

Bloody Penny Picture Pose

A comparative study on the representation of sexuality and violence within the aesthetics of Victorian Gothic horror

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Abstract

There is an ongoing fascination with the Victorian era as well as the genre of horror, and the characters originating from the first 18th century Gothic tales still appear in our Western popular culture today. The Victorian Gothic novels contain elements of romanticism and violence which often results in strong undertones of heated sexuality. I argue that it is one of the reasons for the genre's wide popularity. This thesis examines the representation of femininity and female sexuality within a Victorian horror context by a comparative analyse of illustrations from British 19th century Penny Blood publications with contemporary fashion photographs. The images are analysed by applying Erwin Panofsky's method of Iconography and with the theoretical framework of feminist visual culture, and historical theories on sexuality, biology and violence. The thesis shows how Gothic visualisations are interpreted and appropriated photographically today, where the latter is darker and more exaggerated than the former. Symbols of sexuality, female agency, dominance and submission are equally found in the Victorian and the contemporary material. However, the Victorian aesthetic has become a platform where a nude, sexual female body in a S&M situation can offer a spectrum of meanings and even symbols of feminism. It is a visual culture where women can fight back, taking revenge on their oppressor and looking fierce when doing so.

Keywords: Victorian, Gothic, horror, female sexuality, feminism, agency, sadomasochism, gender, visual culture, sexual history.

This thesis became a very personal obstacle for me to conquer. It has been a real challenge and it has tested my mental strength and sanity in many ways for the longest time. In the end I made it through and I am extremely proud of myself for not losing faith in my own capabilities.

Nevertheless, I could not have made it all on my own.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The fascination with the Victorian era of mystique and the genre of horror seems to be a never ending matter in our Western popular culture. The characters of monsters, murderers and detectives originating from the first 18th century Gothic tales continue to appear in books, movies and TV series, only with slightly modified features. Although they vary in expression, genre and targeted audience, **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** (Joss Whedon, USA, 1997-2003), **True Blood** (Alan Ball, USA, 2008-2014) and *Twilight* are all contemporary examples of stories that centre on the forever living vampires¹. A more recent example is the TV series **Penny Dreadful** (John Logan, USA, Ireland and UK, 2014-2016) that, for me, in a wonderful way manages to build a story that contains many of the well-known characters from the Gothic novels, such as Dr. Frankenstein and his monster, Dorian Gray, werewolves and, of course, lots of vampires. Victorian ghosts and spirits are also present in films such as **Winchester** (Michael Spierig, Australia and USA, 2018). Moreover, there is a long list of crime-fighters such as **Sherlock** (Mark Gatiss, UK and USA, 2010-) and the profiling team in **Criminal Minds** (Jeff Davis, USA and Canada, 2005-) that use their intellect and the bending of laws in order to put criminals behind bars, and even examples in which the protagonist is a murderer turned hero as in the TV series **Dexter** (James Manos Jr., USA, 2006-2013). The horror genre has really made its way into serial form on TV the last couple of years with shows like **American Horror Story** (Brad Falchuk, USA, 2011-) and **The Haunting of Hill House** (Mike Flanagan, USA, 2018-).

The most prominent elements found in the Victorian Gothic novels are romanticism and violence, a combination which often entails strong undertones of heated sexuality, and it is the representation of said romanticism, violence and sexuality that constitutes the main focus of this thesis. By analysing illustrations from British 19th century publications of penny magazines, I unite two interests of mine, namely the historical context of the Victorian era and the visual representation of horror and sexuality.² During the second half of the 18th century, the Gothic literature emerged in England, a genre that combine fiction, horror and romanticism and the novel *The castle of Otranto*, written by Horace Walpole in 1764, is attributed as one of the first. Due to the increasing literacy and improving technology in the

¹ The *Twilight* serial novels are written by Stephenie Meyer and the first book was published in 2005. The film adoptions are the following: **Twilight** (Cathrine Hardwicke, USA, 2008); **The Twilight saga: New Moon** (Chris Weits, USA, 2009); **The Twilight saga: Eclipse** (David Slade, USA, 2010); **Breaking Dawn: Part 1** (Bill Condon, USA, 2011); **Breaking Dawn: Part 2** (Bill Condon, USA, 2012).

² The novels were issued weekly one episode at a time and printed on cheap pulp paper, each number costing one (old) penny. These types of publications are also known as penny horrible, penny awful and penny fiction.

1830's, reading became a form of leisure activity that led to a new market of cheap fiction for the working classes. The *Penny Bloods* were magazines that published Gothic novels in serial form, both new and classics, about the adventures of pirates and highwaymen at first, but later focusing on crime, murder and the poor streets of London, which made them even more popular. An essential element was the black-and-white illustrations which the novels were accompanied by, and it is images as such that constitute my historical material. By the 1860's, the narratives of the penny novels started to target a younger audience and parallel with this change they generally came to be called *Penny Dreadfuls* instead, a name change that is employed by researchers today. At the same time many penny fiction writers became well-respected authors by incorporating the gruesome ingredients of the former into fine literature, replacing dungeons with a tidy domestic sphere familiar to the middle-class reader. As Gothic lost its place as the dominant genre, and was disliked by most critics, it entered a most creative phase. The urban became a particularly Victorian Gothic setting and a new genre was created: the sensation novel.³

I would argue that the strong connection between mystique and sexuality found in the 19th century novels still linger on culturally today and, more importantly, that it is one of the reasons for the genre's wide popularity. People on the wrong side of the law, and especially fictional creatures such as vampires, are often being sexualised, and a part of this sexualisation is the threatening danger it contains. While many of the radical feminists of the 1990's were quick to label such novels and illustrations as nothing but a male fetishized fantasy pleaser, by objectification of the naked and abused female body, the feminist movement permits a more diverse analysis today. The explosive popularity of the book and movie *Fifty shades of grey* is one recent example that supports female curiosity about reading narratives describing sexual fantasies about dominance and submission.⁴ As a scholar, I advocate a feminism that supports variation, where women are allowed to enjoy their sexuality in whichever way, without being accused of surrendering to patriarchal structures.

While my historical material comprises the black-and-white illustrations which accompanied then novels, the second half of my research material consists of contemporary fashion photographs, thus placing the study within the field of Fashion Studies. The penny illustrations will be comparatively analysed with the photos since representations of horror, death and violence are found within the fashion industry as well. The role of victim is more

³ Judith Flanders, "Penny Dreadfuls", British Library.

⁴ E.L. James, *Fifty shades of grey* (UK: Vintage Books, 2011); **Fifty shades of grey** (Sam Taylor-Johnson, UK, 2015).

often than not played by a woman and both Duncan Quinn and Jimmy Choo have prime examples of such ads⁵⁶. Sexual violence of women is not uncommon within fashion spreads, three examples are Dolce & Gabbana's ad in 2007, Calvin Klein Jeans 2010 campaign and Raj Shetye's photo feature "The wrong turn" in 2014 all play on the visualisation of one woman being restricted, or soon to be gang-raped, by a group of half naked men.

Stories and visualisations of the Gothic narratives have come back into popularity time and time again since the late 18th century, and one could wonder why we are so interested in this sort of entertainment. Looking at picture-based websites such as Pinterest it becomes clear that it is a trend to visualise this style photographically, using labels and hashtags such as Victorian Gothic, goth, neo-romanticism and steampunk. So, why do we gain pleasure of such thrills? What does it say about our society as a whole and of the people who live in it? Gothic literature and penny fiction is a well-researched genre within academic fields such as Literature, Popular Culture, Gender and Victorian Studies. While the majority of the previous analyses only attend to the textual content, I will rather concentrate on the visual aspect and aesthetic of the Penny Bloods' storytelling illustrations. By analysing how they relate to contemporary visualisations of Victorian horror in fashion photographs I will put them in the context of Fashion Studies. In agreement with leading theorists in the Gothic, Victorian and Gender studies, I put a lot of emphasize on the socio-historical context, focusing not only on the item that is studied, but also on the time in which it is studied. The historical period in which the researcher lives affect the analytic result due to the socio-cultural influences of said time and person. Therefore it is valid to re-examine objects and phenomenon from a new or different perspective. Deriving from the idea that cultural trends and movements are cyclical, I believe that historical research relating the present with the past can contribute to a deeper understanding of our society as a whole. Interesting is when symbols or concepts that have been used during a long period of time seem to have changed the meaning within, and questions of why, when and how emerge.

1.1.AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to get a deeper understanding of representations of femininity and female sexuality within a Victorian horror context, the purpose is to examine how female characters in Penny

⁵ This 2008 ad for Duncan Quinn's men's suits depicts a thin woman who lies on a hood of a classic sports car, dressed in white lace underwear while a well-dressed man is standing behind her and the car. The only thing missing from his outfit is the tie, of which outstretched end he holds in his hand, since the noose is stringed around the seemingly dead woman's neck.

⁶ In this Jimmy Choo 2006 Spring shoe ad, an expensive car is parked somewhere in the desert, guest staring Quincy Jones sits on the edge of the open trunk with a shovel in his hand. Its tip is placed in the hole he is digging; in the trunk lays a woman in a white dress, bare legs and closed eyes.

Bloods are illustrated and how these Gothic visualisations are interpreted and appropriated photographically today. The thesis consists of comparative analyses and its theoretical framework is that of a feminist visual culture, where the works of art historian Bram Dijkstra have been important inspirational tools. Additional theories on sexuality and violence are used to place the study within a European, and mainly British, Victorian context. These regard violence as 19th century entertainment, as studied by Rosalind Crone and Judith Walkowitz, and sexual violence examined by Deborah Cameron and Elizabeth Frazer. Other external sources include the sexual medical history, examined by researchers such as Michael Mason and Thomas Laqueur, as well as sadism and masochism. By applying Erwin Panofsky's method of Iconography I will examine symbols of violence, sex crimes, sexuality, danger, dominance and submission; if they are found in both 19th century penny illustrations and in 21st century fashion images, to which point and in what ways they resemble each other, and whether they seem to connote the same meaning.

The research questions are:

- How is the concept of Victorian horror interpreted aesthetically in modern fashion photographs?
- In regards to features such as dominance and submission, deathliness, female agency and sexuality, what symbolical similarities or differences between the Victorian and the contemporary images can be detected?
- What impact could the feminist movement have had on the sexualisation of violence under the prevailing gender structures?

1.2.MATERIAL

The visual material is divided into two categories, one historical with 19th century illustrations from ten different Penny Blood magazines and one contemporary with fashion photographs. In total the former comprises 20 illustrations and the latter 22 photos. Due to the great number of images included in this study, they will be presented as the analysis unfolds. The images are purposely sampled, that is, they are selected based on the themes discussed. These include representations of the 19th century ideal of passive femininity, vampirism, male violence against women, modernist perversions like voyeurism, sadism and masochism, and female sexual empowerment. The thesis is a socio-historical examination where the images work as examples of the concepts being discussed. Therefore the analytical attention given to them differs, where some are more in-depth and others just briefly mentioned. In regards to the

fashion photographs I must note that they are not all visualisations of Gothic horror, but rather has a connection to a certain illustration or topic. When the final material selection was finished I found that many of them shared the same designer, Alexander McQueen, and photographers, Steven Klein and the duo Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott. Even if this was not done intentional I see no direct problem with it, but rather conclude that they are enthusiasts of Victorian Gothic horror and therefore was likely to be caught in my net. In a similar manner George W. M. Reynolds is the author of the majority of the Penny Bloods as he was a most productive writer.

1.3.METHOD

1.3.1. Sampling of material

Since there is no web based archive which holds all penny novels and illustrations, the process of collecting the visual material was a long and frustrating one. The material was thus gathered from a great number of archives and websites, and therefore the references and validity of every picture had to be checked and re-checked multiple times. The peer-reviewed web page *Price One Penny* was a great recourse for validation as it is a catalogued database for penny fiction from 1837-1860 with bibliographic author information. To find the 19th century illustrations I used web based archives, the main ones being the *British Library digital collection*, *Yesterday's papers* and *Hathi Trust digital library*. I also used platforms such as Pinterest and Flickr to collect images, and then establish the source through investigation. The contemporary fashion photos were found in various ways, for example by reading articles and debates, visiting exhibitions at Fotografiska (The museum of Photography in Stockholm) and do internet searches on specific keywords, like fashion editorial + Gothic + violence.

At the end of my material gathering I had about 200 pictures to select from, an amount which enabled me to see what features and motifs were common or unusual, especially in regards to the penny illustrations. This was helpful since the images selected to be part of the thesis work as examples of the general Victorian Gothic aesthetic, or – as I sometimes point out– when they are not. Choosing the final pictures was a process done parallel to my reading of earlier historical research, and the narrowing down was based on the themes and cultural trends I wanted to discuss and how accurate the image visualized the issue in question. It is thus based on my personal view, but due to the large collection I feel safe in stating what elements among the illustrations are common or rare.

1.3.2. Erwin Panofsky's Iconography

The answers to my research questions regarding representations of violence and sexuality are found in the images themselves, and the purpose of conducting a visual analysis is to make the pattern formed by the individual details visible. I will apply Erwin Panofsky's Iconography since the fundamental aim of this method, described by Theo Van Leeuwen, is to study the *representational* and hidden *symbolical* meanings of an image. Great value is also given to the historical context of the examined object and therefore both textual analysis and contextual research, that explores the socio-cultural meanings behind a phenomenon, are advocated.⁷ It consists of three levels and begins with the *pre-iconographic description*, an objective report of the factual components visible in the image and requires no previous knowledge of either item or context. During the second level, *iconographical analysis*, the hidden or indirect meanings should be identified while the different parts are put in relation to each other. This requires some understanding of the concepts represented which is obtained with the help of external sources, in this case literature on visual culture, Gothic aesthetic and the relationship between text and image during the 19th century. The final step is the *iconological interpretation* where the detected symbols are placed within the historical and cultural context (how objects, themes and concepts were expressed at the time they were created) in order to get a wider perspective on the meanings of the work.⁸ The sources for contextual research include books about the Victorian era, popular culture and the history of gender and sexuality. The two first levels were more of an internal proceeding in the process of collecting and selecting my visual material. Thus, the first and second levels are not outlined in the text since it is the final step that I am focusing on in the comparative analysis. The types of symbols I will be concerned with are male and female roles, sexuality, power and powerlessness, to name a few.

1.4. THEORY

The interdisciplinary field of Fashion Studies allows scholars to combine different approaches since there are no standard theories or methods one must follow. The theoretical framework of this thesis is rooted in Visual Culture and Feminist theory. Additionally, a significant part of the analyses includes concepts from western sexual and medical science, which is why both historical and contemporary theorists and philosophers are presented.

⁷ Theo Van Leeuwen, "Semiotics and Iconography", in *The handbook of visual analysis*, eds. Theo Van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (London: SAGE, 2004).

⁸ Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (New York: Anchor Books edition, 1955).

1.4.1. A feminist visual culture

The field of visual culture branched out from art history during the 1970's and is a subdivision to cultural studies which focus on political aspects of contemporary culture, its historical background and the meaningful mechanisms behind social processes. Some current advocates appearing in *The handbook of visual analysis* are Van Leeuwen, Martin Lister and Liz Wells who all write that the field allows scholars to combine theories of feminism, history and art. Researchers of cultural studies strive to demolish the separating wall between so-called high and low culture by incorporating pop-cultural elements, like the Penny Bloods.⁹

The inspiring writings of British historian Judith Walkowitz and the prominent art historian Griselda Pollock function as a guide in my feminist analysis, in which visual culture is used as a critical perspective in examining normativity and oppressive discourses. Pollock argues that a central part within feminist art research is to study the power relations and gender divisions reproduced in visual media. She problematizes how even feminist research risk to reproduce the cultural hegemony since academic writings tend to judge women and their accomplishments against a male norm, from a different set of criteria or to view them as representatives of their gender. In her discussion of how scholars should position themselves Pollock states that one must treat history as a complex process of multiple narrations and contradictions that keeps producing meaning – and not a static period of time.¹⁰ I find her arguments highly valuable, they challenge me to avoid any routine feminism and encourage me to have a reflexive approach towards the concept of femininity.

On this note I feel the need to include a small disclaimer regarding the usage of the terms feminine and masculine in this essay. I am aware of the problems of using those words, as the meanings attached to them are socially constructed and is in a sense the essence of the issues discussed here. However, I decided that a discussion without using these terms would become both confusing and difficult, thus, when feminine or masculine is used henceforth note that I am referring to the socially constructed qualities they have been inscribed with.

One author that exemplifies the kind of cultural study approached in this thesis is the former professor of English literature and art historian Bram Dijkstra, whose wide-ranging visual analyses I find very engaging. His writings, and especially the book *Idols of perversity*, have been a fantastic source when it comes to the view of women within natural science and how it was reflected in 19th century art by means of symbolism.¹¹ By paralleling literature, art,

⁹ Theo Van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt, eds., *The handbook of visual analysis* (London: SAGE, 2004).

¹⁰ Griselda Pollock, "Women, art and ideology", in *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1983).

¹¹ Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

medical history, sociology and philosophy he critically examines how the female body have been portrayed through history, as a sexual object, reproductive womb and inherently evil. Dijkstra's work is among the main external sources used in combination with Panofsky's iconography, where some of the theoretical concepts discussed are; the death of beautiful women, the invited rape, vagina dentata and the feminine self-sacrifice.

