efforts to enforce psychoanalysis as a scientific discipline there is no way to avoid the problem that the unconscious (or fantasy, desire etc) is deeply unknowable and therefore incapable of being scrutinised in any

³⁵ This was first published in the Winter edition of *Screen* 1975-6 (vol. 16, no. 4)

pragmatic or empirical fashion. Rather, it is the contention of this thesis that psychoanalysis can provide conceptual and theoretical frameworks for developing a useful understanding of how the representation of identity operates in film and television, and it is able to deal with the complexities of how we engage with such representations. Secondly, Lacan's work is particularly difficult to follow, as he purposefully attempts to place the reader in a position where they will come to understand how the unconscious is structured like a language. However, while Lacan's use of language might be difficult, it does not follow that every theorist using his concepts will make use of the same complex expression; I argue that psychoanalysis can provide frameworks and tools for the analysis of representation, and this does not necessarily mean that one must become immersed in psychoanalytic discourse in order to effectively provide an analysis. To be more precise, psychoanalysis is best put to use when combined with other methodologies; this thesis will use psychoanalytic concepts but will also take into account both industrial and socio-cultural contexts within which films are produced and consumed, which are crucial when looking at identity and its representations. A central research question of this thesis is whether psychoanalysis as combined with social contexts can provide an effective and productive reading of film texts and how cultural resonances, and indeed theoretical ideas and models, are mediated in cultural products.

Lastly, Buscombe, Gledhill, Lovell and Williams' criticism of the critical interpretation of film using psychoanalysis is drawing on the status of psychoanalysis as 'real', particularly as they are concerned with how analysis is applied to film as it might be to a patient (ibid). However, not all uses of psychoanalysis need posit it as a real, therapeutic practice; psychoanalysis is also a theory that can be used to gain a deeper understanding of psychologically based texts when used as an interpretational tool and as a creative springboard. The four board members of *Screen* also express concern over psychoanalytic terms and how various critics use them in differing ways. This leads back to the problem of expression and the danger that theorists (particularly Lacan) might be

misunderstood. I contend that following the *Screen* debate of the 1970s (and on), film theory has moved into a period where psychoanalysis does not dominate academic writing; this is a period for refining and evaluating the uses of psychoanalysis, not to abandon it as a theory altogether.

In 1996 David Bordwell and Noël Carroll edited a collection of essays under the title *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*. The title sums up a particular attitude towards certain factions of theory in general and posits several areas of enquiry as erratic and unreliable; notably those most attacked are psychoanalysis (particularly Lacanian), Structuralist and Post-Structuralist literary theories. For Bordwell there have been two major factions of film theory between 1975 and 1995, which he calls 'subject-position theory' and 'culturalism'; he terms these 'Grand Theories' (Bordwell, 1996: 3). Subject-position theory deals largely with semiotic and psychoanalytic readings of film, for example *Screen* articles such as Heath's mentioned above, Christian Metz's views on how spectators are sutured into the cinematic narrative through identifications (Metz, 1982) or Mulvey's views on the gaze and scopophilia etc (Mulvey, 1989) (Bordwell, 1996: 7). Cultural studies incorporate a wide number of theories that encompass postmodernism and 'Frankfurt School culturalism' for example (ibid: 9/10). In Bordwell's view culturalism came along after subject-position theories as something of a 'relief' to film theory as it moved away from difficult writings to 'far more relaxed and user-friendly' texts (ibid: 11). Culturalism also fills in the apparent gap of the ahistorical, which psychoanalysis (subject-position theory) is often criticised for (ibid). While psychoanalysis and cultural context are often two methodological approaches that are not seen as being similar, Bordwell draws several links between the two.

Firstly, Bordwell argues that both theories suggest that '[h]uman practices and institutions are in all significant respects socially constructed' (Bordwell, 1996: 13). Subject-position theory argues that humans are born into already

existing social structures, thereby the individual is 'constructed' through social structures (ibid). Equally, culturalism lays emphasis on the 'constructed' individual through 'social processes construct[ing] culture; and social subjects are themselves constructs of culture' (ibid: 13). Secondly, Bordwell argues that both theories are preoccupied with '[u]nderstanding how viewers interact with films [which] requires a theory of subjectivity' (ibid: 14). Much of subject-position theory is concerned with subjectivity, from Lacan's concept of the ego to the subject's position in society in terms of class; culturalism focuses on the subject as conscious agents. Thirdly, '[t]he spectator's response to cinema depends upon identification' (ibid: 15), which for subject-position is apparent in Lacan's stress on identifications in the Imaginary, and for culturalism identification is more simply the (conscious?) act of identifying with characters similar to ourselves or our situation (ibid). Finally, '[v]erbal language supplies an appropriate and adequate analogue for film' (ibid: 17); for subject-position theory this is evident in Lacan's emphasis on language and the unconscious as structured like language. For culturalism, this is evident in an emphasis on semiotic theories and 'codes' (ibid). After pointing out the apparent similarities between these two 'Grand Theories', Bordwell rejects them in favour of what he terms 'middle level research', which is based on extensive research, it 'asks questions that have both empirical and theoretical import' (ibid: 27).

Bordwell rejects the former two theories on several counts, but largely he favours 'middle level research' because its emphasis is on practical and experiential evidence. He argues:

Middle-level research programs have shown that an argument can be at once conceptually powerful and based in evidence without appeal to theoretical bricolage or association of ideas. Moreover, these programs have demonstrated that you can do a lot with films besides interpreting them. In particular, we do not need to understand a film by projecting onto it the semantic fields "privileged" by this or that theory. Most important, the middle-level research programs have shown that *you do not need a Big Theory of Everything to do enlightening work in a field of study* (ibid: 29) [italics in original]

Bordwell is suggesting that middle-level research should be preferable over a theory that apparently wishes to provide answers to all aspects of 'subjectivity or culture' (ibid: 29), as well as the problem that theory might be 'flimsy' in that it relies on 'association of ideas'. While I contend that Bordwell has a valid claim in that middle level research provides excellent studies in areas such as film history where actual physical documents can be examined, a black hole looms in the form of psychological issues. Many cultural products (all the texts I will be discussing in this thesis) point to a preoccupation with identity, the origins of identity and what it means to be human, however the analysis of such issues on Bordwell's terms is impossible. There is no empirical method of examining the unconscious but it seems preposterously dismissive to simply ignore analysing such a psychological issue (or the representation of psychological issues) because there is no 'middle-level program' to research such a thing. It is the contention of this thesis that certain methods are apt for analysing certain genres or types of film; psychoanalytic concepts are key to providing frameworks for analysing psychologically based genres. A thorough analysis of split characters in the cinema in this thesis is also testimony to the fact that extensive research (and not relying on certain key texts) is not necessarily at odds with psychoanalytic analysis; not all applications of psychoanalysis (and other 'Grand' theories) rely on scrutinising only one or two texts.

The status of film theory over the last decade or so has often focused on the debate between psychoanalysis and cognitivism. According to Carroll:

Cognitivism is not a unified theory. Its name derives from its tendency to look for alternative answers to many of the questions addressed by or raised by psychoanalytic film theories, especially with respect to film reception, in terms of cognitive and rational processes rather than irrational or unconscious ones (Carroll, 1996: 62)

For Carroll, cognitive theory fills in the gaps left over by psychoanalysis in terms of 'rational' conscious thought/processes. Arguably Carroll is missing the point of psychoanalytic theory here in many respects; the very strength

of psychoanalytic discourse is that it allows for a thorough analysis of the unknowable and irrational, while there are many theories or lines of enquiry that deal with the conscious and the rational, and even Carroll admits (in *The Philosophy of Horror*) that many horror films actually use psychoanalytic concepts (1990: 168). I also fail to see how cognitivist approaches move away from a 'totalizing' Grand Theory, which Carroll also argues (*ibid*).

Similarly to Buscombe, Gledhill, Lovell and Williams, Carroll also criticises the fact that theorists such as Freud and Lacan base their findings on clinical observations, while film theorists have no such expertise and therefore simply re-interpret psychoanalytic concepts with no therapeutic experience. Such a criticism seems slightly irrelevant if psychoanalysis is used as a form of interpretation, which most psychoanalytic critics would have no qualms about admitting. Film is after all a multifaceted form of representation, I therefore cannot follow Bordwell and Carroll's' assumption that film interpretation is somehow a non-productive practice; interpreting film can allow for understanding cultural and social attitudes at certain times, which helps us to understand the society and culture that we live in. This thesis contends that while any one theory or methodology usually has drawbacks if used singularly to analyse cultural products, it seems reductive and rash to suggest that one theory may completely eradicate another (in a chain of displacements Bordwell and Carroll seem to be calling for the dismissal of psychoanalysis and replacing this with cognitivist approaches [Bordwell and Carroll: 1996]). Carroll's assertion that cognitivism should replace psychoanalysis smacks of a hope that cognitivism will eventually shift into the place of the Grand Theory, which completely undermines his (and Bordwell's) main argument.

In 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis' Lacan refers several times to the division or splitting of the individual, which must presumably link back to the original splitting during the 'mirror phase'. Lacan argues that he 'object[s] to any reference to totality in the individual, since it is the subject who introduces division into the individual, as well as into the collectivity that is his equivalent. Psychoanalysis is properly that which reveals both the one and the other to be no more than mirages' (Lacan, 2001: 88). Lacan's view here is useful in several ways, firstly it again stresses that splitting in the individual is inevitable as it is the result of each individual's own doing, here Lacan is presumably referring back to the desirable whole image in the mirror, which the subject identifies with. However, Lacan's argument also suggests that it is only through psychoanalysis that we can attempt to explain splitting in subjectivity. This is of course contestable in many ways (as discussed above), however, the theoretical premise of the 'mirror phase' can certainly allow for a further understanding of the splitting trope in cinema, particularly if cultural contexts are also taken into account. As this discussion has brought to light, splitting in the psyche and the origin of the fully developed personality cannot be separated from the agency of the ego in psychoanalytic thought; the ego is intrinsic to a discussion of identity. Bowie, in discussing both Freudian and Lacanian theory, argues that 'ego-theory is a quest for the primordial in human experience, the moment of origin, the irreducible principle in accordance with which the human subject comes into being and is transformed' (Bowie, 1991: 32/33). I would argue that the ego as a concept necessary to theorising identity issues is not only confined to psychoanalytic thought. The general use of the term 'ego' and its cultural resonance potentially moves it beyond the boundary of both psychoanalytic thought and theory in general; the term 'ego' has become part of more 'ordinary' discourse. It is the use of theory, however, that provides the framework for a general concept of ego.

According to Freud, the ego is accompanied in the psyche by the id and the superego, and suggests that the mind is not only divided by unconscious / conscious but also by these differing components of the psyche. Bowie suggests the significance of this division in relation to making sense of psychological functioning and argues that:

memorable images of mental process could be produced by envisaging the mind as a group of persons in restless co-existence or open strife...dividing the mind into *dramatis personae* made sense in theoretical terms because being divided in that way was what it felt like to have a mind...(Bowie, 1991: 89) [italics in original]

Freud's intricate mental dynamics are simplified, then, by the idea of a *person in whom there are persons*, and the implication of the individual in worlds larger than himself is correspondingly understated. (Bowie, 1991: 90) [italics in original]

While Lacan repeatedly emphasises the divided nature of subjecthood in his theory and suggests that autonomy is delusional, such fragmentariness is also in the subtext of Freud's theory of mental activity and often plays an implicit part in his work.

It has been one of the aims of this chapter to establish that psychoanalysis is a valid method for analysing cultural products with the aim of shedding light on cultural and societal concerns about the construction and experience of identity. The debate on feminism and psychoanalysis provides insight into the uses and drawbacks of psychoanalysis and what kind of headway can be gained in such a political arena, as well as allowing for an in-depth analysis of identity within the region of gender. This chapter has also discussed the many criticisms of psychoanalysis and how theorists have both used and attacked this rather radical theory over the years. I have shown that while psychoanalysis, as a method of analysis, has its drawbacks (as does any theory if used singularly) it also has significant strengths. It is my intention to combine psychoanalysis and cultural and social contexts in a critical analysis of the split subject onscreen.

A further aim of this chapter has been to critically appraise the concept of 'ego' within psychoanalytic thought; I have argued that the ego, and the origin of the ego, is central to Lacan's theorisation of selfhood, and provides an invaluable model for the problematic experience of identity. The following chapter will demonstrate the extent to which the concept of the (realist and narcissistic) ego can be used as a framework to analyse how identity is constructed in psychological based texts.

Chapter Two

The Heroic Ego?

From the supernatural terrors of the gothic novel to B movie invasions to the Slasher film, the 'secure' state of human life is constantly threatened in the medium of film and television. The besieged hero or heroine is a figure most viewers would readily recognise particularly in horror and psychological-based genres, but also in physical genres such as the action or Western film. Key to the popular theme of protagonists under threat is dramatic tension and fantastic visual displays; the protagonist struggling and more often than not defeating a foe (monster, killer etc) animates many narratives, while in films focused on split characters the figure of the double also provides intrigue and spectacle. As such, many texts have slightly shifted the threat of annihilation from without the body to within; the threat of the bloodsucking fiend, hideous monster, giant insect or crazed machine has been replaced by a somewhat more severe threat, and one that in many ways is harder to identify (as noted in the Introduction). This is the trend of splitting characters so that their identity and their bodies become the springboard for dramatic tension and, often, the site of terror and visual special effects grounded in the supernatural. The protagonists of such texts then, may become not only our hero/ine but also our villain: identity becomes split and unstable. It is often considered that monster figures such as the vampire are reflections of ourselves, it seems in recent cinema and television that this threat must be located much more clearly in terms of the 'human' rather than the non-human.

In this chapter, it is argued that although the protagonist can be interpreted as a representation of the ego, this is highly problematic in terms of the slippage this creates between the idea of 'ego' and that of 'self'; this however is central to how we interpret such characters. Importantly, it seems likely that the slippage between ego and self is perhaps inherent in psychoanalytic theory as well as contemporary psychological horror-based texts (particularly in terms of the narcissistic ego), and in itself may tap into contemporary

social fears surrounding autonomous identity. If the psyche is split, as it seems to be in such texts, then this may well highlight a more general ambiguous relationship between the 'self' and the 'ego'. Considering that the hero/ine may represent many facets of the ego, it is necessary to consider the concept of the ego further in terms of audio-visual representation. How then, can the protagonist of a given text be considered as a representation of the psychoanalytic concept of ego? It is likely that the slippage between 'ego' and 'self' is key to how hero/ine characters can be considered as egos onscreen.

The following section examines *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* heroine: the multifaceted nature of Buffy's character can be effectively critiqued through the framework that the ego (both realist and narcissistic) provides. The premise of the following section is to ascertain how useful it is to view such characters in light of the ego, with specific attention to the analysis of identity as fractured.

* * *

The (narcissistic?) ego / hero in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

Victim (saved by Buffy): "But ... you're just a girl"

Buffy: "That's what I keep saying"

On the surface *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is a show about a young woman in Sunnydale, California with supernaturally fuelled fighting skills able to despatch dangerous foes such as vampires and demons. Beneath the surface, *Buffy* is about conflicts of desire, what it means to be 'human' and the difficulty of establishing and maintaining an identity in a very blurry and murky world where demons and humans live alongside each other. Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar) constantly tries to juggle a 'normal' life with the

duties of being a vampire Slayer. She often struggles with her calling and we must consider identity as a core issue and theme here, as many people are not aware of the role Buffy performs, including her mother, Joyce (Kristine Sutherland); she hides her Slayer identity, the source of humour in early episodes.

The show frequently focuses on Buffy as she attempts to maintain her 'hero' Slayer identity, often under increasingly challenging circumstances where she must make difficult choices (Angel³⁶ [David Boreanaz] walks a similarly tricky path in the spin-off show *Angel*). Buffy the Slayer should be unique as, according to the logic of the show, only one girl can be chosen to be the Slayer after the previous one dies. However, the 'death' of Buffy at the end of season one by drowning, before her good friend Xander (Nicholas Brendon) revives her, brings about a second Slayer ('The Prophecy' 1012)³⁷. The drama in the long running show is often located in the conflicting desires of the characters who are, essentially, a group of friends; while Buffy is the eponymous protagonist, her friends the 'Scooby Gang'³⁸ play a significant role in her fight against the forces of darkness, at times even becoming these forces (such as Willow in season six). Buffy's struggle with maintaining her heroic status is never clearer than in the last episode of season five, 'The Gift' (5022).

³⁶ Angel is Buffy's lover early on in the show; he is a vampire with a soul. His soul can at times be removed through various circumstances and he reverts to Angelus, his evil vampire self. He leaves *Buffy* at the close of season three for LA, where the spin-off show *Angel* is set.

³⁷ I am using the 'Buffy Studies' convention of numbering episodes. The first two letters refer to the season, for example 20 refers to season two, while the second two letters refer to the episode number in that season. 1012 therefore means season one, episode 12, which is 'The Prophecy'.

³⁸ The 'Scooby Gang' shifts and incorporates different members from time to time, but the central characters are Buffy's good friends Willow, Xander, earlier Angel, later Spike (a villainous vampire who later falls in love with Buffy and becomes increasingly less evil, he later regains his soul), Dawn (Buffy's sister, although she is actually 'the key', which is mystical energy and is placed in Buffy's care in the guise of being her relative) and Anya (Xander's love interest and former vengeance demon), while Giles, as Buffy's Watcher, always plays a large part in proceedings and can be considered more of a father figure rather than a friend.

This episode begins with increasingly rapid editing between a variety of shots from previous episodes of the show, reminding the viewer of all the demons and monsters that Buffy and her friends have had to face in the past. Reminiscing on the foes that the Scooby Gang have despatched earlier serves as a recap for viewers as to how successful a Slayer Buffy is (albeit with the help of her friends and her former Watcher Giles [Anthony Stewart Head]). After these rapidly cut shots a scene plays out where a young male victim is pursued by a larger male vampire into a closed off area where he is trapped, he consequently pleads for his life but to no avail. Buffy intervenes at this point, only to be told dismissively to leave by the vampire who calls her "girl"; he has never heard of a vampire Slayer before. Buffy despatches the vampire with her impressive fighting skills fairly easily, to be once again told that she is "only a girl" by the almost victim who is obviously confused as to how Buffy not only knows about vampires but is also highly accomplished at killing them. Clearly, to this young man Buffy, as a young and petite blonde female, does not look as if she should really be able to handle this sort of situation; long-term viewers know very differently. However, significantly in this scene Buffy appears weary of the fight, after being told twice that she is merely "just a girl", she agrees and replies, "that's what I keep saying". While Buffy is a successful Slayer, she is by no means a happy one, not after five seasons of slaying anyway. The significance of this scene lies in the fact that while Buffy's status as vampire Slayer is clear to viewers, here, both vampire and victim are unaware of who Buffy is, which potentially undermines her powerful status as Slayer.

It will come as no surprise to viewers that Buffy struggles with the split between her being 'just a girl' and her Slayer identity, which calls for superior fighting skills in dangerous situations and which often impedes on the 'normal' aspects of her life such as dating and school or university. At this point in the story arc of the show Buffy has also lost her mother and the powerful god Glory (Clare Kramer), the villain of season five, has kidnapped her sister Dawn (Michelle Trachtenberg), who is to be killed in a ritual to

return Glory to her home. At the start of 'The Gift' Buffy is far from appearing as heroic: she is drawn, weary and has just recently been rescued by her best friend Willow (Alyson Hannigan) (through magic) from apparent mental breakdown due to the stress of losing Dawn to Glory. Giles advises her that if Glory starts the ritual to open the gateway to her dimension (this entails letting Dawn bleed to death), then Buffy will have to let Dawn die, as the gateway will only close with her death. Buffy's reaction to this is understandably hostile, however Giles rationally tells her that if Dawn does not die closing the gateway then the entire world will perish (including Dawn). Buffy refuses to acknowledge the logic of this argument and tells the entire Scooby Gang that if any one of them attempts to kill Dawn she will stop them. Buffy, then, is acting on her 'human' instincts.

Buffy, as the hero, has to make difficult choices (such as whether to save Dawn or let her die for the good of the world in 'The Gift') constantly in the show; the final say is always hers as she has the physical strength to carry out her desires or choices. I argue that much of the drama of the show is often driven by the conflict caused by Buffy's Slayer identity and the clashes this causes, not just with the forces of darkness she must fight, but also with her friends and Giles and the more ordinary 'girl' part of her personality. It is Buffy's choice that Dawn must not die at the end of season five whatever the consequences, yet when Xander makes a similar appeal in 'Selfless' (7005) (based on love and humanity) to save Anya (Emma Caulfield) once she has turned into a vengeance demon (admittedly by choice, yet she regrets the decision), Buffy refuses to listen and insists that Anya be killed. A similar situation arises in season six where Willow becomes evil through the practice of dark magics, yet Buffy will not consider killing Willow because of her deep personal attachment to her. Xander is clearly frustrated and upset at being able to do very little to stop Buffy where she threatens to eliminate Anya; the choice is always hers to make and carry out.

Buffy struggles with her Slayer identity because it is rooted in darkness and power, and renders her a demon (this is ambiguous but her power at least is driven by demonic forces). The human aspects of her personality clash with this frequently; as a Slayer, she should sacrifice Angel in season two as his evil counterpart Angelus has awakened Acatlha ('Becoming Part 2' 2002) and the world is about to be destroyed; she should kill Ben (Charlie Weber) so that Glory cannot return in season five ('The Gift' 2002); she should plan to let Dawn die if all else fails at the close of season five ('The Gift' 2002). As a human, she of course does not want to lose Angel (yet she does sacrifice him); she will not kill Ben because he is human, despite the fact that he is also the terrible God Glory; she refuses to let Dawn die at the close of season five and sacrifices herself first (in true heroic style). Significantly, the human aspects of her personality seem to have little input when it comes to killing Anya, perhaps because she does not like Anya very much she is happy to wear her Slayer identity, which would allow her to kill Anya for the apparent 'good' of the world, conscious-free.

What makes Buffy such a successful Slayer is this hybrid identity that she struggles with, her desperate need to retain her 'humanness' is apparent in her close friendships, which have been invaluable to her success as a Slayer. The seductive power of being a Slayer and the clash this creates with being 'just a girl' has spurred her to remain as 'human' as possible. While at times this has led to many conflicts (such as in 'The Gift') and provides the drama of the show, it has also allowed Buffy to keep her link to family and friends who do provide emotional support as well as a helpful hand in fighting the forces of darkness. However, her supernatural strength also creates many disagreements because of the power she wields that sets her apart from others and keeps her alienated, yet it also allows her to despatch villains, which provides much of the momentum or dynamics of the show. In 'The Gift' Buffy's problematic identity as both Slayer and sister to Dawn provides the dramatic structure and narrative for the close of the season.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer is a show that has attracted a large number of very dedicated fans evident in the many websites and forums through which fans can converse. The show has also attracted a large amount of academic interest, as indicated by *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies* and *Watcher Junior: The Online Journal for Undergraduate Buffy Studies*, as well as several academic books dedicated to the show. Perhaps academic interest can be explained by the show's richly multi-layered narratives and 'knowing' attitude towards academic bodies of work such as gender politics. Academic attention to the show ranges from discussion of gender to religious iconography, however very little has been written about split identities and personalities in the show. I argue that much of the drama, spectacle, narrative and structure of the show is driven by the complex and fragmentary identities of the characters. It is because *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* falls within the genres of horror and fantasy that it can make use of the supernatural and the fantastic; it is the generic context of the show that allows for doppelgängers, vampire and demon doubles, which in turn allow for storylines dedicated to the multifaceted nature of identity and the mirroring of characters as they struggle with each other to establish identities. It is also highly likely that the creators behind the show like creating split identities within the realm of the supernatural, as it allows for writing character development in a highly dramatic fashion; it also gives actors the chance to vary their performances while simultaneously allowing viewers to enjoy 'evil' Willow and 'evil' Xander etc, as well as the 'normal' Willow and Xander that viewers have come to know and love. Moreover, such character diversity is part of what often occurs in fan fiction or Slash fiction; Whedon often incorporates fan fiction devices into the show.

Taking Buffy as an example of a protagonist in a fantasy and horror-based genre, this chapter contends that the protagonist (and indeed many characters) within such genres is represented as an ambiguous entity that is

caught between conflicting identities, which is often most evident in tensions between internal forces or desires and the external construct of social reality. External forces (such as Glory) and her unavoidable identity as the Slayer continually block Buffy's desires (for example Angel, keeping Dawn alive etc). If we consider that the protagonist may be a representation of the ego it is necessary to discover how useful this is in the analysis of identity onscreen; can the model of 'ego' get to the heart of, and explain the appeal of fragmentary identity onscreen?

Key to the psychoanalytic concept of the ego is the fact that it is constantly under siege from external and internal assailants, which decreases its autonomy and renders it fragile, despite its supposed status as the focal point of mental functioning. I argue that the model of 'ego' offers a very apt account of the experience of identity as it fractures the notion of autonomy and explains and expresses contemporary issues surrounding identity. As mentioned in the Introduction, a common view of the ego is that part of the psyche that we are familiar with and that we project onto others; the supposed 'wholeness' of the ego disavows the more truthfully problematic and disruptive nature of identity. The fragmentation of the psyche (which ego attempts to cover over) also relates to the condition of postmodernity (see Introduction for more on the postmodern subject), where a core, autonomous identity is negated. As a psychoanalytic concept, the ego can provide further understanding and resonance to contemporary texts, particularly with regard to identity of both protagonist and spectator, although for this to be true it is possibly inherently linked to the concept of 'self' for the spectator; using the model of the ego to analyse identity in film and television allows for an account of the way our own experiences of identity are engaged. This is just one example of psychoanalytic ideas or concepts becoming diffused into everyday discourse; yet might also be an affect of postmodernity where fragmentation plays a key role in subjectivity and self-reflexivity can play a part in much discourse.

The presence of psychoanalysis as a rhetorical mode can very often be seen to be at work in the representation of such characters as those of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and often also underpins or motivates narrative. Therefore, psychoanalysis can be considered as a suitable mode for approaching texts concerned with the subjective nature of many protagonists. This further implies that the notions of 'self' and 'ego' are linked and perhaps both can be interpreted as representative of the subjective experience through the agent of the protagonist. Dramatic tension can be had through the undermining of such a subjective protagonist and in film the audience is often restricted to only, or mostly only, the knowledge of the protagonist, as presented in the diegetic story world. However, in a television show such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, viewers are often aware of a bigger picture as storylines can be told through a variety of character perspectives. For example in 'The Gift', viewers witness Glory's attempt at bringing about an apocalypse through Buffy's eyes as well as through the perspective of Giles, the Scooby Gang, Dawn, Ben (Glory's human half) and Glory herself. The viewer is therefore offered many perspectives with which to identify potentially, although often encouraged to identify with the protagonist (Buffy) in trying to discover 'the truth' of any given situation; viewers can therefore identify with the experience of both agency and determination as well as conflicting pulls or demands on the subject as is apparent in the character of Buffy.

A visit to any Internet fan site, where members discuss the show, is testimony to the fact that viewers identify with a variety of characters, and this is encouraged by and thematically echoed in the show, particularly where characters mirror other characters (for example Glory and Buffy mirror each other in their alienation due to ascent to power). The show was able to take risks in terms of the identity of the main characters because over several years a core fan-base formed and the show's producers could be confident and sure of the loyalty and predilections of its audience. In terms of split characters and fragmentary identity, dramatic tension in the show is

problematic because of the subjective positioning of both main characters *and* their counterparts or doubles. For example Willow's evil vampire double may be a villain but it is possible to identify with her because she represents a more adventurous side of Willow's personality. She is also a refreshing character, as are many villainous characters in a show that often pins narrative structure around moral questions. The show therefore presents human experience as mysterious and difficult; it is my contention that examining split characters in light of the concept of the ego taps into the loss of coherent identity that many characters in *Buffy* face, as well as allowing for identity that is experienced as inexplicable and complicated. There are no ideal-egos in the show, which exemplifies the (sometimes) disappointing experience of identity in the diegetic world (as well as in reality), where people might not be who they want to be. Rather Lacan's view of the (narcissistic) ego seems to provide a more relevant model, as this allows not only for a fragmentary vision of identity but also for a narcissistic, as well as aggressive, relation between subject and other.

In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, splitting sometimes occurs at a very basic level: for example Buffy has a robot double and both Willow and Xander have vampire doppelgängers³⁹ (I will focus on literal character splits in Chapter Three). Often, however, splitting occurs at a more complex or subtextual level, as is the case with Buffy and her struggle with maintaining a Slayer identity. Or, as Donald Keller has suggested a further example is Faith (the second Slayer) as a 'shadow self' to Buffy, which he argues is apparent in their dream worlds. He goes on to suggest that 'both Slayers feel a deep bond to each other' (Keller, 2002: 172) even if their relationship is often tense. Such a bond is important as the two Slayers are polarised in many ways and in a sense Faith can be interpreted as a 'bad' shadow self to Buffy; such a bond between them highlights the ambiguity of 'self'. James South

³⁹ Spike arranges for a robot to be built in the form of Buffy during season five, as he has become infatuated with her but knows that the 'real' Buffy will not reciprocate his feelings at this point. Xander and Willow have vampire doubles in an alternate universe; in 'The Wish' (3009) Cordelia (Charisma Carpenter) wishes for Buffy to have never arrived in Sunnydale, one of the consequences is that both Xander and Willow are turned into vampires.

argues that Buffy is caught between two identities, one that embraces her calling and the other that fights against such duties and rejects Slayerhood, wishing instead for a normal life (2002).

One of the important dynamics of Buffy's character is the split between the fragmentation of her identity, and also the assertion of her different identities. The subjective experience of the protagonist is therefore vital to the overall narrative and dramatic impact of the text. Importantly, it is necessary to mention that the viewer is likely to identify with the protagonist as a representation of the 'self' (or indeed any character that they might identify with). Therefore, academics and scholars may argue the view that the 'ego' can be projected on to the cinema screen, however, it must be acknowledged that this is not a version of the 'self' and therefore potentially problematises the way that we view the protagonist psychoanalytically. Subverting this notion however, allows an interpretation of hero characters onscreen that acknowledges the 'self' qualities of such characters, while also allowing for the fact that they are fabricated compositions of identity. A character is, after all, a fictional construct as opposed to a real person; yet cinema seeks to disavow the constructed nature of the character and encourages viewers to identify with characters as (fictional) selves.

Buffy is an ambiguous figure; she is in touch with the human world of sunlight and high school / university and also the dark and dangerous demon underworld, as realised in the show's diegetic world. Her reality is steeped in darkness, where it should present light and factors related to a 'normal' teenage sense of reality. Viewer desire is arguably split between hoping Buffy can overcome her challenges as well as enjoying the trials she faces. Buffy's world and psychology is strongly linked to shadowy underground forces such as the vampire or monster she must kill in each episode; in psychoanalytic terms she can be said to have to mediate between the forces of the id and superego and also the external world as her

role is exemplary of the pressures the ego must face. However, Buffy can also be said to undertake more specifically the role of the narcissistic ego in that she is bound by a fragmentary identity that is defined by constant striving towards a whole, or complete identity that she can never achieve. 'Surprise' (2013) and 'Innocence' (2014) are two episodes of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* that exemplify such ambiguities, as in these two episodes Buffy is represented as struggling with her identity, as well as external and internal pressures; through her status as a struggling heroine she inhabits the role of the besieged ego. This is largely aligned to her relationship with Drusilla⁴⁰ (Juliet Landau) in these two episodes and it is this relationship that fragments Buffy and opens up the possibility of reading her as a split psyche.

The opening of 'Surprise' shows Buffy's dream where she gets out of bed to get a glass a water, as she steps out of her bedroom door Drusilla steps into frame from behind Buffy. The composition of this shot allows for the fact that Drusilla literally steps out of Buffy; the concept of the two being linked is upheld throughout the two episodes. I argue that the show encourages us to read Buffy and Drusilla as acting literally as different aspects of one psyche or mental functioning. Both Drusilla and Buffy have a birthday and subsequently a party; Buffy's is held in the local 'teen' club The Bronze, while Drusilla's party is held in a derelict factory, which we can presume is underground due to its close proximity to sewer tunnels. Later they experience the same dream of the party, both wearing the same white dress, where Drusilla is shown killing Angel. This dream enables Buffy to see where Spike (James Marsters) and Drusilla are and she goes with Angel to Drusilla's party. While there Drusilla remarks, "I only dreamed you'd come", thus indicating that Buffy and Drusilla experienced the same dream/vision. Both Buffy and Drusilla are 'seers'; Buffy can see future events in her dreams and Drusilla is highly talented in reading both the future and people's

⁴⁰ Drusilla appears in *Buffy* in season two, she is a vampire and is Spike's long-term lover. She appears in both *Buffy* and *Angel* and can see into the future and read minds, she is also portrayed as being rather irrational and 'mad'.

minds. Moreover, Buffy can be linked to Drusilla through several periods of 'madness', once losing her mind by hearing other people's thoughts in her head ('Earshot' 3018) and more recently thinking that she really lives in a mental institution in Los Angeles and that her home Sunnydale is an illusion ('Normal Again' 6017). These periods of 'madness', as well as dreams that show Buffy future events, allow for reading retrospectively through events that occur in later episodes and seasons. In 'Surprise' cross fades are used between a close up of each of their faces, further illustrating their connection in these episodes; arguably the link between Buffy and Drusilla is upheld throughout the series as both characters become involved in a love rectangle with Angel and Spike demonstrating the role of interpersonal relationships in the construction of identity; identity shifts constantly in relation to such relationships.

Buffy's first dream continues as she steps into The Bronze through a door in her house (typical spatially disjunctive dream logic) and is witness to Drusilla killing Angel by driving a stake through his heart. The important point here is that Buffy is powerless to stop Drusilla killing the man/vampire she loves, she literally does not see her in time to help Angel; passivity and powerlessness is something the viewer rarely sees in Buffy. She doesn't even reach Angel's hand in time, as he reaches out to touch her before turning to dust. The dream shows Buffy as passive and this is the first clue that the episode will involve dramatic scenes where Buffy will not prevail as she usually does. One of the main factors that I argue here is that this is due to Buffy's confusion between the internal forces, as represented by the underworld (where Angel is particularly ambiguous), and the external world of 'reality' linked to high school, her friends, her status as Slayer and Giles. Buffy's human desire for a boyfriend and 'normal' school activities, such as cheerleading, continually conflict with her much more dangerous identity as a vampire Slayer.

The opening of 'Surprise' shows Buffy's dream world and her connection with internal forces as represented by Drusilla. We can align Drusilla with

internal (unconscious) forces such as id because as a vampire she is ruled by the pleasure principle and therefore the unconscious; she is an embodiment of repressed desires: she lives underground, sunlight will kill her, she drinks blood and it is strongly implied that she is sexually active. Drusilla can even be considered as an 'hysteric', in terms of her 'madness', which highlights the fact that as a vampire she is acting on repressed instincts or desires. Buffy is linked not only to Drusilla (in these particular episodes) but also to darkness; as she is constantly told throughout the series, her power is rooted in darkness. This is partially explained in season seven where it becomes apparent that Buffy's power and role as Slayer is derived from demons. The 'normal' high school girl in Buffy fights this during the early seasons, always longing to be a 'normal' teenager with concerns such as homework, school and boys. However, her links firstly with Angel (a vampire with a soul) and now Drusilla serve to illustrate her ambiguous position as an ordinary girl yet a Slayer with superpowers. In later episodes, it is not just Buffy whose identity is ambiguous: Willow becomes an all-powerful witch; Oz (Seth Green) a werewolf; Anya a vengeance demon and Cordelia (Charisma Carpenter) a 'seer' in *Angel*. Both Spike and Angel also have fractured identities; both vampires are reverted to a more 'human' status as their souls are restored. Even the seemingly infallible God Glory of season five has a human counterpart, Ben; they each possess the one body at different times and as such they are never present together.

Such ambiguities function to create a significant uncertainty that is evident in Buffy; her constant fraternisation with the underworld serves to link her to vampires, the dark and psychoanalytically speaking internal forces such as id. Furthermore, the presence of the First Slayer from season four implicates Buffy's alignment with darkness even more. The first Slayer⁴¹ tells her that she should be alone, that Slayers should not have friends. On the contrary,

⁴¹ The first Slayer attempts to kill Buffy and her friends in their dreams at the close of season four in 'Restless' (4022). She is portrayed as uncivilised and archaic; she is also before language and so cannot speak to Buffy directly, Tara (Amber Benson) must act as a mediator. The first Slayer is represented as savage and 'primitive', which is highly problematic in racial terms as she is played by one of the very few black actors in the show.

Buffy relies on her friends, and I think it could safely be said that without them she would have died (and stayed dead) long ago. This polarises the two Slayers, as the first Slayer remains alone, without friends, or any help; effectively in the dark not that far removed from her vampire foes. Buffy, on the other hand, is rarely seen without her friends, she takes them patrolling, they help to research and overall provide a huge input to her life not just as a Slayer but also as a friend. *Buffy* therefore shifts away from the 'lone hero' rhetoric, which often relates to the protagonist in much of mainstream cinema, as well as in the horror film where one character is frequently left alone to fend for themselves, embodied in Carol J. Clover's notion of the 'Final Girl' (1992). The lone hero in much of mainstream cinema is often aligned with male characters; the implications in terms of gender are that male heroes are self-sufficient while female heroes require a network of support. However, Buffy as part of a support network might equally imply the strengths of traditional views of the female role in relation to family (her friends can be considered her family to a degree); as already noted it is largely Buffy's close ties with her friends/family that has ensured her survival, a lone hero could surely not have lived to tell the tale through seven seasons, as well as the fact that there would be no melodrama if Buffy were without friends, love triangles etc. In industrial terms, it is also likely that viewers need a variety of characters to identify with and to provide multifaceted layers of narrative in the overall story arc of the show.

Through the blurring of borders, the show presents Buffy's internal world as outside; the demons that she fights can be read as metaphors for the teenage experience of high school, where school in Sunnydale can literally be a terrorising place full of demons: real ones standing in for teenage traumas, yet such traumas are apparent also. This results in Buffy's external world being a rather murky and indefinable place, as the underworld is constantly merging into the bright daylight of Buffy's 'normal' world, where it does not always turn to dust. In 'Surprise' and 'Innocence' Buffy (as a representation of the struggling ego) loses the ability to effectively determine the location of such borders. She therefore loses her autonomy in that she

needs her dreams to lead her to Jenny Calendar (Robia LaMorte)⁴²; she is emotionally fragile after losing Angel to Angelus and therefore goes home to cry instead of helping to research. In essence, she is by no means a 'heroine', in the sense that we are used to her being one. Buffy soon realises that she must kill Angelus, thereby losing Angel forever, and she only takes control of the situation towards the end of the second episode; Buffy defeats the Judge (Brian Thompson), who is led by Drusilla and Angel, and stops a massacre in the local shopping mall. However, Buffy cannot defeat Angelus at the close of the episode, asserting that she needs time before she can commit to this act.

Key to Buffy's loss of autonomy is her merging with Drusilla, which results in a loss of subject definition. Drusilla appears to act as Buffy's unconscious within these episodes, firstly as she appears to literally split Buffy in two when she steps out from behind her at the beginning of the episode. Also, Drusilla is figured aesthetically as the 'dark' side of Buffy within the episodes, she is often shown wearing dark colours such as red or black, while Buffy appears in paler shades; Drusilla can therefore be considered as a dark shadow self to Buffy within these episodes. Perhaps more importantly, Drusilla plays on Buffy's desire for Angel in these episodes; Angel is the means by which Drusilla acts out her attack on Buffy and it is through Angel that Drusilla attacks Buffy's autonomy and therefore her sense of identity as a heroine. Within these two episodes Drusilla manages to delve into Buffy's psyche suggesting that Buffy is not autonomous, nor can she be defined as a separate entity or subject.

Drusilla attacks Buffy through internal means, and through dreams she threatens to kill Angel and therefore take him away from Buffy; from a psychoanalytic perspective Drusilla acts as Buffy's id. Buffy's sexual desire for Angel has been apparent for many episodes and it is this that Drusilla

⁴² Jenny is a teacher at Sunnydale High School and is also Giles' love interest. She is a 'techno Pagan' and has descended from the line of Romanian Gypsies that cursed Angelus, giving him back his soul so that he might live forever in anguish. She has been sent by her people to watch over Angel, which Buffy soon realises.

plays on to get to Buffy: by threatening to kill Angel, Drusilla draws Buffy closer to Angel. Id prevails and Buffy does indeed have sex with Angel, to the end that he loses his soul and reverts back to the evil vampire Angelus. Within the logic of the show the character is both Angel and Angelus; as the vampire Angelus he carried out violence and atrocities, to the extent that he was renowned for his terrible deeds. However, unfortunately for Angelus, he killed a young Romanian Gypsy and in revenge her family cursed him with a soul so that he might suffer forever for the crimes he had committed; the soul will however be lost once more if Angel experiences one true moment of happiness, which in this case was having sex with Buffy whom he loves.

Angel is an ambiguous figure, although a vampire he has a soul, he drinks blood and the sunlight or a stake would turn him to dust, yet he is generally associated more strongly with Buffy's world of normality than with the dark underworld of demons. Before reverting to Angelus, he was often associated with Buffy's friends and Giles (linked to reality and daylight), would often help in a crisis, and in his own spin-off show *Angel* (which begins after the pair break up) he takes on Buffy's role as a hero (or warrior) against the forces of darkness. Once Angel reverts back to Angelus⁴³ we see him in Buffy's dream in broad daylight, in fact it is an incredibly bright light that is far brighter than the average daylight. As Rhonda J. Wilcox has argued, the theme of light and dark is an ongoing motif throughout the series, light representing pain for Buffy (Wilcox, 2002b); in this case Angel in bright sunlight highlights Buffy's emotional trauma at losing Angel to Angelus.

Within the dream, Angel tells Buffy she 'has to know what to see', a seemingly obvious scene is played out in the dream as Jenny Calendar lifts her veil and Buffy wakes to the realisation that Jenny knows more than she has previously let on. However, Buffy has missed the point, she is so desperate to have Angel back in her world of external reality, that she

⁴³ Who is 'mad, bad and dangerous to know'

envisages him in her dream helping her. The scene plays out a wish-fulfilment on the part of Buffy, but it also has a disavowed latent meaning which is Buffy's inability to accept that Angel is not human. Not only does he give her a vital clue, but also he is in blinding sunlight as if he were human linked to reality and the external world, however the light is too bright and therefore unreal. Angelus is now part of the vampire underworld and aligned with Drusilla despite Buffy's wishes; she wakes from her dream but not to the view that Angel is still Angelus, and the spectator is aware that she still has to 'know what to see'. The use of dreams such as these in the show are often used to comment on Buffy's state of mind, and involve characters that she is experiencing problems with, such as the Master, or Faith, both of whom impinge on Buffy's territory of Slaying as they try to usurp her authority. However dreams in the show also create enigmas within the narrative, and often reward long-term viewers as they forecast future events and narrative developments.

A significant pleasure is offered for the audience here in the form of what Barthes terms the hermeneutic code (as noted in the Introduction): the puzzle is set-up and the audience are invited to discover the true meaning of Buffy's dream. The hermeneutic code in the show (as well as generally in many film and television texts) is often put to use in the form of dreams; such dreams, visions and prophecies are usually the carrier of latent meanings, which the viewer may be able to relate to other episodes in the series thus furthering the (spectatorship) pleasures of a long-running show. Latent meanings often include the pressure Buffy faces from both the external world of school, exams and boys, and also the vampire threat that is more representative of internal drives. The merging of the internal and the external is highly dramatic and Buffy's position exemplifies the blurring line between these two binaries. As many have suggested, she is a crosser of borders, at home both in the graveyard and the cheerleader squad. Angel also makes such border crossings when he crosses from good to evil, yet more is at play

than a simple Manichean theme⁴⁴: he crosses from Buffy's external world to join forces with the internal as represented by Drusilla in these episodes, thus confusing Buffy's sense of self or identity as a heroine, and indeed her sense of herself as a 'girlfriend'. Indeed, most characters that feature on a long-running basis in the show have somewhat confused identities. Most of the characters have had at some point a double, a dark past or aspects of their character brought to light that questions what the viewer thought they knew about an otherwise familiar character; this again plays out as a reward for viewers who watch the long-running television series. Through piecing together information that is known about a character over a significant time period, characters become well rounded and 'real' in the eyes of a viewer. It is in this sense that identity provides narrative structure for the overall story arc of both *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*.

If we continue to read these episodes from a psychoanalytic viewpoint, the pleasure principle is clearly at work. Freud used the concept of the pleasure principle to describe the human's basic and instinctual desire for pleasure. Opposing this is the reality principle, which brings the pleasure principle into check; allowing us to search for pleasure but is more in tune with reality and delaying pleasure until a later stage⁴⁵. Freud wrote several essays around the subject of the pleasure principle throughout different stages of his career, concentrating on different aspects of the structure he called 'Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911). He never really differed on the structure of the

⁴⁴ Hilary M. Leon argues that Buffy is not strictly human and this creates many struggles for her living her life as a teenager (Leon, 2001). Rhonda J. Wilcox and Donald Keller argue that Faith acts as a shadow figure to Buffy (they are drawing on Carl Jung), which highlights her ambiguous identity and status of a border crosser. Wilcox also argues that Spike can be seen in a similar light as Faith, in that he can also be considered a shadow self, in his relationship to Buffy (Wilcox, 2002a; Keller, 2002). Jana Reiss argues that the show in general explores ambiguity and she focuses on the 'monster within' and internal forces of darkness. She draws on the idea that vampires might be a dark reflection of ourselves, and argues that Buffy's most important fight is with herself (Reiss, 2004).

⁴⁵ The movement from the pleasure principle to the reality principle is grounded in the ego, where it transforms from pleasure-ego to reality-ego. The reality-ego determines between internal and external stimulus, while the pleasure-ego prioritises the achievement of pleasure above anything else. In short, the pleasure-ego associates the subject with pleasure and the outside world with unpleasure; we can presume that pleasure-ego remains unconscious while reality-ego is conscious: 'Just as the pleasure-ego can do nothing but *wish*, work for a yield of pleasure, and avoid unpleasure, so the reality-ego need do nothing but strive for what is *useful* and guard itself against damage' (Freud, 1911a: 40/1). Freud suggests, then, that the reality-ego must guard against the pleasure-ego.

pleasure principle, but he began to change his original conceptions of the power of the principle, and in later writings, he considered the effect of external stimulus as opposed to internal instincts. Freud argues that the pleasure principle, as ruled by the primary process and the id, seeks pleasure relentlessly and impatiently, '[t]hese processes strive towards gaining pleasure; psychical activity draws back from any event that might arouse unpleasure' (Freud, 1911a: 36). This is opposed by the ego, which is ruled by the secondary process, and where drives are repressed in the hope of avoiding unpleasure. The reality principle is thus introduced and steps in under the rule of ego to oppose the pleasure principle, and delay pleasure until the final stages, although it still works under the influence of the pleasure principle (ibid). The hermeneutic code can be seen as working along the same lines as the pleasure principle in terms of the deferral of desire to know, which creates, intrigue, suspense and anticipation. A link can be drawn between this deferral of desire to know and the 'primal scene'⁴⁶, where a desire to know is juxtaposed with a desire not to know. The endless deferral of desire is perhaps intrinsic to episodic romance, as it is figured in long-running TV shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

Freud argues that 'the substitution of the reality principle for the pleasure principle implies no deposing of the pleasure principle, but only a safeguarding of it. A momentary pleasure, uncertain in its results, is given up, but only in order to gain along the new path an assured pleasure at a

⁴⁶ Pleasure in solving puzzles can to some extent be explained by Jean Laplanche's concept of the 'Primal Seduction' (Laplanche, 1989), where he draws on Freud's primary fantasy (of parental coitus) to explain how the pre-sexual child attempts to solve unconscious sexual messages from adult carers. He suggests that a child is subject to a number of unconscious messages or signifiers from adults that are seductive in meaning; he terms these 'enigmatic signifiers' (ibid: 126). They are seductive because they are unclear and the child, who is reading the signs of the mother's unconscious desire, cannot decipher them; essentially from therein onwards we are constantly attempting to decipher such codes or enigmas. Laplanche argues that 'the 'attentions of the mother' or the 'aggression of the father' are seductive only because they are not transparent. They are seductive because they are opaque, because they convey some thing enigmatic' (Laplanche, 1989: 128). This draws on Freud's concept of the 'primal scene' where the child witnesses parental coitus and becomes 'much concerned with the problem of what sexual intercourse... consists in' (Freud, 1905b: 115), which (un)consciously provides a desire to 'know'. A desire is born to try to make sense of puzzles/codes, and is applicable to all subjects: it is desirable to attempt to find meanings as we are denied access to the true meanings of the enigmas in the unconscious.

later time' (ibid: 41). Freud is suggesting here that the reality principle and the pleasure principle are not polarised, they do in some sense work together for the same goal: the achievement of pleasure. This is particularly relevant when discussing *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as the two systems, while on the surface appear at extreme ends of the spectrum, are in fact far more closely linked than first appearances: much like Buffy's world of normality and the underground demon world. Oddly, this is truly Manichean in that one cannot exist without the other.

Freud's discussion of the pleasure and reality principles hints at his indecision of how the ego should be viewed, on one hand the reality-ego is at hand to uphold the reality principle, while on the other the pleasure-ego is at the frontline of the pleasure principle (as noted in Chapter One, Lacan also links the ego to the pleasure principle). The ego is therefore split in nature, torn between an internal drive towards pleasure and an external awareness of reality. It is perhaps more accurate to discuss the ego in this light as the narcissistic ego, the ego that Lacan takes up as the centre of his discussion of the fragmentary and divisive status of human identity and that Freud theorises in his discussion of narcissism.

In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Sunnydale is constantly under attack from a variety of foes. However, the show focuses on Buffy as a struggling heroine in light of these constant attacks. In 'Surprise' and 'Innocence' Buffy takes on the role of the narcissistic ego as she loses touch with reality and becomes beguiled by the dark mirror image of Drusilla who acts on Buffy's sexual desire for Angel. Drusilla acts on behalf of the pleasure principle and relentlessly pursues pleasure, which is represented by Angel, both for Buffy and Drusilla (Spike is particularly jealous of Angel and Drusilla as it is implied that Angel and Drusilla have a sexual relationship). Angel can be read as the phallus in a Lacanian sense as he promises to fill the gap left by lack, in other words, to satisfy both Buffy and Drusilla's desire; Angel is a character

that cannot be separated from desire (just as the phallus cannot be) as, once he returns in season three, he can never risk having sex with Buffy again, while he is a vampire, and they are both doomed to a relationship which can never be physically intimate. Desire and lack are constants in Buffy and Angel's relationship, which, from a Lacanian perspective, further suggests that Buffy's role of heroine is actually a role of narcissistic ego.

Throughout most of the show, Buffy cannot be said to be an autonomous heroine. Not only do Buffy's desires clash with her status as Slayer in these episodes (as well as often throughout the whole series), but Drusilla acts as her 'dark double', which further fragments her psyche and undermines her status as hero. Both Buffy and Drusilla are shot in a very similar way during the two episodes, there are several close-ups on both the characters and cross fades between them, and we are encouraged to identify with both. Such identification is initiated by similar uses of the camera for both characters, and as a 'dark double' or shadow to Buffy in these episodes; Drusilla becomes a main focus both for Buffy and the viewer. Taking into account the industrial context and as noted earlier, the show provides various characters that viewers may gel with and therefore it is attempting to appeal to a maximum audience interest. The spectator's identification then is quite possibly split, just as Buffy and Drusilla are rendered split; the spectator mirrors the central character in their splitness and therefore lack of autonomy. As Freud argues in 'A Child Is Being Beaten' (1919)⁴⁷, it is highly likely that subjects can identify with more than one position, which is testimony to the fragmented and assembled nature of identity. The viewer is therefore encouraged to identify with Buffy as a fragmentary character, and to accept identity generally in the show not as whole but as a divided hotchpotch of identifications and addresses. In the show, pleasure is offered through characters such as Drusilla and Spike being humorous and in many ways likeable; therefore they are popular with viewers who can identify as

⁴⁷ Freud discusses multiple points of identification in relation to the phantasy of 'A Child is Being Beaten', where subjects take up a variety of different perspectives to gain pleasure from such a phantasy. He discusses this largely in light of masochism as well as sadism (Freud, 1919).

much with a villain such as these characters as they can with Buffy. As the Judge says both Spike and Drusilla 'smell human', which suggests that they have 'human' emotions such as love, jealousy, anger etc, and this is central to how viewers may identify with them. Primary and secondary identifications are key to the show, and the pleasures it offers its audience.

Christian Metz suggests that the cinema screen is in itself like a mirror, but unlike a normal mirror the subject is the one thing that cannot be reflected and the screen can therefore become more like sheer glass (Metz, 1982). Much of his theory is related to Lacan's discussion of the 'mirror phase'. Metz argues that the spectator has to identify with something that is projected on the cinema screen, and this is only possible if the spectator is already a constituted subject that has developed an ego (through the 'mirror phase') (ibid: 45/6). *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* does not appear on the cinema screen but on the television set, however I would like to suggest that identification with something/someone in such a 'cinematic' show, as Metz suggests, is still necessary. Flitterman-Lewis suggests that cinematic identification in terms of psychoanalysis cannot be applied simplistically to television, as the cinema is a darkened room often described as a 'dreamlike' state. Television on the other hand is viewed at home where surroundings are familiar, she suggests that 'the darkness is dissolved, the anonymity removed.' (Flitterman-Lewis, 1992: 217). Technical differences between film and television also create different spatial and temporal diegetic worlds, particularly considering soap operas or news programs. Use of the camera in television often helps to create a variety of 'looks' or viewpoints, thus dispersing with the cinematic preference to produce the viewpoint of the protagonist: that of primary identification only. Flitterman-Lewis goes on to suggest that while television uses many classic (Hollywood) film techniques such as shot-reverse shot, it creates 'multiple pleasures' in terms of identifications (ibid: 229). This is notable in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* through several possible identifications with a variety of characters, or primary and secondary identifications.

Televisual practice relies on fragmented visions and views; where the protagonist is split, as is the case with Drusilla and Buffy, there is perhaps a mirroring of the spectator in the central character in terms of acknowledging fragmentary identity, or at least an awareness of the problematics of the ego as whole. Metz suggests that the spectator is fundamentally split regardless of the content of the film text; he suggests that the spectator is on one hand fully aware of the cinema as an 'illusion' in that it is not real, but the spectator also splits to incorporate a suspension of disbelief thus allowing for the spectator to 'believe' in the world the film creates and thus the protagonist (ibid: 212). Indeed, suspension of disbelief relies on knowing yet not knowing; being aware of the illusion of the image is disavowed in order to gain pleasure from cinema and television shows. In terms of television, this is an unexplored area, however, the use of Buffy as a heroic, yet fractured, figure is key to the pattern of identifications offered to the viewer.

It is often possible to view hero characters as a representation of the realist ego (as proposed by Freud); as such characters are usually the centre point of the show. Freud suggests that heroes in fiction carry a latent meaning in that they can be applied to all daydreams and phantasies:

The feeling of security with which I follow the hero through his perilous adventures is the same as the feeling with which a hero in real life throws himself into the water to save a drowning man... It is the true heroic feeling, which one of our best writers has expressed in an inimitable phrase: 'Nothing can happen to me!' It seems to me, however, that through this revealing characteristic of invulnerability we can immediately recognise His Majesty the Ego, the hero alike of every day-dream and every story (Freud, 1908 [1907]: 137/8)

Freud suggests that a heroic figure can indeed be interpreted as a representation of the (realist) ego, and the ego as a success, fully in control of mental functioning. In terms of the show, it is Buffy who demonstrates heroic characteristics consistently. It is important to note that the show is long running, having recently ended on its seventh season it has occupied our television sets for seven years in total, as well as many re-runs which are still continuing. One of the many pleasures offered by such a long running show is that it offers the viewer the chance to literally get to know each

character, as well as creating character development in ways not available to feature length films. However, in psychoanalytic terms such a long running show provides a further resonance; Buffy could be seen in Freudian terms as the realist ego in a never-ending battle between the id, the superego and reality or external forces. As Freud suggests while commenting on characters in novels and fiction: '[t]he 'good' ones are the helpers, while the 'bad' ones are the enemies and rivals, of the ego which has become the hero of the story' (ibid: 138). Over so many years, the message has got across to the viewer: Buffy may usually prevail at the end of each episode but it is not without cost and there is always another demon ready to take the place of the last; the deferral of an 'ending' is intrinsic to long-running shows. It is important that the viewer is aware of this, if we were so sure that in every episode Buffy would triumph one of the pleasures of the text would be lost. Buffy's ability to become passive, to run away or even to die is always in the background knowledge of the viewer and it is this that creates an important cultural resonance. Buffy then, can be seen as a representation of the realist ego as struggling under the pressures of internal drives and external forces. Such a representation is important to our understanding of how we perceive the protagonist or lead character in a given text, or if indeed the ego is an accurate description of our lead character.

While it is possible to view the character of Buffy as a representation of the realist ego that usually successfully manages to mediate between reality and internal forces, the show does explicitly make Buffy's life a difficult one; more so as the show became more confident of the sensibilities of its 'readership' or audience. It is in this sense that it is more accurate to describe Buffy as a representation of the narcissistic ego; the use of identity as a narrative drive in the show insists that identity is constantly shifting and changing, which is evident in all the characters in the show. In order for viewers to keep watching the characters need to remain interesting; a show that focuses on the supernatural is therefore likely to provide narratives that can literalise issues of the experience of identity through the frequent use of

doppelgängers and doubles. It is the focus on characters' other selves that often animates the narrative arc in many of the episodes; the show deals directly with the problematic notion of what identity actually is through horror and melodrama conventions. This is also the case in other examples of texts that base narrative around personality and split personality.

The idea of identifying with an image outside of oneself is reminiscent of Lacan's 'mirror phase' and it is in this sense that the characters can be interpreted as representative of the narcissistic ego. For the characters in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, identity is experienced as not whole; in the show, most characters have a double that usurps their sense of being a unified individual and identity can be experienced as 'outside' of oneself, much like in the 'mirror phase'. In 'Surprise' and 'Innocence', Buffy experiences identity in such a fragmented way through Drusilla acting as her shadow self; Buffy's identity is therefore experienced as 'outside' of herself and therefore not autonomous, and allows Drusilla to take control which is evident in her winning Angelus back.

Viewing identity in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as representative of shifting between the realist and narcissistic ego demonstrates that the varying models of ego provides both a conceptual and theoretical framework for analysing subjectivity and shifting notions of identity in psychological based texts. Viewing Buffy as the ego (realist and narcissistic) taps into not only the divided nature of her identity as protagonists are often represented in psychological based genres, but also into filmic representation of characters as 'self'. As noted earlier, Freud's conception of the ego is steeped in slippage between a psychical agency and the actual physical person, which is exactly how identity is figured onscreen. In mainstream cinema many heroes are 'perfect' models of subjecthood: fearless, brave and able to defeat all foes, which is strongly representative of Freud's realist ego. However, they are also represented as 'whole' people, autonomous and

bodily characters, which undermine the notion of the ego as a purely psychical agency. It is in the movement between these trajectories that the comfortable and assured sense of identity is played out onscreen.

In melodrama, horror and psychological based genres (as well as art cinema often), however, the narcissistic ego is more prevalent. In these films and television shows identity is played out as fractured and out of control, often this taps into how identity is really experienced. Buffy's struggles frequently take place around her fractured identity, which is played out either through literal doubles such as the Buffy robot, or subtler splitting such as Faith or Drusilla acting as her dark double or shadow self. The representation of Buffy's identity as narcissistic and fractured expresses or embodies societal and cultural concerns about identity and the experience of identity in the real world. While mainstream film might be working 'ideologically' to enforce the idea that identity is autonomous, many psychological and horror based texts (such as *Buffy*) work in the opposite way by highlighting that identity is fundamentally unstable and is experienced as such. More importantly, through encouraging identification with characters like Buffy (and her friends) as split characters, the show provides a progressive allowance for identity as unknowable and difficult, which is arguably more realistic than the unproblematic representation of identity in much of mainstream film and television.

* * *

It has been the aim of this chapter to establish that psychoanalysis is a valid method for analysing cultural products with the aim of shedding light on cultural and societal concerns about the construction and experience of identity. The constant attention to identity in shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* points to cultural fixations with both the experience of

identity as well as the origin of identity, or how identity becomes established and maintained. Key to understanding identity in psychological based texts is the representation of identity as a form of the ego; through its many theorisations the model of ego literalises societal fears about identity as it taps into conceptions of identity that may be sliding between the autonomous, heroic and the unknowable, deeply divided aspects of experience. Furthermore, the ego is key to interpreting representations of identity as ego cannot be separated from a (delusional) feeling or sense of self; film and television representations of characters rely on conflating character with versions of 'selves' to a certain degree. The continuing slide between 'self' and 'ego' strikes at the heart of what are essentially representative versions of 'identity', or what it means to be 'human', onscreen.

The next chapter will explore the narrative form, style and generic context of literally split characters onscreen through focusing on gender identity and the thematic focus on good and evil in many multiple personality texts. I aim to show that all the concomitant issues discussed in this thesis stemming from split personality in the cinema are indicative of specific cultural and social contexts that film and television products are produced and consumed in.

Chapter Three

Into the Mirror

The main premise of this thesis is that doubles and the theme of fragmentary identity populate contemporary cinema and television across horror and psychological-based texts. The central aim of this chapter is to analyse how and why the split subject is rendered in cinematic terms and to discuss its representation in several psychological horror-based texts, in order to ascertain the narrative function and form of the split. It shall be argued here that fragmentary identity is indicated through specific cinematic modes such as mirrors and reflective surfaces. As we will see the generic conventions used in film and television channel representation of the split subject into certain stylistic and narrative form. A central focus of this chapter is therefore on the cinematic devices, most significantly mirroring, that are employed in order to indicate that split identity animates both narrative and character development, as well as theme. I demonstrate that mirrors (as spectacle and cinematic device) are often employed to display fragmentary identity and the split subject in horror and psychological-based film and television. Mirrors are an important tool for signifying unstable identity because visually they fragment the frame and either divide a character's image in two or duplicate it fully.

Equally, however, the visual is not the only method by which filmmakers indicate unstable character identity. In the latter part of this chapter I address the use of voice and language in relation to the split subject with a particular focus on the character of Willow in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. As I will show, voice and language (the use of speech acts) can be just as indicative of split identity in visual culture as devices such as mirroring. Willow's change in speech acts when she turns 'evil' is a way for viewers to identify that she is not herself, and along with visual devices (such as costuming) her identity is effectively demonstrated as unstable and likely to startle those accustomed to 'normal' Willow. It is, however, largely in the visual realm that filmmakers

reveal split identity, and mirrors are often a first choice to easily signify to viewers that identity is a narrative theme.

In film and television the spectacle of mirrors shimmer enigmatically with illusion, and I argue that in fantasy and horror they often foreshadow enchantment and even power. Mirrors and reflections in film and television are common throughout many genres, and are likely to be familiar to the regular filmgoer as a dramatic cinematic device, to the extent that the use of mirrors as a feature of mise-en-scene can be considered clichéd. Mirrors can indicate many themes such as power and mystery, as in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (supervising director: David Hand, 1937, USA), for example. To give some examples of how mirrors might work in other genres: mirrors are deployed in some melodramas to highlight the theme of alienation or to create distancing effects, or perhaps in film noir to indicate dark themes or doubles. The opening of *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz, 1945, USA) frames the shooting of Mildred's second husband in front of a mirror shattering the glass: Mildred's life is from this point rendered unstable and fragmented. In *8 Mile* (Curtis Hanson, 2002, USA/Germany), mirrors are deployed at the beginning and towards the end of the film to indicate a significant change of character self-worth that has occurred to Rabbit (Eminem) throughout the course of the narrative; this is indicated by his prolonged look at himself in the mirror both at the beginning and at the end of the film. In *The Dark Mirror* female twins (both played by Olivia de Havilland) polarise good and bad halves of what can essentially be read as one character; apart from the clue in the title of the film, mirrors in the mise-en-scene constantly draw the eye, calling attention to the fragmentary nature of the character(s). This film noir / melodrama also employs a male psychiatrist character to despatch the 'evil' half making a psychological reading even more accessible. As noted in the Introduction, twin narratives often follow such lines, where the 'good' twin lives out over the other, enforcing the view that 'wholeness' and autonomy is possible after all.

The prevalence of mirrors and reflections, in such texts, lies in the dramatic, resonant and symbolic use that such a device can provide; mirrors in film noir in particular adds to the intrigue and mystery that many of these films develop as a central theme. The combination of dramatic intent and visual enchantment is key to many film genres and mirrors are just one example of the many devices filmmakers might utilise to heighten certain attitudes or dramatic scenes. Mirrors also particularly invoke 'body staring'; where characters may spend time simply looking at themselves in narcissistic contemplation, in despair or perhaps even to seek strength in their own image.

The framing of mirrors within film and television also provides an invaluable image of the infamous 'other' that many genres (such as horror) are renowned for representing, particularly considering the vampire and the mirror that refuses to reflect their image. Mirrors also provide means of showing a double image of one or more characters, such as the 'mirror scene' in *Mulholland Drive* involving the two lead characters in the bathroom (David Lynch, 2001, France/USA); often such shots are long takes so the dramatic intent weighs heavier than any narrative function. One of the aims of this chapter is to show that films and television shows that exploit mirrors in such a way are encouraging the viewer to analyse a character's emotions and state of mind and are therefore locating the drama of such a scene purely within a psychological premise. Importantly, mirrors 'frame' a character's image, which draws attention to their 'self' image, or how a character views him/herself at a given moment.

Visually, mirrors are aesthetically pleasing to the eye; as iridescent surfaces they sparkle and draw the gaze, as well as often providing unusual framings with more than one image of a given character. I aim to prove that in the

horror and psychological horror-based texts (both genres where the supernatural can be put to use) discussed in this chapter, the mirror often provides an image of the character that can be slightly at odds with the actual character: it can be delusional, reflecting or remediating into cinematic form Lacan's 'mirror phase'. It is therefore not surprising that a Lacanian perspective is a favoured mode for critics when looking at the unstable nature of the 'self' (and body), which I argue is a theme so often found in contemporary horror-based texts, particularly those texts which set up mirrors as a dramatic vehicle for expressing the exigent identity of characters. Does the representation of the doppelgänger and split subject through devices such as mirroring address cultural concerns about identity? Furthermore, if cultural concerns about identity are foremost in the texts discussed in this thesis, does this questioning of what it means to be human entail more specific questions such as gender identity?

The previous chapter argues for the changing use of the psychoanalytic term 'ego' in furthering an understanding of the wider cultural climate that these texts are produced in. I mean to show that all the texts discussed in this chapter promote a subjective or 'psychological' approach through the representation of the protagonist as struggling with issues of identity, which is grounded in the personal and emotional perspective of a central character and their counterpart (mirror image). A central goal of this chapter, in line with the thesis as a whole, is to show that the psychoanalytic models of the psyche remain useful to interpret, analyse and critically appraise the splitting of characters as the besieged ego struggling under external forces. Does the concept of the narcissistic ego, which is drawn back to itself as a libidinal object and shies away from reality and the external world, continue to provide the most useful model for interpreting the representation of the split subject in film and television?

The next section will consider how a (mirror) image that is played out either through the positioning of another actor or through a mirror inflection is represented onscreen. What does the representation of these split subjects bring to light about the culture that the texts were produced and consumed in?

The seductive mirror image in *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999, USA), *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976, USA) and *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (Michael Cohn, 1997, USA)

Steven Shaviro suggests that 'virility continually runs the risk of being seduced into vulnerability' (Shaviro, 1993: 190). This is in the context of a discussion of the image of male bodies in *Querelle* (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1982, West Germany/France), and in particular the representation of homosexual male bodies. Shaviro argues that the body is created as spectacle where vulnerability and virility are not necessarily polarised but co-present. Importantly, the use of male bodies and masculinity has been the subject of much discussion and debate in film and television theory for many years, perhaps due to its changing shape over recent times and concomitant shifts in meanings. The male body changes shape quite literally in film and television representation; Yvonne Tasker has argued that the muscle-bound male body has been made spectacle in the action film. While this is not a 'new' phenomenon, the overtly 'macho' muscular appearance of actors such as Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger became very popular in the body-conscious context of the 1980s (Tasker, 1993). Concurrently, the male body and identity has been feminised in other genres such as the horror film, for example the penetration and intrusion of the body in David Cronenberg's *Videodrome*

(1983, Canada/USA). In film noir male characters are often cheated and deceived by the more wily and cunning 'femme fatale' characters who undermine their authority. Recent psychological horror-based texts have also been preoccupied with the male body, however in some of these films, the body is created as a site of splitting and subsequently loss of autonomy.

One of the guiding arguments of this thesis is that fantasy-based film and television texts seem currently saturated with images of split psyches and bodies. David Lynch, for example, often confuses the identity of male characters by morphing their bodies into other characters, or by morphing or splitting characters (sometimes this is 'seen' at other times it is more 'invisible'), as in *Lost Highway*. In relation to *Fight Club* I will be arguing that the male body, and its relation to shifting gender roles, has become increasingly used as a tool to produce dramatic tension through splitting of characters and the loss of autonomy in recent psychological horror-based texts. Characters in texts such as *Fight Club* and *Taxi Driver* are often rendered out of control of their own bodies by becoming either literally split in two or metaphorically (often depicted through the images produced in mirrors, as I will go on to show). This resonates with cultural anxieties surrounding identity, masculinity, the body and gender.

Fight Club is a film about the 'narrator' (Edward Norton), importantly he has no name; he is never called by his name and the credits either refer to him as narrator or 'Jack', a name that springs out of a scene in the film⁴⁸. For the most part of the film, we are aware that something is amiss, for example, the main character does not have a name whereas his close friend Tyler (Brad Pitt) has a first and last name. The two are never seen together by Marla

⁴⁸ The narrator is introduced to us at the beginning of the film as a rather wretched character; as an incessant insomniac he is unable to sleep and therefore cannot function on any other level than that of a 'mechanical' mode. This leads the narrator to live his life by 'going through the motions'. Eventually a doctor suggests that the narrator consider other illnesses that are far more severe than his own, such as those dealt with by cancer patients. The narrator takes the doctor's advice and begins attending support groups for patients with testicular cancer, in order to feel comfort from others.

(Helena Bonham-Carter), and the relationship between Tyler and Narrator is never fully clear. For example, Tyler is seen in the beginning of the film in several shots for a few frames only and thus flashes up on the screen for a very short time before disappearing, which creates an element of intrigue surrounding his character. By the end of the film it becomes apparent that Tyler and Narrator are one and the same person. Together (or by Tyler's lead) they manage to collapse the entire financial district of the city, thus clearing everyone's debt record, which is the conclusion of the film. Within this narrative structure, the narrator has created a double that he believes to be stronger than him. Tyler can attract women and he is also a strong and influential leader. However, the narrator has also created a 'perfect' and virile body, which polarises the two physically; where narrator is vulnerable, Tyler is virile and here we return to Shaviro who (as noted previously) suggests the two co-exist. It is also worth noting that Tyler is exactly the type of man that Travis (*Taxi Driver*) aspires to be (which I will go on to discuss in more detail below).

The use of the actor Brad Pitt in the role of Tyler Durden is telling in that he is perhaps one of Hollywood's most famous and attractive stars currently. The actor who plays the narrator is smaller in build, the character is displayed in the film as being downbeat, and, although clever, he is relatively unattractive and his only interest seems to be buying furniture for his flat, which he orders over the phone. Tyler is represented as attractive to women (particularly Marla), innovative, strong and very much a 'man's man'; he is very involved in homosocial activities such as fighting with other men. The narrator then, has created Tyler as everything that he is not, and in many ways all of Tyler's attributes are grounded in a traditional notion of macho masculinity. As Tyler himself asserts "all the ways you wish you could be, that's me. I look like you wanna look. I fuck like you wanna fuck. I am capable, and most importantly, I am free in all the ways that you are not."

After setting up *Fight Club*⁴⁹, Tyler is seen in most of the fight scenes with his shirt off, displaying one of Hollywood's favourite washboard male torsos, which is very much the object of the narrator's, Marla's and the audience's gaze⁵⁰.

Laura Mulvey argues that:

The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking, but it also goes further, developing scopophilia in its narcissistic aspect. The conventions of mainstream film focus attention on the human form. Scale, space, stories are all anthropomorphic. Here, curiosity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with likeness and recognition: the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world (Mulvey, 1989: 17)

Mulvey suggests here that cinema facilitates the pleasures of looking, which in many films has a gendered economy also found in the male protagonist's 'gaze' towards the female character/s. In *Fight Club*, this 'narcissistic aspect' is largely between narrator and Tyler, and although Marla is technically the 'love interest', she provides more of a narrative function rather than as an object for the gaze. Marla is represented as rather undesirable; the camera regards her from the narrator's point of view and the fact that he treats her with disgust and disdain. Her appearance is always dishevelled and the narrator shows no sexual interest towards her at all. Her function in the text is to create discordance between Tyler and narrator, and to hint to the viewer that Tyler and narrator's relationship may not be what it seems.

The exchange of looks that occurs in the film is most often displayed between narrator and Tyler. Mulvey suggests that 'fascination with likeness and recognition' is incorporated into a 'wish to look' suggesting thereby that the narrator is fascinated with his own manufactured appearance (Tyler's

⁴⁹ *Fight Club* is a group of men that come together to fight each other in order to escape the pressures of modern living and consumer culture; the exclusively male group find pleasure in violent confrontations between each other.

⁵⁰ Yvonne Tasker argues that masculinity in certain films can be seen as a performance, which taps into the problematic display of muscle-bound men onscreen as *both* triumphant and full of crisis (Tasker, 1993).

appearance), as in truth they are one and the same person. The fact that the narrator invents his ideal ego in the form and body of Brad Pitt is due to the perception in both the film and popular culture at large that Brad Pitt is an ideal bodily image. For the narrator, an ideal image in the body of Brad Pitt fills a lack or gap in his own life, the ideal ego can attract women and men for the narrator and builds him a new life based on macho masculine values, something the narrator was lacking beforehand. However, in terms of the spectator this creates an interesting shift in conventional ways of 'looking' at the characters.

In many ways, *Fight Club* encourages us to 'look' at Tyler, and he is created as a bodily object to be looked at, when we might have expected (if we follow Mulvey's notion of gendered spectacles) Marla to fulfil this role⁵¹. Considering a cultural resonance, particularly in terms of feminism, *Fight Club* could be considered as a moving away from placing women as bodily spectacle, and encouraging men to 'look' at themselves more in this light; this is encouraged by consumer culture and magazines for example, which are focused on 'managing' the male body in such a way that might traditionally be seen in society in terms of women's attention to their body and appearance. The film is focused on relations between men and, importantly, economies of power and emotion between men. In *Fight Club*,

⁵¹ For Linda R. Williams 'the important discussion of the male gaze and woman as its object which has taken place in feminist film theory has only recently been developed and reassessed to account for the gender-dynamic of a situation within which woman occupies the ostensibly powerful position of the gaze' (Williams, 1993: 75). The consideration of the female gaze is important in critiquing the representation of the male body onscreen. The representation of male bodies in film has been discussed by several critics (e.g. Dyer, 1992; Neale 1992; Hunt 1993; Tasker, 1993). The 'looking' that takes place between Tyler and narrator (particularly considering how Tyler/Brad Pitt is rather objectified in the film) taps into debates about relations between men and narcissistic and violent elements in such films. Critics discuss the problematic representation of male bodies in light of feminist debates about the female body; debates often note a distinction between active male / passive female, and it is often assumed that if male bodies are objectified, they are in some way feminised (Neale, 1992). Narcissism has been discussed in light of Mulvey's arguments regarding identification with the hero onscreen (ibid), often seen as ideal ego. However, male bodies are often punished and 'tested' in certain films (notably the action and western). Hunt notes 'masculinity may well be investigated by being tested' (Hunt, 1993: 65). Hunt also points to the representation of masculinity as both homoerotic spectacle and as an enigma (ibid). For Neale, the male body in such genres is eroticised, yet this is negated through scenes of conflict and action (1992). For Hunt eroticism and desire are apparent in certain films and such films address male narcissism (Hunt, 1993).

power is largely aligned to looking, particularly in light of the fights being made spectacle for the other men to watch, fighting being a condition under which men can be objects of the gaze. Power is apparent both in the winning of fights and in the watching of fights, and the fights also support their mutual sense of masculinity.

A similar operational split can be seen in season seven of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, where Spike, also known for his washboard torso, becomes split into two much like the narrator and Tyler ('Sleeper' [7008]). However the two Spikes' appearances are exactly the same. These two halves of Spike are split between one half that is decidedly evil, and rather reminiscent of the earlier villainous Spike, while the other is enlightened with his human soul. This split literalises Spike's conflict, also seen in the vampire Angel, of the battle for the soul brought about by the polarisation of his human and vampire parts. The polar positions of the two suggest that the splitting theme indicates the literal mapping of internal conflict onto the male body. Spike's evil half is undesirable (particularly in light of his newfound desire to do good) and is in no way an ideal. However, in *Fight Club*, the narrator is clearly seduced by his ideal bodily counterpart (and it should be noted that Tyler is not coded as 'evil') and follows his 'look' and therefore Tyler's lead to a revolutionary narrative conclusion, within the diegetic story world. While with Spike morality plays an important role in the origin of the split (soul/no soul), it is less of a struggle around masculinity than is the case with *Fight Club*. This suggests that the splitting trope is flexible and 'open', which is important for something to carry a mythic quality (this is taken up in Chapter Four).

In Lacanian terms, the narrator is utterly deluded by his seemingly whole and unified mirror image (Tyler), or ego-ideal; importantly (in terms of Lacan's 'mirror phase' as a framework) the ideal image is intricately bound to aggressivity and tension. Lacan's argues that in order 'to understand the

nature of aggressivity in man' it is important to take into account the formation of the ego, the alienation of the ideal image and its erotic link to the individual (Lacan, 2001: 21). Philippe Julien provides a useful summary:

At the very moment when the ego is formed by the image of the other, narcissism and aggressivity are *correlatives*. Narcissism, in which the image of one's own body is sustained by the image of the other, in fact introduces a *tension*: the other in his image both attracts and rejects me. I am indeed nothing but the other, yet at the same time, he remains *alienus*, a stranger. This other who is myself is other than myself (1994: 34) [italics in original]

Julien notes that the subject and the image are intrinsically linked, both a stranger and yet undeniably bound to the same psyche and body. Key to this tension is the aggressivity that coincides with narcissism, which in *Fight Club* is literalised by Tyler's violent tendencies and the narrator's narcissistic invention of Tyler as an ideal; the narcissism of the narrator works here as it is explained clearly within the diegetic world. However, importantly it is the idea of the 'image', as derived from Lacan and the 'mirror phase', that creates a bodily fascination for both narrator and potentially the audience.

Elizabeth Grosz describes the 'mirror stage' as relying upon 'a condition for the body-image or imaginary anatomy' (1990: 37/38). Repeatedly, the idea of the 'image' (in terms of a metaphorical mirror image such as Tyler, which operates as a mythical ideal bodily image using the terms of a traditional notion of 'ideal' masculinity) is that which seduces the subject. Tyler's character leans on displays and images of 'macho' masculinity to seduce the narrator and spectator; Tyler quite literally is Grosz's idea of an 'imaginary anatomy' and ideal (embodied by Pitt) for the narrator. In terms of cultural significance, this is perhaps a literal rendering of the fascination and also the problems as posed by the psychoanalytical 'mirror phase'; importantly, the idea of an 'imaginary anatomy' and identifying with an image outside of oneself also resonates with identifications with characters in the cinema. If we consider the cinema screen as a reflected image or sheer glass as Christian Metz argues (1982), then cinema could be interpreted as representative itself of perfect bodily images that delude and seduce us.

While Metz discusses cinema as apparatus, James Donald discusses cinema in terms of the issues that are brought to light from themes within film. He suggests:

Although often waved aside as a flight of Lacanian or Derridian fancy, it seems to me that the persistence of tales about vampires, doubles, golems and cyborgs within popular culture tells a different story: simply, that this version of subjectivity is closer to the insistent, everyday reality of how we experience ourselves in the world than the myth of autonomous, self-conscious agency (Donald, 1989: 234/5)

Donald argues that many horror films illustrate the problems facing the illusion of the unified 'self'; the use of a double in *Fight Club* literalises the problematics of the experience of a unified 'self'. *Fight Club* in many ways addresses the idea of cinema as apparatus and how it might 'work' to suture a spectator into identifying with characters; it does this through introducing the theme of identification and the experience of identifying with an image outside of oneself (which is exactly how spectators experience identification with characters in the act of watching film and television).

A prominent theme of the film is the differences between narrator and Tyler and their relationship, which can essentially be read as a struggle around identity and who narrator might want to be, while his 'true' (former) nature is that of insecurity. The idea of identifying with an ideal image (which narrator has of course invented) is similar to the way that spectators might identify with ideal characters, or hero characters, in film as they can provide escapism from the banalities of everyday life, as well as allowing viewers to temporarily fill the shoes of virile and fearless characters. *Fight Club* suggests that the 'self' is split, however, it also creates binary tensions between the two halves. *Fight Club* acknowledges therefore our split positions as viewers of films through its thematic and narrative focus. Does the split between the narrator and Tyler confuse the gender identity of the narrator?

Laura Mulvey argues that '[i]n a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female' (1989: 19). In *Fight Club* the narrator (as a whole being) is split between vulnerability as narrator, and virility as Tyler; in terms of traditional gender models this could be seen as passive/female and active/male⁵². The opening of the film illustrates the narrator as an unconfident and indolent man, as an insomniac he learns that he must cry in order to sleep. Crying is traditionally seen as characteristic of vulnerability, and it places the narrator, in the diegetic world, as passive and insecure. The use of the testicular cancer support group is significant in that it indicates the narrator's search for comfort from a man. The narrator finds a tremendous source of consolation from this group and also several other groups that deal with terminal illnesses, emphasising the narrator's alignment with vulnerability. Narrator's fragility is once again made apparent when Marla begins attending the support groups and her presence brings about the return of narrator's insomnia. After meeting Tyler, narrator's life takes a dramatic change of course, and he begins fighting in the streets with Tyler and living in a derelict house with few modern amenities, thereby rejecting the closeted safety and comfort of his previously middle class, white-collar existence.

Tyler represents a far more masculinised image than the narrator, which is first made apparent in his desire to fight other men. It is Tyler who entices narrator into fighting and also Marla into bed, and it is Tyler who creates mass destruction to the near environment in numerous forms. He takes the narrator away from his obsession with furniture and clothes (again, traditionally coded as feminine), to a place where he lives with no comfort, and with many other men, reminiscent of warriors or Gladiators. Yet Tyler is a 'gift' to consumer culture in terms of making men 'body aware', such as

⁵² I do not wish to be reductive in viewing gender solely in terms of traditional models. However, it does seem to be the case that such models continue to inform representation of gender in visual media to a certain degree, this point shall be returned to.

going to the gym or buying products targeted at men for example, in order to bolster their *appearance* of masculinity. Tyler therefore represents a movement in the character towards a more masculinised status, or as Amy Taubin notes, 'Tyler represents some ideal of free-wheeling male power' (Taubin, 1999: 17). Therefore *Fight Club* highlights the damage caused by 'gendering' emotions and behaviour; the overtly macho behaviour of men in the film, such as Tyler, is shown to be a product of the loss of traditional masculine ideals (ironically) through consumer culture and Western cultural practices. However it is also reminiscent of Carl Jung's concept of integration whereby the feminine and masculine parts of the psyche are integrated to form a more 'whole' being (Jung, 1986).

Jung's theorisation of a 'whole' psyche lies in the idea that the masculine and the feminine combine to produce a complete personality, and he uses the terms 'anima' and 'animus' to describe these principles. According to Jung we should aim for this integration in order to be 'healthy' human beings (ibid). Robert Bly, in his *Iron John: A Book About Men* (2004), argues for a similar understanding of, and is seeking to 'heal', identity. While he spends much of the book discussing masculinity and how a return to an understanding of the 'Wild Man' can reduce problems for men in modern life, he concludes by suggesting that the masculine and the feminine should be understood as different but as equal and not totally separate. His arguments are based on the story of the Wild Man/Iron John and how his teachings help a young man progress towards masculinity in modern life. He argues:

The Wild Man, who is a god of nature, has guided the young man's initiation. Iron John's teaching never aimed at masculine separation, or separatism anyway, and we will soon see how deeply and in how many different ways the progress of our story involves partnership with the feminine principle. In nature, the yang and the yin interweave everywhere... (Bly, 2004: 221)

Bly goes on to argue that the masculine partnering the feminine is symbolised in the marriage between the young man and the King's daughter in the Iron John tale, for example. The story can be said to be a metaphor for understanding identity in the 'real', in terms of accepting both the masculine

and feminine aspects of personality (although it should be noted that the book concentrates on men and masculinity).

The concept of 'ideal' identity as incorporating masculinity and femininity can be considered as progressive in that it allows for a dualistic or fragmented understanding of the nature of identity (which is perhaps closer to how it is actually experienced in the world). However, negative connotations of this reading are that identity can only be understood in terms of gender, and traditional views of gender at that; historically this carries much baggage in light of feminist debates about how femininity might be understood purely in terms of its difference from masculinity and vice-versa. Further ramifications are that traditional concepts of both masculinity and femininity are continually used as models, behaviour is constantly understood in terms of gender and therefore traditional views of gender are continually reiterated and enforced.