1.4.2. Sexual theory

As this study relates to both old and new ideologies of human sexuality, Anna Katharina Schaffner's book *Modernism and Perversion* has been helpful since it maps out the construction of sexology and sexual perversion in 19th and early 20th century scientific discourse.¹² The book discusses differences between various perversions, theorists and practices in several European countries, as well as the role of fictional writing. In *Psychopathia Sexualis*, published in 1886, Austro-German forensic psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing presented a ground-breaking study of the modern perversities. In combination with observations and scientific sources of medicine, psychiatry and forensics, he uplifted the role of fantasy and fetishized imagination by including literary fiction. The latter was used as a proof of the existence of such perversions, which I agree with to some extent. Although, as noted by Schaffner, the line between fiction and reality becomes unstable as he diagnoses the authors themselves with their fictional perversions.¹³

The two most relevant sexual preferences to this thesis are sadism and masochism, and their respective philosophy originates from fictional literature. Marquis de Sade, born Donatien Alphonse François, was a French aristocrat, politician and philosophical writer active during the late 18th century. He is known for his erotic novels which combine pornography with sexual discourse, and the term sadism is of course derived from his name. His most famous work is *120 days of Sodom*, written in 1785, which contents are summarized in the chapter "Perversions of modernity".¹⁴ Sade advocated extreme freedom which should not be regulated by religion, law or morality, thus promoting the freedom of speech. As an ideology I comply to this utopian idea, but at the same time I strongly reject an affirmative answer to his proposal; "Do not all passions require victims?".¹⁵ While I believe that old fashioned morality often is the cause for injustice and prejudices (where people are blamed

¹² Anna Katharina Schaffner, *Modernism and Perversion* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan; 2012).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.45 ff.

¹⁴ Marquise de Sade, *120 days of Sodom* (orig. *Les 120 journées de Sodome ou l'école du libertinage*), written in 1785, first published by Iwan Bloch in 1904.

¹⁵ Deborah Cameron and Elizabeth Frazer, *The Lust to Kill: a feminist investigation of sexual murder* (Cambridge: Polity in association with Basil Blackwell, 1987), p.56.

for their sexual behaviour, whether it is homosexuality or a woman with a high, however defined, number of sexual partners), I do believe in personal moral which should value all people alike and thus not put one's pleasures before someone else's suffering. While Krafft-Ebing viewed perversion as a result of degeneration and modernity, the pioneering sexologist Iwan Bloch argued that it was a part of our ductile human sexual behaviour that thrived in certain contexts due to an internal desire for variation. Although he did not give an explanation as to why the acceptance differs between cultures and time periods.¹⁶ In his studies Bloch calls Sade a *sexual philosopher* since his understanding of the world is entirely grounded on sexuality.¹⁷

Almost one hundred years later the Austrian socialist and humanist author Leopold von Sacher-Masoch wrote the novel *Venus in Furs*, also described in the chapter "Perversions of modernity", which resulted in Krafft-Ebing coining a new pathological category in 1890, namely masochism. Sacher-Masoch was not pleased with this usage of his name, but Krafft-Ebing justified his action by stating that the novel described the symptoms with accuracy and that this perversion became known in the scientific world because of it.¹⁸ The mechanisms behind masochism are socio-politically explained by John K. Noyes as being a symptom of the critical questioning of human agency during the 19th century. In addition to vast developments within technology, the progress of the women's movement created a societal (read white male) fear of disempowerment and feminization, and masochism was "an erotic reappropriation of control".¹⁹ Like the protagonist Severin, Dijkstra explains, the male masochist takes on the submissive role which generally belongs to women. By manipulating his surroundings and claiming submission he gains the control and power indirect, while his female partner is merely a symbol of and surrogate for mastery.²⁰ The sadomasochistic relationship is therefore complex and contains multifaceted structures to be explored furthermore during the analysis.

1.5. CONTEXTUALISATION AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Due to the historical portion of this study I believe it to be beneficial to begin with an overview of the social climate that existed during the 19th century, especially in regards to general ideas about sexual moralism and perversity, as well as visual representations of

¹⁶ Schaffner, p.127-128.

¹⁷ Ibid. p.128-132.

¹⁸ Schaffner, p.54; Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.393.

¹⁹ Schaffner, p.15.

²⁰ Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.372-374; p.394.

violence. The purpose of this section is thus to contextualise the frameworks of the study and staging the social discourse surrounding it.

1.5.1. **Victorian sexuality and the debate of moralism and perversity**

According to Michael Mason, senior lecturer in English, the Victorian era holds a special place in our modern culture and one reason for this can be explained by the complexity that, while we can feel united with our ancestors in that period, we are estranged or even hostile towards their societal culture. More than any other era the Victorian period has become a concept containing multiple meanings that often are linked to a restrictive sexual moralism. Since the majority view tolerance and openness about sexual matters as key elements in our modern culture, as something that asserts an improvement from the past, the moralism we apply on the Victorians is viewed as negative. However, Mason argues that this sexual orthodoxy is not unique to that era, since all kinds of sexual acts “have been deplored, repressed, and even punished in the majority of known human societies”.²¹ Even though prohibitions on sexual behaviour often seem problematic, they also function to protect people, e.g. in cases of rape and child abuse. The Victorian prohibitions are relevant to our own sexual code more than those of other periods because we share a great deal of the social context in which their sexual culture was set.

Mason writes that most studies of the Victorian era, previous to 1995 that is, had been too restricted and that they were ignoring many important aspects. For example he argues that the sexual culture of a society cannot be studied based on the official attitudes only, but equally important are the factual practices and the possible connections found between the two.²² In *The Making of Victorian Sexuality* Mason uses a wide range of research material in order to scrutinize 19th century clichés concerning things like prostitution, premarital sex, marriage and masturbation. By demonstrating what medical authorities stated at the time, and how the population actually were practicing their sexuality, he shows that our contemporary perception of the Victorian sexual culture is rather misconstrued.

Professor Thomas Laqueur holds a historical-medical perspective and in his book *Making Sex* he writes that the emerging theories were concentrated on the difference between the sexes, where female features came to be judged as contrasts to male ones. By the late 19th century, findings of microscopic divergences within our biological building blocks supported the theory of sexual differences as grounded in nature, where women were labelled as passive,

²¹ Michael Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexuality* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), p.4.

²² *Ibid.*, p.6.

conservative and stable and men active, passionate and variable.²³ Laqueur emphasizes that the making of two opposite sexes was created due to certain political circumstances, since how bodies are interpreted and represented depends on social developments. Furthermore he writes that politics can be “understood as the competition for power”, that definitions of sex and human beings are contextual and therefore trying to detach them “from its discursive, socially determined milieu” is doomed to fail.²⁴ The distinction between sex and gender is still under debate, and was especially noticeable during the 1990’s by extremists on both sides of the spectra. That is, those who want to eliminate gender claim that cultural differences actually are natural, and those who argue that natural differences really are cultural. I will return to this matter and explain my feminist standpoint later on in this section.

In *The history of sexuality: An introduction*, French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault argues that the prude, restrained and hypocritical attitude toward sexuality during the Victorian regime still continues to dominate us in modern times. The Victorian bourgeoisie confined sexuality to the home and as a function of reproduction, where the legitimate and procreative couple became the desired normative model. The subject of sex was repressed in society, which differs from prohibitions maintained by penal law, as Foucault explains it.²⁵ How this is reflected in the popular culture of the 19th century is discussed in the following sub-section.

1.5.2. The cultural context and violent representations as entertainment

In *Violent Victorians*, historian Rosalind Crone offers a detailed description of the development of popular entertainment in London during the 19th century.²⁶ She investigates several genres of amusements and puts them in connection to each other, while focusing on the persistent representations of violence and gore. Already in the 18th century puppet-shows such as Punch travelled the English roads and exhibitions of wax-sculptures were set up, the most famous being Madame Tussaud and her Chamber of Horror from the early 19th century which continues to attract audience today.²⁷ During the first half of the 19th century there was an expansion of broadsides dedicated to murders and executions that had taken place, pottery with paintings of known murderers were sold as souvenirs while the increase of theatres in London lead to a merging of different theatrical styles. The popular melodramas often told

²³ Thomas Laqueur, *Making sex: body and gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), p.6.

²⁴ Laqueur, p.11; p.16.

²⁵ Michel Foucault, *The history of sexuality: An introduction* (orig. *Histoire de la sexualite*, 1976) translation by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

²⁶ Rosalind Crone, *Violent Victorians* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.40 ff.

stories of murders, both real and fictional, and were advertised by playbills with horrific illustrations and chocking headings to draw the crowd.²⁸ Both melodramas and the Penny Bloods, emerging in the 1820's, represented the dualism between good and evil while incorporating death in the narratives. The serial novels were all very much alike in regards to themes and characters, where two prominent influences identified by Crone are the Newgate calendars, which contained biographies of criminals and their deeds, and the late 18th century Gothics. These real events and, sometimes plagiarised, tales were often adapted into sentimental domestic stories centring on romanticism and violence. The alterations in penny fiction were made to resemble (overly dramatic) everyday problems and moral dilemmas that included crime, murder and secrets, and even if they were just as gruesome, the good always triumphs in the end to comfort the Victorian readers.²⁹ While the traditional Gothic were set in the past and used violence to evoke horror, the domestic romances were played out in the present and “created a feeling of terror through the use of essentially recognisable, everyday villains”.³⁰

Crone manages to connect parallel changes within the 19th century entertainment sphere and thereby offering plausible causes for how and why representations of violence have shifted form. The question of why we enjoy it still linger in the end, but she do not claim to seek a simple and clear answer to such a multi-levelled question, and neither do I. Crone problematizes the unquestioned status that has been given to the *civilizing process*, a term coined by sociologist Norbert Elias “to describe changing patterns in human behaviour from the late medieval to the modern period”.³¹ However, she acknowledges this process as historically important and reflects upon its connection to respectability, which in turn can be linked to Foucault's discussion of repression. The social discourse of respectability, which was to lead us into modernity, is identified as one cause for the development of violent entertainment. Both class-consciousness and cultural hegemony grew during the early 19th century and as the living conditions of the working class improved, they started to embrace a respectable culture. According to Crone, the 1820's can be seen as a turning point in civilisation, when regulations were made in order to clean up the streets. The aim was not to erase violence as a whole, but to restrict and regulate it, since representations of violence was

²⁸ Crone, p.92-133.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 163-182.

³⁰ Ibid., p.183.

³¹ Ibid., p.2.

better than actual violence. Thus, violence was appropriated into a respectable culture due to a general approval by the respectable middle and upper classes.³²

Another reason is the emergence of the city, with its fast expansion of the masses and new commercial leisure industry. The industrialisation changed working conditions, issues of gender were put into question and overcrowded slums emerged in London's East End. Such developments caused a general anxiety, since London as a metropolis became a place where one could be anonymous and the concealment of criminal activity was made easier. While actual violence and brutal animal sports were restricted, representations of violence increased and the Penny Bloods and melodramas constituted a space for resistance, where social frustration could be ventilated and commentated.³³ A third reason was the new construction of criminality in the 1860's, the transition into modern crime reporting and the separation between news magazines and sensational news.³⁴ One of the points I aim to show in this thesis, something Crone both begin and conclude with, is the fact that violent representations still is a large part of our popular culture today. She makes the examples of horror movies and violent first-person shooter computer games when questioning the triumph of the civilising process, arguing that "if we as adults are civilised we shouldn't want to experience exposure".³⁵ While the narratives of violence change since they are time-bound, our pleasure of consuming it is not. Nowadays the audience is even larger and less defined by class and gender, which fashion photographs would be yet another example of.³⁶

After a decrease in the middle of the 19th century, the British Gothic fiction re-emerged at the last decades of the late Victorian era, which is discussed in *The Gothic body* where scholar Kelly Hurley writes about the ruination and destruction of the human subject. The plot in these stories often circles around the *human* becoming what she calls the *abhuman*, a subject that is not-quite-human. It was a time obsessed with scientific classification, and thereby normalization, but as explained by Hurley, the ideology of normative sexual identity was somewhat self-contradictory:

The Gothic seemed at times to reinforce normative sexuality by representing such behaviours as aggressive femininity and homosexuality as monstrous and abhorrent. But [the Gothic also] served to multiply, and thus destabilize, the meanings of sexuality. [---] Gothic plotting, working to invert and more radically

³² Ibid., p.165-167; p.262-264.

³³ Crone, p.24 ff; p.145; p.186 ff.

³⁴ Ibid., p.209; p.260-261.

³⁵ Ibid., p.259.

³⁶ Ibid., p.258-259.

admix gender and sexual attributes within a variety of abhuman bodies, unfixed the binarism of sexual difference, exploding the construct of 'the human' from within.³⁷

The contradictive social interest in both supernaturalism and science is reflected in how the sexual and bodily identities are transformed by the appropriation of morphic variabilities. Hence, the anxieties caused by scientific discourses were controlled by making them into non-real supernatural phenomenon. Being a period when innovations within the biological, social and medical fields of science flourished, it supports the theory that the Gothic as a genre re-emerge cyclically in times of cultural stress. Furthermore, Hurley opens up for the possibility of a parallel or opposite sequence of event, namely that the Gothic trend had an influence on science as well, in categorisations of human identities such as the insane, criminal and sexually perverse.

The theoretical approach of cultural studies discussed earlier has previously been applied to fashion research, for example in *Fashion at the edge* by Caroline Evans, professor of Fashion History and Theory. She explains early on that the connection between fashion and horror, as well as the re-usage of aesthetic expressions from the past, is a never ending matter within the world of fashion. Moreover, it is this connection that is the main focus in *Fashion at the edge*.³⁸ One of such reoccurring styles is of course the Victorian Gothics. The book contains fashion photographs and runway snapshots of experimental designs from the late 20th century that all share a dark, deathlike aesthetic. They are analysed together with modernist theories about our societal anxieties, and she establish the link between the two. While our contemporary materials are sometimes rooted in the same visual expression, my historical material is exclusively taken from Penny Bloods which results in a narrower and thus more in-depth examination.

1.5.3. Literature studies of Gothic novels and the issues of feminism

In literary analyses of Gothic novels there is one reoccurring division made between Gothic stories written from a male perspective and those who challenges this. Stories belonging to the former category similarly contain female characters that are treated brutally and struggle to gain a better life, but always fail. Women longing to be in control of their own destiny are

³⁷ Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic body: sexuality, materialism, and degeneration at the fin de siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.11-12.

³⁸ Caroline Evans, *Fashion at the edge: spectacle, modernity and deathliness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p.19 ff.

punished and, above all, their life-narrative is always linked to their femininity.³⁹ *Female Gothic* on the contrary, has become defined as a subgenre in which female societal and sexual desires were introduced, while challenging the gender hierarchy and a male-dominated culture. They can, according to Andrew Smith and Diana Wallace, often be read as expressions “of women’s fears of entrapment within the domestic and within the female body, most terrifyingly experienced in childbirth”.⁴⁰ Other relating terms used by researchers are *women’s Gothic*, *lesbian Gothic* and *Gothic feminism*. The female protagonist is often caught in an unfamiliar and terrifying place, but overcomes the horrified supernatural events by logical explanations. Many studies of Victorian literature are written from such a feminist perspective and books like *Gothic feminism* by Diane Hoeveler and *Gothic & gender* by Donna Heiland holds great discussions about literature, research and terminology.⁴¹

Feminist Gothic research seems to have been especially popular amongst scholars in the 1990’s some examples being Kate Ellis’s *The Contested Castle*, Tamar Heller’s *Dead Secrets* and Michelle Massé’s *In the Name of Love*.⁴² Ellis investigates the correlation between the doctrine of separate spheres and the popularity of the Gothic novel, while Heller examines novelist and playwright Wilkie Collins early work and argues that even in his most feminist work the potential female power gets controlled in the end.⁴³ However, the notion of feminism seems to be quite unsettling for some critics, where the literature scholars David Richter and John R. Reed are two of them. In his review of the three mentioned texts, Richter clearly positions himself in the opening statement, writing that “the Gothic novel has become a significant part of the feminist agenda because the plight of the passive heroines of romance can be read as a convenient metaphor for the plight of all women under patriarchy”.⁴⁴ He formulates similar critique towards Ellis and Heller, namely that they are more interested in proving a personal ideology than getting the historical facts right. Throughout the article he sarcastically states that Foucaultians use history only to establish their moral opinions and

³⁹ Jack DeRochi, “A Feminine Spectacle”, in *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-Raisers, and Afterpieces*, eds. Daniel Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), p.243.

⁴⁰ Andrew Smith and Diana Wallace, “The Female Gothic: Then and Now”, in *Gothic Studies*, Volume 6, Issue 1, p.1.

⁴¹ Diane L., Hoeveler, *Gothic feminism: the professionalization of gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1998); Donna Heiland, *Gothic & gender: an introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004).

⁴² Kate Ellis Ferguson, *The Contested Castle* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Tamar Heller, *Dead Secrets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Michelle Massé, *In the Name of Love* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992).

⁴³ The Victorian’s praise of the home brought on the doctrine of separate spheres (the home for women and the public for men). This was supposed to protect women, but instead often imprisoned them.

⁴⁴ David Richter, review of “Contested Castle; Dead Secrets; In the Name of Love”, in *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 89, no. 1 (1994), p.200.

rewrite the past according to their desired utopia. In this way, they transform a masochistic genre into one of female revolt, rather than remembering female Gothic as it really was.

Although John R. Reed admits that Heller offers some helpful views on hidden subtexts and ideological polarities, he returns to the same kind of issues as Richter and writes that these vital insights are “undercut by what might be called template feminism” that “forces texts to obey the patterns laid out by a prescriptive feminist agenda”.⁴⁵ Even if Richter seems less disturbed by Massé, since she doesn’t preach morality when discussing masochism as a patriarchal myth, he feels compelled to mention that she too is a radical feminist, to which my primary conclusion is that his biggest issue is the feminism itself. Even if Richter and Reed use some disturbing phrases, they do point to certain weaknesses in these feminist analyses. Aiming to avoid any template feminism I value Massé’s claim that women neither do nor do not always overcome masochistic expectations, or only exist as victims.