Tyler can be considered as an incarnation of Bly's Wild Man in some respects as he acts as an initiator for the narrator towards a path that will eventually lead him to a fuller understanding of himself, and specifically his masculinity. Bly argues that '[t]he ancient societies believed that a boy becomes a man only through ritual and effort – only through the "active intervention of the older men." It's becoming clear to us that manhood doesn't happen by itself...' (ibid: 15). The narrator needs Tyler in order to provide this 'ritual and effort', which in *Fight Club* centres on combat, and the physical challenges of the male body, as a means of connecting physically and emotionally to other men. Although it is questionable whether the violence in the film fits in with Bly's main arguments, the crux of the story is that the narrator depends on the Tyler side of his personality to bring him out of a more 'feminised', and thereby 'passive' and introverted, state. According to the rules of *Fight Club* men have to fight with and live with other men in order to be in touch with their masculinity.

Bly's arguments can be regarded as part of the co-called 'men's movement' of the USA during the 1980s and 1990s, and he is generally considered to take a mythopoetic approach to a cultural issue, in that his book relies for its arguments on archetypes and myth, rather than historical or political analysis (Pfeil, 1995). Pfeil points out the many problems with Bly's (and others' similar) arguments:

...what Bly is after is an ahistorical, transcultural, and openly mythological definition of full-fledged masculinity, the deep and holy truths of the masculine psyche – that, and a set of instructions for how we his readers can get access to it too. *Iron John* purports to give us both definition and instruction in the stored-wisdom form of the heretofore rather obscure Grimm's fairy tale for which the book is named (ibid: 171)

Attempting to provide a definition that is ahistorical and yet transnational is highly problematic, as well as relying on one 'obscure' fairy tale for guidance, yet there is power in the archetypal qualities of the rhetoric. Other problems are that despite Bly's insistence on the fact that women are not to be subjugated, and men should not turn away from women, his book does smack of pre-feminist ideology and he continually plays on very traditional views of gender, which compromises his supposed attention to modern living. The book suggests to some that Bly says implicitly that feminism has caused a crisis in masculinity. I also concur with Pfeil's view that arguments such as Bly's seem to be missing the point of debates about gender and men's place within such discussions; in many ways views such as Bly's negate a powerful female position at all, which is highly contestable for any theory, and the work is fairly obviously a backlash to feminist achievements (ibid).

Bly's discussion of men is about the power and strength men might achieve in modern society, which is set against the backdrop that there might be a crisis in masculinity. Here we can return to Shaviro, who suggests that power and weakness, or virility and vulnerability co-exist (as noted earlier). Shaviro asks:

The most powerful mirror is one that so entirely submits to the object being reflected, so passively and literally repeats it, that it absorbs it and renders only the pure play of reflection itself. Isn't the movie camera such a mirror, a device for drawing bodies into the anonymity and multiplicity of appearances? (Shaviro, 1993: 204)

Shaviro is suggesting that the mirror and the reflection are most powerful when they are not at odds, when the mirror image is ultimately passive, and he goes on to suggest that this is also the case between spectator and onscreen characters. *Fight Club*, if we continue to read it in Lacanian terms, brings to life two polarised images, that of the subject (narrator) and the reflected image or object (Tyler); however the power and dramatic tension in such a polarisation lies in disparity. It is the very difference of Tyler, born of narrator's sense of vulnerability or lack, that makes him attractive both to the audience and indeed the narrator and Marla; Tyler is perhaps a mythical ideal for all men. As Žižek argues 'resemblance is, on the contrary, *the guarantor of non-identity*. (This paradox accounts for the uncanny effect of encountering a double: the more he looks like me, the more the abyss of his otherness is apparent)' (Žižek, 2000: 51). Žižek here is noting the paradox that such a relationship (such as between the narrator and Tyler) entails. The very recognition of his image as Tyler coincides with a strong realisation of his otherness.

It follows that this attraction to Tyler, on behalf of the narrator, is reminiscent of the concept of the narcissistic ego (Lacan's 'mirror phase' is useful as a framework here as it takes up Freud's notion of the narcissistic ego, which posits the ego as deluded and not autonomous). An ideal-ego that is based on libidinal excesses, and that can let the external world slip away, is strongly linked to Tyler and his place in the diegetic story world. He is driven by his desire to rid the narrator (and indeed everyone) of the worldly comforts that they are accustomed to, and his desire to change the world is evident in his initial setting up of a Fight Club. Within this narrative arena, while Tyler builds an army, the narrator learns to feel passion in crying and fighting, and this shift is noticeable early on in the film.

In the beginning stages of their Fight Club, the narrator and Tyler are on a bus on their way to one of the fights. While staring at an advertisement for men's underwear, the narrator asks Tyler "is that what a man looks like?" Tyler responds with laughter, however, in a few moments from then Tyler is shown fighting at the club with his shirt off and his torso is almost the mirror image of the male model in the advertisement; Tyler is a consumer ideal. The narrator looks on and does not take his eyes from Tyler's fight, and indeed the scene is then reversed while the narrator takes up a fight and Tyler looks on. The scene illustrates perfectly the polar positions of the two, both in terms of body and indeed power. Tyler looking muscular and strong wins his fight, while the narrator looking smaller and weaker than both Tyler and his opponent loses. Shaviro's assertion that vulnerability and virility may bleed into one another can be applied fittingly to the two, yet they cannot both be in one body at one time due to the polarised nature of their split identity. The splitting trope here therefore leans on an economy of looking, of visual coding of the body and its actions plus the body and physicality.

There is a significant irony in the use of both Brad Pitt in a lead role, and also Jared Leto in a more minor role. Both actors are traditionally seen as appealing to women and are often cast for their good looks in film and, in Leto's case, television. Tasker, again discussing the action films of the 1980's, suggests: 'It seems as if, at the same time as the male body on the screen was becoming more and more visible, an excessive parody of an ideal, masculinity was emerging as a visible category within the criticism of the day' (1993: 1). I believe that Tasker's view of parodic masculinity is also relevant in *Fight Club*. In particular, one scene occurs during *Fight Club* where Tyler is making a speech to the men about being let down by society. He refers to how films and television enforce the belief that one day we will all be rich and famous, movie stars or famous musicians. While stating this he is standing in centre frame with Jared Leto clearly in view on the right

hand side of the frame. Both Brad Pitt and Jared Leto are rich and famous from appearing in film and television and the irony of this scene is surely not lost on the audience. Placing Brad Pitt in centre frame and Jared Leto to the side of the frame, slightly out of focus, further enforces this, which is perhaps reminiscent of their 'status' in Hollywood.

This self-reflexive angle, also with regard to psychoanalytic issues in the film, taps into contemporary cultural concerns about the 'self' and the body as a whole and unified being. *Fight Club* is a film that I argue is concerned with how men experience the world, not only in terms of the subjective nature of the split character, but also in terms of socio-cultural and political issues and our concomitant 'myths' of gender. Tyler creates a revolutionary effect on the city by destroying everybody's debt record, which will inevitably change the global economy. In terms of postmodernism and psychoanalysis, I argue that the film consciously makes use of psychoanalytic models around the formation of identity and the split psyche. Through the literal splitting of the protagonist, the film openly addresses questions about identity, masculinity, and also the 'self' and body. Moreover, it encourages the viewer to read the two halves of the character as oppositional binaries (in terms of traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity) thus creating problems with the gendered identity of the character as the film suggests that narrator needs Tyler in order to fulfil a macho masculine role.

Also important is that while viewers might be seduced by Tyler, spectators are encouraged to identify with the narrator and not Tyler (viewers experience the seduction of Tyler through identifying with narrator who is simultaneously seduced by his ideal ego), which importantly alienates the all-powerful ideal-ego somewhat, providing an analogue of the way that spectators identify with on-screen stars and characters. Identifying with the narrator encourages the viewer to see Tyler as delusory and by the close of the film as not real. We put ourselves finally in the place of the lesser of the

two characters, in realisation of the 'truth' of the situation, yet may still wish to be 'superhuman' also. Not only does the film encourage awareness of gender 'myths' and their effect on us as social subjects, it also promotes an alternative reading of identity⁵³ in terms of our collective fractured identities and even a realisation of the ideal as delusory. It is also noteworthy that the film appeared at the same time as *Being John Malkovitch*, which also takes splitting as its central theme and as core to the narrative; media products appear to be increasingly concerned with identity as a fractured state.

The clear attraction between the narrator and Tyler invokes implications of the narcissistic ideal-ego, which is a useful term to interpret what these characters face when confronted with a seductive but delusional bodily mirror image. Critics such as Mark Simpson (1994) and Paul Burston (1995) have discussed narcissism in popular cinema, engaging with debates about the representation of the male body and narcissism in relation to homoeroticism. Arguments regarding homoeroticism and homosexuality in the cinema often tap into the idea of homosociality, which Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick discusses in her book *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985). Her arguments centre on the notion that homosociality cannot be separated from the homosexual and the homophobic (Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1985). Male narcissism in the cinema is often linked to homosexual imagery, and often the homoerotic elements apparent in films such as *Top Gun* (Tony Scott, 1986, USA) for example, are tantalisingly apparent only to be disavowed through various narrative developments (a heterosexual relationship for example) (Burston, 1995). I suggest, in line with Leon Hunt's argument regarding male epic films (1993), that *Fight Club* actively engages with the concept and operation of narcissism, which is apparent in the narrative development that narrator has invented Tyler in the seductive bodily form of Brad Pitt.

⁵³ Unlike mainstream film that often promotes identity as whole and autonomous.

The charge between the two characters throughout the film (before the final realisation that they are one and the same) is difficult to pin down on first viewing; at times the two act as if they are siblings, at others the clear attraction of narrator to Tyler seems explicitly sexual. On the realisation that narrator *is* Tyler, the full impact of their complicated relationship can only fully be realised on a second viewing. Tyler distracts and seduces narrator away from his orderly life and the 'real'; he does this directly with his ideal and masculinised body image. The camera lingers lovingly on Brad Pitt's bruised bare upper body and face during fight scenes and he becomes a fetishistic object; Tyler is in many ways a sexually charged and erotic object for both the characters in the film and the viewer, yet his ambiguous sexuality is covered over (disavowed) through the very fact that he is not 'real'. The bodily masculine force of sexuality and power that Tyler possesses is undercut by the fact that he is not actually a bodily presence (even though Pitt's body is often the focus of the film, like the Imaginary it is there and not there), something that is only realised in retrospect after viewers have bought into the seduction.

In terms of the besieged ego, the film literalises problems surrounding an attack on the ego, an ego that we can view as represented by the narrator. The ego in this instance loses touch with reality and the external world and constructs an ideal-ego out of a idealised mirror image in the shape of Tyler. Although the ego is seduced and in many ways helped and supported by such an ideal-ego, the ego is also besieged by becoming deluded and withdrawn from reality and draws attention to the lack that spurs the creation of an ideal ego. Importantly, the narrator does differentiate himself from his ideal-ego by the end of the film, and indicates that the attack on the ego is over, although it is unclear whether any return to reality or the external world is possible.

Fight Club promotes a subjective or 'psychological' approach through the representation of the protagonist; the film is a subjective space, only realised in the closing scenes of the film. It remains useful to view the splitting of characters as a literalised portrait of the ego struggling under external forces, including dominant gender 'myths'. This is particularly in view of the narcissistic ego, which is drawn back to itself as a libidinal object, and recoils from reality and the external world or the 'real', which makes use of the seductions of the 'myth', as well as the 'myth' of Brad Pitt as an ideal. By literalising a crisis in the sovereignty of the ego, *Fight Club* fits in with the many current fantasy-based texts discussed in this thesis that display images of split psyches and bodies. I would suggest that the splitting theme attacks and antagonises the myth of an autonomous and unified experience of ourselves in the world, as well as its gendered context.

A similar operational split can be seen in *Taxi Driver*, where Travis (Robert De Niro) finds strength in his own mirror image, just as narrator finds strength through Tyler. *Taxi Driver* is a film that tells the story of Travis Bickle, a taxi driver in New York City who undergoes an intense character development or change throughout the film. The climax of the film ends by Travis killing a pimp, a hotel owner and a customer in order to 'save' Iris (Jodie Foster) from further employment as a prostitute. Progressively through the film Travis becomes more obsessed by his intentions to 'clean up the city', and, in becoming a vigilante, loses all sight of normality and reality. The film attempts to promote the view that Travis is essentially like any other man in any other city (which may be hard to justify) through the use of the text on the poster and video cover, which illustrates the world from Travis' point of view: 'On every street in every city, there's a nobody who dreams of being a somebody...' The film is specific about the use of gender in the lead role, as a white male Travis personifies one of Scorsese's

frequent cinematic images, that of a young white male swamped in a large, overbearing and alienating city⁵⁴.

Throughout the film, Travis undergoes not only an immense psychological change but his physical appearance is also drastically altered. The mise-en-scene of the film often employs mirrors and reflections throughout, for example in Travis' taxi where he constantly looks in the rear view and wing mirrors, which suggests that images and reflections are a major theme of the film. The most prominent mirror scene in the film, I will argue, provides the site for a major character development for Travis and is important not only for the character's change, but also for the viewer's understanding of the main theme of the film: identity. This section explores the hypothesis that Travis is a representation of struggling masculinity and confused gender identity; furthermore that the film uses constant frames of reflections and mirrors to underpin the theme of the split self. As I will show, the use of narration, music, colour and location are also key factors in the deployment of Travis as a split identity.

I have already established that splitting, doubles and issues surrounding identity are themes often deployed in film texts (largely horror-based texts) as narrative storylines or purely for dramatic impact. This lends itself well to a Lacanian perspective, particularly that of the 'mirror phase', where a delusional (mirror) representation of oneself becomes apparent, although it seems to offer the subject a promise of a coherent sense of 'self' and psychological integrity while at the same time creating a sense of alienation and lack. Many films make use of the mirror as a dramatic device and employ the framework of Lacan's 'mirror phase' in order to provide narrative momentum and cinematic visual displays, which often make use of special effects. Taking Lacan's 'mirror phase' as a model many films provide a mirror image

⁵⁴ As for example in *Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973, USA), *Bringing Out the Dead* (Martin Scorsese, 1999, USA) or *Gangs of New York* (Martin Scorsese, 2002, USA, Germany, Italy, UK, Netherlands)

that promises power and yet is delusional; often the promise is an empty promise. The supernatural can often provide a premise for mirror images that seem to be autonomous and separate entities but are realised through the visual image of the protagonist, therefore enforcing a psychological interpretation often through 'mythical' forms. However, the mirror image is just as effective when the drama is located purely in a psychological premise, as in *Taxi Driver*.

It is evident that the mirror images in *Taxi Driver* perform much the same role as the mirror in the fairy tale *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. The mirror in the latter film is magical and has the power to tell the wicked queen who is "the fairest of them all," and although the mirror image in *Taxi Driver* cannot be described as magical or supernatural in any sense, it still has power over Travis and furthermore it promises power to Travis. It is Travis' delusional belief in his all-powerful mirror image that causes such a dramatic character development, and recreates the mirror image as seductive and all-powerful in the eyes of Travis. Travis derives power from the image in the mirror, not from his own actual or real feelings and experience of empowerment.

The opening sequence of the film is a low-angled medium close-up of Travis' New York taxi moving toward the camera and then past it, surrounded by steam rising from the gutters. The film then cuts to Travis in a close-up of his eyes looking out the window of his taxi toward the people on the streets, the shot has a red filter and with the intensity of Travis' look, the overall effect is ominous and portentous. The opening of the film is clear in its intentions to indicate that Travis is firstly the central narrative point of the film, along with his cab, and that his feelings towards others are not particularly sympathetic. As Lesley Stern argues, in many ways the film associates or even melds Travis with his taxi as some sort of 'machine-body' (1995: 65); the taxi is in many ways Travis' shell, and a form of power, as it extends the shape of

Travis' actions in the world. It is through the deployment of the taxi that mirrors and reflections first become prominent in the film.

A recurring shot in the film (particularly towards the end) is a point-of-view shot from Travis' position in the cab showing the streets but also the reflection in the wing mirror, thus the frame is split or fragmented by the main shot being displaced by a 'floating' image in the middle. This use of *mise-en-scene* indicates that Travis is himself without stability, and reality to him is displaced and fragmented. Several shots in the film relay the passenger in the back seat of the cab and Travis' view of them in the rear view mirror, again this results in a 'floating' image of the passengers face within the main frame. The foremost of these is the shot at the end of the film where Betsy (Cybil Shepherd) travels in the back seat of the cab and there is a lengthy take of her disembodied head in the rear view mirror (*ibid*), perhaps suggesting that Travis' sense of alienation has by no means shifted despite his now heroic status. The mirror gives Travis the ability to look in all directions, and is therefore a form of power and is a 'vehicle' through which he observes people.

Camera angles are also used to create a sense of discordance and splitness, many low-angled shots place the viewer in the position or near the position of the taxi, forcing us to view the streets of New York through Travis' eyes. The neon lights also help to create an atmosphere of eeriness or dissonance (much like in Dario Argento's cinema), particularly as they are confined to the streets of New York, and are in contrast to the starkness of Travis' accommodation. The music in the film is also established as a further indication of Travis' unstable psyche or distance from reality. The symphonic score was written by Bernard Hermann (who, through his music in Hitchcock's films, is associated with psychologically-based drama) and accompanies the narrative by swinging between soothing, light-hearted chords to darker and discordant notes that creates an unsettling or jarring

effect. This becomes apparent at the beginning of the film during the first sequences and is upheld throughout the rest of the soundtrack to create an unnerving feeling that is directly attached to Travis.

Importantly, Travis is in nearly every scene within the film, and the focus and the themes of the film are centred entirely on him as a character, and as a site for tremendous physical and attitudinal change. In many films, the viewer often sees slightly more of the diegetic story world than the main character; we know more than they do due to scenes involving other characters. However, in *Taxi Driver* Travis is present nearly all the time, and in many ways the diegetic story world becomes very closely linked to Travis or Travis' subjective point of view. This is vital to the idea of Travis as a split character; if he were one of several main characters the portrayal of Travis as a split character would not have nearly as much dramatic impact. In terms of mise-en-scene, I would argue that it is the use of mirrors and reflections that is one of the key indications of Travis' subjective state as a split identity.

Viewing the film through the frame of Lacan's 'mirror phase' provides an insight into how Travis' identity is figured as dualistic; key to this is how Travis sees himself/his reflection in this diegetic film world, Elizabeth Grosz suggests:

The mirror stage relies on and in turn provides a condition for the body-image or imaginary anatomy, which in turn helps distinguish the subject from its world. By partitioning, dividing, representing, inscribing the body in culturally determinant ways, it is constituted as a social, symbolic, and regulatable body. It becomes the organizing site of perspective, and, at the same time, an object available to others from their perspectives – in other words, both a subject and an object. (Grosz, 1990: 37/8)

As noted earlier, Grosz significantly uses the words 'body-image' and 'imaginary anatomy' when summarising Lacan's work around the 'mirror phase'. According to Lacan and clarified by Grosz, it is in their outward image that people define themselves; a drastic change in appearance calls for long periods of staring in the mirror in order to rediscover our 'self' in the

mirror image. For example, getting one's hair cut calls for spending time in front of the mirror assimilating the 'new look'. Grosz suggests that the reflection in the mirror provides an attractive 'body-image' that creates this delusional bodily figure and libidinal object. Arguably, individuals look in the mirror in certain ways in order to preserve a view of themselves; often people do not like their own picture in photographs because they are different to a certain perception that they might have, which is apparent in the mirror.

In *Taxi Driver*, Travis' body becomes his site of obsession and he progresses from a man who apparently does no exercise to training his body into a mass of muscles and jutting veins. On one hand Travis' body and fitness obsession could be aligned to his seemingly addictive personality (also evident in his preoccupation with Betsy), however, his reasoning suggests there is a motivation behind this bodily transformation. He protests several times (to himself) that his training is to prepare him for 'cleaning up the scum on the streets', as he so often calls New York City dwellers. Travis obviously intends to 'clean up' New York single handedly, as well as cleaning up his own 'body' image. Furthermore, this is told to his diary (voice-over narration while he writes) and is one of the only ways the viewer can tap into the interior dialogue of Travis as a character: with other characters, such as his fellow taxi driver colleagues, he is taciturn, quiet and rarely submits an opinion (except on one or two occasions).

Yvonne Tasker suggests (while writing about the action film):

The relationship between the body and the voice is central to the action cinema's articulation of male identity. Involving questions surrounding the ability to speak and act, which are also inevitably questions of power, an attention to the relationship between the body and the voice brings to the fore questions of race and class, as well as the more apparent issues of gendered identity... (Tasker, 1993: 74)

Tasker is writing specifically about the action film genre, however, I believe her arguments regarding the combination of speaking and acting as directly

related to questions of power are transferable to *Taxi Driver*. If Travis was portrayed as more of a 'revolutionary' character and spoke out in public attempting to rally the masses against prostitution and everything he terms as 'scum', then he may have been represented as a more powerful, although no more likeable, character. The fact that Travis does not speak (in the sense that he does not voice these opinions) but only acts, illustrates his very lack of power, and taps into the very fragility of his character. Travis' ability to act out his desire, to eliminate the 'scum' from New York, is only apparent after the prolonged mirror scene, which occurs in the last third of the film.

Travis looks directly in the mirror in this scene; from the point of view of the audience, it is difficult to determine if we are looking at Travis or the reflection (the camera could be positioned where the mirror is or near where Travis is standing). The shot then, shows only Travis, there is no indication in this specific isolated shot if we are looking at the character or the character's reflection, or indeed if there is a mirror at all. Thus, we are only aware of the fact that Travis is looking in a mirror due to the previous shots. This differs from previous examples of mirror shots that I have discussed, such as in *Mulholland Drive*, where the character is shown looking at the reflection and therefore the viewer sees both the character and the reflected image. This mirror scene in *Taxi Driver* indicates the strength the image has over Travis; just as the image is almost unidentifiable (as purely an image) to the viewer, so it is to Travis and it is this delusion that leads him to act out his violent attacks. Travis' relation to the mirror image is similar to Lacan's model of the 'mirror phase'; the delusional image entices the subject into believing in the wholeness of the image.

Importantly the image is a very bodily image; the image that seduces Travis into acting out his violence is the image of his body once he has shaped his physique to appear muscular and therefore stronger. As Grosz suggested in

the above quote, the 'mirror phase' should provide a perspective for the subject, and in turn 'an object available to others from their perspectives', which draws on the viewers response to both Travis and his mirror image. This suggests that the viewer is also put in a position where to identify with the delusional image is rather difficult. The audience is therefore asked to view Travis on their own terms; viewers are split off from Travis in many ways, facilitated by the narrational devices used in the film. Further problematising Travis' identity (for both Travis and the viewer) is gender, and I argue that there is a movement in the character towards a hyper-masculine⁵⁵ identity.

Travis' preoccupation with typically masculine imagery is apparent as he progresses towards the violent conclusion of the film. One such example is his interest in guns and he buys several from a salesman in a hotel room. During this scene one of the guns, a particularly long one that becomes a favourite of Travis, is filmed in a rather provocative manner. The camera lingers on the gun and very slowly moves along the length of it; this is not dissimilar to the way that women are sometimes filmed where the camera will linger on their body insinuating sensuousness or sexuality. Such a shot implies that the gun may symbolise (as a phallic symbol) Travis' now hyper-masculinised status. With a new and improved body and with an increasing interest in weaponry, Travis progressively moves towards a macho and overtly masculine identity, which contrasts to his initial identity as an eccentric, slightly sinister but inactive character; traditional ideas of masculinity seem to focus on action and the male character as a driving force. Travis needs a gun to be in a position of power hence the film suggests he was lacking or open to 'lack' prior to his change of attitude and physicality.

⁵⁵ I am borrowing this term from Tanya Krzywinska. In her book *A Skin for Dancing In* (2000) she discusses the possession film in relation to the 'hyper-masculine' force that often is the perpetrator of the possession of characters in a range of film. The term is intended in my thesis to imply an exaggerated idea of masculinity.

At the start of the narrative Travis was interested in love (sex?), which was evident in his increasingly menacing fixation on Betsy; by the end of the film Travis is obsessed with violently eliminating any person he sees as 'scum'. Such a movement plays on exaggerated views of traditional gender identity and how gender identity is categorised; in *Taxi Driver* a movement towards hyper-masculinity is grounded in a bodily masculine image. Richard Dyer suggests that traditionally 'ordinary male sexuality was simply sexuality and everybody knew what it was' (1993: 111); increasingly the representation of male sexuality and masculinity is becoming more problematised in psychological horror-based texts. The shifting of gender identities, and the concomitant uneasiness that seems attached to gender identity, is often represented in psychological-horror based film and television texts through the splitting of the character; splits problematise gendered identity and the categorisation of such identities, particularly when traditional models, such as active/passive, or masculine/feminine, are both acknowledged and undercut in such texts.

In view of the narcissistic ego, the mirror image provides a visual site of Lacan's 'mirror phase', where reality and external forces play a lesser role as the split character struggles and is beguiled by the narcissistic tendencies of the ego. Through narcissistic leanings, the representation of the character as a split body encourages polarised oppositional binary readings such as active/passive or vulnerable/virile. Such a polarisation in the intra-relations of a character is necessary in terms of creating drama and spectacle in the narrative; a film that is based on a psychological premise must create the drama in a psychological realm therefore splitting a character must create opposing 'selves' to spark interest for the viewer. Problematically, however, what becomes evident in *Taxi Driver* is a fascination with traditional views of gender identity; the film merely exaggerates an understanding of masculinity, which can only be defined by its opposite conveniently located in the double.

Travis is a case of a deluded ego taken to the extreme. According to Lacan, Freud went down the wrong path in his enquiry into the nature of the human psyche, and he attributed too much power and autonomy to the ego in his later writings (Bowie, 1991: 18). While Freud's earlier work had been more preoccupied with the division of the subject and even links with the Marxist idea of 'false consciousness' in that individuals are unaware of their true condition, the later Freud was beguiled by the idea of an ego that could heroically mediate all the pressures involved in internal mental functioning as well as reality. For Lacan, this is a delusion and it is a delusion that Travis falls prey to in his idolisation of his ostensibly commanding mirror image. It is Travis' belief in the powerful mirror image that spurs him to kill Sport (Harvey Keitel) and several others at the conclusion of the film. After many minutes (hours?) spent in front of the mirror wielding his guns and admiring his muscular reflection, Travis emerges as a violent killer with guns strapped to his arm and leg as well as in a holster, he has also cut his hair into a Mohican hairstyle. The change in physical appearance, whilst jarring, also points to the dramatic psychical change that has taken place, although importantly, it is the body or bodily image that entices Travis and seduces him into belief in the seemingly all-powerful mirror image. In many ways Travis looks more like a fantasy action hero or the action 'type' one might expect to see in cinema, yet this is undercut by his status of 'lack' at the start of the film and the film's preoccupation with his identity as unstable.

A very different film that nevertheless makes a similar use of the mirror image is *Snow White: A Tale of Terror*, which is a remodelling of the classic Snow White fairy tale. The narrative is very similar to the fairy tale in that the wicked stepmother Claudia (Sigourney Weaver) attempts to murder her young stepdaughter Lilli (Monica Keena). The film is concerned largely with bodily image, as is the fairy tale where the stepmother is jealous of Snow

White's beauty and for this reason attempts to have her murdered. Claudia in particular is concerned with her appearance and it is this concern that seems to be her motivation for the ensuing events in the film. Tanya Krzywinska discusses films that focus on mother and daughter relations that are entangled with witchcraft, and she argues that 'rarely, if ever, are such films focused on a competition based on physical appearance as it is in renditions and derivatives of the Snow White tale' (Krzywinska, 2000: 136). The use of the magic mirror as a refracted image of physical appearance provides the spectacle and drama for acting out the stepmother's vengeful wishes. Importantly the image that Claudia sees in her magic mirror is a perfected version of herself, and is not a 'true' image. Krzywinska maintains that '[t]he entity that talks to Claudia is, in part, a reflection of herself in idealised form' (ibid: 138), and she goes on to argue the importance of the mirror's link with Claudia's mother and magic. For the purposes of this chapter, I will concentrate on Claudia's ideal bodily image in the mirror.

Just as Travis' mirror image provided him with a strong, macho and overtly masculine image, which he took on in order to achieve his goal of eliminating his 'enemies', Claudia's image equally provides her with an ideal form of herself. Claudia is constantly concerned with her appearance throughout the narrative and after the miscarriage of her baby we see her for the first time looking distraught and bedraggled. It is at this point that the mirror shows to her an image that is beautiful and flawless, and is in contrast to the real appearance of the character at that time. Claudia's idealised image is modelled on a traditional view of femininity in that her skin and make-up are picture perfect, her hair is always down around her shoulders fulfilling a traditional idea of a 'soft' feminine appearance. Importantly, the ideal image's main goal is to revive Claudia's son for her, which again plays on an exaggerated idea of the female role and femininity; the image is attempting to revive Claudia's role as a mother. It is also apparent in the film that the mirror belonged to Claudia's 'witch' mother. There are many other aspects of the film that are important to the narrative (see Krzywinska for a much fuller account of witchcraft, Oedipal tensions etc). However, key to the film is the

use of mirrors and Claudia's ideal overtly feminine image that provides not only the driving force of the narrative but also the spectacle grounded in the supernatural.

On Claudia's arrival at her new home where she will be married to Lilli's father (Sam Neill), she catches a view of herself in a distorted piece of glass, much like the mirrors in fairgrounds and circuses. Her image is misshapen and warped and indicates to the regular filmgoer, who might be familiar with such codes, that she is most likely not all she appears to be. Claudia's elongated stare at her own image not only suggests her vanity and preoccupation with her appearance but also points to the unstable nature of her identity, which is evident in the refracted image. Claudia's status as dualistic becomes cemented after her miscarriage, which she blames (perhaps quite rightly) on Lilli, as it is at this point that the mirror shows her an idealised form of herself and begins to talk to her as a separate entity. Claudia is at this moment powerless and distraught as her baby is stillborn and she has been told that she cannot have more children, which for Claudia means 'her route to power is blocked' (ibid: 138). The mirror image steps up to become Claudia's backbone and provide for her power and beauty, which is maintained through witchcraft.

The ideal image of Claudia not only provides strength and power, it also promises Claudia that it will always tell her the truth. The mirror tells Claudia that her brother has betrayed her and has not killed Lilli, and in her delivery of this message she tells Claudia that she has failed. While the mirror does provide a supernatural strength for Claudia it also epitomises the idea that identity is experienced as fragmentary in many ways; the mirror aspect of Claudia's personality is an idealised version of herself, which provides strength, yet it also puts on pressure to be successful. In this way the film hints, through fairy tale rhetorics, at the pressures of modern living and the

strain many people place on themselves to be successful in careers and family life.

The psychological link between Claudia and her idealised image is made evident through the visual mirror image; Claudia becomes more beautiful the longer the mirror image acts as her support. Additionally, when Lilli finally despatches her stepmother it is by stabbing the mirror image (which bleeds) and not the actual bodily Claudia; Claudia dies from a stab wound that is inflicted on her ideal image in the mirror, which enforces the fact that her psychological and physical identity is located in both her bodily 'real' form and her ideal mirror image form.

Similarly to the narrator and Travis, Claudia is depicted as an unstable character, and it is through the presence of the idealised version of herself that she gains strength. However, the film makes use of horror conventions that determine Claudia's power as decidedly evil. Unlike the narrator, whom we are encouraged to identify with, Claudia is figured as Lilli's (the protagonist's) enemy and therefore, as the antagonist, must be destroyed by the close of the narrative. However, Claudia's character (as a fragmentary character) is often the most interesting of the film. As I maintain in relation to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* in Chapter Two and below, villainous characters are often refreshing in light of the more moral, upright characters, and the narrative would certainly render a gaping hole in their absence. I also contend that many viewers can sympathise with all of these characters in relation to the experience of identity in the world, which is often not felt as autonomous. As I have already suggested, the appearance of all-powerful and ideal alter egos are seductive not only for the character but for the viewer alike.

All of these films show a preoccupation with identity that is figured mainly in terms of gender identity. *Fight Club* is a film about men and masculinity and the narrative is crucially told through the eyes of a dualistic protagonist, which indicates that 'deep masculinity'⁵⁶ in the film is perhaps unknowable or has been 'lost' in the face of modern living. In all films the characters discussed are decidedly fragmentary and unstable, and are largely unaware of their 'true' nature, and in all films an ideal is born in the image of hyper-masculinity for the narrator and Travis, and hyper-femininity (rendered through ideal beauty and ideal motherhood) for Claudia. The films have mixed messages: anxieties about gender identity are foremost and all films hint that identity is unstable when traditional views of either masculinity or femininity has been lost, yet the films also point to the damage that can be done through the constant gendering of emotions and behaviour in culture at large.

The films discussed here suggest that gender is vital to a sense of autonomous identity. However, the films also allow for an understanding of identity that is fractured, particularly *Fight Club* where we are encouraged to identify with the narrator. The narrator accepts his alter ego only to destroy him, however, in many ways Tyler has created a huge impact on the narrator's life, which cannot be undone. By allowing Tyler in, the narrator has embraced both a deeply masculine aspect of his identity as well as maintaining a more vulnerable side, perhaps suggesting that to understand identity more fully we must allow for a dualistic or fragmentary view of identity. Claudia and Travis are perhaps more dangerously unstable than the narrator (whose aim to clear everyone's debt record can certainly be sympathised with), as their preoccupations seem more irrational and deeply personal. Both characters gain more power through their idolised images; however, while the new and overtly masculine Travis is embraced for his apparently heroic deeds, Claudia's attempt at gaining power through hyper-femininity gets her killed because of her status as a witch, and this is

⁵⁶ I am borrowing the term 'deep masculinity' from Fred Pfeil (1995: 200)

grounded in the film's use of generic horror and fairy tale conventions. Genre and stylistic qualities shape both the representation of gender and character identity in film and television.

The next section of this chapter shall focus on several films, and episodes of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. In these texts, a dark double is juxtaposed with the 'good' protagonist and all have a bodily connection to their 'good' counterpart. For instance, Faith (Eliza Dushku) and Buffy swap bodies therefore undermining Buffy's sense of self; the good doctor Jekyll turns into the evil Hyde; Mort (Johnny Depp) is both a likeable writer and an 'evil' killer (unbeknownst to him); and Castor (Nicolas Cage) and Sean (John Travolta) both have a turn playing a psychotic criminal and a 'good cop', as they quite literally swap faces. In these scenarios, there is no recognition of the mirror image (metaphorically in the form of a double or literally) at all, only misrecognition.

The mirror reflection and misrecognition: the monster within in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* 'This Year's Girl' (4015) and 'Who Are You?' (4016), *Secret Window* (David Koepp, 2004, USA), *Face/Off* (John Woo, 1997, USA), *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde* (Roy Ward Baker, 1971, UK) and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932, USA & Victor Fleming, 1941, USA)

In the last section I demonstrated that *Fight Club*, *Taxi Driver* and *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* display mirror images, or ideal egos, that strive to be 'better' than the actual bodily form of the character; in this way they provide strength and virility to the more vulnerable aspects of their personality. In this section I shall show that in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Secret Window*, *Face/Off*, *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde* and two versions of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* the mirror image/double displays a radically different body/image to that which both viewers and the character might expect.

As argued in Chapter Two, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is a show that is often preoccupied with issues surrounding identity and the problems of growing up as an adolescent. However, as Mary Alice Money suggests, 'any series that is, on the surface, about vampires must be about transformation' (2002: 98). Money goes on to argue that many of the characters transform from pure evil to being more complex characters, perhaps capable of redemption, such as Spike (ibid: 99). This is a significant pleasure offered to the viewer of a long-running show, as it allows characters to develop and change over many episodes. However, as Money originally notes the show is also concerned with literal transformations that centre on the body, the primary example of which is that of the human transformation to vampire, such as Angel, Drusilla and Spike. Splitting through horror tropes such as possession and vampirism are commonly used to express, in a literal fashion, the besieged ego in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Characters are often rendered out of control of their own minds and bodies through tropes such as vampirism and

it is useful to view this as the ego struggling against external demands⁵⁷. As such, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is often occupied with experiences related to identity and, importantly, with the experience of desires and impulses that do not accord with idealised self images, manufactured by the ego.

As noted in the last chapter (and see footnote 59), most characters in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* at some point reveal a darker side to themselves, either by becoming possessed by demons or by some other magical means, which leads to transformations of appearance (such as dress) or even of the body⁵⁸. Willow's evil vampire double is dressed in black leather with red trim, which coincides with both Angelus and Xander's vampire double, both of which also wear leather when evil. Drusilla and Spike often wear black and red, particularly in earlier episodes when Spike is portrayed as more villainous. Spike wears bright blue when he appears 'mad' early in season seven; this indicates that he is unsure of his identity and his 'place' in the world because of his newly reinstated soul in his vampire body. Both Giles and Joyce's appearance and accents in 'Band Candy' (3006) also change when they revert back to their younger, adolescent selves. Some of the most important examples of transformations revolve around Buffy, where she oscillates between dead / alive, and demon / robot / human. Buffy's appearance and body is transformed many times and the most prominent of these is a direct result of her dark double, Faith. In season four, Faith literally

⁵⁷ Further examples include Xander early in season one, who becomes possessed with a hyena spirit thus invoking animalistic tendencies; he also becomes split in two in 'The Replacement' (5003). Willow's vampire double first makes an appearance in season three ('The Wish' 3009), a vampire whose personality is not completely unlike Willow as a witch addicted to black magic in season six. Giles wakes up in season four to discover he has been transformed into a Fyarl demon ('A New Man' 4012), due to his drink being spiked by Ethan Rayne (Robin Sachs), while Oz is a werewolf and Anya oscillates between being a human and a vengeance demon. Even Riley (Marc Blucas), the good-hearted soldier from Ohio, is found out to enjoy being fed on by vampires; as one of the darker revelations in the show, Riley protests that it makes him feel 'needed'. Riley blames his exploits on Buffy who apparently does not need or depend on him enough.

⁵⁸ For example in 'The Wish' (3009) Anya (a vengeance demon) transforms the world into an alternate universe where Buffy does not live in Sunnydale, Xander and Willow are vampires, and Angel is a prisoner of the Master. Dress and costume play a role in commenting on the difference in character for each of the Scooby Gang. For example, Buffy dresses in a more military fashion, which is a comment on her more aggressive yet world-weary attitude in this alternate world.

swaps bodies with Buffy, leading to a change of appearance and bodily transformation.

Wilcox (2002a) and Keller (2002), among others, argue that Faith, as a rogue Slayer, is a dark double to Buffy, and represents a side of Buffy that is constantly under the surface. Wilcox suggests:

the dark-haired, violent, promiscuous Slayer Faith is Buffy's Shadow figure. In Faith, Buffy has battled the dark side of herself, and they have yet to come to resolution—though, interestingly, Buffy's Shadow Faith has taken Angel as her Vergilian guide through hell in her search for atonement on his eponymous series. And Buffy has at least recognized the need to allow that search, because, as Faith says to her, "[You] kill me, you become me" ("Enemies," 3017). (Wilcox, 2002a)

Both Wilcox and Keller argue that Faith represents the Jungian shadow self of Buffy, a negative side of her personality (ibid & Keller, 2002: 166). As Wilcox suggests, Faith is overly 'violent' and 'promiscuous', both qualities that Buffy does not possess, however, Wilcox also mentions that Faith is 'dark-haired', which suggests the importance of appearance. In terms of appearance, Buffy and Faith are polarised. Buffy as the petite girl with blonde hair and blue eyes looks like an archetypal Californian teenager / young woman, while Faith is taller, dark haired and brown eyed and perhaps looks more the part of a Slayer than Buffy⁵⁹. In fact Faith has more in common (with regard to appearance in terms of Hollywood action heroines) with other similar roles in alternate series such as Max (Jessica Alba) in *Dark Angel* (2000-2002, USA) or *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995-2001, USA). Buffy and Faith are so different in appearance and attitude that when they swap bodies, this creates a dissonance that is disconcerting both for the characters and the viewer. This is in accordance with the conflict of personalities of the two Slayers; their appearances are merely representational of the very polarisation of the two in terms of beliefs, morals, ethics, friendships and even humour. These two episodes use appearance and change of appearance (and subsequently lengthy scenes of

⁵⁹ It should be noted that Joss Whedon cast Sarah Michelle Gellar in the role of Buffy precisely because she does not look like she could fight, in order to subvert traditional gender roles.

staring in the mirror) to allow for the viewer to recognise the distance between the two Slayers, however it also taps into the notion of the psychoanalytic other within, which is imperative to narratives that focus on split characters.

'This Year's Girl' (4015) and 'Who Are You' (4016) are two episodes that begin with the awakening of Faith from a coma, a coma that Buffy was responsible for after stabbing Faith in order to save Angel at the end of season three ('Graduation Day' parts 1 and 2 [3021] and [3022]). Once awakened Faith goes in search of Buffy; after learning that Mayor Wilkins (Harry Groener), her surrogate father figure, has died at Buffy's hand she is enraged and seeks revenge. The Mayor, who has foreseen that Faith may reawaken, has left a gadget for her that magically enables her to change bodies with Buffy. This would enable Faith to exert the strongest revenge possible on Buffy: by taking her body she also takes her friends, Riley (Marc Blucas), her mother and all that entails Buffy's life. Indeed, this is exactly what Faith attempts to do, and succeeds at least for a short time, most notably by sleeping with Riley. Buffy, in Faith's body, is captured by the Watchers' Council and spends the second episode trying to escape, which she eventually does. Fortunately, Tara (Amber Benson) has sensed that Buffy (inhabited by Faith) is not what she seems and Willow and Tara conjure a spell that will enable Buffy and Faith to be restored to their rightful bodies.

Strangely it is Tara who knows Buffy the least who sees that she is not herself; Tara is coded as 'sensitive' and is often more aware of others and how they are coping with a given situation. The second episode ends with Faith and Buffy restored to their correct bodies, and Faith escapes to appear in the spin-off series *Angel*. Crucial to this bodily transformation is the way in which each inhabits the other's body which allows the viewer to see who Buffy really is (despite being in Faith's body) and this is central to the notion

of autonomy and identity, two of the show's recurring themes. As a regular viewer, there is also a certain enjoyment in watching one actor portray a different character; although the two episodes are rather disturbing, humour is used in Sarah Michelle Geller's imitation of Faith's voice, language and bodily movements and vice versa. The two actors' imitation of the other's character adds to the humorous quality of the series but it is also important to the viewer in terms of recognising who Buffy really is.

As noted earlier on in this chapter, Tasker has argued for the importance of speech as an indication of power, but which is often overshadowed by the visual: 'The muscular male body, foregrounded in the star images of a range of 'physical actors', ... is played off against the voice. The verbal dimension is often played down in a cinematic tradition which is so centrally to do with the spectacle of the body' (Tasker, 1993: 86). Tasker also suggests that the ability to both speak and act is indicative of power and/or possession of heroic qualities. Although Tasker is suggesting this in relation to male identity (and in particular within the action genre), her comments are also relevant to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. As previously noted, Buffy decides on certain aspects of the 'scooby gang's' plans of action where villains are concerned, although it is only on occasion that she speaks with real authority; language within the show is sometimes used as a means of power mainly by characters such as Willow when she turns evil (discussed below), for Buffy it is more commonly used for humour. Overbey and Preston-Matto argue: 'Buffy is the speech act. She is the utterance that communicates meaning, drawing on the linguistic capabilities of her companions: invention, playfulness, contextualization, archival knowledge, compilation and translation' (2002: 83).

Buffy's use of language is exemplary of her unstable identity and difficulty in maintaining order in her status as the 'ego', it shows her ability to take charge at times but mostly her hesitancy at others informs the viewer that

while she is our heroine she may not always prevail against the forces of evil. Her use of speech underpins the fact that she is split by her two roles: one as teenager or young woman and the other as Slayer. The most obvious examples of speech indicating instability are her long (and, to put it bluntly, tedious) speeches of supposed encouragement in season seven, which are meant to instil courage in the potential Slayers. Instead Buffy is unconvincing in her attempt at stirring her potentials into becoming brave fighters; rather she is actually fired for a time as leader of the group because she comes across as lecturing, authoritarian and frankly oppressive. Ironically, while Buffy does possess real power and is by far the most successful of the Slayers it is Faith who speaks with more confidence and authority.

Faith is by no means silent, she likes to speak and she is a vivacious and compelling speaker, using her whole body to converse. When Buffy and Faith swap bodies, the two characters' use of language and speech indicates their different positions in regard to power within the diegetic world. Buffy, in Faith's body, speaks very carefully in these two episodes, she attempts to persuade the Watchers' Council that she is Buffy, but quickly realises that this is in vain. She then remains silent until escaping and finding Giles. With Giles she is equally careful, choosing her words in order to convince him that she really is Buffy. Faith, in Buffy's body, is reckless with speech and after practising so carefully in front of the mirror to sound like Buffy, she proceeds to speak with less and less care and attention, causing several of the characters to look concerned. For example, her crude comments about 'Faith' being sent to prison cause her mother to caution her, and her laughter at the news of 'Faith' then being sent to England with the Watchers' Council causes a similar reaction from her friends and Giles. This is vital in terms of a sense of autonomy in the show. Buffy, as inhabited by Faith, is rendered entirely powerless over her own body. However, through the use of speech, she still manages to convey some sense of power within the diegetic story world, and remains the heroine of the show. In short, by remaining in control of her speech acts, Buffy still conveys a sense of autonomy despite being split and 'out' of her own body.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer literalises the psychoanalytic notion of the ‘other’ within. Drawing on Freud and the idea that the repressed will insist on returning is central to the show’s use of monsters or is perhaps even a literal rendering of the return of the repressed. Krzywinska notes that repressed ideas are apparent in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, which creates a resonance with regard to identity:

repressed ideas nevertheless press hard to return from the realm of the unconscious. In accordance with the psychoanalytic understanding of the “other” within, the split characters are often drawn from the core “good guys” camp and demonstrate the idea that identity is ultimately fragile, unknowable, and liable to throw some surprises. (Krzywinska, 2002: 182)

Krzywinska argues that identity is further problematised by ‘good’ characters such as Willow being split, or othered by the return of the repressed. Faith, in these two episodes, literalises the idea of the ‘other’ within, and in ‘Who Are You’, she moves from being a subtle representation of Buffy’s dark double to literally being the ‘other’ within Buffy. By moving into Buffy’s body, Faith appears and looks as Buffy usually does, but as her violent and aggressive counterpart, Faith uses Buffy’s body to her own ends.

The use of Buffy’s body (inhabited by Faith) is a prominent feature of the second episode ‘Who Are You’. The episode concentrates largely on Buffy’s appearance, as Faith would want her to look; she ‘makes-over’ Buffy’s body by wearing more provocative and darker coloured clothes. Faith changes Buffy’s hairstyle and she also looks in the mirror several times at her appearance. The episode contains several ‘mirror scenes’, the first of which occurs when Faith is still in her own body and is putting on lipstick, while holding Joyce hostage; the lipstick is aptly named ‘harlot’ and is a shade Buffy would be unlikely to use. While speaking to Joyce, Faith leans towards the mirror and kisses her own reflection, leaving a blood red lipstick mark on the glass. This act of kissing her reflection could be interpreted as narcissistic, but it also has lesbian undertones, particularly in conjunction

with the second mirror scene. This second mirror scene is longer, and shows Faith in Buffy's body staring at the mirror for a long time making faces and practising how Buffy would speak.

The former mirror scene creates an interesting split between Faith who kisses her reflection in this scene and later, in Buffy's body, hits her own face/body again and again in apparent hatred⁶⁰. This polarisation of attitude towards her own body is created through inhabiting Buffy's body and living Buffy's life, leading Faith further into self-hatred and morbid self-attention. The latter mirror scene is vital to the episode as it places Faith in the body of Buffy examining her appearance and every move. Jump shots are used to exaggerate the fragmented nature of such a swapping of the body, and the dissonance this creates. Tara who claims that Buffy's energy is "fragmented, as if it is forced where it doesn't belong," also hints at this dissonance later. Furthermore, jump shots are used later when Faith is with Riley, suggesting that Faith cannot cope with Buffy's apparent trust in others such as Riley, and indicates again the conflict between Faith's psyche and Buffy's body.

The sex scene between Faith (in Buffy's body) and Riley is highly indicative of the difference between Buffy and Faith psychically and physically. Faith attempts to seduce Riley by hinting that the two engage in sado-masochistic sex. Perhaps understandably, Riley is shocked to hear 'Buffy' ask him such things, and as the viewer might expect from the wholesome soldier from Ohio, he quickly puts a stop to her proposal. Faith is irritated by Riley's lack of enthusiasm, but plays along with Riley's more tender approach to sex and the sexual relations that take place between them is similar to those witnessed by the viewer between Riley and the real Buffy: conventional, and vastly different to Buffy's violent sexual relationship with Spike two seasons later (Wilcox 2002b). After sleeping with Riley, Faith becomes distressed and again jump shots are used to indicate that Faith is somewhere she does not

⁶⁰ Rhonda V. Wilcox argues that Faith is beating herself up rather than Buffy, despite the fact that they have swapped bodies (2002b).

believe she belongs, where she is safe and cared for but also rather smothered.

This scene raises some interesting questions about the differences between Faith and Buffy, which is vital to these two episodes as it is the very psychical or personality differences of the two that are literalised by their polarised physical appearances. Faith is rather obviously jealous of Buffy in that she has friends and family who care for her, however she also holds the view that Buffy is rather dreary. This is one of the primary reasons for Faith's dissent into uncontrollable violence and rage; she wishes to be Buffy but simultaneously desires to be her very nemesis and opposite. The crux of these episodes is that Faith acts out these desires and finds that while being Buffy has its bonuses, it also means being "proper and joyless like a girl should be."

Importantly, the second mirror scene also taps into Lacan's view of the 'mirror phase' and his assertion that during the 'mirror phase' recognition is bound up with misrecognition. Lacan phrases this as *méconnaissance* and it refers to both the concepts of misunderstanding and misrecognition (Evans, 1996: 109). *Méconnaissance* refers specifically to the formation of the ego; at the time the ego is formed the subject profoundly misrecognises and misunderstands as s/he is beguiled by the other and believes in the delusional whole image, which negates the more truthfully experienced fragmentary nature of existence. According to Lacan *méconnaissances* 'constitute the ego, the illusion of autonomy to which it entrusts itself' (Lacan, 2001: 7).

It is in the sense that the mirror image can provide an image that is unrecognizable as well as being recognizable that many of the films discussed here locate the double. In Lacanian thought, an image of

wholeness seems or feels alien to the subject as the body feels fragmented and in 'bits and pieces', which, as discussed in Chapter One, Lacan refers to in terms of the 'fragmented body' (this is also often referred to as *corps morcele*). Misrecognition of the 'whole' image leads to the seduction of the subject by the image as they desire to be this unified person and not a fragmented body. This is evident in Faith's (in Buffy's body) gaze in the mirror: she recognises Buffy's face, but as her own reflection it seems alien and strange. Moreover, this is clearly evident of Faith's view that Buffy is whole and unified whereas she feels out of control of her own body; a body that can kill effortlessly and without judgement seems to work against Faith's conscience and consciousness as a human. Looking in the mirror, Faith sees Buffy's reflection and this is representative of the unified person she wishes to be, however her inability to become this person leads her into further hatred and self-annihilation. The model of the narcissistic ego in view of Lacan's work aptly describes the fascination for Faith as she stares in the mirror and sees Buffy looking back; the image she sees is her idea of near perfection (she perceives Buffy as having it all while she has nothing), while her own feeling is that her life is out of control. Misrecognition and misunderstanding combine here to create an ego that is narcissistic (Faith is fascinated by her own image as Buffy); aggressive and narcissistic tensions between Buffy and Faith are key to these two episodes and indeed many of their other clashes.

The strength and power of a Slayer is directly related to the body; what makes Buffy (and Faith, Kendra etc) different from other girls is their supernatural strength. As noted above, two polarised split bodies or characters (such as Buffy and Faith) often engender different binary positions, particularly in terms of gender. In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Faith is figured as a more masculinised character than Buffy. She is 'tomboyish', evident in her eagerness to 'fight first and think later', whereas Buffy is to some degree more predisposed to calculation and tactical thinking (particularly in later seasons). Faith is more reckless than Buffy and this becomes evident in season three where Faith leads Buffy somewhat astray,

before Faith ends up accidentally, yet recklessly, killing a human; this is quite possibly the beginning of her downfall. Faith never wears traditionally feminine clothes (other than in dreams), she always wears dark coloured clothes and often leather, which aligns her more with characters such as Willow's vampire double, and male vampire characters such as Spike. In fact the only time we see her in a dress is before the Mayor's ascension and she openly states her doubt at the Mayor's choice of the clothes she should wear; it should also be remembered that she never gets a chance to wear the dress as Buffy puts her in a coma. In contrast Buffy is often very feminised, looking the part of a bronzed and blonde Californian prom queen; she often wears light colours and is a self-confessed follower of fashion. In these two episodes, through swapping of bodies, Buffy and Faith become reminiscent of Shaviro's assertion that 'virility continually runs the risk of being seduced into vulnerability.' This is not because Faith represents masculinity (and therefore virility) and Buffy femininity (and therefore vulnerability), but because Faith, despite her amazing display of aggressiveness and violence is ultimately vulnerable and no amount of physical strength can disguise such a fact, even when she has the use of the 'better' slayer's body. This is perhaps why it is possible to identify with both Buffy and Faith; the two Slayers both embody vulnerability and immense aggression, and this has the ability to appeal to an audience (particularly female) in two ways.

Firstly, an audience may well emphasise with Buffy and Faith's vulnerability in being teenage girls with the normal problems one would expect in attending high school or university (in Buffy's case) and dating; secondly the strength of Faith and Buffy lends itself well to an audience who presumably enjoys watching two women ably despatch much larger and aggressive vampires or monsters. Although Slayer strength is apparently aligned to the body as a site of supernatural force, Buffy's strength and also her autonomy is also located in her strength of character as well as the support she receives from her friends. Faith, with her fears and insecurities becomes a vulnerable Slayer, while Buffy, despite being usurped from her own body

does sustain her identity as the heroine of the show, although how autonomous she really is may be questionable. The show constantly tests her status as heroine, for example in 'The Weight of the World' (5021) Buffy thinks she has killed Dawn by allowing Glory to take her; she cannot cope and regresses into a catatonic state, which leads Willow to rescue her by entering Buffy's mind with the use of magic. Willow sees several Buffys through different stages of her life, all of which are vulnerable; this undermines her 'virility' and status as heroine of the show. Buffy asserts in season seven, "I am the law," and while it may be difficult to disagree with Buffy's statement (compared to Faith), her sense of autonomous identity is still highly problematic, which is evident in the show's constant attention to Buffy's identity and the doubling that frequently takes place around her character.

The double plays a similar role in *Secret Window* as it does in the two episodes of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* discussed above. The film tells the story of writer Mort Rainey (Johnny Depp) going through a difficult divorce and living in a remote cabin while he attempts to write his next book. He is increasingly threatened by a stranger called John Shooter (John Turturro), who claims that Mort has stolen his story and published it as his own work. The film sets up enigmas around both Mort's character and John Shooter's character, much like the narrative of *Fight Club*, and it becomes apparent that Mort and Shooter are indeed the same person. Unlike the ideal ego in *Fight Club* however, Shooter is a threatening and unpleasant character who, by taking over Mort completely, renders him a sinister murderer who kills his own wife Amy (Maria Bello). The revelation that Mort is indeed Shooter is not revealed until the end of the film, and mirrors play a role in signifying to the viewer that Mort's identity is fragmentary and indeed unknowable even to himself.

Mort's identity is depicted as unstable throughout the film; firstly, he is not completely sure whether he has plagiarised Shooter's story or not, suggesting that his memory plays tricks on him. It is apparent that in the past he did indeed plagiarise a story consciously and had to buy off the original writer in order to protect his reputation. It is also implied that he had been a heavy drinker, which contributes to his uncertainty that he might have plagiarised Shooter's story and not remember doing so, as well as his dreams which seem to blur his sense of reality. For the viewer then, Mort's character is ambiguous and it is highly possible that he has carried out actions without being aware of them consciously. Mirrors feature largely at the end of the film as Mort realises that Shooter is actually a part of himself. However, prior to this, in the midst of the film, he smashes both the mirror in his bathroom and the reflective shower door, believing that Shooter has broken into his house and is hiding in the bathroom. The focus on mirrors in this film points to its main themes, which focus on identity and subjectivity. The smashing of the mirrors and reflective surfaces earlier on in the film suggests that there is more to Mort's identity than is originally apparent.

The realisation that he is both Mort *and* Shooter occurs as Mort is attempting to track down a printed copy of the story that Shooter has accused Mort of stealing. Mort begins talking out loud to himself and the replies are in the form of narration voiced by the same character; the cinematic device of narration juxtaposed with Mort answering aloud allows the viewer to see him as dualistic. Throughout the film Shooter wears a black hat, which illustrates his status as a villainous character. At this point in the narrative Shooter has apparently left the hat on Mort's porch; the appearance of the hat in Mort's home, and as he begins to wear it, signifies his gradual realisation that he is indeed Shooter. Mort looks in the mirror, and reflections are made more prominent by his glasses that reflect light, a device put to use throughout the film, and he continues to talk to himself in the manner described above. At this point Mort quite literally splits in two and he argues with himself about the events that have led to this moment; the double Shooter, however, has

been replaced by a more easily recognisable doppelgänger in the bodily form of Johnny Depp (who also plays Mort).

The double who looks like Mort seems to be the opposite of Shooter, however, as he tries to convince Mort to call the police before he does any more damage (he has already burnt down his old house where his ex-wife lives with her partner). The doppelgänger of Mort seems to play out his conscience, while the dark double Shooter is figured as the menacing, sinister aspects of Mort's personality. As the battle for his psyche plays out, Mort walks toward the mirror but the reflection shows his back, not the frontal image reflected as would be expected. Shooter appears once more and wins out, which leads Mort to murder his wife and her lover. Mirrors are key to these closing scenes of the film; where they feature more heavily, Mort becomes aware of the true state of affairs and his two doubles both appear. Similar to the case in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* where Buffy and Faith swap bodies, Mort cannot recognise his evil double because they look nothing alike, it is only when his own bodily double appears that he realises the truth of the situation.

The dynamic between Shooter and Mort is in some ways played out similarly to the clash between Faith and Buffy in the episodes discussed above; Mort shows a more vulnerable, human and likeable side that leads to his unconscious invention of Shooter to carry out his more violent wish fulfilment. Buffy shows a constant need to remain human, and in some ways Faith can be viewed as a shadow to Buffy who carries out actions that Buffy feels are inappropriate or plainly wrong. However, whereas the narcissistic ego produces both narcissistic (erotic) and aggressive tensions in the subject (according to Lacan's model), and which is apparent in the relations between Buffy and Faith, only an aggressive tension exists between Mort and Shooter. The film plays on a more simplistic Manichean conception of good versus evil and any erotic element is not apparent between the two

characters; Mort is seduced, however, into becoming Shooter⁶¹ because he wants revenge on his cheating wife, not because he is physically drawn to Shooter, which is for example the case between narrator and Tyler in *Fight Club* and to some degree between Buffy and Faith. The doubling that takes place in *Secret Window* is perhaps more related to psychosis in ways that many other doubles examined in this thesis are not⁶². It is unlikely that Shooter would seduce an audience in the way that Tyler or Claudia might, in relation to their good looks and power. In many ways Mort could be more related to Travis as they both suffer from delusions and take violent revenge on those they believe have done them wrong or society wrong. The fantasy and/or psychological generic stylistics in such texts allow for a literal doubling to take place. Such a dynamic between two characters, who can essentially be read as one, is also apparent in the more mainstream action-thriller (with science fiction elements) *Face/Off*, the psychological undercurrent in the film, however, equally allows for doubling between the two lead characters.

Just as Mort has trouble recognising his bad counterpart, so does Agent Sean Archer (John Travolta) in *Face/Off*, who literally trades faces (and appearance in general) with his sworn enemy and the mastermind criminal Castor Troy (Nicolas Cage) who killed his young son. The premise for this psychological action thriller is the futuristic scientific ability to physically alter Sean's appearance so that he looks exactly like Castor and can infiltrate Castor's crime circles. Unfortunately for Sean, Castor wakes from a coma and forces the surgeon to complete the same procedure on him so that he takes on the appearance of Sean. The two then lead each other's lives until Sean's wife and the authorities finally realise what has taken place. In many ways the lure of the film is witnessing how the two inhabit each other's

⁶¹ There is a possible significance in the names of the character(s). 'Mort', meaning dead or death in Latin, is a subtle indication that there is a sinister aspect to Mort's character, while the name 'Shooter' implies a similarly sinister characteristic related to guns, particularly towards the end of the film where 'Shooter' becomes translated into 'shoot her', and Mort does indeed kill his ex-wife (although he commits this brutal act with a spade and not with a gun).

⁶² Claudia can also be described as 'psychotic', however her status as 'witch' and her 'irrational' behaviour can place her as 'hysteric' rather than 'psychotic'.

identity; viewer pleasure is also apparent in watching John Travolta and Nicolas Cage mimic each other's characters (and acting methods). While the film is driven by a Manichean divide between the 'good' police agent and the 'bad' criminal, each character manages to add something extra to the other's life: Castor manages to reach Sean's estranged daughter, by allowing her to smoke and teaching her self-defence, and he even fits in better at work as he is less tense and anxious about his workload. At the same time, Sean embraces Castor's son and girlfriend whom Castor had previously abandoned. Such narrative developments are in many ways unprecedented due to the differing personalities of each man; Castor is erratic, violent, psychotic and can aptly be described as 'mad, bad and dangerous to know', while Sean is responsible, family orientated and loving, if a little tense.

The focus on the drastically different identities of the two characters, while providing narrative drama and humour, suggests that leaning too far towards an extreme aspect of one's personality can be dangerous or unhealthy. Sean's life at the start of the film is severely damaged by the death of his young son; Castor teaches him to value his family and also unwittingly gives Sean the opportunity to bring up his own son, as Castor and his girlfriend both die at the close of the narrative. Castor is depicted as a far more unstable character and while he does not change much in the guise of Sean, a slightly more human aspect of his personality emerges: he looks uncomfortable at the grave of Sean's son whom he has shot, and shows surprising insight when he tells Sean's daughter Jamie that she has never been the same since her brother died. Once Castor has taken Sean's place in the family subtle Oedipal tensions arise as Castor shows sexual interest towards Jamie; although even Castor, whose exploits with women are clearly many, seems to gradually take on a fatherly role toward Jamie, which is evident in his ferocious beating of a young man who tries to kiss her against her will.

Such intertwining of the two character's lives suggest that they are inseparably linked, which the film plays out as a ferocious battle between good versus evil, or hero versus villain. The two are linked at the beginning of the film as they engage in a gunfight that is equally matched, each seem to know exactly what the other will do leading to stalemate. Symmetrically framed shots depicting Sean and Castor feature often when the two meet, one in particular where a mirror lies between each character and they each point a gun towards the other; here they are actually facing their 'true' enemy as the image in the mirror is of course the face of the real opponent. As seen in *Buffy* and *Secret Window*, mirrors feature to demonstrate that identity and subjectivity are unstable and simply looking in the mirror at oneself is not enough to reaffirm one's sense of self.

As Sean awakes from the surgery that has transformed him into Castor he becomes increasingly distressed as he looks in a three-panelled mirror, eventually smashing all three panels of mirrored glass. The smile of fascination on his face as he first looks in the mirror gradually descends into a look of horror as he realises he has become his worst enemy. However, as with the other texts discussed here, Sean's initial smile at the image is testimony to his initial fascination with his changed appearance, which leads him to 'body-staring' in the mirror. The narcissistic tensions of Lacan's (and Freud's) model of ego are apparent in the fascination of one's appearance as well as elements of *méconnaissance*, where misrecognition and misunderstanding combine to secure a fractured state of identity. Also apparent are aggressive tensions (also key to Lacan's model of the ego) as the two characters proceed to battle each other (in the form of themselves) with increasing violence and ferocity.

Mirrors also feature as Sean takes drugs in his attempt to fit in with Castor's friends: he stares at his blurred image in a mirror whilst saying, "I'm me, but I'm not me," suggesting once again the importance of appearance in

confirming one's identity. (This is also hinted at in relation to Jamie who constantly changes her clothes and appearance in an attempt to assert her identity.) The most prominent mirror scene takes place in a major shoot-out between Castor and Troy, as they inhabit each other's skin. Here they are surrounded by a circle of mirrors as they each struggle to see clearly where the other is and each continually confused by the sight of their 'own' reflection (more truthfully their enemy's reflection) in the mirrors.

Perhaps more subtly apparent in the film is the difference between the two characters in terms of masculinity. In *Fight Club* I argued that Tyler represents a more masculinised image than the narrator who is vulnerable and leans on his ideal ego for strength. In *Face/Off* both characters are representative of typically masculine traits, often seen in mainstream film: Sean is a familiar character as the tough police agent who is alone in his ability to match Castor's fighting techniques. Castor is equally familiar as the near pantomime villain who will stop at nothing to get what he wants. The film hints that he is cruel to women, as well as outrageously propositioning them wherever he goes, and his persona relies on a macho element that allows him to threaten and terrify others. Castor's masculinity leans on a villainous 'mad, bad and dangerous to know' element, which means he is attractive yet dangerous and violent. Sean's masculinity incorporates the macho element of using guns and having all the physical skills of a police agent, yet he is also sensitive and caring about his family suggesting that he is also a 'new man' as well as being tough, as Yvonne Tasker notes 'the 'new man' and the 'action man' are complexly inter-related' (Tasker, 1993: 120). Therefore, gender seems key to categorising the identity of split characters in the cinema, although it is not always so simply about a traditional divide of masculine (active) / feminine (passive); what is apparent, however, is that traditional gender models are constantly used to base character identity on. In *Face/Off* traditional elements of masculinity (particularly according to cinematic codes in mainstream film) are used to create both characters.

Gender is not represented in quite such a traditional manner in the early 1970s film *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde*. This film tells a slightly altered version of the familiar tale of Jekyll and Hyde, the original tale telling the transformation of the 'good' doctor into his 'evil' counterpart Hyde; in the original story the respectable Dr. Jekyll invents a scientific formula that allows his 'other' within, the brutish (male) Hyde, out. However, in *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde* the male doctor Jekyll (Ralph Bates) turns into the seductive female Hyde (Martine Beswick). In this Hammer film, Jekyll's scientific experiments are an attempt to elongate human life so that he might have the lifespan possible to develop immunity to the many diseases that inflict mankind; in this way the film asserts that Jekyll is essentially a 'good' character at the beginning of the film yet he gradually declines into more shady dealings⁶³. The first transformation from Jekyll into Hyde takes place in front of a mirror, and mirrors feature frequently throughout the film to indicate Jekyll's dual persona. Soon after Jekyll's first transformation he stares at his reflection once he has turned back, and transformations frequently take place in front of the same mirror; Jekyll also talks to the mirror when he is addressing sister Hyde and vice versa. As in many renditions of this familiar tale, Jekyll gradually loses control of Hyde and tries to destroy her, yet prior to this she carries out many of the dark deeds that Jekyll himself cannot perform; once it becomes too dangerous for Jekyll to murder women and extract parts for his experiments (as the authorities are suspicious of him), Hyde carries out many of the murders for him. She also seduces Professor Robertson (Gerald Sim) and kills him, as he is particularly suspicious of Jekyll. Hyde performs much the same role as Shooter in *Secret Window*, as she fulfils Jekyll's darkest wishes which he himself cannot or will not perform, it is also noteworthy that she carries out the murders gleefully.

⁶³ The first sign of this is when Jekyll turns a blind eye to young women being murdered by his accomplices so that he may use the bodies in his experiments.

Jekyll's fury at Hyde is evident once he realises she has killed Professor Robinson and in a rage he smashes the mirror that he has frequently sat in front of as he changes into Hyde by throwing a dagger at it; in the next shot the camera pans to show the dagger is lodged in the cracked mirror much like the knife in *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* where Lilli stabs the mirror to kill Claudia. Mirrors constantly mark the presence of Hyde and she appears towards the end of the film in reflective surfaces as both her and Jekyll fight for control of the one body. The smashed mirror also provides a refracted image of both Jekyll and Hyde, suggesting an unstable identity in cinematic codes as seen in many other texts discussed in this Chapter.

Unlike the later remake of the same story (*Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde* [David Price, 1995, UK/USA]), the 1971 version of *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde* does not simply equate good with Jekyll and evil with Hyde (the novel also aligns Hyde with evil and Jekyll with good). Dr. Jekyll in the 1971 version is guilty of murder on several counts and the film also suggests that he is in fact Jack the Ripper; although his murders are carried out for the supposed good of mankind as he believes he is benefiting medicine, it is difficult to see his actions as anything other than brutal and vicious. The representation of gender in the film is less problematic than might first appear due to this reason, although it is still contentious; Hyde is in many ways a femme fatale character in that she plays on her appearance and seductive abilities to get what she wants from men, and she takes great joy in killing women, however, Jekyll is in many ways more guilty than Hyde. Jekyll is supposedly the 'good' aspects of this one personality, however, he is happy to murder women and on a lesser scale be rude and obnoxious to others; while Hyde has the excuse of being the id-type aspects of this personality, Jekyll has no such pretext.

The two sides of personality in the 1971 version are far more alike than in many other versions of this tale; the border between the two is blurred in that

the two look very much alike, occasionally Jekyll also acts on Hyde's wishes such as when he reaches to touch Howard's (Lewis Fiander) face because Hyde desires him. Gender representation in the later remake is perhaps far more simplistic and problematic as the film simply juxtaposes the good male Dr. Jekyll against the evil and conniving female Ms. Hyde. Genre is perhaps key to the differences here; the later version is a comedy which focuses largely on the comedic aspects of Jekyll continually trying to rectify aspects of his life that Hyde sabotages, as well as him continually being taken for a cross dresser as he gets 'caught out' in women's clothes after transforming back to Jekyll. The horror conventions of the former 1971 version channel a focus on the more horrific aspects a split personality might demonstrate. Interestingly, while the generic conventions of horror are often more predisposed to centre narratives on a Manichean theme, in this example the focus is on the blur in-between (which is also the case in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) and also the dynamic between the two in terms of gender.

In the 1932 version *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* an expressionist style is used to enhance the theme of fractured subjectivity; the opening shots are from Jekyll's (Fredric March) point of view and this creates a rather eerie atmosphere surrounding his character. This subjective viewpoint is utilised again when Jekyll first transforms into Hyde, and he stands before a mirror watching his face change into the grinning, inane Hyde. Hyde stretches on his first appearance as if he has been trapped in the body of Jekyll; he exclaims gleefully that he is free. The film also links Hyde with nature and bestial non-civilisation; for example the bird caught by the cat precedes Jekyll's first transformation (without the potion) into Hyde. Hyde also delights in standing in the rain and has an almost apelike appearance; such elements in the film draw comparisons to him as a beast and link him with nature, rather than the human. The 1941 version of the same title tells the story almost exactly as does the 1932 version⁶⁴, Hyde in both these films are played by the same actor who plays Jekyll (Spencer Tracey in the 1941

⁶⁴ Although the screenwriters for the original 1932 version are uncredited in the 1941 remake, the script appears to be almost exactly the same.

adaptation) but are given a different appearance through make-up, the earlier version more so. Transformation in the later film is firstly shown through a dreamlike scene, the first transformation also shows Jekyll through a distorted piece of glass equipment, rendering his image refracted. Both films change the appearance of the actor to play Hyde so that a refracted version of Jekyll plays out the 'bad' aspects of Jekyll's personality. Both these adaptations play on a simple split between good and evil, assigned to Jekyll and Hyde respectively.

The texts discussed in this section display a double that the hero or protagonist finds difficult to recognise as a doppelgänger, largely because their appearance is different to that of the lead character. In many ways, these doubles fit neatly into the model of Lacan's (narcissistic) ego because they are reminiscent of the 'other' that is a reflection of the ego. The formation of the ego in the 'mirror phase' is intrinsically linked to identification with a whole bodily image (*gestalt*) that is delusory and entails both misunderstanding and misrecognition; all the protagonists here are both fascinated and to some extent beguiled by their delusory images in the mirror. The double in these texts also to some degree creates both erotic and aggressive tensions between the character and their counterpart; if read as one character, these characters all display the problems of the experience of identity that Lacan highlights in his psychoanalytic model.

In the previous section I argued that the double or mirror image displayed a hyper-masculine or hyper-feminine ideal for the character to live up to or be supported by. In this section gender is far more problematic; *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* plays with a traditional view of gender models, and while Faith is far more tomboyish than Buffy and in many ways performs some of the traits of the masculine 'lone hero' from physical genres such as Westerns or action films, neither Slayer fits neatly within traditional models of gender. Buffy usually dresses in a more feminine fashion than Faith; she is also the

stronger Slayer possessing traditional 'macho' or masculine characteristics of fighting and expertise with weaponry. The show displays a knowing attitude towards traditional models of gender identity and seems to actively disrupt them.

Gender representation in *Secret Window* is also far from simply assigning traditional models of gender identity to the character and the double; gender is, however, an issue in the film. Mort shows many of the signs of masculinity in crisis that the narrator in *Fight Club* also displays, and similarly to the narrator Mort must invent a double to carry out actions that he feels he is inadequate to perform. Shooter, however, is far from the masculine ideal of Tyler; he is tall yet thin in stature, although he does defeat Mort in their only physical tussle. Shooter is depicted as an unattractive and sinister character, which is more representative of Mort's state of mind than depicting an ideal ego (based on an overtly masculine body and mindset) such as Tyler. Drawing on cinematic codes, Shooter is represented as a masculine force however; his Southern accent and appearance are reminiscent of a cowboy in Western genre films, which evoke traditional masculine characteristics of the lone anti-hero. Shooter's Southern accent is juxtaposed with the more sophisticated 'city' accent of Mort.

Face/Off makes use of traditional models of masculinity in different extremes, and Sean finally wins out suggesting that the tough yet family-orientated masculine ideal is preferable to the overt masculinity and violence that Castor represents. Finally, *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde* on the surface looks like a split between masculine / feminine as the double is played as female; yet this film blurs the borders of traditional gender identity just as it obstructs a simple Manichean reading. Both personalities are linked to aspects of traditional femininity and masculinity: Hyde is a femme fatale, a phallic figure, while Jekyll is seen several times holding a blood red dress as well as emulating his double by touching Howard's face in a sensual way.

The obstruction of a simple reading of gender in this film points to the shifting and unstable nature of gender representation in film as well as the experience of identity in the world. In the two versions of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Hyde plays out the brutish and cruel side of Jekyll as both brutalise the women in their life. These films focus on the concept of civilisation juxtaposed with non-civilisation; in terms of gender this plays out through Hyde as an animalistic type of masculinity, which contrasts with Jekyll's status as a polite gentleman. The doubles in these films problematise gender identity just as they problematise recognition and understanding of identity more generally for the character.

The next section of this chapter shall continue to explore the 'misrecognition' that occurs in mirror scenes in many psychological horror-based texts. In *Fight Club*, *Taxi Driver* and *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* the mirror image strives to be 'better' than the actual bodily form. In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Secret Window*, *Face/Off*, *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde* and the two versions of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* the mirror image/double displays a completely different body/image. However, in the following texts the mirror image or doppelgänger looks exactly as it should look (the image of the protagonist) but it behaves in a very different way than is expected by the respective protagonists, and the viewer.

Better the devil you know: the deadly double in *Angel Heart* (Alan Parker, 1987, USA, Canada, UK), *Evil Dead II* (Sam Raimi, 1987, USA), *Into the Mirror* (Kim Seong-ho, 2003, South Korea), *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Maurice Phillips, 2002, UK), 'The Life of the Party' *Angel* (5005), and *The One* (James Wong, 2001, USA)

The close of *Angel Heart* provides a significant dilemma for both the central character Harry Angel (Mickey Rourke) and also the viewer. Harry, as one would expect, firmly believes that he is Harry. He looks like Harry and speaks like Harry. Viewers have identified with him as Harry Angel, the rather likeable private investigator, for the entire film up until this point. However, the close of the film reveals Harry desperately screaming at his mirror image "I know who I am", after being told by the Devil (Robert DeNiro) that he is not Harry and is in fact a singer named Johnny Favourite, the very person that Harry has been attempting to track down in the narrative. Harry's initial reaction is to go to the mirror as if attempting to confirm to himself that he is whom he thinks he is. Perhaps, on the other hand, he is expecting his appearance to have morphed into another, which would confirm this confusion around his real identity. Yet he still looks like Harry, he still feels like he is Harry, but he is not: Harry's mirror image is delusional, and it takes the Devil to convince Harry otherwise.

Angel Heart provides a narrative where Harry Angel is sent on a wild goose chase by the Devil; he has literally been employed to track himself down. As is usual with psychological-based horror genres the viewer is aware that something is amiss; everywhere Harry goes a dead body turns up and he seems unable to detach himself from unfolding events unaware of his connection to other characters. It is not until the closing stages of the film that viewers become aware that the Devil has knowingly sent Harry after himself (Johnny) in order to take back his debt. Johnny had made a pact with the Devil to ensure his success as a singer, but had escaped the debt by stealing another's body (Harry's) and becomes unable to remember his former life as Johnny. This final twist in the plot leaves Harry

(understandably) utterly confused in relation to his identity, and the film taps into the dramatic notion that even looking in the mirror and seeing ourselves (as an adult) does not necessarily confirm that we are who we think: simplistically put, appearances can be deceptive.

This thesis argues for the continued use of psychoanalysis in film and television studies as it can still provide us with further understanding of why narratives around fragmentary identity, such as in *Angel Heart*, continue to be popular. The drama surrounding Harry's demise is particularly fascinating to watch, and the combination of Harry's seemingly innocent charm and a pact with the Devil taps into the very (unknowable) nature of identity. It would seem unwise to discard a psychoanalytical approach because the narrative in *Angel Heart* (just like the other texts discussed in this thesis) plays on key psychoanalytic concepts, which shall be explored shortly. In this sense it seems likely that viewers are familiar with ideas such as the unconscious, the repressed and fragmentary identity, regardless of whether they align this to psychoanalytic thought or not. The use of such ideas is testimony, therefore, to the way that psychoanalytic concepts have become integrated into common ways of understanding psychological factors. It seems reasonable to suggest that the use of these specific concepts of psychoanalytic theory is to deploy, in the context of fiction, drama and tension. Key to this utilisation of tension at the close of *Angel Heart* is the use of mirrors towards the final scene.

Shortly before Harry's final confrontation with the Devil, he has sex with Epiphany (Lisa Bonet) in his shabby rented room, which is full of leaks so that rain drips constantly from the ceiling. The scene is highly charged particularly as blood starts to flow down the walls instead of rain. The cascading blood taps into supernatural elements that the film has, up until now, been hinting at, although it is important to note that Harry has no belief whatsoever in the supernatural or Voodoo until the end of the film. At the

end of the scene Harry looks in the mirror and punches the glass shattering his own image, he later goes back to this same mirror and stares at his fragmented image. Similarly, during a scene where Harry interrogates Margaret's father (Stocker Fontelieu), he stares in the mirror in the bathroom shouting "who's the boy?" as Margaret's father tells him Johnny stole the soul of a young soldier; this is a prelude to the later scene where he will similarly try and use a mirror to assert his identity and find answers. Finally Harry goes to Margaret's (Charlotte Rampling) apartment and finds soldiers tags confirming that it was indeed Harry Angel whose soul was stolen by Johnny Favourite. However, he consistently claims that he knows who he is and he rushes to the mirror to confirm this fact. The Devil, who has appeared in the room, replies "take a good look Johnny, however cleverly you sneak up on a mirror, your reflection always looks you straight in the eye." Harry continues to insist that he knows who he is and he stares in the mirror all the while; it is during this prolonged stare at himself that Harry/Johnny begins to see that he did commit the murders that he investigates in the narrative, and finally realises that he is indeed Johnny Favourite (and that the young woman he had sex with and killed is actually his daughter).

It is the use of mirrors in these closing scenes that provide spectacle and leads the viewer to realise that all is not quite as it seems. The Devil's spiteful comment to Harry regarding the mirror's reflection looking him straight in the eye has multiple meanings. It not only tells Harry that he has mistakenly trusted his mirror image, but it also taps into the status of mirrors in certain film genres: mirrors are often placed in the *mise-en-scene* to question identity, and if they are broken we can almost certainly assume that an issue around the stability of identity will be raised in the film, as has been discussed in relation to the other texts discussed in this chapter. Finally this knowing use of mirrors further enforces the relevance of Lacan's theory of the 'mirror phase', which can continue to be used as an approach to further understand the fragility of Harry's identity and his reliance on his mirror image to tell him who he is.

Lacan suggests that deep-rooted psychological splitting is the individual's own doing, and this is literalised through Johnny Favourite being responsible for his own split nature and confused identity. Johnny decides to back out of his agreement with the Devil, which has cost him his soul, and performs Voodoo with the aid of Margaret on a young soldier (Harry). Through Voodoo he knowingly takes another's identity and is responsible for his own splitting. By providing a literal portrait of this early splitting during the 'mirror phase', the film taps into the unconscious nature of fractured identity, which is applicable to all according to Lacan. What is so effective in *Angel Heart* is that this unconscious 'subjective' split nature erupts from the unknown into the 'real' and knowable. This provides an extremely spectacular way of providing drama and tension in order to attract an audience, but it also taps into contemporary concerns that surround identity, and this also helps to explain the popularity of narratives such as in *Angel Heart* and why they might engage audience interest.

As is the case with many of the films discussed in this thesis, *Angel Heart's* narrative is not simply figurative of a psychoanalytic split nature. Rather the film places this in the context of the use of Voodoo and black magic in Deep South America, and as Krzywinska argues, the film links Voodoo with Satanism (Krzywinska, 2000: 182); Harry's doubling is directly linked to Voodoo and its relation to the Devil. As is so often the case with the splitting trope in psychological horror-based texts, a split nature is provided as a narrative base to tap into the problematics surrounding many charged cultural struggles, for example in this case an understanding of Voodoo, which in horror film conventions is often grounded in black magic. Harry's doubling with Johnny is used as a psychological narrative tool to address issues surrounding religions (Voodoo and Christianity), metaphysics, and the use of magic.

The mirror image that is deadly and threatening is also apparent in both *Evil Dead II*, the *Angel* episode 'The Life of the Party' and *Into the Mirror*. *Evil Dead II* is a comedy horror film and Bruce Campbell's Ash, whose possession by the 'evil dead' renders him out of control of his own body, provides much of the humour. Early on in the film, he is taken over, or possessed, by the forces that he has previously battled in the first film *The Evil Dead* (Sam Raimi, 1981, USA). Ash fights off this possession, however, and his struggle intermittently provides scenes of the fantastic and humour throughout the narrative as at times he becomes unable to control his body as the possessing agent takes over. The most spectacular of these scenes begins with a mirror scene in the garage after he has just removed the head of his girlfriend (she had been taken over by the evil dead and was attempting to kill him).

While Ash looks in the mirror after this traumatic (yet comically portrayed) event, the mirror image begins to act differently to Ash, and the mirror image hand reaches out and grabs Ash around the throat. Ash pulls away from the mirror and realises that he is attempting to strangle himself. His hand is from here on possessed and animated, and continually tries to murder Ash, typified in an amusing scene located in the kitchen where the hand smashes crockery continually over Ash's head until he is unconscious. The giggling hand (it has a sound effect) then drags Ash's body towards a hatchet in the attempt to finish him off. Ash, however, is well prepared and chops off his own hand while hysterically shouting, "who's laughing now?" The mirror scene at the beginning of this section of the plot allows the narrative to position Ash against his other possessed half; the use of the mirror allows for the character to be split into two and the viewer can still identify with the 'good' half of Ash. The scene is firmly placed as comic-horror spectacle, however, and allows for Bruce Campbell to further his iconic status as a cult hero through his outrageous exploits as Ash.

The split character of Lorne⁶⁵ (Andy Hallett) in the *Angel* episode 'The Life of the Party' functions in a very similar way to *Evil Dead II*. Lorne has had his sleep removed at the law firm Wolfram and Hart as he is overworked and has no time for rest anymore. The viewer realises something is wrong with Lorne when his mirror image begins to talk to him, much like Claudia's does in *Snow White: A Tale of Terror*. At first Lorne's image provides a similar function for Lorne in that he encourages Lorne to be the life and soul of the party as he is accustomed to being. Lorne, however, is actually feeling worn out and exhausted and he smashes the mirror in annoyance. Gradually it becomes apparent that Lorne's lack of sleep is distorting his psychic powers and he begins to unconsciously construct peoples' destinies rather than simply reading them. This dangerous turn of events is grounded in the deadly mirror image that increasingly takes on menacing qualities. Eventually the mirror image manifests itself and takes on the form of a larger, monstrous version of Lorne who begins killing guests at a party. Lorne's unconscious has manifested itself and provides an amusing metaphor for the pressures that busy life can create when one does not have the luxury of enough sleep. Lorne's monstrous inner self erupts and causes havoc much like other characters' vampire/demon doubles in both *Angel* and *Buffy*, such as Willow's vampire double in 'Doppelgängerland' (3016), Angelus, or Oz's inner werewolf.