1.5.4. Studies on lust murder, sexual danger and further issues of feminism

When exploring the long lived horror-aesthetics from the 19th century it is difficult to ignore the vast impact of the unknown person who terrorized the streets of London in 1888 and came to be known as Jack the Ripper. In connection to the centennial of these events there were numerous books published on the subject, but I am focusing on three that are written from a feminist perspective and aims to challenge the old Ripperologists. Two of them investigate the history of sexual murder and violence against women in a similar manner by recognising Jack the Ripper as a social construction that still is present in modern culture. The first one is *The Lust to Kill*, in which linguist Deborah Cameron and sociologist of politics Elizabeth Frazer start off by explaining different categories of killing, landing in sexual murder and their ambition to make gender a part of this debate, as they argue that this has been missing in earlier research. By examining representations of violence and murder the authors divide the construction of sexual murderers into those of a cultural discourse, where he is portrayed as a hero, and a scientific discourse that labels him as deviant.⁴⁶ Several medical factors, such as biogenetic, psychological and social, are used within criminology to explain why sexual murderers exist, in order to decide whether he is mad or bad, human or subhuman, and should be classified as a sex criminal.⁴⁷

The other book is *The Age of Sex Crime* by professor Jane Caputi, in which Roland Barthes’ concept of myth is used in discussions about the Ripper, who right away was

⁴⁵ John R. Reed, review of “Dead Secrets”, in *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 25, no. 2, (1993), p.235.

⁴⁶ There are very few known cases, if any at all, where a female killer would be classified as a sexual murderer.

⁴⁷ Cameron and Frazer.

depicted just as fantastic as the monsters in Victorian Penny Bloods by the news magazines. Caputi is more direct in her feminism, writing that the phenomenon of horror movies and song lyrics that refers to known serial killers as heroes is grounded in a patriarchal male identification with these murderers, since sexual danger are unfamiliar to them.⁴⁸

Walkowitz is the author of the third book, *City of dreadful delight*, in which she discusses sexual culture, gender issues and representations of sexual violence in the late-Victorian era. She writes that Jack the Ripper is the most culturally reproduced criminal ever and has become a story of sexual danger, much due to the unknown face and identity which created the myth of an eternal Ripper, since the killer could be anyone. The Victorian London was a perfect place for such gruesome narratives, where social classes were geographically divided and an underworld of crime and sexual endeavours could prosper.⁴⁹

Walkowitz has by coincidence written a review on the other two books, called “Myths and Murderers”. According to her, the many publications on Jack the Ripper emerging in the late 1980’s contained nothing but repetitions of time-worn theories, where the attitudes of the male authors resembled those of the 19th century: “a distaste for prostitutes (whom they refer to as ‘whores’, ‘strumpets’ and ‘gap-toothed’ hags) as well as a voyeuristic fascination for anatomical details of the female body”.⁵⁰ The purpose of *The Age of Sex Crime* and *The Lust to Kill* is to avoid such exploitative voyeurism, to examine the Ripper story as a cultural construction and treat it as a gendered event that sanctions male power over women, and was therefore a welcomed contribution. Walkowitz states that both books are a “thought-provoking contribution to a cultural history of sex murder” as they show how the multiple original stories circling the Ripper continue to be mythologised in our western culture.⁵¹ However, she expresses a disappointment at the end results, writing that the contextualized analyses run short as the Victorian era gets simplified and all three authors “go on to reproduce their own version of the ‘eternal’ Ripper”.⁵²

Caputi, Cameron and Frazer’s texts are meant as political acts of feminist participation in cultural production, unfortunately, my biggest issue is their often restrictive feminist perspective. Walkowitz’s main critique on this matter concerns the narrow frameworks offered to gender identity and cultural production, mashing together horror movies and pornography and excluding other feminist critics who have noticed important changes in the

⁴⁸ Jane Caputi, *The Age of Sex Crime* (Bowling Green: B.G. State Univ. Popular Press, 1987), p.47-52.

⁴⁹ Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London: Virago, 1992).

⁵⁰ Walkowitz, “Myths and Murderers”, in *The Women's Review of Books*, vol. 5, no. 6 (1988), p.7.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.7.

genre. Due to their commitment to anti-porn politics, they “tend to treat violent sexual representation as an un-mediated expression of what men think about women; and they confidently advocate a coherent feminist sexual politics that could speak for all women against men”.⁵³Walkowitz’s desired theoretical stance is rather a feminism that defends multiple socio-historical contexts, embraces a range of gender identities and recognizing contradictions and inconsistencies in both female sexual pleasure and male power.⁵⁴I agree with this point of view and I believe her feminism to be more progressive than most of the 90’s feminist studying this field. There is of course an important difference between discussions of actual violence and the representation of it, and it is on this matter I believe that the lines become blurred and unclear every now and then in *The age of sex crime* and *The lust to kill*.

1.6. DISPOSITION OF ANALYSIS

The following visual analysis is divided into three parts which further comprise three subsections each and are concluded with a summary of the discoveries made. The first section is titled “Victorian anxiety; or, unconscious women and vampirism”. It includes a brief introduction to the Gothic aesthetics as well as discussions about two 19th century societal anxieties which both came to be a part of the popular culture, namely beautiful women sound asleep and metamorphic bodies. The second part “Sadomasochism; or, perversions of modernity” is dedicated to visualizations of men’s violence against women, the sexually brutalised female body and sexual preferences such as sadism, voyeurism and pornography. The final section is called “Feminist Gothicism; or sex, fashion and fantasy” and shows images of women who display sexuality, agency and are powerful by acts of violence or sexual independence. Thereafter follows a final discussion with my research questions as focal point and the possible findings I have discovered. Due to the uncertainty regarding authorship amongst many of the Penny Bloods, I reference the novel’s title in the footnotes instead of the writer. This is in order to be as cohesive as possible.

⁵³ Walkowitz, “Myths and Murderers”, p.8.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

2. ANALYSIS

2.1. VICTORIAN ANXIETY; OR, UNCONSCIOUS WOMEN AND VAMPIRISM

The Victorian ideology of respectability is a breeding ground for the single-minded ideal of submissive and decorative femininities. This first analysis section is dedicated to examine and give examples of the large amount of illustrations depicting women either as beautiful wallflowers or as helpless victims in the need of rescue. While the first subsection is a short introduction to the Gothic aesthetic by a comparison between then and now, the two following subsections are each dedicated to one major direction within the 19th century art culture, both linked to anxiety, namely unconscious women and subhumans.

2.1.1. Introducing the Gothic aesthetics

To incorporate historical references within fashion is not a new phenomenon, but, as described by Evans, exploded as a trend during the 1990's. While flirtations with the past sometimes derive from nostalgia, it can at other times be visualizations of the hopes and fears we have about the future. She refers to Christine Buci-Glucksmann who argues that "the idea of the modern can no longer be based on early 20th century utopian modernist ideas of progress and revolution, but might be grounded in a darker, more nihilistic aesthetic that requires a return to Baudelaire and Benjamin to map the modern".⁵⁵ Taking a too optimistic view of the past is to deny the chaos it also contains, a history we are always hunted by.⁵⁶ During the 20th century, fashion meant lightness, frivolity and pleasure, but as it drew closer towards the turn of the millennium, anxieties that had been articulated 100 years earlier arose again. Concerns about the progress of the consumption culture, technologies and capitalism grew, and resulted in a new kind of expression within the fashion imagery. It became filled with darkness and despair and designers started to incorporate meanings within their collections that told dystopian horror stories.⁵⁷

There is a certain aesthetics connected to the Victorian era which is reproduced and mystified in most forms of popular culture. Based on the overall stylizations in my visual material it is apparent, and not surprising, that the social acceptance of bodily exposure and the usage of heavy make-up have increased. This is the biggest difference between the fashion photos and illustrations that will be present throughout the analyses. The stylization of such images draws on a Gothic concept which has been under construction the last century, and it

⁵⁵ Evans, p.298.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.298-300.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.26-28.

seems to me that it has become a genre in which women can be fierce looking by vigorous make-up and powerful clothing. Since historical representations always are interpretations and the usage of cosmetic and costume is more allowing now, expressional differences like these are expected and are what the first four images are representative of.

While there are a great deal of murky forests, castles and dungeons illustrated in the Penny Bloods, many of them also contain portraits of the female characters as they are introduced in the story. Illustration No.1 from *Mysteries of the court* is one of these common portraits where the ladies in question are depicted as mild and feminine with corseted waists, ample bosoms and flowers in their perfectly curled hair. Photograph No.1, from Chad Michael Ward's "Victorian Blue", contains similar traits, especially the detailed hair, flowers and ruffles. However, the photo is darker and more eerie than the 19th century counterpart, and there is a mournful determination in the model's eyes and a slight frown upon her face.

As will be evident by the visual material in the first two analysis sections, the female body is often illustrated as a sexualized object for the male gaze in penny fiction, and one example is the recurring setting of the theatre. According to Rosenman the stage is a physically gendered place in itself, where the female performers are separated from the male audience below.⁵⁸ Both Illustration No.2., from *Mysteries of the court*, and Photograph No.2, by Annie Leibovitz, visualise this gender division in a Victorianesque setting, where dolled-up women perform their talents in what looks like an effort to impress one particular man. Even though the women live up to the prevailing female ideal, the men communicate nothing but boredom and equally detach themselves from the entertainers by placing a hand at the temple, which has the effect of a separating barrier. I believe that the gender division is one of several plausible reasons for the popularity to include ballet in the plot, since both the fictional audience and the male reader can indulge in harmless voyeurism.

2.1.2. **Sleeping beauties**

In this section, focus lies on the depiction of women in deep sleep or other degrees of unconsciousness. What is notable is the correlation between the popularity of this theme in art paintings and one specific turning point in the Western medical history. As explained by Laqueur, the belief that a woman needed to have an orgasm to conceive a child was abandoned at the end of the Enlightenment. By extension this meant that women did not need to feel pleasure, or even be conscious, to fulfil her reproductive purpose. New knowledge

⁵⁸ Ellen Rosenman, "Spectacular Women: 'The Mysteries of London' and the Female Body", in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (1996), p.52.

such as this redefined the principles of sexual functioning for both men and women, but while male passions and pleasures never were put into question, it opened up for the possibility of female passivity. Thus, the nature of female sexuality could be debated, reformulated or even denied and, as Laqueur writes, “so it was of course. Endlessly”.⁵⁹

One common motif among the penny illustrations is a woman lying in bed sleeping, while one or more men are sneaking around the room or circling the bed. Considering the great number of images like these, it tells us something about women’s societal situation. Namely that the danger of being the submissive gender multiplies at night, and to sleep is to put oneself in an even more threatening position. However, just as one cannot simply decide not to be regarded as the sex existing only to fulfil the pleasures of men, one cannot refuse to ever sleep again. The lurking men in the novels have different intentions and while some of them are searching for clues or items to steal, others exemplify the threat of rape. The latter is found in *Fanny White and Her Friend Jack Rawlings: A Romance of a Young Lady Thief and a Boy Burglar*, a novel about a music-hall dancer and thief who many men try to seduce, but fail as she is determined to maintain her virtue. In Illustration No.3 Fanny, who has been taken to a secluded house and then drugged, lies collapsed on a sofa as planned by Lord Crokerton. He enters the room, with erotic paintings hung on the walls as pointed out in the novel, and creeps towards her with the intention to rape her, safe from any interruption. In the candle light he stands gazing at “her gentle bosom heaving as if in peaceful slumber”, her slightly parted “red, pouting lips” and “the voluptuous contour” of her body.⁶⁰

The penny novel *Fanny White* was published in 1860, a time when female sexuality and behaviour were being thoroughly examined by scientists and resulted in rather worrying findings. By the 1870’s, MD Nicholas Francis Cooke’s book *Satan in Society* described “the most shocking revelation about the private habits of young girls”.⁶¹ Dijkstra connects the popularity of the collapsing woman as a motif within art with two main reasons; the belief that the duties of the Victorian wife to represent her husband’s success and the household’s spiritual virtue were supposed to drain her of energy to the point of exhaustion, and the scientific rediscovery of feminine sexuality, specifically the alarming notion of female masturbation. Images of the collapsing woman, in British art especially, portrayed women as

⁵⁹ Laqueur, p.3.

⁶⁰ *Fanny White and Her Friend Jack Rawlings: A Romance of a Young Lady Thief and a Boy Burglar*(London: George Vickers, approximately 1860-65), p.54.

⁶¹ Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.64.

self-contained, although “an object of erotic desire”, she had no real interest in “the viewer’s participation in her personal erotic gratification”.⁶²

These iconographic representations encouraged Victorian women to wither into submissiveness, but according to Dijkstra, women rather became “more determined to stand up and fight [and] make themselves heard”.⁶³Fittingly, and to Lord Crokerton’s surprise, Fanny White awakes just in time and bursting from laughter asks what he wants, to which his response is to fall to his knees and begin “to make violent love to her”. Fortunately Fanny is not the ideal submissive woman and the scene continues with her giving Lord Crokerton “such a terrific right-hander on the nose, that it spread him out flat upon the floor, where he lay, bleeding and gasping, a sight pitiful to behold”, and as he tries again she successfully beats him unconscious while taunting his failure.⁶⁴

Examining the illustration of the moment before Fanny wakes up, I draw the conclusion that important elements are emphasised by the degree of brightness. That is, the two glasses in the back used to drug Fanny are pale grey; the frames containing erotic art even paler; Lord Crokerton’s old face is filled with candle light shadows; Fanny’s dress is folded up to reveal two white ankles; and brightest of it all is her smooth face, bare shoulders and the thing that catches the viewer’s eye instantly – her white plump bosom. As shown in Photograph No.3, by Mert and Marcus, the sleeping woman is a theme which also is used in the art of fashion photography today. The styling has an antique feeling due to the divan, stained walls, dark wooden floor and the woodcuts in the frame to the right, as well as the clothes she wears. There is a resemblance between the model and Fanny in regards to their many layered full skirts and body pose, where a hand rests upon the stomach and their pale skinned faces leans to the side. There is no man visible in the photograph, but there is a shadow cast in the top left corner behind the couch which source is unknown to the onlooker. While she appears to be asleep in this photo it is worth mentioning that the fashion editorial is full of females who without doubt are made to look dead with open eyes that stare unseeingly.

A woman of virtue would, rather reluctantly, partake in sexual intercourse only to please her husband and become impregnated. The male establishment was convinced that sexual stimuli had a degenerative effect on women, and if she found pleasure in such activity, she had become a fallen woman whose cravings would lead to promiscuity and the destruction of the nuclear family. The ability to recognize masturbating females was thus of importance, and

⁶² Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.69-70.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.63.

⁶⁴ *Fanny White*, p.54.

for Cooke, the signs consisted of physical and mental exhaustion due to the decrease of blood flow in the brain. Contradictory, if not ironic, the depiction of a sleeping woman, as a symbol of female masturbation, became a male erotic and voyeuristic fantasy.⁶⁵ This genre of visualisation evolved during the 19th century and towards its end, as shown by Dijkstra, she was frequently depicted with a combination of helplessness and uncontrollable ecstasy.⁶⁶ The vulnerable, and often naked, female body was posed horizontal in awkward angles “as if their backs had been broken in some violent moment”.⁶⁷ At the same time, certain details found in facial expressions, muscle contractions or the placement of a hand were more or less subtle symbols of the woman’s deep sexual need and ecstatic passivity. Body poses like these then, visualize sexual fantasies of the invited rape, women longing to be taken violently by whatever man who happens to be nearby, and derives from “the notion that women were born masochists and loved nothing better than to be raped and beaten”.⁶⁸

The women in Illustration No.4 and Photograph No.4 appear to be somewhere between life and death. The Victorian lady seems to have fainted due to the smoke filling the room and her arms are positioned in awkward angles. The chest is bare and her facial expression and arched back closely resembles that of sexual gratification. The female in the photo is equally unresponsive; her body is curved backwards over a bench where beer bottles and cans lies on the floor underneath, which explain her defenceless condition. With one shoe off and the dress crept upwards the legs are elongated, emphasizing the fact that she is straddling the bench, which further can be interpreted as a connotation to the invited rape. Judging by her attire comprising a shiny dress, nylon stockings, heeled sandals and a small lilac purse, it does not seem entirely believable that her plan was to party at an abandoned warehouse. Regardless of how she ended up there, it is worrying that she looks to have been left there by herself, if it is not her drinking companion that is capturing the moment, either as a friendly joke or as a memorabilia of a conquest.

Since a sleeping female embodied the Victorian ideal of the passive woman, a dead body was by extension potentially erotic as it guaranteed such passivity, and this concept of the sleep-death equation is also discussed by Dijkstra. By illustrating erotically passive, but nevertheless alive, women, both the painter and the voyeuristic viewer could indulge themselves in whatever arousing fantasies of the lifeless body they wished – without being

⁶⁵ Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.74-80.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 99-101.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.101.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

accused of morbidity or having necrophiliac preferences.⁶⁹ The notion of feminine self-sacrifice captures the very essence of the 19th century male/female doctrine of dominance and submission. The male establishment thought that self-sacrifice, i.e. suicide, was the ultimate gesture a good woman could do to show compliance to her husband, lover or the gender doctrine itself, since “the less demanding his mate, then, the greater his conquest”.⁷⁰ Suicide confirmed that the male was so dominant that he did not even need to be physically involved to defeat the female body. To die also had the function of a purification rite in 19th century art and literature, where the fallen woman is cleansed from her devilish sexuality. By death she regains her purity and virginity, and thereby also her attractiveness as a submissive and good woman.⁷¹ One of the most iconographic images of such self-sacrifice is Sir John Everett Millais’ “Ophelia” (1851). Evans and Dijkstra similarly explain that; to paint beautiful women in death was a way to master the fears of femininity, sexuality being one, and by depicting dead women who no longer had a reproductive function it was taken away from them.⁷²

2.1.3. A Darwinist fear of subhumans

Gothic fiction has always been a way for writers to raise awareness about contemporary fears and that is why the themes and structure have changed within the genre. This section contains different aspects of what was feared or made out to be abnormal during the whole Victorian era. Even though my historical material pre-dates the novels referenced by Kelly Hurley and Dijkstra, e.g. Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) and Richard Marsh’s *The Beetle* (1897), I find their discussions relevant and applicable on similar, yet older, narratives since they correlate with each other. Beginning with the evolution theory of Darwinism from the mid-19th century, which entails that species evolve according to their surrounding and needs based on natural selection. Hurley writes that the idea that bodies are capable of transformation destabilized the boundaries between external appearances and internal reality, and between man and animal. If humans had evolved from animals there was a possibility that they were incomplete and not totally human. In accepting this, people feared the possibility of the human species to begin to regress back into animalism, since evolution has no ultimate goal.⁷³ These kinds of changes happen slowly during a long period of time and the effects are seen many generations later, and it was therefore a collective degeneration that was problematized.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.58-62.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁷² Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.49-50; Evans, p.132-136.