Into The Mirror plays on exactly the same notion of the evil mirror image as *Angel Heart*, *Evil Dead II* and 'Life Of The Party'. In this Korean film a young woman, Lee Jeong-hyun (Kim Hye-na), who has been killed by the Director of the shopping mall she works in, haunts the building; a fire in the mall covers up her death as an accident, however. Lee Jeong-hyun betrayed the Director as he was trying to complete an undercover buyout of the shopping mall and she threatened to expose him; he killed her so he could complete the buyout and own the shopping mall. The ghost targets those who had

⁶⁵ The green colour of Lorne's skin could also link him to the comic book character the Hulk, who is another figure that can be viewed dualistically due to his double persona.

anything to do with her death, and all of these colleagues are killed by their own mirror image. Each death occurs in front of a mirror or reflective surface; according to the logic of the film, the mirror image suddenly becomes autonomous and acts independently to kill the characters in a variety of gruesome ways. It becomes apparent that the girl is an identical twin and her sister, Lee Ji-hyun (also Kim Hye-na), communicates to her dead twin through mirrors, which is apparent in a room in her apartment completely lined from floor to ceiling with mirrors on three walls. She claims that when looking in the mirror the reflection is not her but her twin sister who has previously died.

The film works on the premise that there are two worlds (as with *Alice Through the Looking Glass*), that of reality and also the world within the mirror; if one dies in the real world, they may still exist in a symmetrical mirror world. In a particularly dramatic scene, while Lee Ji-hyun is staring at her reflection (her sister) in the mirror, the mirror splits noisily down the middle; the many mirrors in the room proceed to smash around her as she stands in the middle of the room attempting to protect herself from shards of glass. Mirrors in this film therefore play a key role, not only to comment on the fragmentary nature of identity, but also as a component in the narrative driving the story forward. Mirrors feature frequently from the dramatic scene described above, to the murders that take place in front of mirrors and the subtle array of reflective surfaces apparent in the shopping mall.

The theme of the 2002 version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is largely morality, or perhaps more accurately civilisation pitted against the uncivilised, just as it is with the two versions discussed in the previous section. As in *Angel Heart*, 'Life of the Party' and *Into the Mirror* etc described above the double in this tale has the same appearance as the character (and is therefore played by the same actor). Dr. Jekyll (John Hannah) is convinced of the duality of humankind and his scientific work is preoccupied with controlling the

'criminal' tendencies which he believes all people possess; he terms people as existing as higher and lower beings. Jekyll attempts to enforce a unified, whole identity by controlling the dual personality he alone believes all possess; this backfires and Jekyll allows his other personality out instead of ridding himself of such uncivilised aspects of his psyche. As with Shooter in *Secret Window*, Hyde wears a black hat signifying his villainous status, he also carries a black cane (as does the devil in *Angel Heart*); in instances where doppelgängers have exactly the same appearance as the protagonist, signifiers are often used to denote 'which' of the two are onscreen.

Mirrors also feature in this version of the tale, Jekyll's maid Mabel (Kellie Shirley) points out a mirror that is distorted much like the mirrors in fairgrounds, and in one scene Jekyll converses with Hyde through the mirror, similarly to *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde*. The mirror represents Hyde while the 'bodily' character remains Jekyll. Jekyll and Hyde appear several times in the same scene and they openly argue and battle over who will have control of the one body. Jekyll states that he is mesmerised by his own image in front of him, and when Hyde finally takes over Jekyll enough to kill his maid Mabel, the two lean in toward each other as if about to kiss when Hyde evaporates into Jekyll's body. Just as with many of the cases described above, erotic, as well as aggressive tensions are key to the dynamic between the two.

The One works on the premise that there are many parallel universes and therefore over one hundred 'versions' of each person. In this science fiction, action film Jet Li plays both a 'good' self and a 'bad' self, the 'bad' half attempting to kill the final version of himself (he has already despatched the others) so that he is the 'only one', which will give him tremendous power. As with many of the other films discussed in this chapter, mirrors and reflective surfaces are used early on to hint at the unstable nature of identity in the film. For example, Gabe (the good half) sees Yulaw (the bad half) in hospital

mirrors, giving a distorted image; a mirror image of himself also makes Gabe start in the hospital changing room. A Manichean theme of good pitted against evil is the basic premise of the film, however a slightly more interesting method (than costume alone) of telling the two apart is put to use; Leon Hunt explains:

The One's most interesting concession to its star is the equipping of his two characters with different fighting styles. Yulaw, who adheres to the principle that "the shortest distance between two is a straight line", practices the straight-line attack of *xingyi*, an 'internal' style with a 'hard', forward rolling power... The gentler Gabe, yin to Yulaw's yang, practices the 'soft', circular *bagua*, which has its basis in Taoist circle-walking meditations derived from the *I Ching* (Hunt, 2003: 178)

As Hunt goes on to note, it is unlikely that many viewers would be able to name or even be particularly aware that different styles of martial arts skills are being put to use. Rather the film makes use of these simply as a distinction between the two characters, and as a comment on their personality or psychological make-up (ibid: 178).

Also pointed out by Hunt is the film's attention to balance, evident in the many universes regulated by 'multiverse' agents; the two characters must both live at the close of the narrative or an unknown 'disorder' might reign (ibid: 178). In terms of the psychological status of both characters, the film suggests that one cannot live without the other, and despite Yulaw's desperate desire to be the 'only one'; the logic of the film prevents this. In line with my arguments outlined above, a whole and autonomous 'one' identity is negated in the film in favour of 'two', albeit that the film rather simply aligns this duality with good / evil. However, as with many of the films discussed in this chapter the duality of the protagonist is figured as inappropriate and even perverse. The 'correct' pairing (or 'proper' couple format) in the film is assigned to Gabe and his wife, who he explains makes him 'complete'; this is also evident in the necklaces that the two wear which lock together when worn by one person. Although Gabe's wife dies in the film the end of the narrative leaves him in a different universe where he instantly runs into another version of his wife; the film hints that 'wholeness'

is only apparent in a heterosexual coupling rather than a narcissistic fascination with oneself.

The texts discussed in this section figure the duality of the protagonist, or characters generally, as rather simply split between a Manichean divide of good and evil. It is likely that the generic conventions of the horror film, action format and psychological premise play a key role in channelling representation of the split subject into such a polarity or divide between good and bad. The texts discussed here all represent a doppelgänger in the 'true' sense of the meaning in that they look exactly like the character they are doubling. Therefore dramatic cinematic signifiers are put to use to indicate to a viewer 'which' of the characters we are seeing onscreen; the black hat worn by Shooter and by the 2002 version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a none too subtle suggestion that they are the 'evil' aspects of one personality, while *The One* uses different fighting styles to differentiate between the two Jet Li characters.

The next section aims to show that there are often other, more subtle indications of the duality, or fragmentariness, of character identity. Through analysing the character of Willow in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* the next section will analyse and critically assess the function of speech as an indication of character instability.

Speech, Power and the Split Identity of Willow in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*⁶⁶

This chapter has largely dealt with how split identity is figured visually, and the meanings that might be at play. However, as noted at the beginning of this chapter the visual is not the only method that film and television makers utilise when depicting split identity. The use of voice and language (or speech acts) can also be an effective means of representing fragmentation within subjectivity. This section deals with how split characters are articulated, or performed in film and television texts as not all split characters are visually split into two all of the time; while visual coding of characters (such as mirroring, costume, hair and make-up) often indicates unstable identity, there are other codes or indications of character instability that viewers are invited to interpret. Here I show that speech and language can also be symptomatic and indicative of a split character.

When discussing the use of speech and language in horror-based texts, verbal speech in the horror film is often sidelined for more 'primal' expressions of fear such as screams of terror from victims. On discussing the soundtrack in cinema generally (and in the context of the gendering of voice)⁶⁷, Kaja Silverman argues that cinema sound has had a peculiar theoretical past and she suggests that it is 'notoriously passed over in favour of the image' (Silverman, 1988: 42). Rick Altman makes a similar argument, suggesting that sound theory and practice actually provide substantial food for thought in terms of theorising the cinema (Altman, 1992); sound should not be overlooked, but it frequently is. This section contends that sound in horror has been constantly disregarded in favour of the spectacle of image.

⁶⁶ A version of this section is due to be published in *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*.

⁶⁷ As noted in the Introduction, see footnote 18.

Importantly, sound has much to offer in terms of theorising the problematic unity of identity in the cinema (in terms of cultural resonance). Sound and speech in mainstream film provide far more than just a complimentary addition (grounded often in realism) to the image, in fact sound and image editing provide coherence for the viewer that helps stabilise meaning and interpretive possibility. Rick Altman explains that:

By holding the auditor at a fixed and thus stable distance from all sound sources...Hollywood uses the sound track to anchor the body to a single continuous experience. Along with the narrow dynamic range allowed for background music, this process serves to constitute more completely the spectator's unconscious self-identity as *auditor*, thus providing a satisfying and comfortable base from which the eyes can go flitting about, voyeuristically, satisfying our visual desires without compromising our unity and fixity (Altman, 1992: 62) [*italics in original*]

The soundtrack in mainstream film seems to have the job of anchoring the meaning of events and image for the viewer, but Altman also taps into the idea here that mainstream cinema actively pursues the aim of disillusioning its viewer and cementing the *feeling* of a fixed identity. I suggest that other forms of cinema and television disrupt this coherence in order to estrange the viewer and bring to light the reality of the actual feelings of identity in the real world⁶⁸; identity is problematic and subject to many factors seemingly

⁶⁸ For example a film such as *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974, USA) uses both visual images and sound to disrupt 'comfortable' viewing. The use of sound and speech in the film remains one of the most unusual to this day. As Christopher Sharrett aptly notes, the entire second half of the film is almost without dialogue, instead we are subject to the terrorised screams of Sally, the loud and intrusive noise of the chainsaw, and the babblings and mutterings of the family, namely Hitchhiker (Sharrett, 1984: 259). Sound is apparent at the beginning of the film before an image appears on screen, and throughout the film the diegetic soundtrack remains constantly intrusive, for example the buzz of the chainsaw is loud and continuous. The film employs constant diegetic noise such as the use of the radio in the car or the noise of chainsaws and motors running. As Kirk and Pam enter the area surrounding the house belonging to the cannibals, diegetic sound immediately takes over through the overbearing sound of a nearby motor, which dominates any other element of the soundtrack. This is a less than subtle prelude to the violent deaths of both Kirk and Pam, both of whom are shortly to be despatched by Leatherface. The use of sound in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* goes against the norms of mainstream cinema in that the sound becomes noticeable in its omnipresence. Instead of seamless image and sound editing that compliment each other in classical cinema, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* violates its audience not purely from its graphic images but from its ability to interrupt the coherence of image and sound correlation. As Altman suggests in relation to classical cinema 'Hollywood cinema thus established... a careful balance between a "forbidden" image, which we watch as voyeurs, and "sanctioned" dialogue, which appears to be addressed directly to the audience' (Altman, 1992: 62). In contrast to this equilibrium, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* provides no such 'sanctioned dialogue' and instead the viewer is likely to feel that the sound in this instance is just as 'forbidden' as the images.

out of our control. This is more apparent in horror or horror-based texts than in any other genre. In horror, verbal speech often becomes noticeably absent⁶⁹, for example 'killers' are often silent like the masked and deadly Michael Myers in the *Halloween* series, or Jason of the many *Friday the 13th* films⁷⁰. So, how can speech, or lack of speech, be symptomatic of a split identity?

Speech (as discussed in the next section) is figured as a means of agency and power when it is aligned to Willow's use of magic (where magic is language) in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Willow is figured as a villain towards the end of season six, and this is closely embedded and signified through her use of language and speech as it becomes entwined with her use of magic and the nature of her split character. This use of language is figured in season six as a symptom of Willow's split character and the changing face of her identity.

My arguments here take a similar approach to Willow's demise as James South, who attempts to show that Willow's choices throughout the series mean that her addiction to magic cannot be understood rationally. South suggests that Willow's descent into evil is a demonstration of the 'dark currents' of the unconscious mind (South, 2003: 145). Throughout the story arc of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* magic has gradually become Willow's

⁶⁹ Traditionally, it seems, speech in the horror film has often been limited to further basic plot development and to indicate terror and fear in the many forms of screams and shrieks from the victims; for example the screaming Janet Leigh in the famous shower scene of Hitchcock's *Psycho* became an icon for the genre, along with the non-diegetic 'screaming' violin soundtrack. While the horror genre is often claimed to be about the 'body', something I will not contest here, horror films regularly make use of voice, language and sound (both diegetic and non-diegetic) to strengthen dramatic tension, and to create atmosphere and emotional response.

⁷⁰ Through the very absence of speech, horror-based texts often invoke Freud's notion of the hysteric. The body 'acting out' rather than 'speaking out' suggests the unconscious has 'leaked' symptoms, which are written across the body rather than expressed through conscious speech acts. The concept of the hysteric is normally linked to the feminine - this implies that tensions between the masculine and the feminine (and gender identity in general) are implicit in horror-based texts. Tensions are articulated through different modes of communication such as verbal / non-verbal. Rose argues linguistics and psychic instability are bound together; psychoanalysis links identity with speech through a focus on language (Rose; 1990).

language. At the end of season six Willow becomes so deeply immersed in black magic that she claims that she *is* magic. When performing spells Willow seems to speak, perform and practice another language, different to that of most of the other characters (Tara being an exception). Magic is Willow's language. Other characters occasionally dabble in magic, such as Jonathan, or Tara who is sometimes seen performing spells with Willow and very occasionally on her own. However, these characters are never represented so clearly performing spells on such an extensive scale or for such a long period as the character of Willow. Willow's figuration as a representation of magic cannot be separated from her use of language and voice; her change in speech when performing spells points to her changing levels of confidence and assertion of identity as she graduates towards fulfilling her role as an all-powerful witch.

Willow's use of magic is also the use of a language that the 'Scooby gang' can rarely understand or participate in (the penultimate episode of season four is a significant exception - 'Primeval' [4021]). Her use of magic can be interpreted as her attempt at finding her own voice and identity through magic as practice and as a performative speech act. This is an attempt on Willow's part to establish a more secure identity for herself; often overshadowed by Buffy (to whom she acts as a 'sidekick'), Willow attempts to assert herself through magic. Willow's own voice (magic) has a dramatic effect on the character of Buffy, who has managed to survive seven seasons in total being the Slayer and by extension the leader of the Scooby gang (most markedly when Giles, who acted as an authority figure and an expert in things magical, leaves and returns to England). Buffy struggles to maintain her identity as the Slayer in Sunnydale; as argued in Chapter Two, it can therefore be useful to view her as the (realist and narcissistic) 'ego' of the tale struggling against dark id-type forces. While Willow has previously used magic to help Buffy in her fight against all that is evil, in season six ('Villains' [6020], 'Two To Go' [6021] and 'Grave' [6022]) Willow uses magic against Buffy and against what Buffy herself has proclaimed as her "law." Willow's use of magic as a language indicates her split self and her desire for power,

largely because her use of both communicative speech and magical language when she becomes evil is at odds with her more usual hesitant method of communication.

In the season seven episode 'Selfless' (7005), Buffy attempts to kill Anya who, as a vengeance demon, has killed several humans. Xander and Buffy argue about whether this is the right or moral thing to do. In the conversation Buffy negates Xander's viewpoint by ordering him to see things from her viewpoint; there is no room in this exchange for Xander's own challenges. Buffy attempts to assert herself by using specific modes of expression; her particular use of speech acts at times demonstrate her status as the heroine of the show⁷¹. Buffy's speech acts here are generally assertive and directive illocutionary acts⁷² in that the acts are both insistent that her opinion is the true state of affairs as well as challenging the listener; she is confronting Xander in an authoritative manner by insisting that he come around to her way of thinking. Whatever Buffy's law might be, at times she asserts herself in specific ways through using language in a commanding manner; her illocutionary acts tend to be assertive and directive, as well as commissive, where she might promise or make threats to perform or not perform a specific act. For example, in 'Bring On The Night' (7010) Buffy vows to defeat the first, however she promises this (to the viewers?) on behalf of all the potentials and the Scooby Gang; she says 'we' far more often than 'I' indicating that she has no intention of doing this alone. Buffy lets slip here,

⁷¹ Speech Act theory is the study of utterances in a linguistic context. In this section I shall refer to illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts, which are kinds of speech acts. Illocutionary acts are 'complete' acts, which are made up of utterances, referring and predicating, and finally stating, asserting or promising etc (Austin 1962; Searle 1969). Perlocutionary acts refer to the effect speech acts might have on the listener, such as persuading someone to do something, or effecting their feelings or actions etc (Austin 1962). See Alice Jenkins and Susan Stuart for more on the benefits of using speech act theory in *Buffy* in 'Extending Your Mind: Non-Standard Perlocutionary Acts in "Hush"' (2003)

⁷² I shall refer to five kinds of illocutionary acts: Assertives are representative acts that describe a situation such as making statements or insisting. Directives are illocutionary acts that are meant to get the listener to do something, such as making orders. Commissive are illocutionary acts that intend the actual spokesperson to do something, for example promising to carry out a certain action. Expressives are acts that convey the psychological position, or the emotional state of the speaker, for example apologizing. Finally declarations are illocutionary acts that are meant to result in the circumstances to which they allude, for example Willow's spells (Loos, 2004).

amid an apparently confident and inspiring speech, that she is not self-assured without the support of others. Buffy's autonomy is not without its challenges.

In season six Willow's own dramatic and excessive use of magic has a huge impact on the Slayer's autonomy. Willow's impact on Buffy's autonomy is exemplified at the close of season six when she almost destroys the world, which Buffy is sworn to protect. Importantly, Willow's dramatic attack on Buffy and all of her friends is dependent on Willow's evil half making an appearance; it is Willow's split self and fragile identity that causes this dramatic turn of events. Willow's split identity is tied in with her changing use of magic, which Willow uses as her own language; her fractured identity also mirrors Buffy's fragile sovereignty. Jess Battis suggests that Willow 'has been overshadowed by Buffy, but...has also *shadowed* her, and at times, eclipsed her' (Battis, 2003) (*italics in original*). If Buffy is our ego of the tale forces of darkness that are to some extent out of her control besiege her constantly. In season six Willow becomes such a dark force and through the very nature of her split character she challenges Buffy's autonomy and identity as a heroic Slayer. Firstly it is necessary to demonstrate how Willow's use of magic can be figured as her own language, as it is this use of magic as a language that is indicative of, or is a symptom of, her split character and that mirrors Buffy's loss of autonomy.

Willow's use of magic as a specific language is grounded in her changing speech acts once she begins to practice magic on a consistent basis; her modes of articulation change as her familiarity with magic grows. It shall be argued throughout this section that Willow's use of magical speech alters dramatically from her usual hesitancy in speech⁷³. Viewers can recognise Willow in her various guises through the way that her expression and speech

⁷³ For example in 'Welcome to the Hellmouth' (1001) Willow explains to Buffy that she has trouble talking to boys she likes and can only make "vowel sounds". She often asks questions rather than making direct statements.

acts change. For example, vampire Willow's cutting remarks (as well as a change of dress code) allow the viewer to enjoy the stark difference between 'evil' Willow and the Willow viewers have come to know and identify with. Speech acts as suggestive of personality allow viewers to recognise 'which' Willow is onscreen and what her agenda might be. For example, in 'Doppelgängerland' (3016) 'normal' Willow masquerades as vampire Willow (first seen in 'The Wish' [3009]) in order to avert a massacre at the Bronze; it is Willow's attempt at talking and acting like an evil vampire that provides humour in this instance. Vampire Willow's direct way of communicating contrasts to 'normal' Willow's anxious hesitancy and eagerness to please others by saying the right thing.

The joke lies in viewers being fully aware that the girl in the vampire leather outfit is the Willow that viewers know and love; Willow is unconvincing as vampire Willow, which is evident through her attempt at altering her speech and her discomfort in a 'vamp' leather outfit. However, she also acknowledges her link with vampire Willow by admitting, in the guise of vampire Willow, that Willow is 'weak' and 'accommodating'; behaving as vampire Willow allows Willow to confront what she considers the weaker and less confident aspects of her personality. The difference between Willow and vampire Willow can therefore be identified through the differences in how the two use speech (as well as changes in appearance); their very different personalities are therefore performed through speech. Speech acts are performative and functional: illocutionary speech acts are speech acts that assert something, while perlocutionary speech acts are speech acts that are intended to achieve an effect and are meant to bring about a certain reaction from the recipient (Austin, 1962). In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* changes in speech, on the part of the characters, provide an insight into personality and how language can be of use in developing character. Willow's hesitancy in speech demonstrates her natural tendency to stand back and allow others to take the limelight, while vampire Willow's sharp expression reflects her id-driven vicious, blood-sucking lifestyle. It is therefore possible to view speech acts and language as symptomatic of personality and identity in the show.

Willow's own use of everyday language in conversation is uncertain: Farah Mendlesohn describes it as her 'characteristically hesitant mode of speech' (Mendlesohn, 2002: 59). Overbey and Preston-Matto suggest: 'the words sometimes get away from [Willow]...she is awkward in talk, blushing, stammering,' (Overbey and Preston-Matto, 2002: 78). Willow's illocutionary acts are often expressive, allowing the viewer insight into her state of mind. The hesitations apparent in her speech, and her frequent questioning rather than stating, point to key components of her personality such as lack of confidence. In 'Doppelgängland', for example, despite Willow attempting to take on vampire Willow's mode of expression, her slight hesitancy and unwillingness to lead the conversation (she generally replies to questions asked her) allow the viewer to recognise Willow rather than vampire Willow. As Alice Jenkins and Susan Stuart note in a more general sense '[a]ll communication is, in some trivial way, the extension of one's mind' (Jenkins and Stuart, 2003). However, as Overbey and Preston-Matto also suggest 'Willow is turned on by text' (2002, 78). Her love of academic learning, new technology and researching magic are defining features of Willow's character. It is her love of knowledge, or the tools of knowledge, that seemed to spark Willow's initial interest in magic. Magic is Willow's masquerade or mask and is a defence mechanism against her vulnerability (both psychical and physical vulnerability).

Willow's love of text, which inspires her knowledge seeking, is essentially a means to an end; she requires the text in order to find knowledge, and by extension power. As Alan Sheridan suggests 'power and knowledge are two sides of the same process' (Sheridan, 1980: 220): the two concepts are inseparably linked; indeed one is immanent in the other. Text is also sexualised for Willow, as seen in 'Restless' (4022), where Willow paints Tara's naked body with text. The demon Sweet (Hinton Battle) of the musical episode 'Once More, With Feeling' (6007) aptly highlights Willow's strength

by retorting, “I smell power” in the presence of the (by now) experienced witch. This remark is made after Willow has spoken, not after her performance of any magic, signifying that her power is indicated through speech. The complexity of Willow’s character is evident through the fact that both her lack of confidence and growing power is apparent in her use of speech.

Willow’s power is referred to constantly during season six and seven by several of the characters, most notably characters that do not know Willow very well. For example Rack (Jeff Kober) describes her as the “new power” who will “blow this town wide open” and Anya with her supernatural status (and who has never seen eye to eye with Willow) claims that she can feel Willow’s power. Significantly Buffy, as one of Willow’s closest friends, does not initially notice her rapid decline into addiction to magic. Buffy also uses Willow’s magic addiction as a homology of her own problems with leaving Spike; Buffy is too busy fighting her own personal demons to notice Willow’s deep problems. Buffy reads Willow’s words about giving up magic in terms of her own conflicts about her desire for Spike when both Buffy and Willow are talking in ‘Wrecked’ (6010). (Buffy mirrors Willow; which becomes more apparent in relation to their split characters towards the end of season six).

While Willow is often hesitant in conversation, there are other ‘languages’ that she is more comfortable with, for example her knowledge of computer ‘language’ (before she begins using magic) is often her method of helping research. Willow’s familiarity with computers links her to Jenny Calendar and leads her on to magic once Jenny (a ‘techno pagan’) dies. Her use of magical speech is fluid and confident; in fact many of the spells are often performed in other arcane languages. A significant early example of which is the dramatic episode ‘Becoming - Part Two’ (2022), where Willow alarms Oz and Cordelia (Charisma Carpenter) by suddenly speaking in ancient Romanian during a ritual to recover Angel’s soul. Such an example is an

instance where magic speaks through Willow and subsequently Willow's friends (or indeed the viewer) cannot understand her use of the language of magic: this expresses Willow's alienation within the group. To some extent the alienation produced by ascent to power is shared by both Willow and Buffy. For Willow this culminates towards the end of season six, where Willow's use of magic has become extraordinarily powerful. Willow is figured as more of a vigilante than Buffy in season six; her magical power renders her more dangerous than either Buffy or Faith. In keeping with Willow's power becoming almost unstoppable, her use of everyday language has also changed dramatically.

Previously on the show Willow's use of language during spells or rituals was lengthy or complicated, thus leaving much room for things to go awry. A prime example is Willow's attempt to conjure a ball of sunlight and accidentally conjuring a troll in 'Triangle' (5011). This is due to Anya's interference, which results in Willow getting the words of the spell wrong. To say the wrong words or the right words in the wrong order results in spells getting mixed up; Anya ensures that Willow's words are incorrect through her constant interruption. The show therefore implies that magic is an exact and complicated art where words performed in a particular manner will have very specific magical effects⁷⁴. Magic, then, seemed to operate in a similar way to programming language – if the syntax is wrong errors occur. This is not the only way that magic can go awry for Willow, in 'Something Blue' (4009) Willow attempts a spell that will enable her to enact her will upon the world through her spoken words. As Alice Jenkins and Susan Stuart suggest, 'Willow has attempted to give her speech acts radical perlocutionary force, or extreme power to alter reality' (Jenkins and Stuart, 2003).

⁷⁴ In season four Xander accidentally sets a book on fire by saying a specific Latin word while holding a book of spells. The fact that Xander did not mean to perform this spell is testimony to the power of words within the show's magical context: intent is not necessary.

Spells that go wrong for Willow also bring to light the link between Willow's emotional state and magic that is upheld throughout the show⁷⁵. Willow's magic is performed as illocutionary declarations (and they are also perlocutionary as they are intended to bring about significant changes in the world around her); her words of magic are intended to result in the circumstances to which they refer, so calling on the "spirits of light" to "let the gloom of darkness part" is intended to actually produce light. Once Willow's alter ego makes an appearance (in the form of the black-haired, black-eyed witch) her magic is still illocutionary declaration yet she is able to perform magic without the aid of rituals or long and complicated reams of words. Her magic is now brisk, often colloquial commands performed as directives, such as "stop," "take a nap," "back off." Willow has transcended the need to 'ritualise' her magic through lengthy citations: "take a nap" results in the offending police officer to instantly drop sleepily to the floor. Such power is hinted at earlier in the show in season five where Willow says "separate" to stop Xander and Spike fighting in 'The Weight of the World' (5021). This use of magic indicates confidence and control: she 'owns' the magics rather than having to accommodate the esoteric language of magic.

'Bad' Willow's use of speech becomes more reminiscent of Buffy's quipping than Willow's hesitant speech. Michael Adams suggests that 'slayer slang becomes, not only the means to community, but finding an individual voice within that community' (Adams, 2003: 44). Willow's language is not so simply about being part of the Scooby gang community; language becomes a symptom of her internal conflicts and her struggle to attain selfhood, or in many ways to achieve an identity equal to that of the Slayer. Language therefore signifies Willow's internal status, which provides a commentary on the character's psychological make-up, more so than other characters. The

⁷⁵ Willow's emotion is linked to magic, evident for example in her vengeance spree at the end of season six, sparked by Tara's death. Other examples include her attempt at floating a pencil, which spins out of control at the mention of Faith's name (of whom she is jealous because Faith had sex with Xander) ('Doppelg ngland' [3016]). Her 'will' spell goes awry and only works when she is angry or upset etc; her emotion drives the spell, without her (conscious) knowledge ('Something Blue' [4009]).

symptomatic use of language signifies Willow's struggle with maintaining an autonomous identity, which she experiences as dualistic and fragile. Willow's speech acts while performing magic in season six demonstrates her increasingly pathological identity; identity in the show therefore includes being recognised as having iniquitous characteristics as well as being identifiable as one of the characters on the side of good. This is one of the show's strengths: the series allows for an understanding of identity that is often unknowable and deeply ambiguous, which provides a progressive and differing view of identity that in much of mainstream media is represented as (misleadingly?) autonomous and wholly good, and makes (melo)dramatic capital from such. The function of Willow's use of language is to signify to viewers that her identity is fragile and twofold; one of the central aims of this chapter is to determine how fragile identity is represented onscreen. What becomes apparent through analysing Willow's use of language is that the indication of fragile identity is not always indicated solely through visual means.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer is about conflicts of desire, conflicts between who the characters think they are and who they actually are. Speech in the show indicates these conflicts. Dramatic values in the show often emerge through conflicts between and within characters. Willow's problems and experiences in the process of establishing identity and status are literalised through her magic and its relation to power and speech. Similarly humour in the show often marks 'problems' where the 'real' contrasts with the 'wanted'. Willow's change in her use of language (both magical and in conversation) when she becomes evil, reveals her split nature. Willow's change in verbal language also taps into the idea of the repressed; Willow's speech acts point to a deeper repressed side of her nature that has rarely been seen before⁷⁶. The play on language in the show is dually coded; indicating that the characters

⁷⁶ Freud terms the repressed as that which is held in the unconscious being unacceptable to the conscious mind, such drives, desires, instincts etc must be kept hidden from the conscious mind but they often slip out in speech acts. Freud establishes that while the repressed may be kept in the unconscious, it by no means loses any of its strength; indeed it becomes a constant pressure that the conscious must keep at bay (Freud, 1915a).

are essentially unaware of who or what they really are; the repressed side of their nature will slip out, often in speech acts. Willow's use of the language of magic (which is different to her 'normal' use of language) becomes a symptom of her fragile identity as it indicates that her character is twofold, or split in that the show makes implicit use of psychoanalytic notions of what constitutes the psyche.

The differences between 'crayon-breaky Willow' and 'dark Rosenberg' emerged during season three when Willow's vampire double first made an appearance in 'The Wish' (3009) and 'Doppelgängland' (3016)⁷⁷. Most strikingly Willow's appearance as both a vampire and a black magic witch is dramatically different to that of the 'normal' Willow. Both adorn black clothes and in the latter case black hair and eyes and are, as Battis suggests, 're-coded' negatively (drawing on codes used to decode 'evil' found in other witchcraft films such as *The Craft* [Andrew Fleming, 1996, USA]) (Battis, 2003). Both make a different use of language than that of the Willow we are accustomed to. In contrast to 'normal' Willow's hesitant speech, 'bad' Willow is more cutting and commanding (often 'assertive' by making statements for example, or 'directive' in attempting to recruit Willow as her companion). Willow's obvious abhorrence of evil Willow's proposition is juxtaposed with evil Willow's confidence ('expressive' / 'assertive', 'directive'). Her nervousness and lack of confidence is apparent in her cautious mode of speaking in her very first line of the scene, where she makes a mistake in her expression, obviously confused by the sight of her double. Her following remarks are generally short reactions ("Oh! Oops!"). Conversely, vampire Willow leads the conversation and her expression is either seductive in trying to win Willow over ("wanna be bad?"), or threatening and aggressive ("bitch"). In many ways the vampire Willow as the 'virile' and 'normal' Willow as the 'vulnerable' enforces Shaviro's notion that these two characteristics

⁷⁷ In the last episode of season six 'Grave' (6022), Xander refers to Willow's 'normal' self as 'crayon-breaky Willow'. This is a reference to when they were in school and Willow cried because she broke a yellow crayon. Andrew describes Willow's evil self as 'dark Rosenberg', 'Sabrina' and 'truck-driving magic mama'. Xander calls her 'scary veiny Willow'.

are co-present in psychical and bodily make-up and are not to be polarised (as discussed in relation to *Fight Club* above).

Willow incorporates her evil counterpart's self-assurance when she becomes consumed by magic in season six. The differences between the expression of normal Willow and vampire/black magic Willow is partly a dramatic device but it suggests Willow's repressed or buried side and further signifies a deeply split identity, which is a major theme of the show. Perhaps most noticeable is 'bad' Willow's use of the catchphrase "bored now". James South aptly describes the use of this phrase throughout the series and demonstrates the significance in season three where both Willow and the vampire Willow suggest that "this world's no fun." As South argues, it is no surprise that vampire Willow finds this to be the case, however it seems unusual for 'normal' Willow to agree with such a sentiment. South goes on to suggest that 'normal' Willow does indeed struggle from time to time with everyday demands mainly because of all the pressure she is under from being a teenager/young woman and attending school/university, as well as coping with living on a hellmouth (South, 2003: 139-140). Drawing on Freud, South suggests that Willow's pressure reflects that which we are all subject to in psychological terms; as he puts it, a 'too much' (2003: 140).

Vampire Willow is bored because this world is ruled by a Slayer (instead of the Master), and again this is similar to the reason why 'normal' Willow might also feel bored. She, like all in Sunnydale, must live under the rule and law of the Slayer. Willow at times struggles with this as, perhaps due to her academic and probing mind, she does question the status quo, albeit in a generally quiet or unassuming fashion. While Buffy is a friend, her law is a difficult one to live by; morals are very clearly laid out and there is very little room for mistakes or bad judgements. More importantly, Buffy's law leaves only a sidekick-shaped space for Willow's own voice (magic). Willow's power in her magic is sidelined for the Slayer's power in physical strength leaving

her a sidekick with no heroic status of her own and specifically no language of her own (or none that she can communicate to others with). South interprets Willow's sidekick status as 'her biggest fear' (2003: 134). In fact, ironically for Willow her background (often magical) work/research has bolstered Buffy's status as a hero. Through the majority of the show Willow's metaphoric pen has never been mightier than Buffy's literal sword, until now.

It seems necessary to discuss further Buffy's own proclamation "I am the law," for it is this law that Willow so fiercely attacks. Buffy, as the 'ego' of the tale, is besieged by forces she cannot reckon with; Willow becomes one of the forces that challenges Buffy's law. This occurs in a number of ways: first, Willow undermines Buffy's moral law by attacking humans; she also attempts to take over Buffy's identity by making herself as physically strong as the Slayer and attacking her, retorting "this is a huge deal for me, six years as a sideman, now I get to be the Slayer." This is not the first time that Willow has challenged Buffy's authority, she sometimes acts as 'superego' for example in 'Pangs' (4008) where she takes the moral high ground because she believes the avenging Native American spirit to be correct in his attack. Her questioning of the best way to deal with this conflict is, however, undermined by the situation as the spirit has to be dispelled or they would all have died. Willow attempts to take over with her own language or voice of magic, rendering Buffy (in her position of power) redundant. Buffy makes a proclamation similar to Willow's statement that she is "the magics," when she claims, "I am the Law." Buffy does not mean that she is a representative of the police force in Sunnydale or in any way associates herself with that type of authority; in fact, one of the few things that Buffy and Principle Snyder ever agreed upon was that "the police force in Sunnydale are deeply stupid"⁷⁸. State law is not the only law apparent in Sunnydale however, as Anthony Bradney suggests '[p]luralistic legal systems exist in Sunnydale', and he is of course, referring to the Watchers' Council (Bradney, 2003). By season four, Buffy has distanced herself from the Watchers'

⁷⁸ Anthony Bradney also makes the point that the police are figured as largely incapable of dealing with the supernatural in the show (Bradney, 2003).

Council in England and even Giles is no longer officially her Watcher, therefore she in is no way a representative of the law of the Watchers' Council⁷⁹. It therefore becomes necessary to ask what law is it that Buffy fights for.

Generally Buffy fights the 'good fight' and is representative of a force of good that keeps at bay the never-ending forces of darkness (demons, monsters and some vampires). However, as has been discussed recently about the show, it has become increasingly more insistent on blurring the line between good and evil. For example, Krzywinska suggests that the show takes an increasingly 'relativistic approach' in its representation of magic (Krzywinska, 2002: 178-194). This relativism is also evident with the arrival of demons such as Clem (James C. Leary), both Spike and Angel on a rocky road to redemption with a soul, and the final revelation that Buffy's power is driven by demonic forces, perhaps rendering her part demon. In addition to these factors, Anya reverted to demon status (and back again) and Willow has certainly crossed the line, blurry though it might be, from light to darkness. It seems that Buffy's law is an individual law that is applied as a universal 'good', a law upheld by her power as the Slayer, but not every Slayer attempts to assert themselves as representative of a specific law as Buffy.

Faith most certainly abides by no law, or if we are to push the issue her agenda would be to have as much fun as possible without acknowledging the ties of duty that Buffy seems to always bear in mind. Importantly Faith herself announces to Buffy that "we don't need the law, we are the law" during the season three episode 'Consequences' (3015), but as her lack of rationality becomes apparent her capacity to uphold any law slips through her fingers. Faith generally abides by few rules during the show (although it should be noted that she does seem to do what the Mayor asks (orders?))

⁷⁹ In 'Graduation Day' (3021) Buffy resigns from the Watcher's Council and refuses to take any more orders from them. Giles is fired by the Council for not being an objective Watcher; he has become a father figure for Buffy ('Helpless' [3012]).

her to do, and she is certainly more stable on her return in season seven to the extent that she takes over from Buffy briefly).

Kendra (an unnecessary replacement Slayer for Buffy who temporarily dies at the close of season one), like Faith, does not adhere to the same rules that Buffy does. Kendra is the most Council law-abiding of the Slayers in that she stands for the rules and laws of the Watcher's Council and would never perform any task without first receiving permission from her Watcher. Finally the first Slayer, introduced at the end of season four as an enigma related to Buffy's origins as the Slayer, is never fully explored but her vicious attack on the Scooby Gang implies that she is a force of rage and vengeance. The first Slayer also works alone and tells Buffy that she too should be a solitary Slayer. It is made clear that the first Slayer precedes all language; she cannot communicate to Buffy other than through Tara who provides her voice. Tara is used to bridge the gap between the non-speaking Slayer and Buffy who represents the law in the present time; interestingly it is Tara that provides the first Slayer's voice although her speech is normally very stilted and stammering. This is perhaps because it is a similar role to the one Tara plays with Willow in that she helps Willow to secure a more stable identity through their common 'language' (magic).

Vitaly, none of the Slayers who meet become good friends as we might expect. Friendship is hinted at between both Buffy and Kendra and early on between Buffy and Faith, but both friendships are fruitless once it is discovered that Buffy's idea of being a Slayer differs dramatically to Kendra's and Faith's (although it should be noted that both the relationship between Kendra and Buffy and Faith and Buffy are later re-established to some extent). Kendra abides by rules that are external and suggested to her by an outside force. I suggest that Buffy's law is actually her own beliefs and morals that she manages to uphold vigorously through having the power of being the Slayer. She also has much support from her friends who assist

with both Slaying and researching; in 'The Wish' (3009) Buffy the Slayer appears cold and finally dies in this alternate world, as she comes from elsewhere and has no support groups, no Scooby Gang to make her more 'human'. It is also likely that Giles has been an influence during her time as the Slayer, providing her with a strong sense of duty. Yet this sense of duty is on her own terms, the movement 'arc' of the show has placed increasingly more emphasis on Buffy being in charge; often in earlier episodes Giles's despair at not being able to control Buffy was a source of humour, it later becomes a problem when ironically Buffy relies too much on Giles and he returns to England ('Tabula Rasa' [6008]) to ensure she matures as an adult⁸⁰.

Buffy is arguably the most successful of the Slayers, she outlives Kendra and while Faith survives she has experienced many problems along the way. Buffy's success is largely because she has a strong team behind her, but it is also because she clings to the idea that she is human and wishes to retain this humanness, hence she refuses more power in season seven despite this putting her at a disadvantage in her combat with the First. The moral of the tale is that while Buffy refuses extra (dark) power, she still wins out and the force of good is once more triumphant. One of the themes of the show is the continual slide between good and evil, and a focus on the grey area in between; Buffy is at the centre point of this battle hence her desperate attempt to stay on the 'light' side of the fight. Importantly evil is not synonymous with demon and good is not equal to human; Buffy is ambiguous in this sense as she is both human and demon and this to some extent explains her tricky position of being the Slayer (vampire hunter with demon power) and being human (young woman who attends school/university etc). Buffy deals with this ambiguity by performing her 'law'

⁸⁰ Bradney argues that Buffy chooses when to abide by certain laws (state law and/or the Watchers' Council) and when to break those laws, which further enforces the view that Buffy in fact has her own law, her own rules to live by (Bradney, 2003). As Bradney goes on to point out, this is largely because Buffy has a far more accurate picture of the world than either the state law, the Watchers' Council or even the Initiative; these organisations simply equate demon with bad, apart from state law which disavows the presents of vampires and demons altogether (Bradney, 2003).

(fighting all that she perceives as evil); Willow equally performs her magic and the two become juxtaposed in that they both perform their law / magic habitually and at times irrationally.

What becomes so problematic for Willow in the close of season six is Buffy's law (which ironically assists Willow to become more 'whole' in that she allows herself to be completely taken over by her 'evil' side in order to battle Buffy's law); not because Buffy's law is static and she refuses to see Willow's point of view but because Buffy has to draw the line somewhere (the show has hinted at this previously, for example in 'Pangs' (4008) where Willow sympathises with the plight of the Native American Spirit). It is the dramatic death of Tara that pushes Willow's moral boundaries beyond that which the Slayer can allow: Willow must kill humans in order to avenge Tara's death and this Buffy will understandably not endorse. This is a source of tremendous dramatic tension as long-term viewers of the show are accustomed to Willow and Buffy being the best of friends, not the worst of enemies. It is first necessary to clarify what Willow loses through Tara's death which results in such a fierce attack, not just on the 'nerds' but also on Buffy and Giles.

South argues that Willow has no clear identity of her own, no way of defining herself within the group, which South describes as 'no core identity' (South 2003, 134). Yet, all identity is relational; we are defined by the groups we belong to, the people we converse with and the situations we encounter. The show demonstrates this by putting the identity of characters under pressure. However, in the eyes of others Willow does have a clear identity in the group as another source of power, but it seems her actual experience is that of surviving on the perimeter. Perhaps this is partly due to her own language (magic) having little significance to the other group members, until she turns 'evil'. The group has relied extensively on Willow's use of magic in the past, and has even become angry at the prospect of Willow giving up magic for

good⁸¹. However they have shown little appreciation of the skill and knowledge that Willow has acquired to help them in such a way. Willow's identity does not rely on the other group members, however it is evident in the show that her identity is *experienced* as fragile (which is represented through her split character in the form of both vampire Willow and dark magic Willow) and this is reflected in her group identity profile.

Willow's fragmentary nature is also evident in her relationships, Battis argues 'Willow's relationship with Tara, like her relationship with Oz, only further demonstrates her dis(embodiment) as a subject whose mentality and materiality is fragmented... [s]he must belong to Tara, to Oz, to Xander, in order to be inscribed by meaning, by the validity that others place in her' (Battis, 2003). It would therefore follow that without Tara Willow feels that she has no 'meaning'. Willow and Tara form a very close bond; Tara, apart from being Willow's lover, is also someone who understands Willow's language or voice (magic). Willow often appears to be unsure of herself and it is only in the presence of Tara that Willow appears more confident; Willow and Tara maintain their identity as witches together through intimate trust in using magic together (magic seemed to hint at sex between Willow and Tara early on in their relationship)⁸². As Battis argues '[m]agic brings her [Willow] closer to Tara, and closer to what she believes is an authentic identity' (Battis, 2003).

On the sudden and tragic death of Tara in 'Seeing Red' (6019), Willow's grief is violently apparent. Tara's death causes great grief for Willow because she provided a grounding for Willow in the 'normal' world, and without Tara Willow has lost her anchor in and to the world; Tara's death

⁸¹ Anya becomes antagonistic towards Willow during their entrapment in Buffy's house, and tries to persuade her to perform magic despite her having given it up ('Older and Far Away' 6014). Buffy has also criticised Willow's use of magic in the past claiming it to be unreliable ('Fear Itself' 4004).

⁸² For example in the episode 'Who Are You?' (4016) Willow and Tara perform a spell together to find out if Buffy is in Faith's body and vice versa. The spell hints at orgasmic pleasure between the two witches, figured through the performance of magic.

also leaves Willow with no one to communicate with through the use of magic (Willow does not consistently perform spells with other characters; before dark magic consumes her magic becomes increasingly 'personal' for Willow, an intimate exchange). Willow instantly tries to resurrect Tara with magic in the next episode 'Villains' (6020) and her lack of success puts Willow straight back 'in the magics', meaning that her use of magic as a language becomes once more powerful, but also out of control. Willow's grief at being told that Tara will remain dead (unlike the previously raised Buffy by Willow's hand) results in her screaming "no" at the offending demon whom she has called to bring Tara back. The word is graphically represented as a visible sound wave to the viewer and it sends the demon (also screaming) back to where he came from. Willow's use of dark magic is instantly aligned to her use of language, and this becomes unmistakable in the remainder of the season.

It is necessary to substantiate the language or discourse of magic in the context of the tradition of magical 'words' or the traditions of magic and the word in religions. In *The Golden Bough* James Frazer explored the use of words in ritual in religious and magical practices, where he discusses the significance of tabooed words in certain cultures. In what Frazer terms a 'tyranny of words' (1993: 258), he describes how the names of relatives, loved ones and kings may not be mentioned after their death and new names are often devised in order to make reference to the departed. Such practices were due to beliefs that calling the name of the departed was disrespectful and could result in consequences such as the ghost of the departed returning to haunt the dreams of the disrespectful (Frazer, 1993: 244-262). This 'ritual' around words taps into the implied power of words within magical practice, and it also hints at the instability of language whereby it changes constantly in the changing face of the group identity of the culture.

Frazer brings to light both the power and the taboo nature of certain words in magical thinking and practices. Similarly, Geoffrey Hughes discusses the power and taboo surrounding certain words. Hughes' work is within the context of swearing and he suggests that gradually over time society has developed a 'modern insensitivity to the language of cursing' (Hughes, 1998: 7); language not only evolves but reactions to uses of language also change. While Willow's more aggressive expression cannot produce much more than emotional responses from her friends (and as Hughes suggests, they quickly adjust to her different manner of speaking), her magic can produce very real effects. Cursing in the context of swearing, and cursing in the context of magical practice have certain similarities; swearing often has the aim of either producing a reaction in the listener and/or expressing anger, disbelief, grief, etc. Cursing (performing a spell) in a magical sense, for Willow, also usually has the aim of producing some kind of affect (a 'real', physical affect), for example, Willow uses magic against her enemies such as her attack on Glory after she has invaded Tara's mind ('Tough Love' [5019]). Here Willow is both attempting to attack Glory physically with her magic as well as expressing anger and grief. When 'bad' Willow makes an appearance, her changing use of language has the aim of producing a reaction (in the viewer and other characters); magic (cursing in a magical sense) has specific physical consequences but Willow's use of razor-sharp language (similar to cursing in the context of swearing) also has the aim of jarring the listener and is a reminder that she is not really Willow, or not all of Willow.

According to Hughes, swearing has a complex (and changing) relation to authority, he argues that depending on context profanities can either work against or in favour of the person doing the swearing (he discusses this in relation to the monarchy and politicians for example) (Hughes, 1998: 33/34). Willow's cursing (in a magical sense as well as her increasing use of more cutting language) is a performance of her authority as she is attempting to display her power and assert her identity.

The idea that words have power is regarded as superstitious and 'represent survivals of primitive beliefs in word-magic' (Hughes, 1998: 7). Jeanne Favret-Saada suggests that the word is implicit in both the ritual and also the person who speaks it: 'for if the ritual is upheld it is only through words and through the person who says them' (Favret-Saada, 1980: 9). In this pre-Structuralist understanding of language, words have intrinsic power and this directly implicates the word and language in the discourse of magic. This is upheld by Willow as she uses the word and text in magical discourse to maintain her power. For her friends (and perhaps the viewer) however, her changing use of language with the changing face of her increasingly fragmented identity is jarring and serves the purpose of reminding us that Willow is acting out and that Buffy's enemy of season six was once her best friend; the tensions between the two characters are exaggeratingly played out as hero vs. villain and also act as a homology of the friction between the two over Buffy's recent resurrection by Willow's use of dark magic.

In order to avenge Tara's death Willow arrives at the Magic Box to 'load up' on magics. Importantly, she does not research as she usually would if she were attempting a new spell; instead she compiles a huge pile of the darkest magic books, sinks her hands in the middle and literally soaks up and absorbs the text. Willow's use of magic allows her to use text and language in anyway that she requires and become absorbed by it⁸³; she can literally meld with the text and it will become part of her psychical and physical make up. This is made painfully clear by the image of Willow with her hands in the books and text covering her body and face as she internalises this knowledge. Dark magic turns her hair and eyes black and consumes her. The image of the text on Willow's body becomes a form of writing (on) the body, where the divisions between text and the body are transgressed.

⁸³ Willow as able to use magic in anyway that she requires carries over to season seven ('Get It Done' [7015]), where she performs a spell to retrieve Buffy after she has gone through a portal. Willow moves away from the traditional Latin words of the spell, and successfully performs the spell using her own expression.

After killing Warren with her trademark expression, “bored now,” she seeks out Jonathan and Andrew at the prison, however on arriving she discovers that Buffy has already arrived and rescued them. Her initial anger is displayed in an incredibly high-pitched scream that cripples all those in the near vicinity. Jenkins and Stuart argue that while screaming is not strictly a perlocutionary act, it does indeed have perlocutionary might: ‘screaming has immense perlocutionary force whilst not strictly counting as a perlocutionary act... In normal circumstances we would hope that screaming will have an effect on a hearer’s behavior; it would, we hope, urge someone to run to our assistance’ (Jenkins and Stuart, 2003). In Willow’s case, her scream has direct perlocutionary impact on those in the surrounding area; her previous hesitant mode of speech has become a force to be reckoned with and this is directly through her voice being aligned to magic and power. It is also noteworthy that Willow’s outburst is a ‘primal’ scream and not a scream of terror from a horror victim; it is raw power demonstrated through voice. Buffy’s law prevents Willow from carrying out her desires, and this is the reason that Willow so violently attacks Buffy and Giles, who upholds Buffy’s law and sanctions it. In essence, the ‘goodness’ has gone from Willow’s world on the death of Tara, only Xander’s love can bring back anything resembling the ‘good’ for Willow.

Buffy is placed in the difficult position of attempting to persuade her friend that the world is a place worth living in. Buffy struggles with trying to be positive for Willow after her recent trauma of being brought back to life (by Willow’s hand), where it was apparent she was in a heaven-like dimension. Buffy, as our heroine, is forced to lead in a post-Structuralist world; her desperate attempt to assure Willow of the good in the world is exaggerated and unfortunately unconvincing. While we would expect our heroine to produce a speech that means exactly what it intends this is not the case and neither Willow nor the viewer are convinced by Buffy’s persuasion. Arguably

Buffy can only return to the role of heroine once her urging for Willow to stop meshes with Willow's pre-Structuralist language; while Buffy and Dawn are stuck underground Willow communicates to Buffy through telepathy and it is during this time that Xander can approach Willow and finally bring her journey of destruction to an end. Xander is the hero in this instance, rather than Buffy, however the scene draws out the similarities between Buffy and Willow as they are doubled in the sense that they both deal with the problems of ascending to power. Also apparent is the overall interdependence of the characters within the Buffyverse; the dynamic between Buffy and Willow allows Xander to change the course of events.

Buffy's sense of duty or law as the Slayer prevents her from killing humans. She frequently maintains, "a killer isn't a Slayer" ('Two To Go' [6021]), which is key to understanding Buffy's struggles. In fact, as the heroine Buffy has to be fairly rigid in her moral beliefs; this underlies her complex and ambiguous relationship with Spike, Buffy finally ending the relationship believing it to be amoral due to Spike having no soul (this also relates to her attempt at remaining human). The popularity of characters such as Spike and Faith lies in the fact that they are polarised with Buffy's moral self, and celebrate all that is unprincipled; this is often refreshing in the moral world of the Buffyverse. Despite this invigorating slant, it is difficult to see Willow's use of magic in season six as little more than an addiction. Greg Forster argues that:

Willow's embrace of evil at the end of Season Six of *BtVS* is not celebrated as a glorious act of Nietzschean self-creation in which she rejects the old, obsolete moral standards in order to create her own. It is treated as a corruption rather than a rebirth – her entanglement with magic is an addiction, a sort of super-alcoholism culminating in the mother of all benders (Forster, 2003: 9)

While I agree that Willow's use of magic becomes a clear case of addiction (her ascent to power is built on negation), I argue that she does transgress moral boundaries in order to avenge Tara's death, which she can do because she has lost any 'goodness' or 'humanness' on account of Tara's

death⁸⁴. Moreover, by using her magic successfully as a language that Buffy cannot (or will not) understand, she overturns Buffy's authority and law, which are key to her sense of autonomy and identity. Buffy is arguably defeated by Willow. It is Xander's sense of humanity and his deep friendship with Willow that averts the apocalypse and stops the end of the world, and allows for some goodness to come back into Willow's world. Buffy's law becomes ineffective in the face of Willow's (powerfully textual and) magical language that Buffy cannot understand or compete with, and therefore has no hope of defeating.

It is, however, contestable whether Buffy is actually defeated by Willow at the close season six; Xander (one of Buffy's allies) does, after all, stop Willow in her tracks through his love for her. What is apparent in season six is that Buffy stands on the moral high ground while Willow has no such moral grounding anymore; without any sense of humanity or what is 'good' (which has been lost through Tara's death) she has nothing to guarantee a differentiation between 'good' and 'bad'. As noted earlier Buffy is offered dark magical powers during season seven, which she refuses believing those powers to be immoral and non-human. Buffy's law dictates that she must not edge too far into the dark side of her power; if she does she might lose herself (as is almost the case with Willow in season six). In season six, Buffy represents 'humanness', which is made painfully apparent through her recent death and resurrection, while Willow represents power and the corrupt through her use of magic. The show makes it clear that Willow is abusing her power and polarises this against Buffy's stark sense of duty, morality and what is right.

However, Willow's dismissal of morality in season six does offer a significant pleasure for viewers in that she challenges Buffy's sense of duty. Buffy is our

⁸⁴ Freud can shed light on Willow's transformation through his work on 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917 [1915]), in which he suggests that when grieving the world loses all meaning. Willow has lost any emotional connection to the world through the death of Tara (Freud, 1917b).

heroine, however, this thesis contends that at times she is not as likeable as several other characters; this is most likely the price of being at the frontline of fighting evil. Buffy can appear overbearing and authoritarian in her attitude towards fighting evil (even the 'Scooby Gang' become tired of this in season seven), which is often noticeable in her use of directives and commissives when making speeches to the other characters (particularly in season seven); she has offended her friends on many occasions making them feel worthless and unnecessary. Buffy often distances herself from her friends, and lays down her own law; I therefore disagree with Anthony Bradney's assertion that law in the series is shaped by love and that gradually the law upheld by Buffy is created and influenced by her friends as well as Buffy (Bradney, 2003). While this is the case at times, at other times Buffy makes her own judgements that infringe on the other characters and here she consciously disavows their friendship and love.

Buffy operates under the terms of the vigilante, whereby she cannot act if not morally grounded. Willow's barrage against Buffy in the last episodes of season six provides a similar pleasure for viewers as characters such as Spike, Angelus or Drusilla as she acts as the polar opposite of Buffy's sense of duty. This potentially provides a refreshing point of identification for viewers who might find Buffy's view of the world, at times, narrow. However, story arcs such as Willow's interaction with dark magic also reinforce one of the overall messages of the show, which is that inhabiting a heroic position such as Buffy's entails difficult decisions and ultimately a need to remain as human as possible. Buffy's position is also perceived as the 'right' position, and enforces further the fact that being a successful Slayer is not purely synonymous with having supernatural strength, one must also learn to navigate the seductive power of darkness without becoming consumed by it.

Willow's use of magic in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is strongly aligned with her use of language as her own individual voice. Her sense of identity is fragile

throughout the series and it is only through her use of magic with Tara, that her sense of identity becomes stronger. The death of Tara leaves Willow with no goodness and no one to communicate with through magic as language; other members of the Scooby Gang have no knowledge of the text or the language that Willow is familiar with. It is not that Willow feels excluded in this sense, rather she has positioned herself as fluent in magic where others are not; this has previously provided her with a clear sense of identity and function, however ironically magic also eventually renders her undeniably dualistic and fragmentary. Her dramatic use of text and magic in the close of season six is an act of vengeance for Tara's death, which Buffy attempts to obstruct (notably Tara died from a bullet that was meant for Buffy). By such use of magic and language as power, Willow directly attacks Buffy's autonomy rendering her out of control of events and without authority. Willow has a very different way of dealing with grief than Buffy (who does not wish her mother to be brought back by magic). Buffy bases this decision on her moral approach to the world and events, to some extent Buffy seeks to preserve her humanity in this way, her morality is based on this premise.

Buffy, as the ego of the tale, is directly attacked by external forces (in this case Willow) and is confined by her moral law (super-ego?), or her need to retain her 'humanness.' Buffy strives to do what is always right, what is most human, and this clashes with Willow's agenda; she fails to maintain harmony in Sunnydale. Willow's split character, which is demonstrated through her changing speech acts and appearance, successfully overturns the Slayer's autonomy and provides an effective mirroring of Buffy's own struggle with maintaining her identity and autonomy as the Slayer (ego) through performing her own law. In the end it is not the endless supply of demons and vampires that can so easily usurp the Slayer, but one of her closest friends with a force that, steeped in darkness, is essentially far more dangerous than Buffy's own ambiguous power.

The aim of this chapter has been to discuss the representation of splitness in several psychological horror-based texts through the cinematic mode of mirroring, and to ascertain the narrative function and stylistic form of the split. The split subject is rendered in cinematic texts through either a literal bodily split or through the more subtle deployment of mirrors and mirror images, or both. Through analysing the split subject in cinema and television in this chapter it is apparent that the double is either a seductive and erotic presence in the protagonist's life that provides assistance and support and/or an evil counterpart that intends on taking over a given character's life. The double can be figured as either completely unrecognizable or as an exact replica of the character. Mirrors are a key indication for viewers that character identity is unstable; they hint that the theme of identity will be central to the narrative, as well as the theme of the text. Mirrors also provide spectacle as they afford unusual framings that can portray one or more images of a character, which is instrumental in the representation of dualistic characters.

The psychically split characters of *Fight Club*, *Taxi Driver* and *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* are figured through an alter ego that provides strength or virility to the more vulnerable side of the character's personality. These texts are particularly concerned with gender play and traditional models of gender identity, which is testimony to the fact that cultural concerns about (gender) identity are mediated in contemporary cinema and television through the representation of fragmentary identity. The invention of an ideal ego to assist the character in many of these films point to a more generalised socio-cultural concern about the problematics of identity, and more specifically gender identity as each invents a hyper-masculine or feminine alter ego. *Fight Club* and *Taxi Driver* are two texts that were possibly targeted at a similar audience, that of young men. The films therefore, could be described

as dealing specifically with male and masculinity issues, particularly those surrounding gender identity. In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the swapping of the bodies of two female Slayers to some degree further enforces the heroic identity of the lead character (as well as undermining it), which is in contrast to the texts in the first section. Although Buffy maintains her heroic identity at the end of the second episode her identity is highly problematic and continually rendered split through various narrative functions. The generic conventions of horror, fantasy and psychological drama dictate that the split subject is caught between polarised 'good' and 'evil' halves, or binaries; the drama, spectacle, thematic and narrative development is therefore driven by the tensions that arise between a 'good' protagonist, or hero, and an 'evil' and/or seductive counterpart.

While in *Fight Club* and *Taxi Driver*, both protagonists narrate their own stories, the autonomy of the character is located elsewhere: in the mirror image for Travis (as is the case for Claudia), and in the bodily (metaphorical) mirror image of Tyler for the narrator. These texts suggest that cinematic or televisual displays of splitting are used specifically to question issues surrounding identity and autonomy, and herein lies the cultural resonance that is so inherent in these texts: by suggesting that identity is split, using implicitly or explicitly psychoanalytic concepts, the texts undermine the assumption that the body and psyche is a whole and unified entity, furthermore many of the texts use gender identity to further confuse the protagonists and perhaps therefore encouraging the viewer to question their own sense of 'self'.

By drawing the viewer into texts through such subjective characters, these texts then play with the audience's sense of (in)security in their identifications by splitting or fragmenting the body. This draws the viewers' attention to the otherness of our very natures and our relationships to others, and furthermore to the relevance to the outside world. This is particularly true

of *Fight Club* where David Fincher creates such a self-reflexive feel to the film.

We can continue to see the relevance of engaging with the psychoanalytic term 'ego', particularly with regards to subjectivity and the 'mirror stage' where a narcissistic ego becomes a useful term in addressing instances in texts where the mirror image is seductive. The ego continues to struggle with external forces, which in many ways prompts a splitting of the psyche, and does impinge on autonomy, which in turn affects identity. The troping of 'split' subjects becomes rendered in these texts through literal images of mirrors and through the mirroring of characters.

Aggressive tensions, which are so key to Lacan's theorisation of the ego, also persist in contemporary tales of the double; in films such as *Face/Off*, *Secret Window* and various renditions of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, as well as exact replica deadly doubles such as in *Angel Heart*, *Into the Mirror* and *The One*, the double undermines the conscious sense of self that the lead protagonist believes is their true identity. In many of these films a battle that pivots on a standard Manichean notion of 'good' against 'evil' is the central conflict over maintaining control of the psyche and body; there is a long history of moral structure in horror as well as other genres, which relates back partly to the Hollywood Production Code and generic formulations. The generic context of all these films position the double as a central dynamic element of the film, and narrative demands ensure that the story centres on such a battle for the body, mind and even soul.

The model of ego continues to inform the representations of identity that are apparent in character identity onscreen in more ways than one; the assured and confident 'selves' or egos that are figured in the form of protagonists are

undermined by a further 'self' or doppelgänger, which reinforces the constant slippage between 'self' and 'ego' that is apparent theoretically as well as implicitly in these texts. The structure of the narcissistic ego is again of particular use here as the alienation and paranoia that springs up between subject and the act of identifying with an image outside of oneself is apparent in all the protagonists' sense of persecution by a double. The narcissistic ego allows for a feeling of identity that incorporates qualities such as division, divisiveness, alienation, paranoia, desire and lack, which are qualities ever present in the protagonists discussed in this chapter.

Through analysing the deeply split character of Willow in relation to her changing speech, it is also apparent that the presence of the double is not always indicated solely through visual means (such as the actual physical presence of another 'self' or the use of mirrors). The form and nature of the fragmentary character can be indicated through changing speech and use of language, which ties in with Willow's increasingly fragile identity. Willow resorts to ever more cutting and sarcastic expression that, in addition to her increasingly commanding use of magical speech, signifies a deeply dualistic sense or experience of identity and perhaps the return of the repressed. Long-term viewers of the show are able to decode 'which' Willow is onscreen through such coded language, which in addition to her change in dress, comments on her psychological make-up. Viewers can therefore enjoy the different layers of Willow's personality, which in a show centred on the supernatural can be displayed quite literally through different forms of the same character, such as a vampire 'version' or Willow addicted to black magic, which makes for melodramatic excitements and intrigues.

The varying portrayals of gender identity in all the films discussed suggest that gender identity, while being far from simple to categorise across such a variety of texts, is key to a cultural understanding of identity in general. Also apparent is that most films discussed make use of traditional models of

gender categories (masculine [active] / feminine [passive]). A crisis in gender identity is perhaps most apparent in films that focus on masculinity (such as *Fight Club*, *Taxi Driver* and even *Angel Heart* and *Face/Off*). In splitting characters, often different 'types' of masculinity are apparent, suggesting that cultural understandings of masculinity are in a fractured state. These debates point to contemporary concerns about the status of identity in human existence as supposedly whole, and what difficulties the experience of identity might create for individuals. The double (whether deadly, a helping hand or completely unrecognizable) does more damage than posing a temporary crisis in subjectivity for certain characters in film and television, it points to the cultural and terrifyingly permanent status of fractured existence, which splits and scars all individuals and is constantly inflamed in the mirror.

* * *

Is such splitting of the psyche within the texts discussed throughout this thesis a new myth for our time? A myth tells a time-honoured tale, which holds values or an attitude about a certain time, surely then a contemporary myth will tell the tale of beliefs in contemporary times. Perhaps it is possible to view our preoccupation with identity and issues surrounding the unified body as having the qualities of a 'new myth'; or perhaps popular culture is actually producing stories that address the anxiety that a crisis in the sovereignty of the ego might generate. Is the split character a 'new myth', which has been brought about through a preoccupation with identity that is fostered by aspects of modern life such as consumer culture? The next chapter aims to discuss and critically appraise the split subject as a 'new myth', and to address why culture might create such a myth in contemporary times.

Chapter Four

Coming Out

The 'Other' Within and the 'New Myth' of Splitting

In the previous chapter, cinematic codes of representing fragmented identity such as mirroring and the use of voice and language formed the main focus of analysis, as well as the narrative function and (gendered) form of split characters. The generic context of many of the texts discussed has a direct impact on the shape that the doppelgänger takes; horror and psychological-based genres often locate drama and spectacle in the 'other' of the double, and conflicts (as well as seduction) arise between 'real' characters and the (often) supernatural double. Frequently a Manichean theme is pivotal to these texts and a clash between good and evil is foremost. However, concerns about gender also circulate these texts suggesting cultural anxieties about identity, specifically in terms of gender identity, are either manifest or latent in such texts. For example, in films such as *Fight Club* splitting creates a tension between two polarised halves of one character. In this case, the Tyler Durden part of the psyche / body is an imaginary ego-ideal giving strength and virility to the weak and vulnerable narrator (or besieged ego), which suggests that split psyches might polarise traditional masculine / feminine counterparts. However, traditional gender identities are not so simply allotted to split psyches in film and television; a complex array of gender identities are both acknowledged and undercut in many of the texts discussed in the last chapter, perhaps suggesting that what is most apparent in analysing split characters in visual media is that ideas and understanding of gender identity is confused and confusing in society.

The premise of this chapter is that the array of split characters in film and television (apparent in the multiplicity of texts discussed in the last chapter) points to a preoccupation with fragmentary identity within society and culture at large (which was also discussed to some degree in the last chapter). I demonstrated in the previous chapter that the widely understood

phenomena of the split subject can be identified as a trend in film and television products; I shall go on to argue in this chapter that split identity can also be considered as a 'new myth' within culture. A further aim of this chapter is therefore to define myth, and the function of myth; this is likely to be a rather complex task due to the many definitions and theories surrounding myth, which are vast and cover a number of disciplines. It is necessary to ascertain what the link might be between screen representations, or mediation, and cultural mythic resonance; perhaps screen representations present a refracted view of what is 'real' in terms of cultural anxieties or preoccupations. This chapter aims to discuss the concept of a fragile ego as having a mythic standing in contemporary film and television texts. In discussing fragmentary identity as a 'new myth', this chapter also intends to place contemporary cinema and television (that show a preoccupation with split identity) within the context of wider discourse such as literature. As I have noted previously, split characters are in no way 'new' to literature, film and art, yet the recent trend of using split characters and damaged ego characters across a range of genres points firstly to the popularity splitting has in cinema (as providing drama and spectacle for example), and secondly to the different meanings that the splitting trope has across cultures. A central research question of this thesis is to discuss splitting as a 'new myth', and to determine how such representation of identity might shed light on how myth functions in society, and how a new myth might be born or reinforced through media. I also focus on the role of 'transnational' media in consolidating this new myth between cultures.

If the splitting theme in cinema is as important a cultural phenomenon as this thesis contends then it seems necessary to continue to outline in this chapter the extent to which this splitting in the cinema is apparent. A central plank of this thesis, however, is that themes of fragmentary identity are not only apparent in Western cinema, but also in cinema from other parts of the world, such as Japan or South Korea. A further aim of this chapter and thesis as a whole is therefore to test the 'cultural' positioning of the 'splitting' myth and its potential meanings. By arguing that the doppelgänger in cinema

provides contemporary popular culture with a 'new myth', this chapter contends that dualistic characters in the cinema are in play in a much broader sense than might initially be recognised. I aim to show that this new myth of splitting keys into contradictions experienced around identity, one that highlights the experience of the instability of individual autonomy. If such a new myth does indeed key into social factors, what then might be the ramifications of this role? Is society itself unstable, and how might this play out in different ways in diverse cultural and industrial contexts?

Myth and Culture

Considering myth and its relation to culture, society, and peoples' place within these, one definition of myth is that:

myths form part of the hegemonic process of cultural discourse through their ameliorating social function by providing resolutions to real social contradictions...In short, myths help to make ideological concepts intelligible. They encourage the development of an 'inter-subjectivity' in which individual subjective responses are shared to a certain extent by most of the members of a social group. They therefore function as the cement binding individuals to a social group through a set of shared meanings, values and beliefs (Standish, 2000:14)

Arguably, a myth is a time-honoured story or belief that relays certain values or attitudes held by society at a particular time. As Isolde Standish notes, a myth becomes a way for society to deal with 'social contradictions', and she also suggests that this becomes an important way of consolidating a group or social identity. However, myth as an 'ameliorating social function' also has implications for individual identity. Standish suggests that myths actually perform ideological functions that enforce hegemonic ideals. Myths, according to Standish, make us feel secure in our societal group and by extension it seems that myths play a role in securing and channelling identity as part of social groups. If we take Standish's argument to be the case (and depending on the myth) myths can be argued as enforcing the delusional

belief that society members are autonomous individuals within capitalist economies.

Roland Barthes examines myth in the light of semiology and in many ways defines myth from a more communicative standpoint. First and foremost he describes myth as '*a type of speech*' (Barthes, 2000 [1957]: 109) [italics in original], the emphasis being on myth as a type of communication or message, always using speech as a basis, whether this is writing, cinema, photography or even something seemingly as obscure as wrestling (Ibid: 109). Because speech is the basis of myth, Barthes uses semiology to analyse it, specifically focusing on the signifier, signified and the sign. The important point that Barthes makes however is that myth '*is a second-order semio-logical system*' (ibid: 114) [italics in original]. Barthes suggests that:

That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second. We must here recall that the materials of mythical speech (the language itself, photography, painting, posters, rituals, objects, etc.), however different at the start, are reduced to a pure signifying function as soon as they are caught by myth (ibid: 114)

In Barthes' terms myth becomes a two-fold semiological system where signs are used as a stepping-stone to create further meaning. According to Barthes, original signs take on further, extended or secondary meanings / signification through the mythical two-fold system: the end result is a disguised form of the original meaning. Barthes discusses myth in the light of ideology and suggests that myths act in a negative way politically; myths essentially steal from language and are in many ways delusory and misleading (ibid: 121 – 137). His argument is reminiscent of the idea of 'false consciousness' in that we are all subordinated, in this case through myth that disguises the 'true' nature of things. While Barthes' argument for defining myth is both intriguing and useful for understanding our complex relationship with language (and myth), his arguments do not seem to get to the heart of what myths might mean across different cultures, instead he focuses on myth as language and as a ideologically-motivated system. Although Barthes concentrates on the system as a whole, he also negates a positive

reading of myth, which may seem problematic in light of their popularity and endurance.

Claude Lévi-Strauss also locates myth as a formal system, he provides ethnographic or anthropological findings in order to try and establish what he terms a 'science' of 'mythology', or a structural approach to anthropology and myth (Lévi-Strauss, 1978; 1993). Lévi-Strauss discusses myth from a functional point of view, attempting to ascertain how cultures 'use' myth to understand the world (discussed by Mackey-Kallis, 2001: 17). However he also attempts to formalise myth by suggesting that myth is structured and informed by a collective psychological state of mind; a need or drive to understand the world around us (Lévi-Strauss, 1964; 1966; 1978). Using myth to understand culture is similar to Standish's definition of myth, and even Barthes is concerned with the cultural and ideological implications of mythic narratives. This chapter will discuss myth in light of cultural factors while also taking into account the complex relationship myth has with narrative, fiction, fairy tale and folklore. What becomes apparent through many myths is that they are often about origins, of how things come to be; a preoccupation with origins suggests a general cultural concern with the beginnings of 'us', of the world as we live in it today, as well as historically. Such a view of myth as suggestive of concerns about origins is potentially progressive as it hints that culture at large is concerned with what it means to live in society in terms of changing identities, both national and individual.

Perhaps such a new myth expresses cultural anxiety and contradictions rather than being ideologically motivated; myth has an ideological role but it is an affect of social experience. The splitting myth may highlight issues around fragile identity but leave the viewer feeling more secure by the end of the viewing experience by resolving the narrative, as might be the case in a text such as *The Eye* (Oxide Pang Chun & Danny Pang, 2002, Hong Kong/UK/Thailand/Singapore) (to be examined shortly). Narratives that end

positively can be argued as having the dramatic function of catharsis; the playing out of human fears and anxieties on screen may negate such fears from everyday life, particularly when tensions are resolved at the end of the film. The dramatic function works cathartically according to Aristotle, who suggests:

Tragedy is the imitation of an action serious, complete, and having a certain compass, with ornamented language, each kind of ornament existing separately in its parts, using actors not narrative, which by means of pity and fear effects the purgation of these emotions (Aristotle, 1907: 16)

Tragedy, according to Aristotle, then can work positively for the audience / reader as a kind of 'safety valve'. Often, however, texts that utilise splitting as a prominent theme leave the viewer with a much more ambiguous ending, as is the case in many of the other examples this thesis examines. Texts that are ambiguous follow Lacan's idea that identity is by its very nature unstable and in no way 'curable'. Ambiguity in this sense may function as a way of drawing attention to the fact that there is no way of resolving these identity issues, however, it also lends itself well to the production of sequels which is often vital in the industrial context of horror genres.

The texts examined in this thesis are testimony to the extent to which the split character has over recent years been present on the cinema screen. Yet it should not be forgotten that characters with unstable identities are a staple of gothic literature and horror fiction going back to the seventeenth century (this will be explored in more detail shortly). Nonetheless, increasingly, visual representations of doubles and characters that are quite literally split into two have become more prominent in both film and television. By way of approaching the topic as a contemporary myth it will be necessary in the introduction of this section to define the way in which splitting as a form of media spectacle has come about and the extent to which it can be considered a new myth.

By approaching classic horror stories such as the werewolf and vampire film, it can be considered that splitting (as a contemporary myth) has been born out of the subtler 'other within' narrative, often apparent in the vampire and werewolf film. If this is indeed the case it indicates that the horror genre (and psychological horror-based texts) has shifted its generic character / plot trends (and mythic quality) in order to continue appealing to a target audience. The horror genre has therefore injected new life into its generic trends by evolving its villainous monsters: the iniquitous werewolf or vampire, for example, can be transformed into a being that can split into oppositional halves. The literally split character also opens up the metaphor of the 'other within'; while traditional horror figures hint at the concept of the 'other within' the split character or doppelgänger quite literally visualises and realises the idea that 'I' may actually in fact be 'we'. The splitting trope is also, however, indicative of the current cultural climate, and cannot be attributed entirely to industrial demands; it is a 'media' phenomenon, which mediates cultural concerns and anxieties.

The first section of this chapter will consider the recent werewolf film *Ginger Snaps* (John Fawcett, 2000, Canada/USA) in the context of a range of films that address the idea that there is an unknown 'body' or being within us, something that is trapped or repressed beyond the realm of the conscious. An unknown entity within the collective 'us' is a 'gift' to the horror film; tapping into the psychoanalytic concepts of the unconscious and the return of the repressed, narratives where the protagonist undergoes severe monstrous bodily changes perhaps suggest that there is something within that we are not in control of. By mapping psychical tensions on to the body many of these films literalise psychical pressures as well as adolescent anxieties apparent in *Ginger Snaps*; such anxieties are filtered through cinematic valves.

The second section explores both cultural influence and resonance in terms of character splitting in, largely, Japanese horror cinema. If the splitting trope can be considered as a new myth in the cinema then it would seem important that it is traceable in a wider cultural context than simply that of the West. By looking at films mainly from Japan (examples from other East Asian cinemas such as South Korea are also briefly discussed) this section shall discuss the cultural context of these texts to provide a comparison to those films focused on splitting made in Western cultures. This is an important consideration in terms of identity; the various uses and meanings of split identities are to be understood in national terms.

“Preying on normal, healthy cells, the intruder gradually devours the host from within”

The ‘other’ within: splitting as myth in contemporary film and television.

Many horror films, particularly possession films, are focused on the teenaged body and transformation. The prevalence of which has been discussed in film and television theory⁸⁵. Often such films portray a drastically changing body that exaggerate or literalise the changes one must face during adolescence when the body is altering at a dramatic rate. Such resonances certainly contribute to the pleasures of watching such films, but is also an effective marketing ploy to attract teenage audiences, the target audience of many horror genre films. *Ginger Snaps* is no exception; the film’s target audience can be deduced by the high school and family home life setting, which produces familiar domestic problems when the protagonists are two

⁸⁵ As noted in Chapter Three, Mary Alice Money suggests, in the context of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as a ‘teen’ show, ‘any series that is, on the surface, about vampires must be about transformation’ (2002: 98). Krzywinska points out the correlation between male possession in film and television (such as the werewolf) and the teen body, she argues that certain renderings of the werewolf ‘lend mythical meanings to the physical and mental transformations undergone by male teenagers’ in terms of ‘rapid and inexorable changes that occur during adolescence’ (2000: 43)

morbid adolescent sisters. The diegetic world involves an interfering mother, an ineffectual father and a storyline that centres on a werewolf transformation. The film portrays the changing teen body of Ginger (Katherine Isabelle) by turning her into a gruesome werewolf after being bitten on the first day of her menstrual cycle while out with her sister Bridget (Emily Perkins). The film produces much black comedy through the family situation, particularly when Ginger becomes more and more aggressive towards her family as her wolf transition develops.

Ginger Snaps can be read through the concept of “family romance” particularly considering the sibling rivalry that is apparent in Ginger and Bridget’s relationship. Sisters so close in age are experiencing similar tensions within the family. This is often expressed through anger against their mother (which can be read through Oedipal tensions as they are denying the mother, which according to Freud ensures that girls reject femininity for a time [Freud, 1933]). The sisters also clash against one another, however; perhaps the two are in competition with each other, vying for attention from their male companions, particularly Sam. Many younger audience members would possibly identify with the anxieties in Bridget and Ginger’s relationship. The film focuses on the relationship between the sisters and their progression from being close, to tensions between the two, rather than their relationships with other parties.

Unlike most of the texts examined in the previous chapters, *Ginger Snaps* is concerned with bloody horror that focuses on Ginger’s body rather than her psychological make-up. While *Ginger Snaps* is more visceral in terms of visual displays of gore than the texts previously discussed, it raises some interesting questions when considering the body as a site for splitting. Many of the films discussed previously are more preoccupied with psychological horror and how the mind / psyche copes with the horror of splitting. *Ginger Snaps*, however, deals more with the bodily aspect of rupture. The

psychological element of the film is played out through the role of Bridget, who undergoes intense stress watching her sister change and attempting to save Ginger from becoming a werewolf. It is Bridget who finds Wolfsbane to concoct an antidote and it is Bridget who befriends Sam, who not only has the means to help make up the antidote but also believes Bridget's story. (Although she does lie to Sam by telling him that it is she who will become a werewolf, in order to protect Ginger. He does eventually see through this lie). Ginger on the other hand is increasingly swept up with her fascinating bodily changes to be too concerned about how to reverse them: Ginger is in many ways taken over by, and obliterated by, her body.

The film has its roots (heavily bound) in classic tales of the werewolf; it makes use of legends that surround werewolf mythology such as linking the moon to menstrual cycles and the use of silver as a weapon or guard against werewolves. Although rather unusually for a werewolf narrative the bodily transformation of a female character is a central focus. Angela Carter also makes reference to werewolf mythology in some of her writings, as well as drawing extensively on fairy tales. In the short stories 'The Tiger's Bride' and 'The Company of Wolves' (1995) the female protagonists come to love and desire beastly animal male characters, in the former a tiger and the latter a werewolf. In *Ginger Snaps*, the arrival of the beast is aligned with sexual awakening and menstruation, and is ambiguous in terms of how the representation of Ginger's sexuality can be read; Ginger can be considered as a negative representation of monstrous femininity⁸⁶, or she can be read as a positively overwhelming and powerful force of female sexuality. The latter reading is perhaps more prominent as the film displays a (postmodern) 'knowing attitude' toward female roles and representation, and how these have been critiqued over many years. However, in Carter's stories the theme of female sexual awakening is more obviously relayed as positive and sensual, and bodies are not destructed like Ginger's; instead it is implied that they are desirable. In both stories the female protagonists choose to remain

⁸⁶ I am drawing on Creed's definition of the 'monstrous feminine' here (1993)

with the beasts instead of either dispatching them or escaping. Not only do these stories place the female characters firmly in control of their destinies, sexual relations and their desiring natures, they also treat bodies as changeable and a positive reading of 'the beast' is promoted, particularly in terms of feminine desire.

Ginger Snaps provides a (post?) modern slant through Ginger's obsession with her monstrous appearance in a self-conscious, image-obsessed Western high school. The black comedy of the film lies in the lead characters' constant denial of their adult femininity in an environment where others seem to adhere to their specified gender roles, their mother being a prime example. Ginger's disavowal is then grossly exaggerated by the turning of her female adolescent body into a werewolf, a beast that can be considered in traditionally masculine terms due not only to its aggressive characteristics but also to its past representation onscreen⁸⁷. The irony of Ginger's transition is perhaps to be taken as a warning of the dangers involved in moving towards adulthood in a gender specific society. In terms of myth, perhaps the classic werewolf (or vampire film) is a forerunner to the more 'open' displays of splitting, doubles and the twinning of characters that are now often portrayed onscreen. What is apparent is that while double personas are certainly not new to the literary or media world, they are being *used* in a different way to articulate current crises in our understanding of identity. This is in line with Marina Warner's argument that:

Myths offer a lens which can be used to see human identity in its social and cultural context ... Myths convey values and expectations which are always evolving, in the process of being formed, but – and this is fortunate – never set so hard they cannot be changed again, and newly told stories can be more helpful than repeating old ones (Warner, 1994: 14)

Warner emphasises both the durability and the malleability of myth, and her argument suggests that myth is constantly evolving in line with, and directly because of, a constantly changing cultural context; this implies that myth is

⁸⁷ The werewolf is often more associated with male characters as in *The Wolfman* (George Waggner, 1941, USA), *Curse of the Werewolf* (Terence Fisher, 1961, UK), *Teen Wolf* (Rod Daniel, 1985, USA) or *Wolf* (Mike Nichols, 1994, USA)

useful in interpreting contemporary concerns (particularly those surrounding identity) in society. The current use of dualistic characters in media taps into the nature of contemporary Western consumer culture; in many senses this culture can be viewed as postmodern through the fragmentation of identities in society, emphasis on consumer buying and the loss of ideals in the face of modern urban living. Identity is therefore expressed through the practices of consumption. In order to place this 'new' use of dual personas within a mythic boundary, it is first important to trace the use of twinned characters in literary and media forms.

Dual roles have appeared in literature countless times and under a remarkable variety of guises. Doubles appear in Shakespeare for comic value or to twist plots and create confusion. Dual guises also create tragic consequences in Shakespeare, one example of many mistaken identities (throughout several of his plays) leads to the downfall of Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is an example of a more obvious, or clear-cut, two-fold Manichean persona: Hyde, identified as evil, attempts to obliterate Jekyll's 'good' persona. Oscar Wilde deviated from comedic social satire to write the more sinister *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a disturbing tale of a young man's ugly soul trapped in a portrait while he remains the picture of perfection.

Gothic literature provides the mysterious figure of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the (in)famous vampire character that provides a shadow or nemesis to the human characters, particularly that of Van Helsing. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* also creates an apparently monstrous mirror image of the seemingly respectable Dr. Frankenstein⁸⁸; his creation unleashes a darker

⁸⁸ Leon Hunt notes that in the (lost) 1910 version of *Frankenstein* Victor Frankenstein sees the monster's image as his own reflection in the mirror (1990: 400). Hunt also notes that *The Student of Prague*, which is a film about a doppelgänger, has links to the Gothic but is also closely tied to burgeoning cinematic codes, he argues: '[h]ere, then, is a film which looks both backwards, to a certain Gothic *literary* tradition, embodied by writers such as E.T.A. Hoffman, and forwards, to a cinematic codification of space whose operation is fundamental to the creation of horror and the fantastic' (ibid: 399) [*italics in original*].

side of himself that threatens to destroy his life. So-called Romantic literature also makes use of fragmentary characters and dualism to emphasise darker themes. Both Byron and Shelley write almost obsessively about death and gothic themes such as Byron's 'Parasina' (1816), however Shelley's 'The Beauty of the Medusa'⁸⁹ (1819) is a poem dedicated to the Medusa, a figure that can be seen as having a dual persona as she is an odd mixture of irresistible beauty and deadly peril. As Mario Praz argues '[f]or the Romantics beauty was enhanced by exactly those qualities which seem to deny it, by those objects which produce horror' (Praz, 1951: 27). Beauty and horror, Praz argues, go hand in hand in Romantic literature.