⁷³ Hurley, p.56.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.66 ff.

Darwinism and its dangers were perfect for the Gothics and resulted in narratives combining scientific revelations with supernaturalism. These stories often begin with a mysterious stranger coming to town, or with a doctor who experiments on human subjects, resulting in monstrous subhumans. The key element connecting the narratives is often the female identity, because while all bodies can be inhabited with such Gothic materiality, it is especially compatible with the characteristics of femininity.⁷⁵ This is because narratives of the female sub-human derives from longstanding cultural traditions, which “identifies women as entities defined by and entrapped within their bodies, in contrast to the man, who is governed by rationality and capable of transcending the fact of his embodiment”.⁷⁶ Italian criminologist and physician Cesare Lombroso, amongst others, theorized these ideas within the 19th century social medicine, describing women as incomplete humans that have not evolved from the animal stage to completion.⁷⁷ Female aggressive sexuality is an appropriation of masculine traits, thus, her gender identity becomes unstable and her sexuality emasculating. The embodied female sexuality is described as a thing of abjection and danger.⁷⁸

In reference to writings by Elaine Showalter and Foucault, Hurley explain how the female body was treated as pathological, which disorders were directly connected to the reproductive system. Thus, the female body was utterly filled with sexuality which was perceived as a symptom of abhumanness, since it did not correspond with the cultural moral of passivity and asexuality, and furthermore:

The evacuation of female subjectivity (the woman's lack of rationality, volition, and self-control; her liability to pathological mental states) renders the woman a Thing: a body that is at best imperfectly animated by a “human mind” and a “human spirit”.⁷⁹

In some Gothic novels the identity markers of abhumanness are not only motivated by a deviant femininity and sexuality, but also as a matter of ethnicity. In reference to Edward Said, Hurley writes that the Western world has wrongfully defined and shaped the image of the Orient, or the East, as their opposite – the *other*. In *The Beetle* for example, the Orientals are portrayed as sexually perverse, primitive barbarians who indulges in religious rituals and occult magic, while the Westerners are chaste, rational and civilized people who advocate

⁷⁵ Hurley, p.117-119.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.119.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.119-120.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.118; p.137-141.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.120.

science and technology. Additionally, the Orient is a feminized space in itself, sharing characteristics like irrationality and sensitivity with the female sex, as well as a promise land of bodily pleasures.⁸⁰

In *Mary Price* there is the character of the Gipsy Queen Barbauld Azetha, and in Illustration No.5 she is reading Mary's palm. The burning candle, large timeworn book, the playing cards on the floor and the black cat underneath the table are all elements contributing to an atmosphere of spiritual mystique. Her dress differs from the usual female attire as she wears a silk handkerchief on her head instead of a bonnet, a dark stuff gown with the arms rolled up exposing her forearms and, as seen in other illustrations, is bare footed. Although the Gipsy Queen is described as exotic – the other – it is in an admiring manner from what I have found. Her female customers describe her as remarkably beautiful with hair “as being of the deepest and most perfect blackness”, piercingly bright black eyes, a complexion “of true Egyptian duskiness, with a tinge of carnation on the cheeks” and a mouth with red lips and white even teeth.⁸¹ It is not only her looks that is depicted in a positive way, but also her intelligent countenance, eloquent language and her majestic and dignified charisma. It is true that she is involved in the occult, but so are also the English women in this case.

When Mary asks the Gipsy Queen if she knows what love is, the latter answers that “if you believe I possess a heart like other women – an intelligence like the rest of my sex – [...] then must you also be convinced that I am equally susceptible of love – that I can be moved by its charms, conquered by its power, and melted by its tenderness!”.⁸² Mary did not expect the Gipsy Queen to be open to such emotions at first due to her wild vagabond lifestyle, and not because of her nationality per se, but soon realises that she, Mary, was obviously wrong in thinking so. Thus, there is a differentiation between the English and gipsy women in the novel, but it is equally pointed out, in this chapter at least, that all hearts and souls are the same. Likewise, the images illustrate a difference between the aesthetics of the two nationalities, but without disparaging either.

While the Orient was incorporated into the novels for its mystique and curiosity of the unknown, it can be used as more of a style today and Photograph No.5 by Mert and Marcus exemplifies contemporary orientalism within fashion. This is due to the magnificent headpiece which resembles traditional ornaments worn in the Eastern and Asian continents, like a Chinese fengguan or a Russian kokoshnik. It is a dramatic image in black and white,

⁸⁰ Hurley, p.125-128.

⁸¹ *Mary Price; or, The memoirs of a servant-maid*, Vol.1, George W. M. Reynolds(London: J. Dicks, 1852), p.71.

⁸² *Mary Price*, p.340.

where the flow of the black sheer fabrics, flower petals scattered on the floor and her bare feet produce an air of magic and to me she could be a fortune teller just like the Gipsy Queen.

I also find a vampiresque quality to the model Kate Moss in this picture, her shadowed eyes, pale skin and darkly painted full lips is both sensual and dangerous. The issues of ethnicity are a part of the vampire narratives as well, as they reflect a fear of immigration – we all know that Count Dracula resided in Transylvania before moving to England. In the article “Dracula: vampires, perversity and Victorian anxieties”, Greg Buzwell writes that the vampire has always been a figure of contradictions, since s/he is a horrific half-dead, blood-sucking beast, but also an intriguing, sensually mysterious creature. The vampire represented many of the societal fears of the late 19th century. The capacity to move unnoticed in the urban streets was linked to the uncontrolled immigration leading to a growing crime rate and slum areas. The blood-sucking of vampirism stood for fears about sexually transmitted diseases and promiscuity, while the moving from victim to victim, representing sexual partners, was the result of moral degeneration as it corrupted even the purest women.⁸³ One of the most famous Penny Bloods, and earliest vampire literature, is *Varney the vampire; or, The feast of blood*, which Illustration No.6 originates from. The story contains many of the features we are familiar with today, such as the hypnotic power of the vampire, his gentlemanly behaviour, the curse of eternal life and fangs that leave two distinct punctuation marks. Accordingly Varney is well dressed in an embroidered west, fitted coat and cravat while he is charging at the terrified woman, taking a firm hold around her waist with his long-nailed fingers. The attack is sudden and aggressive, and his face is turned into a hungry grimace.

Like in most forms of popular culture the vampire is recurring in fashion editorials as a symbol of sensuality. In Photograph No.6 the couple is dressed similarly to those illustrated, where both men wear periodically appropriate suits and the women long white dresses, the colour of innocence and purity. The photo is in black and white, all but the red blood trickling down her neck. The model is not however taken by force, but by smooth seduction. His lips lightly touch her skin and her facial expression is one of pleasure, and even though she too is bent backwards supported by the man’s arm, she does it while surrendering to passion. The morphed body of the vampire has served as perfect examples of how good women transform into bad ones. Female vampires came to represent the fallen woman, she who refused to be a man’s property and yet engaged in sexual activities. This was scientifically explained in 1922

⁸³ Greg Buzwell, “Dracula: vampires, perversity and Victorian anxieties”, British Library.

by the MD William J. Robinson, who had a chief position at Bronx Hospital, as “a direct equation between woman’s supposed hunger for seminal substance and her bestial blood lust” caused by “her degenerative subjection to the reproductive function and its attendant sexual craving”, since she felt the need to refill the blood that had been lost.⁸⁴ Semen was the vital essence of man and even though it was a duty to please the better half in marriage, but no more than every other week, it should not be spent carelessly. Hence, the sex-crazed female who seduced men in order to steal their vital seminal fluid was dangerous and real-life vampires.⁸⁵

Judging from the Victorian visual culture and fictional and scientific literature, what men feared was the hidden potency beneath the feminine surface – as her genitals had the ability to metaphorically devour the male’s vitality and literally his penis – her *vagina dentata*. It is one of the most mythologized dreads of man, according to Caputi, and its symbolic meaning is that of the castrating vagina, equipped with sharp teeth.⁸⁶ Another example given by Evans is the female demon Baubo who crudely “flashes’ her genitals, recalling Freud’s phrase ‘the devil fled when the woman showed him her vulva’”.⁸⁷

Dijkstra point to an important difference in the killing of male versus female vampires, namely that the former is described in much less detail and lacks the erotic undertone as in the case of the latter. The execution of female vampires, like those of Carmilla and Lucy, “always takes the form of a sadistic rape scene blended into a ritual of symbolic female castration”.⁸⁸ The symbolism of these texts is of great importance, but they must be put in their historical context of medical scientific beliefs and the sublime usage of metaphors, as shown by Dijkstra in the following paragraphs:

As Freud made clear, the head was the true locus of the vampire’s *vagina dentata*. Her ritual castration, the excision of her phallic tooth, her clitoridectomy, must therefore take the form of decapitation. [---] For Stoker, this description was obviously a source of great erotic satisfaction. The account outlines an orgasmic experience of masculine self-assertion that reaches its climax with the woman’s final submission to the force of the avenging phallus.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.334.

⁸⁵ Dijkstra, *Evil Sisters: the threat of female sexuality and the cult of manhood* (New York: Knopf, 1996), p.212.

⁸⁶ Caputi, p.146-147.

⁸⁷ Evans, p.151.

⁸⁸ Dijkstra, *Evil Sisters*, p.118.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.119-120.

Thus, getting your heart pierced by a stake is presented as the proper symbolical way to punish women with an awakened sexuality.⁹⁰ It is justified as therapeutic rape that serves to give the lost virtue back to her, because, as previously mentioned, the death of a fallen woman makes her passive and therefore attractive yet again. The murderers of Dracula, on the other hand, are allowed to keep their heterosexual distance – because no phallic, and otherwise crucial, stake is needed to kill the most notorious vampire of them all.⁹¹

Illustrations of women sound asleep in bed is a part of vampire fiction as well and is exemplified in Illustration No.7. Here Sir Francis Varney succeeds in his quest for blood and crouches over the bitten woman, whose facial expression shows an indecisive combination of helplessness, sexual pleasure and deep sleep. Her body is motionless and if this is because she has not awakened from her sleep yet or if her heart has stopped beating the images does not tell. The same applies to the picture by Klein, Photograph No.7, of a seemingly dead female whose arm dangles lifelessly while her ice blue eyes stares unseeingly towards the ceiling and a red mouth is fixed open in her pale face. The male wears an unbuttoned army service uniform type of jacket and white trousers with what looks like blood spatters on them, yet there is no blood visible on her body. Judging by the manner in which he presses his body on to hers, and tightly grasps one of her breasts with his hand, he is engaged in some sort of sensual act. While his caress and wrinkles upon his forehead could propose remorse or an internal struggle between desire and conscience.

The iconography of how the vampire is expected to look and behave was developed by the 19th century writers. In his book *Evil Sisters* Dijkstra explain that, since people nowadays are used to explicit details of sex and gore in our popular culture, a current reader might discourage the sensationalism of the Victorian Gothic novels. However, considering the social context of fin-de-siècle, readers were “used to reading between the lines when it came to sexual matters” and the creators of vampire narratives were absolutely aware of the connection between vampirism and sexuality they created.⁹² In the age of symbolism, metaphors were an important part of the textual content since it inspired readers to put all facts aside and instead open up for imaginative and subjective interpretations.⁹³ Vampire stories written during the late 18th and early 19th century all contain “a strong element of sexual sadism”, which notable correlates with the works of Marquis de Sade.⁹⁴The next

⁹⁰ Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.342.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, *Evil Sisters*, p.120-123.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.88.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.311-312.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.123.

analysis section will shift focus from subhumans towards human perversities and the representation of sexual violence.

2.1.4. **Summary of discoveries**

I have shown that the Penny Bloods illustrations often depict female characters as decorative trophies or performers. The great majority of the women's portraits are mild and feminine and there are a vast number of ballerinas on stage which all resemble each other, while portraits of male characters are next to none existing. I conclude that the aesthetic of the Victorian Gothic has been mystified in modern culture, where the dark and eerie fashion photographs are more connected to a horror aesthetic than the original illustrations. The notion of colour is an important difference since elements such as blood becomes more dramatic when it is deep red instead of shades of grey. The female penny characters are often depicted as victims and the examples of unconscious women mirrors the 19th century art trend that correlated with medical revelations about the female reproductive system. The images in this analyse section show a general lack of female agency, where the women rather are victims of different circumstances or male perpetrators. Symbols of the invited rape can be found in the many images of unconscious women, and bodies posed in awkward angles with facial expressions somewhere between pleasure and helplessness are equally found in today's fashion photos. This fuels ancient theories of natural female masochism, especially in Photograph No.4 where her human worth is destroyed as she has been left behind with the rest of the garbage.

Male vampires that prey on female victims have just as strong sexual elements now as in the Gothic tales, but the feeding feasts represented in the photos include a larger portion of sensuality than the more aggressive attacks illustrated. The vampire is still a figure of contradictions, where s/he can be used in horror movies as evil blood-suckers or as a beautiful and mysterious creature in young adult popular culture, and Photograph No.7 exemplifies an ambivalent mix of such violence and eroticism. The fictional vampire was a symbol of societal fears, immigration being the main one, and I wonder if it is a coincident that the popularity of vampire fiction remerged explosively in the beginning of the 21st century, at a time when patriot nationalist parties gained political ground in the Western world?

2.2. SADOMASOCHISM; OR, PERVERSIONS OF MODERNITY

In this section, the pictures analysed holds a strong connection to certain sexual preferences or perversions that contain a dominant/submissive relation. In the following subsections I will discuss the history of sexual pathology and pornography, as well as the visualization relating to serial killers in popular culture. While the general framework of sadism and masochism is outlined in the introduction I begin this chapter by describing the textual content of the two most prominent novels, to give an understanding of how they are practiced in fiction. The first one is Sade's *120 days of Sodom*, about four male libertines who lock themselves in a castle for four month in order to participate in the ultimate sexual experience. That is, they kidnap eight boys and eight girls, all virgins between 12 and 15 years old, and act out perverse fantasies on their bodies. After deflowering, abuse, incest, vaginal and anal rapes, almost all of the total 46 victims (the servants are eventually turned into sex-slaves as well) are slaughtered.⁹⁵ Sade divides the passions, his word for perversion, into four groups: the simplest, more unusual, criminal and murderous. The same categories were further developed by various authorities a century later.⁹⁶ Sade's textual legacy is complex and is the focus of many feminist discussions, and in my personal quest to establish where I stand regarding his philosophical perspective, I admittedly have somewhat failed.⁹⁸

The second novel is *Venus in Furs* by Sacher-Masoch, and Dijkstra describes the core essence of the book as such: the male protagonist Severin has a desire to be abused and betrayed, for he believes that one can only love which is superior to oneself. His lover Wanda, who lives according to the prevailing female gender norm and is thus a masochistic, actually wants a dominating *real man*. However, in order to please his needs she somewhat reluctantly agrees to be his dominatrix by means of whipping and bondage. The interesting complexity here is that by agreeing to dominate, she submits to his needs and thereby gets her masochist fulfilment as well. While Severin, claiming submission, actually is in control and manipulates his surroundings to achieve it. Thus, Wanda, as woman, is only a symbol and surrogate for mastery. When Severin lets himself be dominated by Wanda's new male lover, his dependence on woman cease to exist and the surrogate is forsaken for masculine mastery.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ de Sade.

⁹⁶ Schaffner, p.132 ff.

⁹⁷ Note the socio-historical context, e.g. that masturbation was a simple perversion and homosexuality illegal.

⁹⁸ Admittedly I have not read *120 days of Sodom* page by page, but, while accepting the attraction in the beginning of the book – transgression of the forbidden – I soon found myself repulsed by the actions described. Child molestation, faeces and murder as erotica is beyond my understanding. Hence my ambivalence between de Sade's philosophy and the literature itself.

⁹⁹ Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.372-374.