Shelley's poem 'The Beauty of the Medusa' is a good example of the kind of subject matter that was written about at the time. Penned in 1819 the poem describes the splendour of the Medusa in all her horror and in detail discusses the 'tempestuous loveliness of terror' (quoted in full in Praz, 1951: 25/26). The idea that terror might be lovely can be explained through Kant's writing on the 'dynamically sublime' (Kant, 1987 [1790]); here sensation becomes overpowering, an example of which is nature inducing tremendous awe, such as witnessing a spectacular thunderstorm. The sublime, as described by Kant, seems to be an odd mixture of pleasure and pain: imagination is overloaded with sentiment and leads to unpleasure and therefore the surrender of imagination. Following this is pleasure as the temporary relinquishing of imagination leads to a feeling of freedom and, in Kant's terms, this indicates the re-instatement of reason (Kant, 1987 [1790]). Importantly, while it can be argued that a figure such as the Medusa has a double persona, it can also be considered that the subject (reader) can be seen in dualistic terms, through this odd discord of pleasure and pain invoked through the literary evocation of the sublime. While I have no intention of discussing the concept of spectatorship (readership) in this sense, it is important to illustrate that dualism in its many senses has been

⁸⁹ Also known as *On The Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci in the Florentine Gallery*.

familiar to readers (viewers) of popular discourse for many centuries: splitting, doubles and unstable identities are in no way new.

Literary studies, unlike film and television studies, have paid some attention to the frequency of the doppelgänger in literature and discourse. Otto Rank carried out one of the earliest studies of the double in, largely German, literature⁹⁰. While he does concentrate on literature, Rank does mention the early film *The Student of Prague* (Stellan Rye, 1913, Germany), which is one of the first films to feature a doppelgänger. In this tale the double pursues the hero eventually goading him into killing his doppelgänger which, within the logic of the story world, means he has effectively committed suicide⁹¹. After giving many examples of literal doppelgängers in novels, Rank points out only a few similarities and traits that these examples exhibit. He notes that they all appear exactly, or almost exactly, as the protagonist; the double always works against the hero which usually ends in the death of this

⁹⁰ Several authors have discussed the double, or themes of duality in literature; Ralph Tymms continued Rank's study on the double in literature in his *Doubles in Literary Psychology* for example. Andrew J. Webber discusses German literature (as does Rank) and analyses the double in the literature of authors such as Hoffman and Kleist. Webber also uses psychoanalytic models in his discussion of the double and cites Lacan's 'mirror phase' as an important tool to analyse the doppelgänger (1996). Mary K Patterson Thornburg discusses Gothic literature in terms of duality, or as she terms it the 'sentimental / Gothic', or light versus dark (1987). She argues, for example, that '[w]ith the movement into sentimental / Gothic myth, each figure is divided into two, both incomplete and in opposition to each other. The first is a safe, consciously acceptable component, the second a figure containing all unacceptable or threatening aspects of the character or concept' (1987: 40). One of her key examples is Victor Frankenstein and the monster from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as two different aspects of one personality (ibid). Linda Dryden concentrates on what she terms the 'modern gothic' and addresses the work of Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde and H.G. Wells. Taking into account the context and setting of these authors' work, she suggests that '[e]mploying the Gothic mode for some of their work, these authors depicted horrors occurring in the heart of the modern metropolis... Stevenson, Wilde and Wells, among others, fictionally inscribed on the London landscape monstrous transformations, mutilations and dualities that spoke of urban concerns' (2003: 15-16). She argues for example that the Jack the Ripper murders created 'social divisions' in London, which is perhaps reflected or mediated in some of these authors' work (ibid: 36-7). Astrid Schmid employs a variety of approaches to determine the meaning of the double in English stories between 1764 and 1910 (1996). For example, she draws on Freud's concept of the 'return of the repressed' as well as addressing the double in terms of allegory, among other approaches. Karl Miller discusses the double as metaphor in much of literature and discourse in his *Doubles: Studies in Literary History*, where he analyses literature largely from the Romantic period (1985).

⁹¹ This film is unfortunately unavailable; the narrative detail has been drawn from Rank, and Leon Hunt's very useful in-depth analysis of the film's form and stylistics in 'The Student of Prague' in *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*.

character; the hero also typically suffers from delusion and paranoia (Rank, 1989 [1919]: 33).

Rank takes up a rather contentious line of argument whereby he suggests that the prevalence of doubles in literature points to underlying psychic disorders of the authors of such work (ibid). He goes on to what he terms an anthropological study of the double in folklore and legend, and within 'primitive' cultures. Drawing on scholars such as J.G. Frazer, Rank discusses the discord between the superstition related to doubles in what he terms 'civilised nations' and the actual beliefs of 'primitive' cultures (ibid). For example, he discusses the dread that certain cultures have of their image being captured in a photograph, due to the fact that they believe their soul to be personified in the image (ibid: 64-5). In the final section of his book, Rank discusses the relevance of the myth of Narcissus in relation to the prevalence of doubles in literature. He draws particular attention to the themes of death and self-love that are central to the tale of Narcissus, and that he argues are present in many tales of the double (ibid). Perhaps most important in terms of the relevance to this thesis is that Rank uses Freud's concept of ego to describe the double. However, other than addressing the concept of narcissism (which arguably lies behind the theorisation of ego in both Freud's work and Lacan's) he does not go into any great detail about how the model of ego can be used to analyse the meaning of the double in works of art.

Not only are there many uses of twinned characters throughout literature, other forms also make use of the double. Other examples are tales of early religious possession where a discord or divide can be seen between spirit and body, or in storytelling such as myth, fairy tales and legends: twins often play many a part in such tales. For example Frazer discusses the 'legend of the twins' where he states that twins in certain cultures are believed to be magical and able to create rain (Frazer, 1993). This is utilised by Anne Rice

in her horror fiction *The Queen of the Damned* (1988) where twins are able to talk to spirits and bring rain. Claude Lévi-Strauss also discusses twins in *Myth and Meaning* and suggests that twins appear in several guises in many records of myths in North and South America (Lévi-Strauss, 1978: 25-33). Contemporary commercials use twinning to promote a 'better' self or ideal ego; this 'better' self is used to advertise a product that will supposedly transform the collective 'us' into our more desirable counterparts or twin⁹²; such commercials are based on lack in that they simply align one self with having and the counterpart self as not having (lacking).

A central plank of this thesis is not that the double has suddenly appeared in recent forms but that the very use of twinning has taken on a different form, and can be used to reflect cultural understandings of identity in general; this is specific to contemporary times and in this way is to be understood as a 'new' myth. In other words, the prevalence of splitting has taken on a new mythic meaning across different cultures (this will be explored in more detail in the second half of this chapter). Before returning to this question of the new myth in the cinema, it is first necessary to establish what is at stake when the body is so openly split in horror narratives such as in *Ginger Snaps*. The focus on the body in such films plays an important part in establishing splitting as a new myth, as it plays on early fantasies of the body being out of control, and as such has implications for the 'myth' of our beginning, or origin myths.

The literally split body in the cinema (and literature) is most apparent in classic horror tales such as werewolves or vampires. The use of Lacan's concept of the *corps morcele* might prove useful here as it allows for a

⁹² For example, AA loans advertises its product through two versions of the characters Kev and Bev; the 'better' versions have a loan from AA and therefore have a newer car. The advert implies that their lives are transformed due to this as they dress more smartly and appear happier. Direct Line uses a similar method whereby twins have identical cars and experience identical crashes, Direct Line however provides the 'better' insurance service and this twin is depicted as happier and more satisfied with the service than the other.

psychical unrest or instability to account for bodily splits, or physical transformation. As noted in Chapter One, Lacan suggests that in early years the child is unable to fully control his/her motor functions, or as Lacan notes the 'uneasiness and motor unco-ordination of the neo-natal months' (Lacan, 2001: 4); for some time the child will be dependant on another to take care of it. During the 'mirror phase', the child sees a whole and unified image in the mirror, or in others, which it aspires to be (as noted in Chapter One, the 'mirror phase' is not literal and is grounded in the Imaginary). Key to Lacan's theory is this actual *experience* of the child, a child that is effectively (though not literally) staring in the mirror at a supposedly better self? The child is left feeling out of control of its body; in effect this body *feels* like it is in bits and pieces.

Importantly, this 'mirror stage' becomes about agency, power and control (or lack of), and it is because this body feels so out of control that the child is so enchanted by the wholeness of the image in the mirror (the delusional ego). Lacan argues that:

The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity (Lacan, 2001: 5)

Lacan suggests that the fragmented body is bound up with 'insufficiency' that gives rise to 'anticipation' of a whole and unified being; however what the horror film constantly plays on is the notion of this initial fragmented feeling (calling therefore on our experience of such). The key point being that a psychotic state in body horror is related to a return to this early disjointed feeling, or when something has been lost. It can be argued that consumer culture in general leans on a collective sense of loss or lack in society, and constantly hints that any given product will make us 'whole' or complete, as typified by the Direct Line television advert mentioned above. The fragmented body is a body that is in essence split, and even as the subject leaves the uncoordinated body behind, the memory of such a feeling will

remain with the subject. Lacan himself suggests that we see numerous images of such a broken body in many art forms (Lacan, 2001). In terms of the horror film, such images of the body as Lacan has described, are core to the genre.

Many horror films are ultimately (and perhaps obviously) concerned with what can be done to the body; bodies in many of these films are rendered 'open' and at times utterly out of control. Bodily possession, as seen in the werewolf film, mutates the body into animal form; many David Cronenberg films invade and open up the body as in *Videodrome* (1983, Canada/USA) and *Existenz* (1999, Canada/UK/France); vampire films open the body using teeth to tear flesh, usually at the neck. The list is quite possibly endless, and indicates that the body horror film is exactly what it intends to be: horror focused on the body, and moreover, the splitting of the body. Mikita Brottman, while discussing what she terms *cinéma vomitif* and exploitation films in general, argues that:

these films are topographical narratives of the human body split open, infested, rendered asunder, penetrated, truncated, cleft, sliced, suspended, and devoured. They all deal with bodies inverted, reduced, transmogrified, assailed, out of control and thereby made ridiculous. These depictions, all of them elemental, cultic, and uncanny, are the representations of bodily transgressions and broken taboos. They stand for the inside-out of civilisation, culture, and the human body... (Brottman, 1997: 14)

Brottman suggests that horror films quite clearly render the human body in a state of bits and pieces, where the body is sometimes literally torn apart. In this sense horror films may seem reminiscent of the early 'mirror stage' where the body feels out of control, and in pieces (or which also occurs in some forms of psychosis).

Ginger Snaps is a film that is preoccupied with the changing body of Ginger, however it also displays images of the body in a fragmented state and evokes a time when the body was out of control. Thus the film plays on a distinct splitting of the body that again can be traced back to the 'mirror

stage'. Here, however it is the *feeling* of not being the autonomous entity in the mirror, the split, broken and fragmented out of control body, that is representative of issues surrounding identity and the body in contemporary culture. The unstable identity of Ginger in *Ginger Snaps* is defined by her conflicted experience of her body as fragmented; the film is not animated by an all-powerful ideal ego such as those found in Tyler (*Fight Club*), Travis' mirror image (*Taxi Driver*) and Claudia's mirror image (*Snow White: A Tale of Terror*). Horrific bodily changes in the horror film literalize psychological issues that are indicative of a wider cultural climate that is preoccupied with the problematics of a unified and bodily identity, as well as gendered identity.

The opening of *Ginger Snaps* shows a woman and her child discovering the torn apart body of their dog Baxter, who has been attacked by the so-called 'beast of Bailey Downs'. The residents of Bailey Downs have been finding the remnants of their dogs for several weeks before Ginger, while out with her sister Bridget, is attacked by the beast and subsequently bitten, before escaping with Bridget and running to safety. The beast pursues them as they head towards the road where Sam, the local gardener and drug dealer, happens along in his truck and mows down the beast. Unfortunately for Ginger, the beast turns out to be a werewolf, and Ginger herself begins to turn gradually into such a beast. Importantly, the opening image of the dog in bits and pieces is a prelude to the changes we can expect to take place in Ginger's body. (In fact the film makes constant reference to body parts or 'incomplete' bodies such as the fingers of the dead Sinclair, later found by Ginger's mother and kept in a Tupperware container in the fridge.) By invoking imagery of an animal pulled apart by another animal, the film encourages us to view the aggressor as a primitive, uncivilised cold blooded killer intent on feeding on domestic animals, specifically dogs. Both Ginger and McCarty's (Ginger's boyfriend) first kills are dogs as they begin to turn into werewolves, which is a direct attack on the domesticity of the pet dog, scorned by the wild, untameable and uncivilised werewolf, despite perhaps the dog being one of the werewolf's closest relatives. This is paralleled by Ginger's increasing scorn and contempt towards Bridget, as she is under the

impression that Bridget is jealous of her newfound power, despite the fact that Bridget is desperate to save her sister from turning further into a werewolf.

Ginger becomes increasingly uncivilised and driven by primitive appetites throughout the film: she is evermore rude to her parents and Bridget, forces McCurdy into having sex with her and kills several people even before becoming a full werewolf. As noted earlier, Ginger's arrogance is perhaps due to sibling rivalry, particularly between sisters of a similar age who may feel jealousy toward each other. However, Ginger's antagonism toward Bridget and others may also be a result of the emergence of the 'other' within, which in Ginger's case literally ruptures the body from inside out. The wolf destroys her identity as 'Ginger', she no longer looks like Ginger or will be known as Ginger again. This perhaps draws on the familiar notion of the return of repressed desires being literally represented through the presence of a monster as argued by several theorists, for example Robin Wood (Wood, 1986: 70-94). The idea of the embodiment of repressed desires (within a monster figure) is bound up with the idea of the 'other' within, this is a concept that again draws on psychoanalytic ideas that suggest that there is something 'unknown' within us; in its most simplistic form this draws on the idea of the unconscious. Again, this is a gift to the horror film; the genre employs this model of psychic functioning.

It is in the horror genre's use of this mode of psychic functioning that we can see how the idea of the besieged ego is relevant. I suggest that in *Ginger Snaps* the besieged ego is once again literally mapped on to the body. The body becomes a site of attack from internal forces and thus perhaps becomes analogous of the ego under attack from a variety of assailants. By mapping the ego on to the body, the film directly attacks Ginger's teenage adolescent body, which is apparent in her rapid change not into a young woman as is expected but into a hideous monster. Moreover the film calls

into question Ginger's femininity firstly by acknowledging the feminine sensuousness of her body during the initial stages of change, and then finally by the ultimate destruction of her body as she turns into a wolf. Femininity and 'being female' is an issue made apparent in the film through the two sisters' disavowal of their femininity. They are both dismayed when Ginger finally begins menstruation, and Brigitte vocally blames the werewolf's attack on Ginger's menstrual blood, believing it enticed the werewolf. Femininity is something seemingly alien to the sisters and actively to be avoided, which is fittingly demonstrated in Brigitte's remark to Ginger, "something's wrong, like more than you just being female."

Importantly the concept of the ego being mapped on to the body (which effectively articulates the theoretical slippage between ego and 'self', or between psychological agency and the physical person) is located on the young female body of Ginger, while she is attempting to locate herself within the social order; in "becoming a woman" as her mother calls it, Ginger is called upon to act more within an adult role and to shift from the earlier role of being a child / young teenager. Ginger's transition also entails her taking up the gender role assigned to her by society, that of femininity: she is quite obviously expected to begin showing signs of traditional femininity once she begins menstruation, for example to date boys and begin dressing in a more traditionally feminine fashion. With these facts in mind, one of the film's major themes is the idea of identity and the shifting bodily transitions that are made in order to become a part of the social order. Ginger is expected to have a 'clean' and 'proper' body⁹³ (Kristeva, 1982: 2). As Barbara Creed argues, the werewolf becomes an abject figure precisely because 'the boundary between self and other has been transgressed' (Creed, 1993: 32)

⁹³ I am drawing on the concept of abjection here which is a term that has been used to describe the processes by which we maintain a 'clean', 'proper' body. Mary Douglas discusses the taboos surrounding dirt and pollution and how this relates to society in terms of boundaries and limits placed on what is considered a 'proper' body (of society) (Douglas, 1966). To maintain a 'clean' body, anything that disrupts binary positions such as inside/outside (e.g. bodily leakages such as blood) must be made disgusting. Douglas argued that these things are *made* disgusting. The abject that threatens order and boundaries is never extinguished; it remains a constant presence 'threatening apparent unities and stabilities with disruption and possible dissolution' (Grosz, 1990: 87).

Therefore Ginger's body is not or ever likely to be 'clean' or 'proper'; turning into a werewolf is a direct refusal of her femininity and therefore her supposed place in the gendered order.

The role of Freud's realist ego (bearing in mind that the return of the repressed plays a significant, yet ambiguous, role in the horror genre: ambiguity for example in the question of whether it is a manufactured discourse or *real*) is clear in its capacity to attempt to control or mediate psychical functioning at all times. The ego is therefore often represented or literalised by the hero of our tale in film, as Freud himself discussed with regard to writers in 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming' (Freud, 1908 [1907]), and as discussed in Chapter One. Noël Carroll argues against the usefulness of the return of the repressed as a theory in film studies; he suggests that the return of the repressed, and psychoanalysis in general, 'fails to provide a comprehensive account of the figures of horror, and, consequently, of the paradox of horror' (Carroll, 1990: 174). Carroll's arguments suggest that there are some figures in horror that simply cannot be examined through such a framework, as they cannot be understood in terms of repressed desires (Ibid: 173).

What is important in figures such as the werewolf or the vampire however is that they are acting on impulses that would be deemed 'uncivilised' at best in contemporary society. It is therefore useful to view horror characters through the framework of the return of the repressed because such figures revel in doing the very things society tells its members that it cannot do. These horror figures are reminiscent of early desires to behave in any way we like; these desires are repressed in order to take up a 'proper' position in society and monsters can be viewed as metaphorical of early uncivilised repressed desires. In *Ginger Snaps* the return of the repressed (werewolf) causes many problems for Ginger, and while it is not necessary here to provide a full

explanation of all the workings of Freud's unconscious, it does seem necessary to further clarify Freud's idea of repressed instincts.

Freud suggests that all that is undesirable for the conscious psyche must be pushed back into the depths of the unconscious in the hope that they may never return (Freud, 1915a: 146/7). This is due to the fact that this repressed instinct or drive may cause unpleasure for the ego and it is therefore necessary to be rid of it (Freud, 1915a: 145/6). Of course, the repressed may return at any time, and is a constant threat to the ego, as the repressed is never destroyed. Freud asserts that that which is repressed is in fact always present in the psyche and is therefore a threat to the ego, which is attempting to maintain psychical order; the actual act of repression works for the protection of the ego in that it attempts to keep away what is repressed from the ego (ibid). It is this very notion that provides much narrative material for film and, moreover, the horror film; the idea of a constant but unknown presence within the collective 'us' provides tremendous momentum and the potential for visual (special) effects in film genres that centre on the supernatural. The ego is continually under threat in the diegetic world of such films and provides an intuitive literal rendering of the questionable status of individual identity, and the autonomy of the ego. The ego under pressure can continually be traced to being a result of the 'other' within and furthermore the splitting of the body in horror and psychological horror-based texts.

Steven Shaviro argues that many body horror or 'other' within films are not representative of the consequences of the denial of certain desires or psychoanalytically speaking the return of the repressed. Instead he suggests that such films are born out of passion and not denial (Shaviro, 1993: 129). In *Ginger Snaps*, the two adolescent girls deny their femininity, until Ginger is bitten by the wolf, and this increases her drive for femininity (initially) and her being more conscious of how she dresses and looks. However, whether

the wolf is simply a return of Ginger's repressed desires, or whether the wolf is borne out of passion and not denial, as Shaviro has argued, is not of particular consequence as the end result is the same. If the body is 'acting out' desire or passion, as Shaviro suggests, or even if the body acts out on the return of repressed desires or denial, the mind or psyche in this instance has no control over bodily functions: it is simply a matter of conceptual frameworks.

In continuing to use a psychoanalytic framework as a theory in film studies, it is useful to see Ginger's transformation as an image of Lacan's fragmented body or *corps morcele*. Lacan's theory argues that splitting is a central component in the psychological make-up of identity, and therefore centralises the theme of a problematic identity so often apparent in media texts. The fragmented body is particularly useful as it harks back to the construction of the ego born out of delusion and it emphasizes the beginning or the birth of 'ego-centric' mental functioning. In correspondence to this the act of repression marks the ego's apparent sovereignty by deciding that certain instincts are deemed unsavoury and pushed away. This discord emphasises perfectly the difficulties faced in the experience of a 'whole' identity as the ego is constantly protected and perhaps beguiled by certain psychic functions and attacked by others. By emphasising the beginnings of psychic functioning psychoanalysis also emphasizes a further split between mind and body. Once again this can be traced back to the 'origin' of the ego and the first potential feelings of being a unified subject (however deluded) in Lacan's 'mirror phase'.

Many horror films are centred on the notion that there is a collapse between the Cartesian mind/body dichotomy. For the purposes of this chapter, this collapse can be viewed as the confusion that takes place during the 'mirror phase' where the mind and body become confusingly separate and irrevocably interlinked for the child through the division of the mirror.

Separate in that the fragmented body takes on an imagined (fantasy) status in the mind while simultaneously the body experiences this 'bits and pieces' feeling as though it were real; however the two cannot be separated because during the same phase the ego is born which experiences the mind *and* body as 'I'. The mind and body become not as distinct as they once were, and psychical internal conflicts are mapped on to the body thus blurring the distinction, which is often utilised for spectacle in certain film genres. Also central is the idea that the body is out of control, the mind cannot control bodily functions, as it once could (or believed it could), and the body becomes 'bits and pieces', reminiscent of that early 'mirror phase' ordeal. Vital to this loss of control is the failure of Freud's autonomous heroic ego, and also psychical functioning at large.

Key to all these notions surrounding the body, identity, selfhood and the (non)autonomous ego is that they are ever present in all classic horror tales such as the werewolf or vampire film, or the 'other' within narrative. While characters and narratives such as those illustrated in horror tales can be seen as literally split, this thesis contends that they are forerunners to the more plainly two-fold character, doubles or doppelgängers such as can be seen in all the films and television texts discussed in this thesis; the alter-ego in contemporary times are generally more recognisable as 'human', mirror images of ourselves, and can therefore be considered as increasingly dangerous and beguiling. I would therefore suggest in this section that much of the horror genre (and leading into psychological horror-based genres) are preoccupied with the wholeness of the body and identity. The horror genre provides many a metaphor for contemporary cultural concerns surrounding our sense of unified identity, gendered identity and psychical control. The roots of the splitting phenomenon therefore seem to lie in classic tales of horror or the 'other within' film. In terms of the autonomy of the ego, the (new) myth of splitting in film and television instantly begins to draw

important links between popular culture at large and contemporary cultural issues surrounding this (non-)autonomous ego⁹⁴.

It seems necessary to further establish the importance of a mythical / fictional resonance. Similarly to fiction, myths can and do provide excellent commentary on contemporary societal attitudes at large at the time the myth is apparent, and indeed for later cultures. In fact the relationship between myth and fiction is highly complex, just as relationships between fiction, fable, folklore and tales are difficult to define. How does the meaning of myth relate to and differ from other forms of storytelling? According to Bruno Bettelheim the difference between one form of fiction (fairy tale) and myth is due firstly to the way in which miraculous events and characters are relayed to the reader. He argues that:

Although the same exemplary figures and situations are found in both [fairy tales and myth] and equally miraculous events occur in both, there is a crucial difference in the way these are communicated. Put simply, the dominant feeling a myth conveys is: this is absolutely unique; it could not have happened to any other person, or in any other setting; such events are grandiose, awe-inspiring, and could not possibly happen to an ordinary mortal like you or me. The reason is not so much that what takes place is miraculous, but that it is described as such. By contrast, although the events which occur in fairy tales are often unusual and most improbable, they are always presented as ordinary, something that could happen to you or me... (Bettelheim, 1978: 37)

Bettelheim goes on to argue that other differences are that myths are often tragic, while fairy tales (and many forms of fiction and tales) have a more positive ending / impact (ibid: 37). Perhaps more importantly for the purposes of this thesis Bettelheim also argues from a Freudian psychoanalytic standpoint that myths are far more concerned with the pressures that the superego might exert (such as the Gods in Greek myth), and are in a sense more dangerous than fairy tales, which he sees as providing a more positive role (mainly for children). The positivity of fairy tales, according to Bettelheim, lies in their emphasis on inducing positive

⁹⁴ As I have noted, split subjects have been apparent in literature for many years. Increasingly they populate the cinema and television screen, and I would suggest that the frequency with which they appear and the important fact that they exist across culture allows for understanding split characters as a 'new' myth.

solutions to familiar problems (Ibid: 37-41). Marina Warner, however, argues that this may not be so simply the case and that Bettelheim does not take into account the complex relationship between storyteller and protagonist and treats them as one and the same. For Warner there should be more emphasis placed on the fact that a narrator tells a story *through* the protagonist; the voice is quite firmly placed with the narrator (Warner, 1993: 20/21). In terms of storytelling this has implications for the medium of film, as it implies that the protagonist is not always (if ever) in charge of their own story. While myth has differences from fairy tales, it has similarities to fiction and narrative; what is perhaps unique to myth is a preoccupation with origins.

Mircea Eliade notes that his own work is involved:

primarily with those societies in which myth is – or was until very recently – “living”, in the sense that it supplies models for human behaviour and, by that very fact, gives meaning and value to life. To understand the structure and function of myths in these traditional societies not only serves to clarify a stage in the history of human thought but also helps us to understand a category of our contemporaries (Eliade, 1964: 2)

According to Eliade (and in line with Standish’s argument) myths provide a ‘function’ for society and can point the way to understanding attitudes and the cultural climate of a particular time, however he also suggests that myths are about origin: ‘Myth, then, is always an account of a “creation”, it relates how something was produced, began to *be*’ (ibid: 6). In many ways this mythic idea of creation or of how things come to ‘be’ is exactly what psychoanalysis attempts to explain in terms of identity (Freud also often uses myths to help explain his concepts). It is in relation to the idea of beginnings (creation etc) that this chapter contends that the splitting phenomenon is a contemporary or new myth. A myth about origins can mean many things but the foremost must be that of ‘our’ origin, how it came to be that individuals become who they are, which inevitably entails how individuals fit into the society they are born into: how does identity become established? Splitting is utilised in media to inform and promote spectacle, and the industrial element cannot be ignored; however a splitting trope is

also a 'creation' myth that taps into the problematic notion of how identity becomes established, fragile and even delusional. Perhaps more importantly, splitting as myth relates to the wider connotations of fractured identity within society and the different cultural contexts that come into play, which is key to how this myth can be understood as 'new'. Arguably, psychoanalytic discourse has played a role in creating this new myth as its models and concepts have developed and been articulated in a wider sense than just academia; psychoanalysis has therefore informed popular culture.

In terms of mythic value, a contemporary rendering of the splitting phenomenon highlights a need or desire to understand identity more fully, and it articulates the disquiet in the current social climate that has originated from those early initial deluded feelings of being a fully in control autonomous 'ego'; while other meanings may well be at play, particularly in literature and other forms of media, a current reading of splitting in fantasy and horror-based narratives strongly suggest a preoccupation with issues and experiences surrounding identity. In much of Western culture, such as America and the United Kingdom, such fears and problems surrounding identity have been mediated in film and television through the visual image of splitting and split characters. As a new myth, it would certainly seem the case that it should transcend cultural barriers, and be present in other cinema than that of the West. In the next section of this chapter, the research question shall expand to include cinematic texts from other cultures to ascertain whether this new myth is confined to Western culture only. Global media industries produce texts to be consumed in a variety of 'consumer' cultures; media industries are therefore 'transnational', which has an impact on how far cinematic trends may carry across culture. Social and cultural context plays a major role in ascertaining the mythic value of a given text, however, it also seems likely that different cultures will produce varying meanings surrounding splitting in media.

The Pleasures of the Unknown

This thesis has so far largely concentrated on Western cinema in an approach to understanding and grounding the concept of splitting in the cinema within a gendered cultural Western background. It is apparent, however, that split characters and splitting as a theme is found in cinema from regions other than that of the West, particularly that of Japan. In this section of the chapter it shall be argued that the myth of splitting is as apparent in aspects of Japanese cinema as it is in the West⁹⁵. If the splitting myth in the cinema is indeed common (due to the global nature of media industries and communications) then this perhaps goes some way against the continued literature on Japanese culture that suggests they are unique in terms of psyche, ways of thinking, and cultural traditions; thus implying that Japanese culture is in many ways incomprehensible to those of any other cultural background. However, it also seems likely that different meanings will be at play in film texts from a different cultural and social background. If the theme of splitting in the cinema indicates a problematic preoccupation with identity, gendered identity and our 'place' within the social order as this thesis contends, then this is one aspect at least that Western culture has in common with other societies.

The much discussed 'myth of Japanese uniqueness' (Dale, 1986) shrouds Japanese culture behind an obscure veil that makes it very difficult for anyone from a different background to examine Japanese cultural traditions

⁹⁵ I do not wish to appear reductive or simplistic in my description of certain cultures as either 'Western' or 'Eastern', arguably however these terms are still used to describe a polarisation between these two 'worlds'. Defining national identities is tricky and as Andrew Higson argues, in many ways nations are made up of individuals with differing and varying identities that entails much more than nationality, such as gender, political leanings etc (Higson, 2000: 64-66). 'Imagined communities' with an easily definable sense of national identity may therefore be misleading. In terms of film, the transnational nature of the industry further problematises the concept of national cinema (ibid). However I contend that in places such as the United States and the United Kingdom, a degree of connotative mysticism and 'otherness' is set up around countries such as Japan and Korea etc, which is often imagined or described in terms of the 'East'.

let alone understand them. On the other hand, the West has much in common with some aspects of Japanese culture such as capitalism, consumer culture and even perhaps the idea of being part of a system that is focused on work. The rising popularity of Japanese cinema in the West gives us at least some insight into popular culture in Japan. Increasingly the crossover of filming techniques or cinematic style (in the horror genre) is blurring the division between the East and the West; while it should still be noted that there are still stark differences between, for example, American horror and Japanese horror, there are also increasing similarities, or at the very least increasing interest from both parties in the others cinema. In the West, Japanese films are becoming increasingly popular, particularly among horror fans, with the arrival of films such as *Ring* [*Ringu*] (Hideo Nakata, 1998, Japan), *Dark Water* [*Honogurai mizu no soko kara*] (Hideo Nakata, 2002, Japan) and *Ichi the Killer* [*Koroshiya 1*] (Takashi Miike, 2001, Japan/Hong Kong/South Korea)⁹⁶. Moreover, *Ring* was remade by Hollywood to appeal to an even wider audience, and it seems likely that more Japanese (and other East Asian cinemas such as South Korea) films will be remade for a mainstream Hollywood audience⁹⁷.

Perhaps more subtly, Japanese cinematic conventions are creeping into Western mainstream cinema. For example the 'spraying blood' from Japanese Samurai sword films (often revenge narratives) such as *Lady Snowblood: Blizzard from the Netherworld* (Fujita Toshiya, 1973, Japan), or the many *Zatoichi* films has over recent years edged its way into Western Slasher films such as *Freddie Vs. Jason* (Ronnie Yu, 2003, USA/Italy) (and also into films such as Quentin Tarantino's genre-conscious *Kill Bill* (2003/4)). Of course it should be noted that *Freddie Vs. Jason* was directed by Ronnie Yu (although he is from Hong Kong and not Japan), further enforcing the idea of influence from Japanese cinema, and East Asian

⁹⁶ The 'Asia Extreme' marketing and branding used for many of these films also unifies diverse Asian cinemas in its appeal to Western fans.

⁹⁷ It is noteworthy that there is a question of the relative 'Japaneseness' of filmmakers; for example, it can be considered that there was a backlash against Akira Kurosawa when the more 'authentic' Yasujiro Ozu and Kenji Mizoguchi were discovered.

cinema generally, in Hollywood. Anime has also had an influence on genre and film, with many comic book narratives transforming into live action. Such a borrowing of genre conventions from other cultures lends the Slasher film in the West a way of reviving its own (some would argue somewhat tired) generic trends. It lends the horror genre a novel element to attract new audiences and to keep the interest of current horror fans. Importantly, cinema such as that produced in Japan is having an increasing impact on the cinema of the West, whether it is by popularity of Japanese films or through the 'borrowing' of conventions or narratives. In terms of the besieged ego, it is the splitting of characters within these psychological horror-based texts that becomes the focus for approaching these texts as 'new myth'; by understanding these texts as a new myth the cultural context of the splitting phenomena becomes easier to define across a variety of cultures, and instantly begins to draw the links between popular narratives and their cultural background. The potential for multi-meanings across cultures and genres provides 'myth' with staying power.

Many academics that discuss Japanese culture and Japanese film centre on the problem of defining a Japanese identity, both individually and nationally. Much of this debate seems to hinge on specific inherent social pressures in Japan, which Curt Singer terms as 'a bewildering number of conventions and taboos, in various degrees of unintelligibility' (Singer, 1973: 64). It seems that being Japanese entails abiding by a large number of social customs or laws and any wavering from these customs can result in embarrassment for all parties involved, at least traditionally. Defining Japanese culture also entails a further problem, that of Western culture. This chapter contends that it seems problematic to assume that Western cultures will have little or no understanding of Japanese culture, which is often considered the case. After the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki the West largely infiltrated Japan as American troops arrived to stabilise the situation. The simple assumption that Japan is so unique that Western culture cannot comprehend it, or that Western researchers will be unable to contribute to an understanding of Japanese culture seems a little problematic. The West has increasingly

infiltrated Japanese culture from the 1950s onwards through to present day, and vice versa, and this is most apparent in popular culture. However, the East from a Western point of view is still held to be 'mysterious' and largely unknown, as Peter N. Dale writes about Japan:

The more distant the country, the greater is the temptation to extend the submerged landscape of private fantasy into the hearsay reaches of an exotic geography, to populate it with creatures of the imagination whose existence is otherwise rendered improbable by the dulling pressures of a known and banal reality (Dale, 1986: 1)

Importantly, Dale draws on the *attraction* of Japan as embodying fantasies and the mystery of the unknown. This perhaps goes some way to explaining the recent preoccupation with horror cinema from Japan (and from Europe such as Italian and Spanish horror) in America and the United Kingdom; this seems largely to be confined to the horror genre (as well as the 'Samurai' film) where it is easier to deploy fantasies of the unknown and delight the imagination than is perhaps always possible in other genres. The pleasures of the unknown are key to the horror genre and therefore, by drawing on the unidentifiable aspects of a culture that is largely considered to be 'unknown' and mysterious already, horror from Japan can bring a fresh element of mystery and dread to the horror genre in America and the United Kingdom. Perhaps the idea of a foreign 'otherness' also plays a major role in adding to the mystery and fears that Japanese horror films may invoke. This has much the same effect as the apparent mystery of the Japan, the figure of a foreign 'other' adds to the 'unknown' quality of Japanese horror increasing Western viewers' fascination with 'new' horror from places like Japan.

Mette Hjort discusses the concept of national cinema, or the 'theme of nation' in an essay on Danish cinema⁹⁸. She argues that the concept of nation can be understood in terms of the 'topical', which is a term she has borrowed from Peter Lemarque and Stein Haugom Olsen's *Truth, Fiction, and Literature: A Philosophical Perspective* (1994). Topical themes are more specific to a certain culture, in a 'local' sense and she argues that '[t]opical

⁹⁸ 'Themes of Nation' in *Cinema and Nation* (2000)

works are frequently politically motivated and serve as interventions in ongoing discussions within a given social context' (Hjort, 2000: 106). On the other hand are 'perennial' themes (also borrowed from Lemarque and Olsen), which transcend cultural barriers. As Hjort suggests: 'perennial themes bring into focus subject matter that resonates across historical and cultural boundaries' (ibid: 106), for example the concept of 'anger' is likely to be understood across cultures. Perhaps Japanese films can often be understood in light of 'topical' themes, which might explain to some degree, why viewers often feel 'excluded' from films from other nations such as Japan. Hjort also refers to the idea of 'recognition' (here she is following Charles Taylor's notion of the 'Politics of Recognition'⁹⁹), whereby certain identities are 'recognised' through certain specificities and this is 'accompanied by a demand that this identity be recognised as valuable' (ibid: 113). Perhaps certain Japanese films, or aspects of Japanese film, are 'misrecognised' by viewers from elsewhere because the form, theme, stylistics etc of a given film can be considered in a 'topical' sense only. Such 'misrecognition' might also go some way to explaining how viewers engage, or do not engage, with films from other cultures.

Importantly Western civilisations are increasingly interested in Japanese culture, and the East has for many years been preoccupied with Western culture, as Joseph Anderson and Donald Richie have argued regarding Japan: 'by 1896 interest in the West was so extreme that derbies or straw boaters were worn with formal kimono, the big gold pocket-watch was tucked into the obi, and spectacles, whether needed or not, were esteemed as a sign of learning' (Anderson & Richie, 1982: 21). In mirroring such a fascination, the West's interest in Japanese culture has been so pronounced that the study of being Japanese has even been given the name *nihonjinron* 'theories of Japaneseness' (Standish, 2000: 8). However, this is not just a simplistic matter of one cultures' interest in another being enough to fully understand its codes and practices, Japanese cinema for example is still

⁹⁹ Discussed in *Multiculturalism* (1994)

considered to be relatively unapproachable for many Western viewers to penetrate; many viewers feel that they are somehow missing the point of a Japanese film perhaps because of cultural barriers that somehow seem impossible to overcome. This was also the case in Japan during the very beginning of cinema, where theatres would employ a *benshi* (Anderson & Richie, 1982: 23), which was a person employed as a teacher or narrator. The *benshi* would stand by the projected film (imported from Europe during the late 1800s and early 1900s, and then from America during the first World War) and explain the film as it advanced, this was apparently due to 'the Japanese, then as now, were constantly afraid of missing a point, of not understanding everything, and demanded a complete explanation' (ibid: 23). Such use of a narrator implies that the Japanese were also afraid of not understanding the point or meaning of a Western film.

Recently (and most noticeably in the horror genre as well as anime and its influence) it seems that Japanese films are becoming increasingly popular in Western society¹⁰⁰. Of course, this does beg the question as to why Japanese films are so different than other non-Western cultures, Noël Burch asks:

how is it that while several of the non-Western nations - China, of course, but even more prolifically, Egypt and India – have long produced motion pictures, only Japan has developed modes of filmic representation that are wholly and specifically her own (Burch, 1979: 26)

Burch goes on to suggest that the reason for Japanese cinema being so individual is that:

in two thousand years of recorded history, no part of Japanese territory had ever been occupied until the 1945 defeat. Japan was never subjected to the semi-colonial status which was China's for over a century, or to complete enslavement as were Egypt or India. She is the *only* major non-Western country to have escaped the colonial yoke (Burch, 1979: 27)

¹⁰⁰ Arguably, Western cultures have flirted with Japanese cinema since post-war times, with Directors such as Akira Kurosawa becoming popular in 'arty' circles. Hollywood also remade *Seven Samurai* [Shichinin no samurai] (1954, Japan) as *The Magnificent Seven* (John Sturges, 1960, USA), an early indication of the transnational nature of the film industry. Recently horror films from Japan have become more popular in places other than on home ground, and appeal to a more 'pop culture' audience.

Japanese cinema is then highly individual, which Burch has interpreted as being due to prewar isolation from Western society¹⁰¹, and is perhaps difficult to always follow for a Westerner who does not fully understand Japanese codes and cultural practices. How, then, can our recent fascination with Japanese film (largely in the horror genre) be further explained?

Now is not the first time in history that Japanese cinema has become popular in the West. Once the Second World War was over and the American occupation had left Japan, film production once again grew stronger in the 1950s (Morton, 2003: 222). At this time the West became interested in Japanese cinema, which Leith Morton, drawing on Yomota Inuhiko's writing on Japanese mass culture, suggests is due firstly to the fascination with the Orient, secondly to the emergence of auteur theory and lastly to the increased endorsement of films from Japan by President Nagata Masaichi (Ibid: 222). From approximately the 1990s onwards the Japanese film industry has once again produced interest from the Western world, and also on home ground with cinema attendance rising during the mid 1990s (ibid: 228). Key to this interest in horror from Japan is the element of something new or novel in the generic trends of horror, however; also apparent in many of these texts is a psychological element as a prominent theme.

Current trends in the psychological horror-based genre of the cinema show that splitting and split characters are used as key to dramatic tension. By drawing on the problems that surround identity and the questionable autonomy of the ego, many films base narrative drama, structure and

¹⁰¹ Importantly Japan itself has been a colonising presence in the East; Japan rivalled Russia over interests in Korea (as well as South Manchuria) and was successful in 1904-5, approximately ten years later war in Europe allowed Japan to move in on China, where a difficult relationship ensued. The advancement of industry and the military in Japan arguably ensured the nation became a major power by the 1920s.

character motivation around the splitting of one character into two polarised (and gendered) halves. This opens out the trope of the 'other within' (common in the vampire / werewolf etc film) to a very literal translation of inner turmoil onto a bodily visual conflict, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Key to the current interest in some East Asian cinemas, such as that of Japan, is this prominent splitting theme; it transcends cultural barriers providing a 'way in' for a viewer that may in many other ways be culturally barred from fully feeling that a text has been understood. In simpler terms, viewers are well equipped to deal with psychological centred narratives as such themes play a huge role in Western cinema. In the following sections, several film texts will be examined in the light of this new myth of splitting and suggest that through this use of splitting (to provide spectacle and dramatic tension) a common ground can be reached for both Eastern and Western cultures; this chapter contends that issues surrounding identity and our place within the social order transcends many cultural borders. Moreover, in addition to this splitting theme also apparent in Japanese cinema (as well as other East Asian films) is a further dichotomy that can be noted in the twinning or doubling of characters, that of the past and the present, which is a mediation of the cultural contexts in which these texts were produced.

The Haunting Past in *Jian Gui* [*The Eye*] (Oxide Pang Chun & Danny Pang, 2002, Hong Kong/UK/Thailand/Singapore), *Honogurai mizu no soko kara* [*Dark Water*] (Hideo Nakata, 2002, Japan), *X* (Rintaro, 1996, Japan)

The dichotomy that is often apparent in the cinema of Japan is that of the past intruding on the present and vice versa. Modernity and the changing of the world into a perhaps more 'Western' society is a problem that haunts Japanese (and many non-Western) films and suggests that there is still unease that sits with an increasingly modern and consumer-based society; this has implications for both individual identity and the issue of nationality.