2.2.1. **The patriarch history of sexual pathology**

Foucault defines four strategies that developed during the 18th century and represent the mechanisms of knowledge and power in regards to sex. First, a hysterization of women's bodies; medical science declared the female body to be drenched with sexuality and thus pathological, and woman was designated into the home sphere as the caretaker and mother. Second, a pedagogization of children's sex; adults needed to regulate sexually bad behaviours to prevent physical and moral dangers. Third, a socialization of procreative behaviour; recommendations of procreation were made as to maintain the qualitative gens of the species. Fourth, a psychiatrization of perverse pleasure; all forms of sexual instinct and behaviour were analysed and categorized as either normal or pathological, where a cure was sought for the latter ones.¹⁰⁰ The new sexual discourse was governed by official institutions and parents were given instructions on how to care for and monitor their children within the home. Relationships of the middle and upper-class family-structure were reinforced as a network of pleasure and power, where boundaries between adults and children, boys and girls, family members and servants were drawn.¹⁰¹ As a result of the institutionalization of sexuality, Foucault writes, society had created "a whole perverse outbreak and a long pathology of the sexual instinct".¹⁰² The negative consequence is the power institutionalizations came to have over bodies and sexuality and the fact that the 19th century categories of perversion still is sustained by economic interests. Not only does it enhance the power of those who created them – medical doctors and psychiatrists – but also of what crudely could be label as a patriarchal exploitation masquerading as entertainment – prostitution and pornography.¹⁰³ However, contrary to what one might suspect, it was also accompanied by possibilities:

It did not set boundaries for sexuality; it extended the various forms of sexuality, pursuing them according to lines of indefinite penetration. It did not exclude sexuality, but included it in the body as a mode of specification of individuals. It did not seek to avoid it; it attracted its varieties by means of spirals in which pleasure and power reinforced one another.¹⁰⁴

In the first English legal-medicine text from 1785, Samuel Farr repeated the argument, dating back from at least 2nd century Rome, that conception was improbably to occur if not both

¹⁰⁰ Foucault, p.103-105.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.46.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.47.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.47-48.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.47.

parties enjoyed the sexual act and orgasmed. As Laqueur writes, this was the context in which medicine was practiced, where women who claimed to have been violently raped could immediately be disregarded if she had been impregnated. A true rape includes so much terror and fear that an orgasm would be prevented, thus, a pregnancy meant that she must have enjoyed it to some extent. This long-lived belief was not properly disclaimed until the beginning of the 19th century.¹⁰⁵ Although, terrifying as it is, even the congressman and U.S. Senate candidate Todd Akin believed this myth as late as 2012, which fortunately led to his resignation.¹⁰⁶ As evident by the statements below, retold by Dijkstra, science and philosophy repeatedly attacked the female gender during the Victorian era. Due to declining birth-rates, within the middle-class, medical authorities were encouraging husbands to take their reproductive responsibility and “assert their masculinity [...] by force if necessary”.¹⁰⁷ Domestic rape was thus sanctioned for the cause of the human species. This was nevertheless unproblematic since, according to P. J. Proudhon, women actually liked “to be treated a bit violently, or even to be raped”.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, nature had designed women with masochistic tendencies in order to be able to enjoy violent and sadistic conducts by men, since such actions were nothing but an expression of his sexual and masculine potency.¹⁰⁹ Krafft-Ebing is one of the theorists that developed this idea further, stating that women’s “voluntary subjection to the opposite sex is a physiological phenomenon. Owing to her passive role in procreation and long-existent social conditions, ideas of subjection are, in woman, normally connected with the idea of sexual relations”.¹¹⁰ Since female masochism then is natural, only male masochism is a true *perversion*.

It is important to note, as Schaffner amongst others do, that the often stereotypical view on female sexuality as passive, submissive and reactive is due to the fact that the theories were developed within a patriarchy. That is, sexology was established by *male* physicians and psychiatrists who studied *male* patients.¹¹¹ The purpose of including these rag-picked pieces of medical history is not to point the blame at every living man with my feminist finger, but

¹⁰⁵ Laqueur, p.161-162.

¹⁰⁶ On August 19, 2012, Akin discussed his anti-abortion views in a local news interview. When he was asked if exceptions should be made for rape victims he answered; “First of all, from what I understand from doctors, that’s really rare. If it’s a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down”. Besides believing in an obsolete myth, he uses the term “legitimate rape” which I interpret as a mistrust of the truth in testimonies made by rape victims. Source: FOX 2 now.

¹⁰⁷ Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity*, p.119.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.120.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, *Evil Sisters*, p.166-167.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, *Idols of perversity*, p.101.

¹¹¹ Schaffner p.16-18; p.223-224.

rather to describe the social context in which Penny Bloods appeared. Because these ideas that sanction sexual violence against women are present in the novel narratives and imagery.

The first images of this section are Illustration No.8 from *Charley Wag* and Photograph No.8 by Miles Aldrige. By the looks of it both women are in a threatening situation where they are held captive by a male figure. Even though the surroundings differ they share similar details, like the highlighted brightness of their pushed up breasts or the way the eyes convey a feeling of victimization as they look away from the perpetrators. While the Victorian lady looks much more afraid, the backseat victim has the obligatory sexual gaze, which only confirms a reproduction of the theory that women secretly likes to be dominated. An additional component is the hand upon their victim's faces, which I find especially unnerving in the second case where it is used as a reminder and symbol of male authority.

In 1975 journalist Susan Brownmiller published a study on rape called *Against our will*, in which she concludes that “rape is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which *all men* keep *all women* in a state of fear”.¹¹² Based on feminist analyses alike, Caputi adds that rape does not happen because of a man's uncontrollable urges of lust, but rather it is “a social expression of sexual politics, an institutional and ritual enactment of male domination”.¹¹³ I believe this statement to be accurate in most cases, however, I want to make it perfectly clear that I do not imply that *all men* have the urge, or even the slightest inclination of wish, to rape or abuse. The point is that the few men who actually do, create such universal fear that women might see all men as potential rapists, a symptom highly unfair for all genders. The problem at hand is that we live in a factual patriarchal rape culture which is reproduced thoughtlessly in all forms of popular entertainment.

Illustration No.9 from *The work girls of London* is another example of the common motif of violence against women, where the female is attacked by a man who stretches his arms in order to grab her. She seems to be falling backwards while he grips her dress by the collar and is possibly about to strangle her. In Photograph No.9 the male figure has already strangled the female character successfully, since she is lying passed out on the floor. She is dressed in black underwear, knee-length stockings and high-heeled shoes, and he, wearing a suit, straddles the body while one hand clasps her throat and the other holds a firm grip around her wrist. The photo is part of the 2013 fashion editorial “Victor/Victoria” in ELLE Serbia and what is significant is that the model Andrej Pejic, who defines oneself as gender

¹¹² Caputi, p.118.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.3.

neutral, portrays both the male and female character. Although a progressive editorial choice I believe should be celebrated, their potentially good intentions become overshadowed by the fact that they sexualize domestic violence. In what can be seen as a political statement about our cultural understanding of gender and the possibility of transgression, they simultaneously visualize the essence of patriarchy in a sexualized glamour shot. Even if it is supposed to be part of an awareness campaign through Pejic's personal battle between the two sexes – why is only the female getting hurt?

2.2.2. Voyeurism and pornography

Since the issues discussed concern the sexualisation of violence under the prevailing gender structures I believe it necessary to include a short segment about the role of pornography. The Victorian publications of George W. M. Reynolds were respectable and radical at the same time since they offered romantic stories for the female readers, but also contained a blend of political debates and low level pornography.¹¹⁴ The latter was probably a way to allure more subscribers, as Crone suggests.¹¹⁵ In 1885 the *Pall Mall Gazette* editor W.T. Stead published a series of articles titled “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon”, describing the trafficking network of child prostitution and sexual abuse operating in London.¹¹⁶ The series were celebrated by many feminists since it offered women a platform to speak openly about sexual matters and the dangerous situation for prostitutes. However, Walkowitz shows that these political writings were “reworked into male-directed fantasies”.¹¹⁷ Stead's narratives mixed two practises; the old melodramas and Victorian pornographic Gothic fairy tales, which contradictory texts produced an “obsessive discourse around sexuality that remain a legacy for the modern era”.¹¹⁸ Thus, melodramas and pornography have both a similar publishing history and sexual content.¹¹⁹

While Krafft-Ebing identified literature itself as the cradle of perversion, Schaffner writes that fiction do have the power to “shape sexual fantasies” as it is less correct than sexology writings.¹²⁰ Since desire is viewed as socially constructed within the feminist ideology it means that it can be restructured and I appreciate the fact that Cameron and Frazer emphasize that pornographic representations is not the reason for acts of sexual violence, but

¹¹⁴ For example Reynolds newspaper (1850-1967).

¹¹⁵ Crone, p.168-169.

¹¹⁶ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, p.81 ff.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.192.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.85.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.97.

¹²⁰ Schaffner, p.54.

rather a reflection of our cultural fantasies.¹²¹ I agree with Walkowitz in referencing Rosalind Coward, who as early as 1981 contributed to a heated debate when stating that feminism should change focus. Instead of attacking pornography as the problem, the discussion should concern itself with sexual relation in general, since it is those sexist structures that are re-enacted in porn.¹²²

According to Freud however, something is a perversion only when the genitals are surrogated by other erogenous zones. As for scopophilia, the pleasure from looking must be restricted to the genitals, surmount levels of disgust and be the sexual goal itself, not as a part of foreplay. Notable is that voyeurism and exhibitionism resemble masochism and sadism in the sense that they require oppositional, or complementary, counterparts in the form of passive and active.¹²³

I propose voyeurism to be a common denominator for fashion photography, pornography and sexual violence as entertainment, in which the camera is significant. Caputi explains the camera as a patriarchal phallic tool filled with masculine meaning that has the capacity to both sublimate sexually violent acts and objectify women, who are supposed to *make love to the camera*. Two pioneering films from 1960 that established the role of voyeurism in popular culture are Michael Powell's **Peeping Tom** and Alfred Hitchcock's **Psycho**. In the former the audience is given a murderer's experience as the male protagonist literary turns his camera into a weapon while filming by attaching a spear to it, resulting in snuff film trophies for him to watch afterwards. Whereas the now classic shower scene in **Psycho** has originated standard features for the sexualisation of women's murders. These include the victim undressing, getting into a shower or bathtub and washing herself in a sensual (and highly unrealistic I might add) manner, while the killer is watching without her knowledge.¹²⁴ One image that exemplifies voyeurism is Illustration No.10 titled "The mysteries of the photographic business" from *Charley Wag*. Julia Jenkini, the heroine being photographed, recalls her working life, starting as a shirt-maker:

Then I thought I might do better, and went to sit as a model to photographers, at eighteen pence an hour, fastening my boot, or lolling on a sofa, showing my ankles. When I had a little more courage, I used to make a little more money.

¹²¹ Cameron and Frazer, p.142-143.

¹²² Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, p.241-243.

¹²³ Schaffner, p.140-141.

¹²⁴ Caputi, p.169-173.

Indeed, the less clothes you have on, the larger price you get. I got up to three shillings; and I dare say you've seen me in a lot of stereoscopic slides.¹²⁵

I would say that her story as well as the image itself describes this business model quite well, since the same statement could be just as true today. It is the essence of objectification in a way, when you get paid for body parts. The man by the window is smoking a pipe with a nonchalant superiority upon his face. He stands gazing at the beauty in undergarments, while her clothes are piled up in the corner and the photographer captures the scene. She looks uneasy in the image, timid or scared, but when telling her comrade about it years later she does so cheerfully. Maybe she tries to hide the fact that it was an unpleasant experience, or maybe she only was portraying the ideal female when modelling, while actually taking advantage of the stupidity of men who so desperately wants to own her photo.

The cultural conception of Sade has continued to develop within the realm of aesthetics, from early 20th century surrealist painters to Gothic high fashion, and within pornography.¹²⁶ Valerie Steele writes that it was partly these changes of stylized horror and soft-core porn within fashion photography that brought about the, still present, debate of sexualisation in the business. On the one hand, the female body is constantly objectified for the sake of the male gaze, while on the other hand, women can use it as a platform to gain sexual freedom and challenge the usual stereotypes.¹²⁷ I believe that both arguments are true and that it comes down to each specific case, and who the interpreter is. Like Photograph No.10 which exemplifies what Caputi states as one more connection between porn and fashion, namely the reproduction of the female body as a plastic toy. Symbolic annihilation as such is echoed in the speech of serial killers, for example Ted Bundy who referred to his victims as objects, images, puppets or dolls.¹²⁸ He was a sadistic rapist and necrophiliac who finally confessed to the murder of 30 women shortly before his execution in 1989.¹²⁹

The photo is from Craig McDean's editorial "The lines and the shapes" where the garments worn have large clams attached to them. White strings are knotted between the clams and several different structures and tripods and since it is the clothing that is pinched, and never the model's body, the resemblance to marionette puppets varies within the series. It is in Photograph No.10 that the model Gemma Ward is the most puppet-like, because even if

¹²⁵ *Charley Wag; the new Jack Sheppard*(London: George Vickers, approximately 1861), p.285.

¹²⁶ Cameron and Frazer, p.55-58.

¹²⁷ Valerie Steele, *Fetish: Fashion, Sex & Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1997), p.42.

¹²⁸ Caputi, p.176 ff.

¹²⁹ For further reading: Ann Rule, *The Stranger Beside Me* (New York: Pocket Books, 2008); Kevin M. Sullivan, *The Bundy Murders: A Comprehensive History* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Co., 2009).

the strings seem to be attached to the shoulder-straps only, her feet are elevated in the air. What could be argued as a feminist critique is the absolute passivity exhibited. Her body hangs loose and relaxed, the shoulders slouch a bit forward and her face is expressionless. Such dollish representation, like the one of Julia, feeds into a voyeuristic fantasy. However, in my opinion, what triumphs that is the Gothic element – the magnificent black dress with volumes of tulle, the turn-of-the-century birds nest hairstyle and the black spinning wheel in the background. Since it lacks the common sexually taunting gaze or confusing nudity the picture becomes beautiful and the Gothic dollishness does not bother me. Since women are structurally portrayed as passive it is easy to reject such representations right away, but I do not advocate such restrictive categorising. Ward is not passive due to another person's demand or force, as in previous photos, and therefore one can appreciate the artistic concept.

2.2.3. **The visual culture of serial killers and the sexually brutalised body**

Hurley writes that the working-class of London was studied during the 19th century to see the effects of the urban environment and it was reported that the second-generation had become more neurotic, pale and feeble as adults.¹³⁰ The medical problems was also said to have moral effects, where symptoms and causes came to be entangled “as degeneration theory became a tool for measuring the moral health of society” and its individuals, to which Krafft-Ebing among other argued that “deviant sexuality was synonymous with sociocultural devolution”.¹³¹ We had evolved from primitive societies of sexual promiscuity and perversion, towards modest and faithful beings by the institutionalization of monogamy in which any sexual act except heterosexual intercourse within marriage was “a betrayal of the socioevolutionary process”.¹³² In contrast Hurley relates the ideas of Foucault when writing that “hegemonic discourses *produce* the very oppositional possibilities they are designed to pre-empt”.¹³³

The first recorded case of a sexual serial killer operating in a Western metropolis is of course the Whitechapel murders during the autumn of terror in 1888. The pure fact that he is still unknown, while there are countless suspects, makes him a subject of imagination. I believe Foucault's theory to be a plausible cultural explanation for the emergence of sadistic killings and its fictional representations. Ergo, I do not think that the appearance of Jack the Ripper is coincidental, but a result of its time. One specific factor I imagine accelerated the

¹³⁰ Hurley, p.69.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.71.

¹³² Ibid., p.72.

¹³³ Ibid., p.8.

myth of the Ripper is the remarkable happenstance that the American stage-adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) travelled to England the same autumn. It tells the story of a man with split personalities and represents the Victorian ambiguous battle between man and animal, respectability and lust, good and evil. It premiered at Lyceum Theatre in London's West End on the 4th of August 1888 and only three days later Martha Tabram, the most debated non-canonical victim, was murdered. This meant that diabolical murderers like Mr. Hyde could hide in plain sight in the same manner as the sociable Dr. Jekyll.

One of the main issues with rape and sexual murder themed entertainment is, according to Caputi, the male identification with the perpetrator, which reinstates the murderers' role as a hero.¹³⁴ Male adult magazines are the genre in which the-killer-as-hero is presented the most light-heartedly, and thereby a connection between sex and murder is easily made.¹³⁵ I am hesitant about Caputi's claim that the "essence of porn consists in the conditioning of male arousal to female subordination, humiliation, objectification, pain, rape, mutilation, and even murder", resulting in that men "see torture of women and think sex".¹³⁶ Even if this statement is highly exaggerated, sexual serial murderers almost universally testify to regular usage of hard-core porn and fantasies of their own participation, scenarios they eventually realize.¹³⁷ The latter notion is not only stated by Caputi, but something that every true crime reader is familiar with.

Despite the textual amount of violence, blood and sexual assault described or alluded to in the Penny Bloods the accompanied illustrations are quite mild. One might think the reason is that the 19th century visual culture refrained from such scenes completely, but this is not the case. The crime reports in Victorian broadsides I have come across often included illustrations of victims being butchered, with blood and body parts spread all over. In later cases like the Whitechapel murders the news magazines printed sketches of crime scenes as well as post-mortem portraits of the victims. Nevertheless, instead of repeating similar illustrations as

¹³⁴ Some examples of song lyrics with a first person identification with either Jack the Ripper, the Yorkshire Ripper or the Boston Strangler are Trevor Rabin's "The Ripper", Thin Lizzy's "Killer on the loose" and Rolling Stones "The midnight Rambler". Caputi, p.46-50.

¹³⁵ In 1980 Hustler published a spoof ad of Dewey's Scotch with Kenneth Bianchi. The text read "Occupation: Hillside Strangler. Latest accomplishment: Cindy Lee Hudspeth, 20. Quote: 'You gotta treat 'em rough...' After knocking off a couple of bimbos, the Hillside Strangler likes to kick back and relax with *Doer's Lite Label*". Caputi, p.53; Four years later, readers who sent in nude photos of themselves were given caps with the text "Free Beaver Hunt". Pictures of imprisoned serial killers wearing the cap was later published. Caputi, p.54.

¹³⁶ Caputi, p.164.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

already seen I decided to discuss two fashion photos that in my opinion clearly allude to Jack the Ripper.

Photograph No.11 belongs to the 2009 menswear editorial *Psycho Killer*, shot by Matt Irwin and styled by Robbie Spencer, in which the model Artur portrays different types of murderers. Although a bit modernized, as the knife in this photo is replaced by a power drill, the Ripper is personified. This character actually combines two of the mythical suspects, where his blazer, cravat and well-combed hair play on the sharply dressed gentleman in a cape and top hat often reproduced in fiction. The leather apron on the other hand is a direct reference, intentional or not, to one of the initial suspects – a man nicknamed Leather-apron. The model has a decisive look in his eyes, pale skin which emphasizes the dark circles around them, and blood spatter across his face. The fact that he wears no pants creates a duality between the seriousness of murder and the, for me, humoristic tighty-whities seen in other pictures, which ease up the overall feeling.

Photograph No.12 titled “Ravenous Affections” depicts a murder victim whose stomach has been slashed open with the entrails in a mess, also a known trademark of the Ripper. The model and designer is styled in a 1950’s vintage look, rather than as an 1888’s prostitute. The picture comes from *Pretty Macabre*, i.e. Andrea Hansen, who creates horror couture costumes and conceptual fantasy filled photographs. I do not mind this marriage between fashion and horror at all, and very much like the aesthetic of both pictures. Even though they are further examples of a female victim and male killer, as neither of them include the respective counterpart of opposite sex, they do not display an obvious patriarchal power structure. This is also supported by the fact that it is the male who seems a bit bare, whereas women usually are the pant-less ones, neither does the female display any nudity or a facial expression of sexual pleasure.

The sadist sexuality originating from Sade is all about the transgression of social and religious norms and, as Cameron and Frazer write, to gain pleasure from power. The essence of this ideology is shared by the majority of sadistic sex killers, that is, the quest for transcendence, where the taking of someone else’s life works as self-affirmation.¹³⁸ Foucault does not accept sadism as an ancient practice, but argues that it appeared at the end of the 18th century and, as cited by Cameron and Frazer, “constitutes one of the greatest conversions of Western imagination”.¹³⁹ One of Sade’s arguments was that sexual pleasure is a nerve sensation – produced by lust and cruelty. As it is a psychological process, that generates

¹³⁸ Cameron and Frazer, p.166-169.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.56.

pleasure from sadism, cruelty is natural. Therefore killing becomes justified since it obeys nature's law, whiles "it is *pleasurable* because it does *not* obey man-made laws" and transgresses morality and religion.¹⁴⁰ The allure of Sade's philosophy is that it explores not only erotic, but also aesthetic, intellectual and moral aspects of pleasures. However, these desires are "attendant on humiliation, torture and murder" and Cameron and Frazer state that Sade's writings have influenced "our cultural conception of sex-killers" which set the stage for the mythologization of forthcoming murderers.¹⁴¹

Already in 1975 the critic Hilton Kramer observed that "fashion photography was becoming a subdivision of pornography" with an interest for murder and terror.¹⁴² On this note, the analysis steps further into the visual culture of sadomasochism. Illustration No.11 belongs to *The wild boys of London*, a novel which caused an uproar and became registered under the Obscene Publication Act. The reason for this is a bit of a mystery, as it contains the same indecencies as most Penny Bloods.¹⁴³ The image depicts a woman being punished by torture, her hands are tied to the ceiling and a rough man is rolling up his sleeves with one hand, while holding a pole in the other. Her upper body is bare, probably to increase the pain, and her friend outside can only watch the dominant-submissive interplay in progress.

When I initially saw Photograph No.13, from Steven Klein's editorial "Institutional White", the first thought that came to my mind was: David Parker Ray – The Toy-box killer. Ray was apprehended in 1999 and sentenced to 224 years in prison for kidnapping, rape and torture, based on two victim testimonies and his own videotape recordings.¹⁴⁴ I view the fashion photo as a gothized version of Ray's torture chamber he had made for himself in an old trailer, his so-called Toy-box.¹⁴⁵ In his video, the victim lies naked in a homemade horizontal gynaecologist chair and is strapped down by the ankles, knees, thighs, stomach, throat, arms and wrists. The body of the fashion victim, so to speak, is posed spread-eagle on a bare metallic bed frame and the placements of the restricting ropes are strikingly alike. She looks worn out, with her eyes closed, lips slightly parted and the head tilting to one side. There is no question in my mind of the connotation of rape since her bottom seems to be undressed (if she wears any underwear they vanish in the bright light), a detail which is emphasised by the fact that both her shirt and shoes are left on. The windows in the room are

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.57.

¹⁴¹ Cameron and Frazer, p.56; p.55.

¹⁴² Evans, p.193.

¹⁴³ British library, "Penny dreadful, The Wild Boys of London"; Adcock, "Penny Numbers of an Obscene Nature".

¹⁴⁴ For further reading: Jim Fielder, *Slow Death* (U.S.: Pinnacle Books, 2013).

¹⁴⁵ My comparison is based on the crime scene photos and stills from Ray's own recordings, available online.

offhandedly boarded up and another woman with perfectly done hair, make-up and nails stands beside the bed while looking thru one of the gaps. Her well-pressed white dress reminds of an old fashioned nurse or caretaker uniform and a large key ring is dangling at her waist. I find this picture unsavoury since it crosses that blurry line between appealing and appalling for one reason; the spread and bare legs. When associations to such a nightmarish rape scene are present it becomes gender coded and part of a structural problem. Therefore it loses the fantastical horror aesthetic I appreciate in the rest of the editorial's images.

The fact that the sadist in this case is a woman is of course of importance and is a subject discussed by previous feminists. In *The Sadeian Woman* from 1979, Angela Carter reads Sade's works as a critique of the socially constructed gender roles, in which his "heroines healed themselves of their socially inflicted wounds through sexual violence, for 'a repressive society turns all eroticism into violence'".¹⁴⁶ This claim, that women can free themselves through acts of violence, is based on Sade's belief that sexual relations influence every other relation between humans. Evans opposes Carter's interpretation and points to the fact that Sade's "women were either sacrificial victims or ritual murderesses, but in either case always overseen by men".¹⁴⁷ Cameron and Frazer express similar critique towards Carter's conclusion that it must not always be men who murder women. They problematize this existentialist viewpoint of murder on the basis that to be able to become the subject, the murderer, one needs to become masculine. Thus, to be the subject, a person can no longer keep ones femininity.¹⁴⁸ I will return to this question after another female dominator example.

"The hag and her victim" is the title of Illustration No.12 from *Rose Mortimer*, in which a young woman's wrists are tied to a roof beam and similar to the previous image, her dress is pulled down and her breasts are depicted in silhouette. She is faceless, and as the hag beats her with a stick she bends backward in pain, which also highlights the arch of her lower back. The hag wears old patched clothes, the face is heavily lined and her hair flatters around the head due to the violent movement. The overall vision makes her look uncontrollable and mad. The dominating character is the biggest difference between the illustration and Photograph No.14, also from "Institutional White", since she is collected, cool and perfect in the latter. Here the patient is naked and bound to the wall in an elaborate network of ropes, while her hands are tied behind her back and her mouth gagged. The ropes indicate that the dominatrix has taken pleasure in the methodical knot-binding, as it should be in a case of S/M bondage.

¹⁴⁶ Evans, p.154.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.156-157.

¹⁴⁸ Cameron and Frazer, p.58-62.

Returning to the question of femininity when becoming the subject, the old hag has no trace of a conventional femininity, neither in looks nor behaviour. However, I would argue that the madness prevails over the gender aspect and that the character therefore is categorised as crazy and nothing more. The contemporary sadist nurse is a more complicated character to discuss. She controls the scene and is an active agent, i.e. the subject, while her features are quite harsh with a square face and a sharp nose, elements not usually related to femininity. This time she wears a white shirtdress which, with the exception of the waist and its buckled belt, is unbuttoned and spread open to reveal her white bra and panties. If this is done to reassure the onlooker of her womanhood, as if her dominance would become too masculine otherwise, or if it is meant as a portrayal of a strong woman is unclear to me. The problematic bottom line is that the symbolical meanings attached to *feminine* and *masculine* are socially constructed. To state that she radiates masculinity due to the harsh facial features and agency, while showing off her femininity through the visible underwear, gives nothing but value to those categorisations. To give the model masculine traits in order to make her the subject only underlines the idea that she is not actually the subject. If acceptance by the masses is needed to truly be the subject, women are always going to run short. In fiction however, I believe the originator of a fantasy have the power to decide which rules apply. On this basis, the sadist nurse of “Institutional white” is a female subject who opens up for the possibility of the sadist woman.

2.2.4. Summary of discoveries

The analyse above has confirmed the existence of a visual culture based on violence against women containing patriarchal dominant/submissive power structures. In addition, it is a visual culture that sexualizes such violence and similar features are found in both the historical and contemporary material. The material frequently shows slightly pornographic visualisations that can be traced back to Sade’s ideology where the sadist pleasure triumphs over other people’s suffering and pain, like in cases of modern lust murderers. It is evident that stylisations directly linked to serial killers like Jack the Ripper and his victims are present within fashion photography. I argue that representations that separately personify either a male killer or a female victim, as in Photograph No.11 and 12, avoid the otherwise patriarchal power structure and instead focus on the aesthetical horror experience. As expected the fashion photos are more explicit than the illustrations, where the former contain complete nakedness and clear connotations of rape while scenes of intercourse in the latter, whether consensual or forced, never are illustrated.

Representations of women as passive beings are not a problem in itself, which I believe Photograph No.10 is an example of. However, it easily becomes part of a structural problem when combined with other symbolical elements, like a sexually taunting gaze, uncalled nudity or questionable domination by one or more male figures. For example Photograph No.8 that contains all three features since she is naked, kept in place by a male hand and, despite such humiliation, gaze seductively at the camera, which echoes the 19th century belief in female masochism as natural.

The only images in this analysis section that shows female agency are those of women torturing another female, where the victim's body is sexualised. The results differ as Photograph No.13 negatively connotes rape, while No.14 is more of a stylised horror aesthetic of an erotic lesbian S/M experience. In the few illustrations, I have been able to find, where the aggressor is a woman she is mad and uncontrollable. In similar photographic scenarios women seem to have gained the needed societal power to be believable as a composed dominator, in fiction anyway. I do not however, as Carter does, believe that sadistic sexual violence between women has the ability to heal social scars. Since you do not take revenge on the source (i.e. the patriarchy), but on another innocent victim it is rather like punching a brick wall with bare knuckles, it doesn't change anything.

In a Foucauldian spirit I believe that sexual violence as entertainment has its cultural explanation. People seem to like looking at editorials in fashion magazines, all kinds of pornography and sexual violence, both as fictional representations and documented true crime. On this basis humans might have an internal desire to watch and observe, and even if it is not to the degree of becoming pathological, I suggest that the normalization of voyeurism and exhibitionism is much due to internet and social media. One could ask a bit crass if not the majority of people with an internet connection and a Facebook/Instagram account has been slightly infected with those so-called perversities? I believe that sexual liberation and normalization happens because of several factors. One being when our existing socially constructed limitations of sexuality gets challenged, reformed and to different degrees accepted thanks to people who openly transgress norms. The sanctioning of male authority and domestic rape by medical authorities during the 19th century is reproduced in contemporary fashion photos. In addition, it is a factual rape culture which is fictionally represented in popular entertainment and, for me, it is such symbolism that crosses the line from appealing to appalling. Again, I do not advocate censorship; my only wish is a wider variation in regards to representations of power structures and stereotypes.

2.3. FEMINIST GOTHICISM; OR, SEX, WEAPONS AND FASHION

Due to the Victorian ideology of respectability, and the disclaiming of anything like a *healthy* female sexuality, I had one main fear going in to this research project. That was the possibility of finding nothing but single-minded representations of submissive, decorative or victimised females, but as I began to collect my visual material I was pleased to see that my fear was uncalled for. This final analysis section will show that Penny Bloods actually were a platform that enabled the existence of multiple femininities. The first subsection presents examples of female characters exploring their sexuality, the second deals with representations of women who violently strike back on their oppressor, and the third discusses the notion of fantasy and what feminist possibilities it entails.

2.3.1. Female sexuality allowed

Alike the majority of the Penny Blood novels, Reynolds' *The mysteries of London* contains strong sexual undertones, and the illustrations have even been compared to soft-core pornography. However, Victorian researcher Ellen Rosenman opposes these claims, meaning that descriptions of intercourse are deliberately avoided as the focus rather lies on erotic scenarios with the purpose to arouse which is an important difference, and I fully agree on both accounts. In her examination of how the female body is displayed she concludes that *Mysteries of London* actually differs from the majority of the penny novels since it contains "representations of sexual pleasure and female embodiment that are genuinely original".¹⁴⁹ In penny fiction women's virtue are a great force not to be messed with and if, or actually when, she loses this conventional virtue, there are almost always terrible consequences. Rosenman shows that even though the Victorian sexual ideology is present in Reynolds' writings, i.e. genital desire is pathologized, the female characters are allowed both pleasure and agency.

Ellen Monroe for example, who makes a living by modelling for artists when she becomes pregnant by rape, but then climbs the social ladder as a beloved ballet dancer and after seeing her perform the rapist wants her yet again, they marry, he dies, and she can retire peacefully.¹⁵⁰ It is highly unusual that female sexuality is shown by "a subject experiencing her own body", but this is exactly what happens in the scene where Ellen stands gazing at herself in a mirror.¹⁵¹ Through her modelling and dance performances she has "developed a kind of body-consciousness and re-appropriates her image for her own desire" where the

¹⁴⁹ Rosenman, p.32.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.43.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.37.

“presentation of her body in art objects makes it erotically available to her”.¹⁵² Therefore the physically gendered theatre does not only provide the male audience with safe voyeurism, but more importantly enables female performers, and maybe even the readers, to explore their exhibitionism.

A similar scene is found in Illustration No.13 where Lady Ernestina in *The mysteries of the court* stands in front of the mirror. She lets her long dark hair down, her thin waist is noticeable despite the volumes of dress fabric and her white plump bosom is bulging. She peers sensually at herself posing and there is a faint smile on her lips as though appreciating what she sees, which supports the text:

[K]nowing that she was beautiful – aware also that she was admired – with true patrician profligacy did she feel a thrill of pride on account of being the paramour of Royalty: so that while the glow gently suffused her cheeks, the light of satisfaction flashed from her fine dark eyes.¹⁵³

Unfortunately the consequence for this bodily self-appreciation is immediate in this case. The voyeurism is personified by a man, the Hangman, watching “the splendid woman who thus stood before him”, and becoming “insatiate in his desires and furious in his passions, [he] felt the blood coursing like lightning through his veins; and he inwardly resolved to make that charming creature his own”.¹⁵⁴ He smothers her unconscious and in the next scene she is lying on a sofa with the Hangman beside her. The rape that just happened is not recounted, instead it is described how he gloatingly makes her aware that all her shame has been consummated. Lady Ernestina’s devastation quickly turns into anger and hatred, and the somewhat surprised Hangman notes that she “seemed to have lost all the weakness of her sex”.¹⁵⁵ Thanks to her quick-wittedness and a change in tactics she manages to handcuff the Hangman to a mechanical chair and make her escape within a couple of minutes.

My interpretation of Photograph No.15 is that the model Kate Moss is looking at her own reflection, like the camera is a mirror. She is nude except for a bridal veil tiara and a bouquet of crème coloured roses precisely covering her genitals and she is touching her lips with her fingers. Despite these two features, which often are used to accentuate nakedness and sexuality, I do not find her sexualised in a negative way. Due to the lack of a seductive gaze

¹⁵² Rosenman, p.44.

¹⁵³ *The mysteries of the court of London*, Vol. 4, second series, George W. M. Reynolds (London: J. Dicks, 1849-1856 or 1852), p.244.

¹⁵⁴ *The mysteries of the court of London*, Vol. 4, p.244.

¹⁵⁵ *The mysteries of the court of London*, Vol. 4, p.247.

or body curve accentuating pose I draw the conclusion that she is not in front of another person, but alone. There is sadness in her eyes where she stands straight forward, observing herself as one might do before making a big decision. To face oneself in such an exposed and x-raying manner, can require some internal strength. This makes the picture emotional.

The penny authors reproduced the same themes and events in the stories, but according to John Adcock the best writers, i.e. James Malcolm Rymer and Edward Ellis (the pen-name of Charles Henry Ross and Ernest Warren), managed to make every tale refreshingly thrilling. One recurring ingredient is the secret identity obtained by cross-dressing, such as Fanny White who switches from female to male attire whenever she wants or needs to.¹⁵⁶ Another is Eliza in *The mysteries of London* who, like Ellen and Ernestina, figures in a mirror scene.

Rosenman explains this as a moment for “auto-erotic self-contemplation”, where “Reynolds’s fascination with women as performers implies a contemporary understanding of the performativity of gender”, although only regarding the female sex.¹⁵⁷ Even though it is made clear that Eliza and Ellen’s sexualities are unconventional, and that Eliza’s female identity is real while her male identity is pretended, they are allowed to embrace them. Neither is forced to submit to conventions in the novel, and I think this is reflected in Illustration No.14 where Eliza is walking through town in her male apparel, comprising a black fitted coat, top hat and cane. She holds her head up high while making a gesture with her hand in the air which radiates confidence. It is interesting to note the aesthetic similarity between what was an intriguing plot in the form of cross-dressing during the Victorian era and what is high fashion nowadays. As an example I found a stylistic similarity to one of the outfits from Alexander McQueen’s pre-fall runway in 2009, seen in Photograph No.16. Both outfits are completely black with straight pants, broad shoulders and a contoured waistline, accessorised with a hat and cane and they are equally stylishly anonymous.

2.3.2. **Revenge of the phallic woman**

It is not that surprising, as Adcock writes, that the penny heroines “took to the gun and the axe when we look at the trials they underwent”, since they “were stripped, whipped, kidnapped [and] raped”.¹⁵⁸ Some writers, like Ellis in *Ruth the Betrayed; or, The Female Spy*, made parody-like examples of the dualism of womanhood. First describing a beautiful young woman – her honest face, sweet and pure. Then twisting it around, asking what treacheries,

¹⁵⁶ Adcock, “Hard-boiled Heroines”.