Alistair Phillips argues, for example, that modernity and the past have a rather complex relationship whereby it is more than simply a matter of 'a clearly separable set of differences between the old and the new.' (Phillips, 2003: 163). Rather the past becomes mediated through the process of modernisation and traditions are 'being renegotiated by a new interpretation of a nationally specific modernity.' (Ibid: 154). In relation to the double, Andrew J. Webber argues that:

the *Doppelgänger* embodies a dislocation in time, always coming after its proper event... [l]ike all ghosts, it is at once an historical figure, re-presenting past times, and a profoundly anti-historical phenomenon, resisting temporal change by stepping out of time and then stepping back in as revenant (Webber, 1996: 9-10) (italics in original)

In terms of representation, the tensions between the past and the present in the horror genre can once again be articulated through the process of split characters and the splitting theme, which as Webber points out has a particular relationship to the past and present; through the twinning or doubling of characters a dual representation of the two ideologies of past / present are shown to be at odds and indeed to have specific cultural intimations. For example, older traditions may be more concerned with community, family life and the countryside while modernity is more concerned with the city and individualism¹⁰². These shall be explored shortly through three non-Western film texts, *Dark Water*, *The Eye* and *X*.

The texts I have chosen here are generally well known and available in the West, as it is key to this chapter that the texts examined are popular other than in the countries where they were produced; the transnational nature of the film industry plays a major role in such cases as this is where generic trends carry over and conventions are borrowed. Importantly, there is more at play than simply a transnational aspect to the popularity of the films discussed in this section; the Japanese film industry can also be seen in light of the 'trans-Asian' where films such as the *Ring* trilogy and various spin offs

¹⁰² In American horror films, it is often the case that the 'supernatural' stems from Eastern Europe, or somewhere 'other' as, for example, in *Cat People* (Jacques Tourneur, 1942, USA; Paul Schrader, 1982, USA)

have had a major influence in countries such as Korea, including the Korean 'Ring' film *Ring Virus* (Dong-bin Kim, 1999, South Korea), which have borrowed stylistics, conventions and storylines from such films. Just as America has made use of the popularity of various Japanese films, so have neighbouring nations. To this end I have included in this section an analysis of *The Eye*, which is joint production between Hong Kong/UK/Thailand/Singapore and highlights this trans-Asian (and transnational) nature of the film industry as well as identifying that the splitting theme is evident across a variety of cultures.

The Eye tells the story of a young girl named Wong Kar Mun (Angelica Lee) who, at the age of twenty, undergoes corneal transplants and regains her sight after eighteen years of being blind. Initially it seems that Mun's surgery has been successful as she gradually regains her sight and begins to adjust to the visual world. She begins therapy with Dr Lo (Edmund Chen) who helps her to interpret what she sees visually rather than relying on touch to find her way around. Soon after her surgery, however, Mun begins to see what she quickly realises are ghosts; it is apparent that she is beginning to see what the previous owner of her eyes had seen. Mun therefore has a supernatural access to the past. Dr Lo helps Mun to track down the donor of her corneas, Thai-born Ling (Chutchajit Rujinanon), whom they discover could foresee death and disaster. Although Ling had tried to help the people in her village by warning them of when something was going to happen, she was treated with hostility by all the villagers and ostracised as a result of her warnings. Only her mother remained kind and supportive of her, although this proved not to be enough and Ling hung herself through desperation of being so isolated, and through devastation at not being able to prevent the disasters she foresees. Mun, then, has in many ways become possessed through her eyes by a figure of the past, and through the narrative the two become twinned or doubled through the connection of Mun's/Ling's eyes; Mun and Ling therefore can be seen as an embodiment of the irreparable split between the past and the present. The concept of fracture becomes twofold in this instance: not only is the past / present divide introduced

through twin characters, the film hints at all social orders being subject to fracture, fissures and contradictions through this melding of past and present which are essentially irreconcilable.

The discordance between the past and the present is a theme that underpins the film, suggesting that there is a tension between older traditions and the contemporary modern world. For example, Mun goes to a teacher to learn calligraphy and her teacher tells her that not many people wish to learn such a traditional style of writing anymore. He had previously taught three classes a week, while Mun is being taught on her own, which implies that he actually has no other students aside from Mun at the time. The scene keys into the fact that older traditions are being lost in the face of the modern world, which is further driven home by the presence of many ghosts; as figures of the past they perhaps represent a literal embodiment of the loss of particular traditions. In addition, the scenes involving Ling are shot in black and white, which again creates discordance between 'then' and 'now' as the present day is shot in colour. Mun's 'colourful' life indicates the diversity of modern living in the city; whereas Ling's bleaker black and white world suggests the monotony of village life where older traditions are more readily apparent. In essence the supposedly 'moral' black and white world is opposed to the relativism of colour in the present.

The idea of older traditional village lifestyles is also suggestive of Japanese religions (although this film is a joint production between other East Asian countries, many Japanese films also make use of the urban/country dichotomy, to be explored shortly), for example Buddhism is often regarded as being more prominent in the countryside than in cities. Ian Reader for example argues that often literature on Buddhism (specifically Zen Buddhism) is:

nostalgic, drawing pictures of idyllic traditional life in the countryside contrasted with the unease of modern, westernised, cities, and implying that the true ethos of Japanese life, and indeed the 'spiritual homeland' (*kokoro*)

no furusato) of the Japanese people is to be found in this traditional idyll – which of course is depicted as revolving very much around the temple, the ancestors and suchlike. (Reader, 1991: 104/5)

It seems that the past is both nostalgic but also a rather foreboding presence on contemporary times, and it could be argued that Reader's statement suggests that contemporary modern lifestyles in cities moves away from religion (Buddhism) altogether and away from traditional lifestyles. Such tensions are not only apparent in the horror film, but a children's anime film such as *Spirited Away* ([Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi] Hayao Miyazaki, 2001, Japan) links the nostalgic past with menacing characters and images.

Phillips suggests, writing of Yasujiro Ozu's post war films, that modern cities are places that coincide 'with the traditional sites of Japan's past, such as the touristed temples and gardens in the old capitals of Kyoto and Kamakura or the *furosato* (hometown) which embodies the maintenance of a village-style consciousness being eroded by urbanism.' (Phillips, 2003: 158) Phillips suggests that the city / country dichotomy is not simply two sets of values set apart, in fact they impinge on one another, thus reinforcing the concept that likewise the past and present cannot be so easily separated. In line with this argument Ling traverses the boundary of the past / present binary through her 'possession' of Mun, or through the twinning of their characters, and therefore through her visions living on. The doubling of the past and the present in the film through the characters of Mun and Ling is articulated through several scenes. For example Mun's room changes into Ling's showing the simpler more traditional style flashing for a few short frames into Mun's modern world. Also when Mun looks in the mirror she sees Ling's face, suggesting that Ling is ever present in Mun's life; this disturbing fact complicates their identities further as Mun identifies herself visually as Ling, being blind from the age of two she is unaware that the face looking back out of the mirror is not her own. By moving from the past to the present through Mun, Ling injects an older traditional lifestyle into Mun's modern city life, and provides a further layer of meaning within the contemporary rendering of splitting.

Dark Water's drifting child ghost Mitsuko Kawai (Mirei Oguchi) also invokes the dread and creeping unease that sits with the loss of the traditional past; this is directly articulated through the doubling of a single mother and her child. The present day mother Yoshimi Matsubara (Hitomi Kuroki) and child Ikuko Matsubara (Rio Kanno) provide the main focus of the story (and therefore the main identification), after divorcing her husband Kunio Hamada (Fumiyo Kohinata) Yoshimi moves to an apartment with her young daughter. As soon as they move into the new apartment they are haunted by the ghost of the young girl Mitsuko, who is represented throughout the film through the motif of running water. It becomes apparent that through the neglect of Mitsuko by her mother she drowns in the water tank on the roof of the apartment building. As is often the case in ghost story narratives in both Eastern and Western culture, the ghost has unresolved issues that must be settled before she can be at peace. She therefore returns and haunts the present day mother and daughter as she wishes for a 'good' mother of her own. The two young girls are doubled at the start of the narrative by cross cutting between both children while waiting for their mothers at school (in different timelines), they are the same age and by using a similar tactic to that in *Ring*, Hideo Nakata hides the faces of the young girls by their hair hanging over their face. This makes it difficult to always be sure which of the two young girls we are seeing. This fact is emphasised by the red bag that once belonged to the dead child. The bag is found by Ikuko and although her mother keeps throwing it away the bag is constantly returned to Ikuko and therefore implies a significant link between the two young children.

This doubling is very similar to the doubling that takes place in *The Eye* whereby the split character is divided by the past and the present binary. By providing a past 'version' of both Ikuko and Mun, each character becomes intrinsically linked with a very similar person from the past (Ling and the ghost child). The two characters (Mun/Ling and Ikuko/ghost child), by

existing in the same time frame, become doubled or a version of a split character, irrevocably split between an older past and the modern present. Importantly, this provides a metaphor for the tensions that arise between the past and the present, which I shall explore shortly. Before exploring the larger cultural intimations that such a split (within this new myth) creates, firstly it is necessary to discuss the primary theme that drives *Dark Water*. *Dark Water*, as the title suggests, uses water as a constant theme to invoke fear and as a metaphor for the creeping return of the past (return of the repressed?) that will always find a way in, just as water will always find the smallest of spaces to creep through. The sea is often aligned with fear, particularly for an island nation where the sea is often seen as a strange mixture of both creator and destroyer. However, water in Japan is apparently 'the most maternal of symbols' (Buruma, 1984: 61), and while this indicates sensuality (Ibid: 61) in films such as *Dark Water* and *Ring* it is used as a means of suggesting fear, horror and dread. Similarly both films use the long dark hair of the ghost characters to invoke fear, whereas traditionally this is a symbol of beauty in Japanese culture; traditional concepts of beauty and femininity are subverted in the films to instead produce anxiety and a symbolisation of the horrific impinging on the 'innocent'.

Yoshimi is represented as being a 'good' mother, if a little disorganised, and while she seems to be struggling with the divorce from her arrogant and callous husband, it is unquestionable that she is devoted to her young daughter and vice versa. In contrast to their relationship, however, is that of the dead child and her mother. The viewer, in fact, never sees the mother of the dead child and the film hints that she neglects her daughter by not supervising her properly and forgetting to pick her up from school, a father figure is also notably absent. Interestingly, a further parallel is drawn between the two young children as Yoshimi also fails to collect Ikuko from school on time one day. However, this is not due to forgetfulness as Yoshimi is attending a job interview so that she may be able to support both herself and her daughter. She is well aware of the time and becomes increasingly agitated during the elongated interview (the interviewer is repeatedly called

away), eventually running out of the office so that she can get to the school. Overall, the viewer is reassured that Yoshimi cares for her child and falls into the 'good' mother category. This suggests that the dead child targets this family as she wants a 'good' mother of her own, and the film hints that there is no room in this relationship for anyone but the child and the mother, hence the absence of good father figures and the dead child's attempt at drowning Ikuko. The film therefore addresses cross-cultural issues of gender roles and the family and the familiar issues of women at work versus the traditional female as homemaker.

The film is preoccupied with images and the idea of maternity, whether good or bad. Through the splitting of the mother and child into past and present 'versions' of maternal and child images, the film perhaps invokes the concept of Japanese gods. According to Ian Buruma Japanese gods are neither good nor evil but incorporate both qualities, and they are therefore in many senses more like ordinary people (Buruma, 1984: 6). By splitting characters into bad (past) and good (present) forms of metaphorically one character, the film suggests that people possess many qualities and are therefore not autonomous in the sense of being wholly good or wholly evil; a realistic idea of humanity. In terms of the besieged ego, *Dark Water* once again invokes the image of split characters that represent different qualities of one whole character. Using psychoanalytic terminology, the ego representation in *Dark Water* is mediated through the present day mother and daughter characters with whom the viewer is encouraged to identify. The past version of the split characters suggests horror and dread, and informs the viewer that Yoshimi and Ikuko are not fully identifiable as individuals with autonomous identities. The past constantly infiltrates their present and undermines Freud's notion of the (realist) ego in control. This lack of control for the ego is initiated first of all through the use of a split character (into past and present binaries) and the film then figures these two representations through classic horror conventions/narrative (a ghost) of a split between good and evil. Melanie Klein offers a useful theory in terms of splitting within a mother figure, and may therefore prove useful to ground this concept of fissure in a good / evil

dichotomy. Psychoanalysis is useful here as it provides a theory that delves into the psychological aspect of splitting which so many of these films focus on, particularly in relation to the family and our relations with others.

Melanie Klein's psychoanalytic work involved much study around the younger child and she provided many useful theories in the area of psychoanalysis. Klein's work often countered Freud's theories, much of which has been argued as being phallogentric; Freud's work is often father-centred, particularly in conceptualising moral development. For the purposes of this chapter it is only necessary to discuss her allusions to the idea that the mother is split between the 'good' and the 'bad' for the child. One of Klein's key concepts is that the child wishes for the breast to be present at all times, in order that the child's appetite will be continually satisfied. Moreover, in addition to this satisfaction the all-present breast would:

prevent destructive impulses and persecutory anxiety... These unavoidable grievances, together with happy experiences, reinforce the innate conflict between love and hatred, at bottom between life and death instincts, and result in the feeling that a good and bad breast exists (Klein: 1986: 212)

Klein suggests that the child then perceives the mother to be actually split in two. One mother that is totally loving and nourishing and one mother that is all devouring and destructive: a good mother and a bad mother. This creates confusion for the child in that on one hand the mother provides all that is needed and therefore produces love in the child for the mother, while on the other hand the mother is to be feared and hated. The idea of the good and bad mother is often used as narrative material in film and television as well as stories such as fairy tales. In *Dark Water* the split mother is used as a narrative vehicle for providing a past 'bad' mother and a present 'good' mother, and in itself is perhaps an allegory of the problems that a child must face in the acceptance and realisation of a parent that is not wholly good.

It is significant that it is the dead child that desperately seeks this 'good' mother as, if we accept her as an embodiment of the past; she invokes the

older traditional values of Japan that can be considered lost in the face of modernity. In some respects, the dead child seeks a 'ryosai kenbo (good wife, wise mother)' (Phillips, 2003: 160), which is a traditional idea of a Japanese female family member who looks after the family and runs the house. However, as the dead child is a figure of fear and horror, particularly nearing the conclusion of the film as she appears in her actual decaying bodily form, she invokes the pressures that the older traditional past has on the female population. Key to both Nakata's *Ring* and *Dark Water* are the problems and tensions that surround modern Japanese family and social life in the face of the recent traditional past that poses problems for modernity; in both films such tensions seem to have more impact on the female characters. This past / present dichotomy is articulated in both films directly through the use of twinned characters; by dividing the past and present and mapping such a split on to characters the films create a further version of a (new mythic) fractured character thus suggesting the tensions surrounding identity are also bound into cultural and national locations.

X is an anime film (based on a Manga comic) that also centres on the problems that occur between the past and present. The film tells the tale of Kamui Shiro (voiced by Tomokazu Seki), a young Japanese man who returns to Tokyo in order to fulfil his destiny as protector of Tokyo and everyone who lives there. Kamui must become a Dragon of Heaven and protect the people, while his nemesis will become a Dragon of Earth and will seek to destroy all the people in the world in order to save the planet from destruction. Kamui may take either position initially, and once he has chosen another will take up the opposite position as either protector of people or protector of the Earth. The film introduces the theme of doubling almost instantly as the film opens with the idea that there may be two Kamuis. As the narrative progresses it becomes apparent that Kamui's friend Fuma Mont (voiced by Ken Narita) takes up his oppositional nemesis position, but he begins to look exactly like Kamui and dresses the same way. Several other characters

mention that they find it difficult to tell them apart, and in dream worlds they appear as one and the same person. The first dream sequence in the film shows the final battle for Tokyo between Kamui and his other self (Fuma), they both appear identical except for one being an angel in white and the other an angel in black. The film figures the protagonist as embodying very different characteristics split into two versions of himself: simply put as good and as evil. A divide between good and evil is suggestive of Manichaeism which may well derive from Western morality and horror film conventions.

By splitting the protagonist into two, the film makes use of the now familiar idea of separating one person's characteristics into two different bodily entities. However, the film bases this around the dichotomy of the past and present as has already been noted in *The Eye* and *Dark Water*. *X* places narrative tensions around a mythic split character, but the two halves of this character have very different ideas about the current state of Tokyo (and the world). The good Kamui wishes to save all the people and preserve the world as it is now in the present, while the bad Kamui (Fuma) wishes to kill all the humans on the planet in order to save the planet by reverting to its former state. As is the case in *Dark Water*, *X* figures the embodiment of the past as an evil force, while the figure of the present, and therefore modernity, is represented as good, honest and sincere. While such a Manichean theme seems likely to be deployed in order to appeal to a horror genre audience, perhaps there are further cultural resonating issues at stake. The past as a force of evil may stem from the dread that might be apparent in modern Japanese culture of losing older traditional values. Alternatively perhaps by figuring the past as an evil force these films are expressing the pressures that older ways of life put on modern society. It seems likely that both these explanations can describe to a certain extent what is at stake in the past / present (centred on split characters) binary of the horror film.

By infiltrating the past into the present films such as *The Eye*, *Dark Water* and *X* draw upon the loss of traditional values in contemporary culture. This seems most apparent in places such as Japan due to the forced infiltration of Western values in the postwar period into a society that previously upheld tradition over modernity. A link here can be drawn to the cinema in Japan being directly influenced into becoming more 'modern' and leaving behind older and more traditional themes by the American occupation. Film production in post war Japan was continuously monitored, as Leith Morton suggests '[m]ovies made in the immediate postwar era were subject to censorship by American occupation authorities and thus period dramas or samurai dramas...were more or less banned on the grounds that they smacked of prewar military ideology' (Morton, 2003: 221). During this period, then, older traditional themes were forcibly removed from the cinema screen in order for modernisation to preside. The removal of themes such as the Samurai from the cinema screen was a direct attempt on the part of the Americans to modernise Japan; the Samurai were deemed, as Morton suggests, as representing 'prewar military ideology' (ibid: 221).

Interestingly, current cinematic releases contradict this view. Although of course America now has no overt sway over Japanese film production, it is interesting that Japanese culture (both traditional and contemporary) is becoming popular narrative material in America. American mainstream film now seems preoccupied with the 'way of the Samurai' for example, with films such as *The Last Samurai* (Edward Zwick, 2003, USA/New Zealand/Japan) recently on general release, and the popularity of sword fighting in films such as *Kill Bill* (Quentin Tarantino, 2003 & 2004, USA). Japanese 'fighting' culture is also referenced in films such as *Batman Returns* (Tim Burton, 1992, USA/UK) and *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977, USA). It seems that the renowned honour and invincible swordplay of the Samurai are now deemed acceptable, even worthy of a high budget Hollywood production. Perhaps America's current political state has more in common with Japan's so-called pre-war military nationalistic ideology than has been previously

apparent. Also released fairly recently is the melodic *Lost in Translation* (Sofia Coppola, 2003, USA/Japan), which tells the tale of two Americans attempt to navigate the brightly lit and confusing modern day Tokyo. While the film centres on the relationship between the two protagonists, key to the film is the location and the cultural barriers that arise between the Americans and the Japanese. Although treated with humour, the film does point to the current fascination with all that is Japanese, and our constant attempt at defining 'Japaneseness'. Interest from Western cultures in older Japanese traditions and culture is now an area of fascination in the present, while in the past it apparently indicated a threat to the Western world.

It has been argued in this section that while the form of the split subject carries across cultural borders there are varying concerns of a cultural nature evident in the texts discussed; the dichotomy between the past and the present is more evident in the texts discussed that were produced mainly in Japan but also a joint production from Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore and the UK. Before discussing this fully, I shall explore the crossover that arguably occurs in many of the films discussed in this chapter (and previous chapters). By exploring two more films, one a joint production from Japan and the UK and the second from South Korea, I aim to show that the split subject brings to light many cultural concerns that are transnational, which is arguably bound tightly to the transnational nature of the film industry.

* * *

Breaking Boundaries in *Ktkaku kidttai [Ghost in the Shell]* (Mamoru Oshii, 1995, Japan/UK) and *Janghwa, Hongryeon [A Tale of Two Sisters]* (Kim Ji-woon, 2003, South Korea)

I argued in the previous chapter that gender issues often permeate texts that focus on split subjects from places such as America, Canada and the UK. In the last section I argued that a preoccupation with the past and the present were central to narratives that centre on fractured identity in film examples from Japan as well as other East Asian joint productions. *Ghost in the Shell* is a Japanese and UK anime co-production that is also preoccupied with issues surrounding identity. There are hints of a past / present dichotomy in the film (that is deeply inherent in the texts discussed above), which is mainly located in a preoccupation with modern technology that can be seen as clashing with the traditional past. However, issues surrounding gender also permeate this film (as is also the case with *Dark Water* discussed above).

The lead character Major Motoko Kusanagi (voiced by Atsuko Tanaka) is a female cyborg who is on the trail of the Puppet Master (voiced by Iemasa Kayumi), a high-tech hacker. The plot is rather in-depth but the crux of the story is that the Puppet Master has been tracing the Major as he wishes to 'merge'; they are, according to him, practically indistinguishable in terms of psychical make-up and identity. The Major's concerns are very 'human' in that she expresses concern over losing her identity and personality. The conclusion of the film, however, has the two merging into one bodily form; both 'original' bodies are destroyed and the new being takes on the body of an adolescent female. Gender in the film is played with mainly in terms of standard perceptions of male and female roles; the Major is set up as female but she takes on a 'postmodern' slant through her representation as warrior, similar to other contemporary female heroines such as Buffy or Xena. She is also set up as a hybrid between 'human' and 'robot'; she takes on the appearance of a young woman yet her body is almost entirely made up of synthetic materials and is extremely heavy because of this. On attacking a

large machine in an attempt to get to the Puppet Master she tries to rip open the heavy metal covering; her muscles bulge and she begins to take on the appearance of a body builder. Her body then crosses boundaries in that she at times appears as a young feminine woman, at others she takes on features that are often considered to be traditionally masculine; such transformations are afforded through the use of animation. In addition to this, the Puppet Master as an entity is always referred to as male and he has a male voice, yet he is placed firstly in the body of a young woman, and he then takes over the Major's female body. Finally, he is incorporated into the 'new' body of the young girl along with the major. Gender roles in the film appear to be purposefully toyed with, suggesting a postmodern 'knowing' attitude to current trends of representation and cultural attitudes regarding roles of men and women.

While the film is often considered solely as a Japanese production due to it being based on a Japanese Manga comic, it should also be remembered that it is a joint production with the UK. The film is therefore testimony to the transnational nature of the film business (and the popularity of anime and Manga in Western society) where not only the economic aspects of the industry cross national boundaries, but narrative, stylistics and film form bleed into one another. The film's preoccupation with identity and gender identity issues, as well as the use of reflective surfaces and images to depict fragmentary identity, is perhaps suggestive of the cross over of narrative theme and stylistics between cinema of the UK and America and other cultures such as film from Japan.

A Tale of Two Sisters is a South Korean film that also hints at the discordance between the past and the present; the film blurs timelines by confusing the present with the past. The protagonist Bae Soo-mi (Lim Su-jeong), who is linked both in the past and present to mental illness through links with a mental health hospital, is constantly seen with her sister Bae

Soo-yeon (Mun Geun-yeong). Her sister is ever present in her life yet we later find out that she has died at the hands of their stepmother (former nanny) Eun-joo (Yum Jung-ah) some time ago. The merging of the past with the present is positioned alongside the blurring of the sisters' identities (as well as a similar uncertainty about the identity of Eun-joo). For example they begin menstruation on the same day, toward the close of the film Soo-mi also sees herself as Eun-joo. Mirrors are again put to use in this film to illustrate the fragmentary nature of the characters' identities, particularly Soo-mi and Eun-joo.

As is the case with *Ghost in the Shell* (and many other texts discussed in this thesis), *A Tale of Two Sisters* also displays a preoccupation with gender roles. The film's narrative is linked to the fairy tale of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* in that the 'evil' stepmother is the cause of Soo-mi's woes as she has caused both the death of her real mother and her sister. She then marries Soo-mi's father and Soo-mi feels excluded from the family. The fairy tale element to the film presumably lends itself well to appealing to a Western audience. Such narratives based on family tensions (and roles within the family) are familiar to many audiences and is integral to the narrative of *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* for example, which leans heavily on fairy tale elements, more so than *A Tale of Two Sisters*. The titles of both films include the word 'tale', which in itself invokes fairy tale or folklore imagery. *A Tale of Two Sisters* and *Ghost in the Shell* can be considered as breaking boundaries in that they display concerns about identity, such as gender, that cross cultural boundaries; yet the cultural context of the films' production cannot be ignored as the films also show evidence of specific national concerns (such as past / present dichotomies).

The extent to which split characters are apparent on the cinema screen is indicative of many, yet varying, cultural concerns in modern society. This last

section of the chapter has attempted to explore the extent to which this mythic splitting theme has provided spectacle and narrative to the cinema of other countries and cultures (mainly Japan), those outside of the Western world. The use of split characters, doubles and the twinning of characters invoke a psychological interpretation to a film or television text, and by identifying this splitting theme in cinema from other regions a link can be drawn between largely different cultural climates. As a new myth, the splitting phenomenon provides commentary on the current cultural state of play in that it suggests that identity is a major issue in contemporary society. Issues surrounding identity are mediated through split characters in film and television texts. By viewing splitting and split characters as a new myth this chapter contends that wider cultural links can be drawn between splitting and contemporary attitudes towards identity, not only in the West but also cinema from other regions such as Japan.

What is apparent, however, are concerns regarding national identities in terms of the tensions that arise between the past and present (tradition / modernity) binary, once again this is articulated through the use of a split character. This is more specific to the examples from East Asian cinema (largely Japan) however, and suggests that different meanings are at play across different cultures. The past / present divide is suggestive of concerns that are particular to Japanese (Eastern) culture and society, while in the films from Western cultures divides are often more strongly preoccupied with gender roles and models. The generic conventions of horror transcend cultural boundaries, however, and often an opposition between good and evil is central to a tale of the double or fragmentary identity. Horror, in narratives based on split identity, is frequently articulated through the 'personal', through a subjective view of what it means to experience ourselves in the world, which in many of these texts is depicted as frighteningly fractured.

I have shown in this chapter that while quite specific national concerns are mediated through the split subject in film and television products, the transnationality of the film industry ensures that to argue one culture's concerns are mediated in a specific and different way to another is a rather simplistic view. Different cultural concerns are evident in the texts discussed in this chapter; however there are also many similarities. The form and function of the double is typically figured as a villain, or at least adversary, to the hero or protagonist of the narrative. Cinematic tropes are employed across culture to depict fragmentary identity, such as mirrors and reflective or iridescent surfaces. All the films discussed invoke a psychological interpretation because the narrative centres on a splitting or fracturing of a central character, and audiences from many cultures are clearly familiar with such storylines, which is evident in the popularity of the films discussed (at least among fans of horror films etc).

This thesis contends that the trope of splitting has mythic resonance due to the status that split characters are afforded in media. Warner suggests that:

a myth shows something, it's a story spoken to a purpose, it issues a warning, it gives an account which advises and tells often by bringing into play showings of fantastical shape and invention – monsters. Myths define enemies and aliens and in conjuring them up they say who we are and what we want, they tell stories to impose structure and order. Like fiction, they can tell the truth even while they're making it all up (Warner, 1994: 19)

Fiction, then, has much to say about the collective 'us' and the issues that surround being who we are. A myth such as splitting currently highlights the individual crises that modern living can create, particularly in light of Japanese cinema (as well as examples from other East Asian cinemas) where modernity comes under attack from older traditional ways of life. Across Eastern and Western cultures meanings of splitting images change but their prevalence is apparent through the popularity of the films discussed. Despite the difference in meaning all the texts discussed here bring to light problems of identity and what it means to live in contemporary

times in a particular society and are rendered through a set of generic conventions that are shared across cultural borders.

Conclusion

It has been the aim of this thesis to analyse 'splitting' and fragmentary identity onscreen in order to determine the meaning of splintered characters within a cultural context. In an industrial context, split characters are a dramatic device that provides narrative structure as well as stylistic content and the opportunity for fanciful visual special effects. In the texts I have discussed, drama and spectacle is often promoted by the internal psychological make-up of split characters and their inter-relationships with others and intra-relationships with themselves; the texts literalise concerns and issues about essential definitions of who we are. However, the range and variety of texts that deal with unstable identities through splitting is testimony to the fact that meanings are not fixed in terms of identity representation in media, particularly across genres. Contemporary understandings of identity, subjectivity and the 'human' is currently represented or mediated onscreen in psychological, horror and fantasy-based genres through fragmentary characters. This suggests unrest regarding what it might mean to be 'human', and what is at stake in terms of establishing and maintaining an identity within a particular cultural context.

Debates regarding the horror film and psychological-based genres have often focused on the representation of gender, sexuality and the body; I have built this thesis on the concept that these arguments have not adequately appraised in detail what is at stake in representations of identity and what it means to be 'human' in these genres. While I have shown that gender identity is integral to cultural understandings of identity, this is not the only factor involved in the representation of identity in horror and psychological based genres. The double brings to life more than the problems of living in a gendered society; the double's relation to the subject is one of aggression, eroticism, alienation, paranoia, desire and lack, all features of Lacan's theorisation of human existence, which suggests that Lacan's concept of what it means to have a social identity may have some relevance at least in contemporary society.

Identity in the texts discussed is far from sovereign, which is reminiscent of postmodernist definitions of the subject. Arguably it is mediations of the 'postmodern subject' that become the point of identification in horror and psychological based genres; the postmodern subject contrasts to a humanist or modernist subject where a self-governing and autonomous identity is central to subjectivity and experience. Postmodernism is a model that allows for the fragmentation of experience, which is similar to how psychoanalysis can aid an insight into identity in the cinema. I have shown on several levels that psychoanalysis can aid an understanding of the meanings at work in dualistic characters; this is particularly as psychoanalytic concepts are often deployed in the horror and fantasy, psychologically based genres this thesis focuses on. These are film and television texts that arguably use and engage with psychoanalytic concepts to create narrative drive and extraordinary visual displays; it is therefore misguided to repudiate psychoanalytic theory when filmmakers are likely to be consciously using such models. Psychoanalytic theory also engages with the complexities of the formation or origin of individuals, the central focus of this project has been to determine the meanings behind the representations in media of the formation of identity.

The notion of 'ego' is central to understanding representations of identity for several reasons. The ego provides a key model or framework to describe the sense of identity that individuals might assign to themselves; in theory ego is the aspect of mental functioning that is largely conscious and provides an internal map of who we are, which we then project onto others. Central to the theorisation of ego is that it is actually disavowing the more truthfully fragmented nature of identity; for Freud, the ego oscillates between being fully in control of mental functioning and becoming narcissistically self-involved, while for Lacan the fully autonomous ego is a delusion that is covering over our inherently fractured state. The model of the narcissistic

ego is instrumental as it allows for both the theorisation and experience of identity that is not autonomous and in control.

As I have shown, horror and psychological-based texts often literalise both the realist and narcissistic ego under attack; the slippage between the two often gets to the heart of representations of identity onscreen. For example, Buffy at times retains her heroic status but spends much of the series battling with issues of identity in an attempt to remain autonomous. It is the movement between these two concepts of identity that is often explored in the intriguing representation of protagonists who are at times fully in charge of their destinies while at others become increasingly besieged by other factors. The representation of identity as a persistent slide between these two polar positions is likely to be a comment on the exigent experience of identity in the world. Such representation is unlike the mediation of identity in more mainstream genres where 'whole' autonomous characters populate the screen; while they may have to cope with difficulties in the narrative they are not faced with the besiegement or onslaught on their subjectivity apparent in the texts I have discussed in this thesis.

Lacan's theories in general can all be traced back to his most well known concept of the 'mirror phase', which is the birth of the ego and the devastating initial fracture in the individual. Lacan cleverly picks up the constant conflation of 'self' and 'ego' in Freud's line of enquiry and penned a theory of human origin that allows for a more difficult experience of identity; it is impossible to distinguish between 'self' and 'ego' and in fact the slippage between the two is key to understanding the ego. Ego is *both* the person and the psychological agency; attempting to distinguish between the two is as fruitless as attempting to unite ego and subject in Lacan's line of thought. In understanding representations of identity onscreen, it is because protagonists are characterised as versions of human 'selves' that allows for using ego as a model as a tool for analysis and critical appraisal. It is

because the ego is continually aligned with selfhood that this thesis is effectively arguing for the changing use of the term ego, as to examine selfhood is to take into account cultural contexts; cultural contexts are continually shifting, and to use the term ego within such contexts allows for the changing use of the term.

Psychoanalysis is a theory about origins within the register of subjectivism and in this way psychoanalysis can help us to perceive the world in a particular way; the representation of identity in the cinema makes use of the 'recognisable' issue of how identity is formed and maintained, and crucially the actual experience of forming and maintaining an identity. Film and TV products are built from culture and discourse, and in this way incorporate social fears and anxieties, while at the same time perhaps providing a cathartic way to exorcise issues arising from the experience of identity. Through combining psychoanalysis with an awareness of cultural and social contexts, this thesis has gone some way to examining how identity can be understood as disrupted and fractured in terms of experience in a social context.

Through examining traditional horror figures such as the werewolf or vampire in the horror film, it is evident that the extrinsic monstrous figure well known to many horror fans has been replaced in many texts with a bodily form or 'imaginary anatomy' that is more difficult to tell apart from the 'human' of the protagonist (or ourselves). While the generic conventions of horror in some texts render the double as a monstrous figure, the psychological premise of some of the texts discussed also integrates the double as an 'assistant' to the protagonist or as an ideal ego. In this way film and television products allow different aspects of personality to be played out onscreen, which is key to snaring audience interest and intrigue; in many of the texts discussed, the double may appear as 'evil' and the double can simultaneously cause problems for the protagonist as well as carrying out deeds that are deemed

'uncivilised' or even horrific. The double is not only figured as such in a visual sense, through analysing the character of Willow in the popular television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* I have argued in Chapter Three that Willow's use of speech, and her ever more authoritative expression of magical language is explicitly linked to her fragile identity. Willow's varying performances of speech acts (both magical and in everyday conversation) can be understood as symptomatic or an indication of her split nature and fragile identity.

A central argument of this thesis is that split and fragmentary characters are a prime trope in recent cinema and television, and it is a trope that is put to use in a variety of ways. I have argued in Chapter Four that splitting in contemporary times can be considered in a mythic sense, the function of which is to devise tales of the formation of identity. This is linked to what is at stake in terms of what it means to live in contemporary society during specific times. To understand the splitting theme as a myth allows for an understanding of contemporary cinema that produces tales with issues of identity in mind. I suggest that, in line with Warner's arguments, myth is continually evolving in association with, and directly due to, a constantly shifting cultural context; myth is therefore vital in interpreting and critically appraising contemporary concerns (especially those surrounding identity) in society. The present use of (mythic) dualistic characters in media keys into the nature of contemporary consumer culture; this culture can be viewed as postmodern because of the fragmentation of identities in society, the prominence of consumer buying and the deficiency of ideals in the face of modern (urban) living.

It is apparent that while meanings of images of split characters change across culture and genre, some similarities are also evident which is testimony to the transnational nature of the global film industry. Split characters have taken on a mystical resonance in fantasy-based genres,

connoting varying meanings of identity. The polarisation of good and evil is imperative to many horror genre narratives, which is often the case in different cultural contexts. However, the representation of splitting as a narrative theme changes according to cultural, generic and stylistic context to some degree. Fragmentary characters and splitting as a narrative device is to be considered as a 'new myth', and this contemporary mythic status is figured across culture. Split and fragmentary characters have a traditional mythic status due to the prevalence of doubles in literature; however, doubles are now also more apparent in cinema and television as well as in 'new' media formats such as videogames. The doppelgänger must therefore be understood as carrying specific cultural concerns about contemporary social issues.

While in the texts discussed from Western cultures (largely the USA) often show preoccupation with issues such as gender identity, the texts discussed from Japan and South Korea display issues of modernity and the past invading the present. The crossing of the past / present divide is made possible through dualistic characters and identities. However, it is not a simple matter of different cultures displaying completely different issues of national and individual identity. Issues of modernity are apparent in all the texts discussed through the postmodern aspect of fragmentation and consumer culture. Gender identity is also apparent in many of the texts discussed in this thesis, and often ideas of traditional gender identity are linked to tradition polarised with modernity. The transnational nature of the film industry therefore ensures that while cultural context does indeed play a large role in affecting how identity is mediated onscreen, many cultural boundaries are crossed through the production and distribution of film and television products.

I have a significant investment in the representation of the double onscreen, and this lies in their capacity to literalise feelings and experience of

fragmentariness. Contemporary society has a strange and intriguing relationship to issues of identity and it is often considered that a 'whole', autonomous identity that is thoroughly identifiable through a progression of time is 'normal' and usual. On the other hand, the experience of identity as exigent and even unknowable is disavowed or associated with mental illness, while at the same time being apparent in cultural products as a mediation of identity in a general sense. Just as the cracks of identity are experienced in the real world by, I would argue, all individuals so are the chasms of experiential identity evident in products that culture produces, such as film and television.

The double is a shadow figure, shadowing our own experiences of ourselves in the world, providing a comment on subjectivity as divided, almost tangible and deeply enigmatic. It is the illusionary capacity of the cinema and television that figure the double as 'real' and physical, and allow for the double to be played as dangerous, yet erotic and seductive. Ideal shadow selves and dark doubles are visualised onscreen through magic, enchantment and spectacle (ably supported by special effects and more recently by CGI) and strike at the heart of what it means to live as a social, supposedly unified subject. The double sheds light on what it means to be human; by existing as superhuman, truly evil, positively seductive and aggressive the double exposes the actual experience of identity in the world as not truly anything. We are hybrids of good and bad, the heroic and cowardly, the realist ego and the narcissistic ego, existing and experiencing identity as shifting in different moments of time, as dualistic and splintered.

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Adaptation (Spike Jonze, 2002, USA)
Angel (1999 – 2004, USA)
Angel Heart (Alan Parker, 1987, USA, Canada, UK)
Batman Returns (Tim Burton, 1992, USA/UK)
Being John Malkovitch (Spike Jonze, 1999, USA)
Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982, USA)
Bringing Out the Dead (Martin Scorsese, 1999, USA)
Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1997 – 2003, USA)
Cat People (Jacques Tourneur, 1942, USA)
Cat People (Paul Schrader, 1982, USA)
The Craft (Andrew Fleming, 1996, USA)
Curse of the Werewolf (Terence Fisher, 1961, UK)
Dark Angel (2000-2002, USA)
The Dark Mirror (Robert Siodmak, 1946, USA)
Dark Water [*Honogurai mizu no soko kara*] (Hideo Nakata, 2002, Japan)
Dawn of the Dead (George A. Romero, 1978, Italy/USA)
Day of the Dead (George A. Romero, 1985, USA)
Die Hard (John McTiernan, 1988, USA)
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932, USA)
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Victor Fleming, 1941, USA)
Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (Maurice Phillips, 2002, UK)
Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde (David Price, 1995, UK/USA)
Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde (Roy Ward Baker, 1971, UK)
The Evil Dead (Sam Raimi, 1981, USA)
Evil Dead II (Sam Raimi, 1987, USA)
Existenz (1999, Canada/UK/France)
The Eye (Oxide Pang Chun & Danny Pang, 2002, HK/UK/Thailand/Singapore)
Face/Off (John Woo, 1997, USA)
The Fellowship of the Ring (Peter Jackson, 2001, New Zealand/USA)
Fight Club (David Fincher, 1999, Germany/USA)
Freddie Vs. Jason (Ronnie Yu, 2003, USA/Italy)
Gangs of New York (Martin Scorsese, 2002, USA, Germany, Italy, UK, Netherlands)
Ghost in the Shell [*Ktkaku kidttai*] (Mamoru Oshii, 1995, Japan/UK)
Ginger Snaps (John Fawcett, 2000, Canada/USA)
Halloween (John Carpenter, 1978, USA)
Ichi the Killer [*Koroshiya 1*] (Miike Takashi, 2001, Japan/HK/South Korea)
Identity (James Mangold, 2003, USA)
Into the Mirror (Kim Seong-Ho, 2003, South Korea)
Kill Bill (Quentin Tarantino, 2003 & 2004, USA)
Lady Snowblood: Blizzard from the Netherworld (Fujita Toshiya, 1973, Japan)
The Last Samurai (Edward Zwick, 2003, USA/New Zealand/Japan)
Lost Highway (David Lynch, 1997, France/USA)
Lost in Translation (Sofia Coppola, 2003, USA/Japan)
The Machinist [*El Maquinista*] (Brad Anderson, 2004, Spain)
The Magnificent Seven (John Sturges, 1960, USA)

Man in the Iron Mask (Randall Wallace, 1998, UK)
Me, Myself and Irene (Bobby Farrelly and Peter Farrelly, 2000, USA)
Mean Streets (Martin Scorsese, 1973, USA),
Memento (Christopher Nolan, 2000, USA)
Mildred Pierce (Michael Curtiz, 1945, USA)
Mulholland Drive (David Lynch, 2001, France/USA)
Near Dark (Kathryn Bigelow, 1987, USA)
Night of the Living Dead (George A. Romero, 1968, USA)
The Nutty Professor (Tom Shadyac, 1996, USA)
The One (James Wong, 2001, USA)
Querelle (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1982, West Germany/France)
The Return of the King (Peter Jackson, 2003, USA/New Zealand/Germany)
Ring [Ringu] (Hideo Nakata, 1998, Japan)
Sea of Souls (BBC 1, broadcast 2nd February 2004)
Secret Window (David Koepp, 2004, USA)
Seven Samurai [Shichinin no samurai] (Akira Kurosawa, 1954, Japan)
Snow White: A Tale of Terror (Michael Cohn, 1997, USA)
Snow White and the Seven Dwarves (supervising director: David Hand, 1937, USA)
Spiderman (Sam Raimi, 2002, USA)
Spirited Away [Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi] (Hayao Miyazaki, 2001, Japan)
Star Wars (George Lucas, 1977, USA)
Stuck On You (Bobby Farrelly and Peter Farrelly, 2003, USA)
The Student of Prague (Stellan Rye, 1913, Germany)
A Tale of Two Sisters [Janghwa, Hongryeon] (Kim Ji-Woon, 2003, South Korea)
Taxi Driver (Martin Scorsese, 1976, USA)
Teen Wolf (Rod Daniel, 1985, USA)
The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (Tobe Hooper, 1974, USA)
Top Gun (Tony Scott, 1986, USA)
Twins of Evil (John Hough, 1971, GB)
The Two Towers (Peter Jackson, 2002, New Zealand/USA)
Videodrome (David Cronenberg, 1983, Canada/USA)
Wolf (Mike Nichols, 1994, USA)
The Wolfman (George Waggner, 1941, USA)
X (Rintaro, 1996, Japan)
Xena: Warrior Princess (1995-2001, USA)
Zatôichi ('Beat' Takeshi, 2003, Japan)
Zatôichi and the One Armed Swordsman [Shin Zatôichi: Yabure! Tojin-ken] (Kimiyooshi Yasuda, 1971, Japan/HK)