¹⁵⁷ Rosenman, p.45.

¹⁵⁸ Adcock, “Hard-boiled Heroines”.

crimes and vindictive dreams can be hidden beneath the surface.¹⁵⁹ I think the point he is making, even as a parody, is exactly right. We never know the capacity of a person and therefore representations should aim to avoid stereotypes based on characters biological sex.

Fanny White is portrayed in a similar way, as “[s]he could love and languish; but, when her blood was up, she could scratch and bite. She would make love one moment, and, the next, fight like a little she-devil, as she was”.¹⁶⁰In Illustration No.15 she pushes a man up against the gatepost by a stranglehold. What I like about this image is that it displays two extreme gender stereotypes and contradicts them at the same time, which results in an interesting dualism. Fanny’s appearance is feminine as her mouth, hands and feet are tiny and her attire comprises a decorated bonnet and a laced petticoat under her voluminous skirt. The man on the other hand is in my opinion the caricature of a chauvinist businessman, with a large waist-girth, mushy face and fat lips. Yet, Fanny is fierce with a look of determination upon her face, while he surrenders and holds his hand to the gatepost in order to keep his balance. It is of course positive that women were allowed to be angry and aggressive in the penny magazines, although they are describes as she-devils while similar brutality in men simply is described as masculinity. Another example of the outraged revenge sort of violence is found in Photograph No.17 by Steven Meisel. The photo is actually from a video editorial called “Horror Movie”, which either can be seen as the plot of any scary movie or as a statement against domestic violence, but regardless of which shows female victims who decide to fight back. The woman, dressed in red, has overpowered her aggressor and instead of using the knife he hold in his hand she screams and continues to smash his head against the floor in the puddle of blood. I argue that representations of women attacking their oppressor contain a symbolism of empowerment that differs from those of men’s violence against women and could be viewed as a feminist statement, a symbol of women’s increased power in society.

Much of the contemporary photos contain creations from Alexander McQueen, and his connection to Sade and their shared perspective is explored by Evans who writes that both lived in sexual and technological transition periods. They were equally fascinated with the juxtaposition of freedom and repression, aggressor and victim, beauty and horror, and the theatrical performances and historical perspective staged by McQueen resonates with Sade’s nihilistic dystopia.¹⁶¹ Although sometimes criticized for misogyny due to the cruelty in his

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ *Fanny White*, p.55.

¹⁶¹ Evans, p.158-160.

creations, McQueen designed for the powerful woman, almost subhumanly dangerous, who use “her sexuality as a sword rather than a shield”, hence the sadomasochistic features.¹⁶² He armed them with fashionable gothized weapons, like the extreme high heels and accessories made of animal horns, knife blades and barbwire-vines with sharp silver thorns.¹⁶³

Illustration No.16 titled “A noble Lady’s vengeance”, from *The mysteries of the court*, depict a scene where a woman puts her calculated plan of revenge into action. It is a moonlit evening and Philip Ramsay is to collect his extortion money from Countess Eleanor, who talks in a deliberate cold manner as to conceal her true feelings. She reassures that Ramsay will get the money, he just have to know one thing first, and she says “that madly—profoundly—devotedly as I once loved you, so fiercely and intensely do I now hate you!”.¹⁶⁴ Ignoring this insult the criminal once again demands to get the money bag, whereupon Eleanor reaches inside her cloak as to extract it, and with a rapid movement instead retrieves a pistol and shoots the man dead. Eleanor exemplifies those Penny Blood-women capable of keeping their emotions under control in order to plan their revenge, and then execute it well.

The stylization in Photograph No.18 is truly Gothic, where the dark room that could belong to a Victorian mansion is decorated with advanced and detailed woodcarvings on the walls, door and furniture, while the window glass is blackened with dirt. The woman is resting in a chair and is dressed in a voluminous white dress and black boots that reaches above the knees and disappears under the skirt hem. They are equipped with what looks like large scale lacing in the front and the heels are so high and thin they could pierce your skin. She wears silver jewellery that starts as rings on her fingers, then spreading over the back of her hands, like fashionable knuckle-dusters. There is a side table with six curved legs, on top of which lies two old books and a creepy looking bronze mask. Whether the mask functions as a protective horned helmet, a psycho murderer’s put-on persona or as a torture tool, it is in my interpretation a symbol of her control, and the reason why she can sleep so peacefully. Thus, she needs not even be active to convey her mastery.

According to Torkild Thanem and Louise Wallenberg, the limitation of both Freud and Gilles Deleuze’s understanding of masochism is that the heterosexual matrix and sexual difference is taken for granted. In the article “Bugging Freud and Deleuze”, they discuss masochism in connection with Freud, Deleuze and Helmut Newton’s fashion photos for Wolford of phallic Amazon women and fetish paraphernalia, seeking “to develop an

¹⁶² Ibid., p.151.

¹⁶³ Evans, p.233-236.

¹⁶⁴ *The mysteries of the court*, Vol. 2, first series, new edition, George W. M. Reynolds (London: J. Dicks, 1849-1856 or 1855), p.298.

alternative, queer theory of masochism as sexual indifference”.¹⁶⁵Freud concluded that masochism is the result of male desire to be feminine and since both masochist and sadist desire exists within the male pervert he is a sadomasochist. The French philosopher Deleuze rejects the unionizing term sadomasochism based on the difference between the two practices. Sadism is chaotic, impersonal and requires the infliction of real physical pain and the sadist’s total control over the slave. Whereas masochism is structured and performed in accordance to the intimate contract agreed upon by the participants and since it is the fantasy of pain and humiliation that gives sexual satisfaction, actual pain is unnecessary. Nevertheless, Thanem and Wallenberg writes that Deleuze remains confined in a heterosexual matrix and the notion of becoming-woman, and neglects to problematize his own male perspective. Like McQueen, Newton’s work has been criticized for being sexist and misogynist and while Thanem and Wallenberg agree with much of this critique, it is those issues that are of interest:

Indeed, reading his sexualized and pornographic work in a way which visualizes established notions about gender, sexuality, and race may empower feminist and queer discourses to question old truths dictated by male thinkers such as Freud and Deleuze.¹⁶⁶

Based on Judith Butler’s argument that so-called normal heterosexuality is the fundament of sexual difference, any practice that strays from it has the power to disturb the male/female dichotomy and enable gender-bending. The masochist does not simply take a female position according to Thanem and Wallenberg, instead he transgresses sexual difference by becoming neither woman nor man, but both, and strives for indifference. Masochism is thereby a theatrical play where sex and gender can be experienced in various ways by becoming-both.¹⁶⁷

Illustration No.17 from *The mysteries of the court of London* features the Indian princess Indora who is dressed in European fashion, instead of her usual traditional clothing. She is on her own private mission to expose the true perpetrator of a previous murder and has figured out where the weapon was kept and managed to retrieve the dagger. Her powerful black dress has a voluminous skirt and corseted waist, leaving the arms and chest bare, and resembles the McQueen creation in Photograph No.19. The women also share a cocky or bothersome frown upon their faces, but instead of a dagger the model holds a large axe in her hand. I appreciate

¹⁶⁵ Torkild Thanem and Louise Wallenberg, “Bugging Freud and Deleuze: toward a queer theory of masochism”, in *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, Vol. 2 (2010), p.1.

¹⁶⁶ Thanem and Wallenberg, p.6.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.6-7.

the combination of the huge couture gown, the pink rubber dishwashing gloves and the axe as a representation of the ruthless female murderer. Both are like female versions of the most mythological depiction of Jack the Ripper, the fancy gentleman in a top hat, and equally compelling as unbelievable. My interpretation of the punk attitude, as being shown by the model, is that if she is about to go on a vindictive killing spree, she wants to do it with style. By taking up a gun or axe then, she becomes the phallic woman.

Thanem and Wallenberg describe that, to Freud, it was the male fear of castration that led to the invention of the phallic woman. By dressing her in phallic fetish props one avoids the threat her lack of a penis represents. In addition, woman is only a tool-like object in the male masochist fantasy according to Deleuze's understanding. However, they refer to Barbara Creed who argues that the phallic woman also can be used by females as a way to "refuse to be reduced to a patriarchal image", and she exposes the "phallic masculinity as a 'put-on,' as mere style".¹⁶⁸ Masochism may therefore contribute to a queer reversal of sexual and gendered power relations. Thanem and Wallenberg conclude their article by stating that Newton's Amazon models challenge the limitations of gender and womanhood, and:

The masochist contract reveals itself as one in which both parties share power and powerlessness: it opens up for giving the phallus away, throw it away, or sharing it. And so: the male masochist, as the phallic women in Newton's photos, remind us that the phallus is a construction, a disposable and distributable idea, an idea which can be shared between the sexes.¹⁶⁹

I believe that the notion of the phallus as a social construction is crucial for our understanding of masculine power. When realising that the penis itself is not as powerful as the symbolism of it, the phallus can be used as stylized power by women without endorsing male superiority. While Freud theorised about female penis envy, I am much more in favour of Caputi's argument that it is a male fantasy that women would envy their penises.¹⁷⁰ Because, it would be by such envy the penis would be given symbolical value of dominance and power, but when the phallus is a construct it can be shared and passed around just like a princess crown at a kid's birthday party.

¹⁶⁸Thanem and Wallenberg, p.6.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., p.9.

¹⁷⁰Caputi, p.136-137.

2.3.3. Fantasy, sadomasochism and vampirism

I argue that the essence of representations made for entertainment – whether it is horror movies, pornography or fashion photography – is fantasy. As been discussed, representations of pornographic fantasies can be degrading and negatively fuel the Western rape culture, but fantasy might also be used as a tool for feminist endeavours. Sade's writings, which he composed in prison, aimed to stimulate the fantasy of the reader. Bloch, referenced by Schaffner, argues that the fantasy is much more important than reality for S/M enthusiasts because, when re-enacting stories of acrobatic and scandalous sexual acts, the experience never lives up to the imagination.¹⁷¹ The notion of fantasy is also what differentiates the S/M subculture from sexual killers according to Cameron and Frazer, since the former seek a theatrical play on humiliation and moderate pain as love while the latter wants to be cruel and have total control over the victim's life.¹⁷² Thus, the issue is not when people with a normal minds-set watches porn or horror movies, it is when disturbed individuals do it and then re-enact their fantasies in a Sadeian way where their needs triumphs the suffering of others, as in rape, child abuse, mutilation etc. I strongly believe that people should not be blamed for their fantasies since they are not at fault for having them. Instead offenders should be treated for their pathological desires, while punished for the decision to act upon these urges.

Schaffner writes that 19th century women seldom were diagnosed as perverse, but rather as neurotic or hysterical, since masochism was deemed as a natural female characteristic. It was when this exaggerated female psychology of submission revealed itself in men that it transformed into pathology. It is thus the most gendered perversion of them all, even if the heteronormative structures have been rattled within feminist and queer studies in later years. The general idea is that true female sadists do not really exist, and those who take on the dominatrix role do it to satisfy a male masochist, either a lover or a paying client.¹⁷³ The theory that there are no sadistically perverse women is not something only belonging to the past, but is sustained by the lack of female sadistic sexual murderers. According to Cameron and Frazer, women who go on a killing spree are not driven by a sexual motif and seldom mutilate the victims in the same way as male killers, and when women cuts off a man's penis it is usually out of revenge and thereby contain a different symbolism. In numerous cases women have participated in sadistic sexual assaults, but it has then been as the masochist in a heterosexual relationship. Hence, there are female serial killers, but no known female sexual

¹⁷¹ Schaffner, p.136.

¹⁷² Cameron and Frazer, p.97.

¹⁷³ Schaffner, p.16-18; p.223-224.

sadists.¹⁷⁴ Based on my believe that fictional sexual violence does not turn healthy and balanced people into murderous sadists, representations of sadistic women will probably not give birth to a new category of female criminals. What they might do however, is to symbolise an alternative to the submissive female ideal.

Illustration No.18 from *Wild Will* is titled “The horrors of the cave” and shows a derelict place where an old wooden barrel, glass bottles and other debris are scattered on the ground, while a skeleton still hangs by a noose from the roof. A woman seems to have buried a shabby looking man in the soil, a task which requires both time and effort to complete. In her feminine corseted dress and with an angry face, she lifts the shovel behind her back in order to strike him with as much force as possible. With only his head sticking up he can do nothing but watch and wait for the blow, which in itself should be classified as torture and a slight indication of female sadistic pleasure. Nevertheless, the image that connotes female sadism the most amongst my material is Photograph No.20. It is not a crime of passion taking place, but must have been pre-planned by the woman, portrayed by Naomi Campbell. She has sought out an abandoned bathhouse of some sort to secure privacy and have total control over the situation. The victim has been moved around several times judging by the number of blood traces in the local and it is her elongated methodology and self-containment that brings to mind the idea of lust murder or torture. Since she uses her own body-strength to dominate the male victim and there is no distance between them it seems personal, or even sexual. His body is partially on the floor among the shards of glass while she holds one glove clad hand around his throat. The contrast between them makes the image more intense. She is a strong black woman, dressed in a black leather corset and high heeled pumps, and he, a tattooed white male, is naked, pale and powerless.

I now return to the fantasy of vampirism and the way it was used to incorporate female sexuality into the penny narratives. According to Dijkstra, female vampires pre-dating *fin-de-siècle* needed a man to awaken her blood thirst and the awakening itself functioned as a clear depiction of women’s dualism.¹⁷⁵ The two extremes of femininity is often a central part in Stoker’s narratives, *Dracula* being no exception. While Mina is saved from depravity by her monogamous virtue, Lucy represent the threatening new woman who, still being human, naively wonders why a woman is not allowed to marry more than one man. As a vampire she gets her polyamorous wish; “– the blood, the symbolic semen – of ‘as many men as want

¹⁷⁴ Cameron and Frazer, p.23-26.

¹⁷⁵ Dijkstra, *Evil Sisters*, p.90-91.

her”.¹⁷⁶ On the same note Hurley remarks that Lucy’s transformation from virtue to vice happens in only two paragraphs where the latter is “a pathological version of womanhood”.¹⁷⁷ I have not located any penny illustrations of a female vampire, only women who are attacked, but I find the way in which Lady Venetia Sackville indulges in lovers to be quite vampiresque in Illustration No.19. The background story of the scene and Venetia’s many relations is rather intricate. She is married to Lord Horace Sackville, but the couple accepts that the Prince Regent is entitled to nightly meetings with Lady Sackville whenever he wants. In addition she is deeply attracted to Sir Douglas Huntingdon and writes him a note one evening saying that she will be alone in her boudoir that night. She sits, waiting, dressed in a loosely wrapped muslin gown, but he who enters the boudoir is not Huntingdon, but the Earl of Curzon, and Venetia realises that her note has been given to the wrong man. The desire that was already burning inside due to the anticipation of Huntingdon is renewed by the Earl’s kisses and she temporarily replaces her love object by spending the night with Curzon instead. Although, it is noted that it after all would be impossible to refuse him owing to his male power and the compromising note she send, and her agency is therefore not without some doubt. The next morning Huntingdon does come to Venetia’s room to express his love, and covers her lips with kisses. She asks him to retrieve an item from a cabinet behind a screen, and at the same moment he kneels down to unlock it, Curzon re-enters, but she is clever:

[S]he at once, with admirable self-possession, threw her arm over the screen with what to Curzon seemed a mere negligent and unpremeditated gesture, but with a wave of her hand which to Huntingdon behind that screen was a significant intimation that he must remain concealed there. Keeping therefore in his kneeling attitude, so as to continue unseen, the Baronet gently and noiselessly kissed the tips of the fingers that thus hung over that barrier which concealed him;—and this little tender proceeding on his part was meant to convey to Venetia not only an assurance that her hint was understood, but that it should also be obeyed.¹⁷⁸

Before the Earl of Curzon has uttered a word she masterly manoeuvres the conversation as to not expose her double-cross to either lover. She exemplifies a rather modern femininity that embraces her sexuality without feeling shame, while obeying the social rules by not displaying it publicly enables her to continue her wonderfully selfish manner.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., *Idols of perversity*, p.345.

¹⁷⁷ Hurley, p.121.

¹⁷⁸ *The mysteries of the court*, Vol. III, second series, George W. M. Reynolds (London: J. Dicks, 1849-1856 or 1851), p.285.

Photograph No.21 is a current example of a woman indulging in a sexual act with two partners, one conventionally masculine and one androgynous. There are several elements that make me conclude that the gender roles are quite reversed compared to the norm. Firstly, she is fully dressed while the other two are nude or semi-nude. The masculine male is completely naked, he has a dark complexion with a shine that emphasize his well-shaped body. The androgynous person is bare breasted, pale and skinny, with a somewhat feminine fringe. Secondly, the woman is an active agent since she is on top of one of the lovers, and thereby on top of the situation. Thirdly, that she controls the two even though they easily could subdue her is, for me, symbolic of the respect given to her as a human being. There is also the additional vampiresque ingredient of blood trickling down her chin. This brings us back to the female vampire, whose mouth is the *vagina dentata*— an idea supported by the fact that she is clothed and not engaged in intercourse, at least not for the moment.

Dijkstra writes that it was expected that women under patriarchy would applaud the female vampire as a symbol of independence, but to glamorize this sexual violence “is still to deny pleasure [and] internalize the ‘death wish’ imposed on women by the men who invented the image of the vampire”.¹⁷⁹

The vampire woman was a figment of the male misogynist imagination. To make her a positive erotic fantasy figure expressive of “female sexuality” [...] is merely to solidify one of the most meretricious creations of turn-of-the-century misogyny.¹⁸⁰

While I understand the point he is making, this is one of the few times where I disagree with Dijkstra. I believe that old concepts can be filled new meanings by reclaiming the word and its meaning. Even though such processes take time and effort, it is possible. While starting as a misogynist sexual figure of male fantasy, the vampiress can be used as a figure of female empowerment and a symbol that inspires to more opportunities of women’s sexuality. In this way, a symbolic concept can move from the realm of fantasy into reality. The vampiress was symbolic of the good girl’s transformation into the bad fallen woman in the early stories, ergo the male fear of female independence. Western women have now gained said independence and can engage freely in sexual activities with as many men as she want (admittedly not to full satisfaction since sexually active young women still get stigmatized and insulted both in real life and online). Since the male vampire is a sexual symbol for a lot of people I believe it

¹⁷⁹ Dijkstra, *Evil sisters*, p.247-248.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.284.

would be hypocritical to bash the sexualisation of female vampires. The fact that the blood in Photograph No.21 is not applied to look perfect and artificial, but smeared around her mouth, gives her an allowance to act out her animalistic sexuality and is not confined to being a sexualized vampire for male satisfaction. I would in addition argue that vampirism offers an option to the heterosexual matrix in a similar way that masochism does in Thanem and Wallenberg's discussion. The power relations can be staged, the fangs used as phallic symbols while biting entail the threat of pain and so, everything can happen in a shared fantasy land.

While fiction and reality are strongly connected there is an important difference between discussions of actual sexual violence and the representation of it, and this distinction often becomes unclear in *The age of sex crime* and *The lust to kill*, even though both are eye-opening reads. In Caputi's writings about porn, sex and violence I find that the absence of a discussion concerning women's sexual fantasies and preferences belittles female sexuality yet again. The reader is more or less told that fantasies of dominance and submission are a perverted male thing. In my opinion, Caputi inadvertently puts blame on women who desire domination and criticize them for having surrendered to, or being fooled by, patriarchal structures. There are in fact numerous studies that support the commonness of such fantasies, and more importantly, female sexuality does not need any more shame cast their way.¹⁸¹ Fantasy and reality must be separated because even if a woman wants to be dominated and safely choked by a trusted sexual partner it does not mean she has a wish to be raped. One possible reason for masochist desire could be based in women's daily struggle to be equally respected as men, which requires vigilance, assertiveness and an artillery of pre-formulated arguments about nearly everything. This is exhausting work and therefore it is not surprising to me if a woman needs a break from this gendered warfare and has a wish to just lie down and be sexually dominated by her lover.

Illustration No.20 exemplifies one common motif in the penny novels, namely the young lovers who steal a kiss or two when they are alone. Both fictional and academic 19th century texts reproduce the claim that a man is not at fault if he is seduced by a so-called loose girl since men cannot resist sexual pleasure. The amount of images alike indicate that even good and virtuous women, i.e. not prostitutes, were allowed this small act of sensuality without losing respectability in her lover's eyes. Photograph No.22 is not a resembling motif, but a final example of how a representation with features such as nudity, sexiness, passivity and

¹⁸¹ For example; Hariton and Singer's study in 1974 found that being "overpowered or forced to surrender" was the second most frequent fantasy in their survey; Knafo and Jaffe, 1984, ranked being overpowered as their study's most common fantasy during intercourse; Pelletier and Herold, 1988, found that over half of their female respondents had fantasies of forced sex.

S/M is not automatically sexist. The model is dressed in fetish paraphernalia comprising underwear made out of nothing but black straps that frame, instead of cover, her breast, red glossy unwalkable shoes due to the extreme heel and *pointe* angle, and black nylon stockings. She plays with a rope that wind around her horizontal body on the floor. Once again there is no gendered power struggle or fear exhibited which draws me to the conclusion that if she is to be bound by a sexual partner, it will be as a willing participant. Imaginative imagery has thus the ability to represent strong female sexualities without compromising the subject's integrity.

2.3.4. Summary of discoveries

This analysis section has shown female characters who are allowed to experience their own bodies and sexuality, for example by looking appreciative at their own reflection, performing on stage or dress in drag, as in Illustration No.13 and No.14. Illustration No.19 are the boldest visualisation of female sexual agency among my historical material, and Venetia is not only sensual, but quick-witted as she allows herself to indulge in her sexual cravings. Even if female sexuality only was introduced for the sake of the male readers, to keep their attention, it nevertheless opened up for the possibility of body-consciousness, sexual arousal and exhibitionism for the female readers.

Another kind of agency present among the illustrations is rather born out of vengeance where penny heroines like Eleonor in Illustration No.16 and Indora in No.17 step out of the feminine and compliant mould due to mistreatment and thereby gain independence. Female agency exists within fashion as well and the women in Photograph No.18-22 confidently have control in each scenario. The illustrations permit 19th century women to be angry and aggressive, as spontaneous outbursts and especially as calculated revenges on men who had betrayed them. The female readers were thereby shown examples of women capable of action. Many of the women are equipped with phallic symbols in the form of an axe, shovel, pistol, unwalkable high heels, fangs or a dagger. In some pictures they are included as a symbol of power while they in others are used directly as weapons to injure, such as the large axe in Photograph No.19. Like fetish paraphernalia, the weaponesque accessories of McQueen work as phallic imagery. A prime example is Photograph No.18 where the Gothic atmosphere, spike-like heels, knuckle-duster jewellery and the bronze mask become symbolic of her mastery. In these cases phallic masculinity is applied as a social construction which can be shared between the sexes. However, I believe that female power can become even more potent by not including a phallic symbol, as in Illustration No.15 where she is using her hands

to inflict harm. Especially in Photograph No.17 where the symbolism becomes even stronger due to the choice to leave the blade on the ground even though it is available, i.e. a total disregard of phallic power.

Like Sade's writings were meant to stimulate the reader's fantasy, fashion editorials aim to stimulate the fantasy of the consumer. Theatrical visualisations of S/M and bondage, like those in Photograph No.20, 21 and 22, can trigger lust in female onlookers. Not sexual lust necessarily, but a desire to be, i.e. dress like, one of the characters – whether it is the masochist or sadist woman. Since sexualized representations of violence against women keep patriarchal gender-structures stable, stylizations of female violence against men might destabilize the same structures. The fact that this occurs in fashion editorials point to societal progress in relation to male nudity and female power, which is most striking in the play between aggressor and victim in Photograph No.20. One noticeable difference is that none of the male victims display the same ambivalence between helplessness and pleasure as the female victims do. Violence against men is found among the illustrations as well, but neither of these contains male victims that are stripped down, tied up and tortured as the women are.

As to vampires, women have become what male 19th century writers feared and therefore I think the power of the female vamp is a good example of what feminist progression can accomplish, as well as an option to the heterosexual doctrine.

3. SUMMARY

The aim of this thesis was to get a deeper understanding of representations of femininity and female sexuality within a Victorian horror context by examining how female characters in Penny Blood novels are illustrated and how these Gothic visualisations are interpreted and appropriated photographically within fashion today. The main focus was the correlation between violence and sexuality as they are two fundamental elements found in the Gothic novels. The visual material in this thesis was studied by applying Panofsky's method of Iconography where one searches for *representational* and hidden *symbolical* meanings.

In regards to the first research question that asked how the concept of Victorian horror is interpreted aesthetically in modern fashion photographs I conclude that it is a common human behaviour to push boundaries and search for something new, better and more outrageous than what previously has been. The same can be seen within the visual arts where the overall stylizations in the contemporary material analysed in the paper is more mystified, darker, eerier and thus sometimes tend to be more *Victorianesque* and Gothic than it actually was back then. Additionally, they contain modern marks of nudity and heavy make-up.

The second research question brings to light features such as dominance and submission, deathliness, female agency and sexuality. The thesis discusses visual symbolism and the similarities and differences found in the Victorian respective the contemporary images. To examine these themes a wide range of academic sources was used, such as Schaffner's writings on old and new ideologies of human sexuality, especially the scientific discourse regarding sadism and masochism. Dijkstra's work was a great source as he parallels literature, art, medical history, sociology and philosophy to critically examine how the female body have been portrayed through history. Crone and Walkowitz's different studies regarding violence as 19th century entertainment, and Cameron and Frazer's writings on sexual violence, were also used. In addition, external sources on the sexual medical history, examined by researchers such as Mason and Laqueur were of great value.

Beginning with the symbolical similarities found between the historical and contemporary material, this thesis found that both categories contain imagery with a general lack of female agency. If a woman is represented as a victim of a male perpetrator in a picture, elements were detected such as brightly highlighted pushed up breasts, eyes conveying a feeling of victimization, male hands upon the victim's face, and dollish representations which are used to feed into a voyeuristic fantasy. Furthermore, symbols of the invited rape can be found in the images of unconscious women whose bodies have been posed

horizontally in awkward angles with ambivalent facial expressions. Hence, it can be confirmed that a visual culture based on violence against women containing patriarchal dominant/submissive power structures that sexualizes such violence existed then as well as today.

There are of course differences between the two periods past and present as well, where the fashion photos are once again more exaggerated and explicit than the illustrations. Even if there is partial nudity in the historical material in my material gathering I have not come across an illustration where a female victim is totally naked or nude on the lower part of the body, while both phenomenon occur in the photos. In the contemporary material, total nudity is more common than only lower body nudity, perhaps due to the fact that the latter evokes associations to rape. While I found victimisation in the eyes of the portrayed women in both categories, the historical ladies convey more fear while the modern women often radiate a sexual gaze, which confirms a reproduction of the theory that women secretly like to be dominated. Male nakedness is also a divider between the two materials as it is non-existing in the illustrations, but found in fashion photos. Although, not in the same objectifying manner as the female body since He often is an active agent.

When it comes to females represented as violent active agents, both the historical and contemporary material contains them, but in the former category it is almost always born out of vengeance. The penny heroines like Eleonor in Illustration No.16 and Indora in No.17 step out of the compliant and feminine mould, due to mistreatment, and thereby gain independence. This highlights another difference between now and then, namely that women who are actively violent, and not in the name of vengeance, lose all femininity. In contrast to men, beautiful women need to have a reason for being mean, dominant and cruel. Female agency absolutely exists within fashion photos, both in regards to sexuality and violence, and the women in Photograph No.18-22 confidently have control in each scenario. They are also allowed to be active, cruel and beautiful, without visibly being driven by revenge. The fashion photos are more explicit in regards to violence, blood and gore. During the 19th century the broad sides seemed to be gorier than the fictive illustrations, and today it certainly is the other way around.

The last research question regards the impact the feminist movement potentially had on the sexualisation of violence under the prevailing gender structures. To study this, the theoretical framework was grounded in Visual Culture and Feminist theory, mainly on the writings of British historian Walkowitz and art historian Pollock. The illustrated magazines were a platform that enabled the existence of multiple femininities and where the female

readers could explore their own exhibitionism. Female characters were allowed to experience their own bodies and sexuality through their own reflection in mirrors and performances. Even if female sexuality was a part of the illustrations and storylines for the sake of the male readers, it also opened up for the possibility of body-consciousness, sexual arousal and exhibitionism for the female readers – and this is evident in some of the illustrations examined. Today, more than a century later, a fashion photograph featuring a model dressed in fetish paraphernalia and with elements of nudity, sexiness, passivity and S/M is not automatically a sexist one. Women have, much due to the feminist movement, gained more power, which has led to the possibility to visualize a strong female sexuality without compromising the subject's integrity.

The visual representation of the male vampire seems to have the same symbolic meaning today as it had during the 19th century. It remains a figure of contradictions involving violent blood-suckers and erotic beautiful creatures. This however is not case in regards to the female vampire. While the distorted body of the vampire has functioned as an example of how good women turn into bad ones, and was as a tool of oppression in more patriarchal times, it has now been filled with new properties and reclaimed in the name of feminism.

I argue that the female vampire may have been an inspiration for women to explore their own shameless sexuality. This thesis holds examples of contemporary representations where female vampires are used as figures of empowerment by incorporating such symbolism in the photographs. Furthermore, vampirism offers an option to the heterosexual doctrine since the power relations can be staged and the fangs used as phallic symbols. As women today have become what male 19th century writers feared I believe that the power of the female vamp is a good example of what feminist actions, writings and studies can accomplish.

To view the phallus as a social construction is crucial for our understanding of masculine power and like the fangs of the vampire, axes, knives and heels can be used as phallic symbols. By using such symbolic items in the act of revenge against a male oppressor, the heroine takes control over her own life and body and by doing so freeing herself. Female violence against men, both in the Penny Bloods and in fashion magazines, might destabilize patriarchal gender structures as well as offer an alternative course of action. Starting in the realm of fantasy it slowly sneaks itself into our reality.

Since representations and reality always reflect some parts of each other, male and female feminist artist should create what-could-be scenarios that challenge societal structures by incorporation symbols of female empowerment. Doing so can plant imaginary seeds in the mind of the onlooker whom act on these ideas in real life. In conclusion, the thesis has shown

a genuine Gothic visual culture where women are not always represented as helpless victims, but instead function as a platform where women can fight back, taking revenge on their oppressor and looking fierce while doing so.

As further research into this topic it could be fascinating to study how masculinity and the male body are represented in a gothic setting, if there are similar findings to make or if they differ in some way. Furthermore, taking this thesis as a starting point, it would be interesting to examine how the visualisation of the female body within a Gothic setting has changed decade by decade. Can one see the parallel fashion trends intertwine with the theatrics of the Gothic, and in which genre of popular culture has the Victorian aesthetics been trending the last century?

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Webpage's

British Library

Title: "Dracula: vampires, perversity and Victorian anxieties"

Author: Greg Buzwell

Available: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/dracula>

Published: 15-5-2014

Last accessed: 11-07-19

British Library

Title: "Penny dreadfuls"

Author: Judith Flanders

Available: <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/penny-dreadfuls>

Published: 15-05-2014

Last accessed: 11-07-2019

British Library

Title: "Penny dreadful, The Wild Boys of London"

Author: British Library Board

Available: <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/penny-dreadful-the-wild-boys-of-london>

Last accessed: 11-07-19

FOX 2 now

Title: "Jaco Report: Full Interview With Todd Akin"

Author: Charles Jaco

Available: <http://fox2now.com/2012/08/19/the-jaco-report-august-19-2012/>

Published: 19-08-2012

Last accessed: 05-05-2016

POP

Title: Price One Penny: Cheap Literature, 1837-1860.

Author: Marie Léger-St-Jean

Available: <http://www.priceonepenny.info/>

Last accessed: 10-10-2014.

Yesterday's Paper

Title: "Penny Numbers of an Obscene Nature"

Author: John Adcock

Available: <http://john-adcock.blogspot.se/2009/01/penny-numbers-of-obscene-nature.html>

Published: 19-01-2009

Last accessed: 11-07-19

Yesterday's Paper

Title: "Hard-boiled Heroines"

Author: John Adcock

Available: <http://john-adcock.blogspot.se/2010/04/homicidal-heroines-ii.html>

Published: 11-04-2010

Last accessed: 11-07-2019

Appendix 1

Visual material sources:

Illustration No.1

Title: "Lady Jersey"

Penny novel: *The mysteries of the court of London*, Vol. 2, first series, new edition (London: J. Dicks, 1849-1856 or 1855), p.233.

Author: George W. M. Reynolds

Drawn by: Henry Anelay

Engraved by: E. Hooper

Available: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007585723>

Illustration No.2

Title: "The Prince and the Dancing-Girls"

Penny novel: *The mysteries of the court of London*, Vol. 2, first series, new edition (London: J. Dicks, 1849-1856 or 1855), p.249.

Author: George W. M. Reynolds

Drawn by: Henry Anelay

Engraved by: E. Hooper

Available: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007585723>

Illustration No.3

Title: "Lord Crockerton and Fanny in the lonely house at Fulham"

Penny novel: *Fanny White and Her Friend Jack Rawlings, A Romance of a Young Lady Thief and a Boy Burglar* (London: George Vickers, approximately 1860-65), p.49.

Author: Authorship is uncertain. Some sources, including the British Library, names Harry Hazleton as the creator, while John Adcock explain it as a mix up and reassures that it actually was written by Charles Henry Ross and/or Ernest Warren.

Illustrations by: *Robert Prowse Sr. (if 63)*

Available:

https://books.google.se/books?id=41xRAAAcAAJ&pg=PA49&hl=sv&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false

Illustration No.4

Title: "The scene at the fire"

Penny novel: *The Wild Boys of London; or, the Children of the Night*, Book the second (London: Newsagents' Publishing Company, 1866), p.73.

Author: Unknown, but a linguistic investigation by John Adcock suggests the writer to be Vane Ireton Shaftsbury St. John.

Available: http://illustrationarchive.cardiff.ac.uk/page_turner/002251848/000013/0;

<http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/penny-dreadful-the-wild-boys-of-london>

Illustration No.5

Title: "Palmistry"

Penny novel: *Mary Price; or, The memoirs of a servant-maid*, Vol.1 (London: J. Dicks, 1852), p.337.

Author: George W. M. Reynolds

Illustrations by: F. Gilbert

Available: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006672881>

Illustration No.6

Title: Unknown

Penny novel: *Varney the Vampire; or, The Feast of Blood. A romance* (London: E. Lloyd, 1845-1847 as penny serials, 1847 or early 1850's as book).

Author: James Malcolm Rymer and/or possibly Thomas Peckett Prest

Drawn by: possibly G. T. R. Bourne

Engraved by: possibly Pickering

Available: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14833/14833-h/14833-h.htm>;

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/varney-an-early-vampire-story>

Illustration No.7

Title: "The vampyre's midnight visit"

Penny novel: *Varney the Vampire; or, The Feast of Blood. A romance* (London: E.Lloyd, 1845-1847 as penny serials, 1847 or early 1850's as book).

Author: James Malcolm Rymer and/or possibly Thomas Peckett Prest

Drawn by: possibly G. T. R. Bourne

Engraved by: possibly Pickering

Available:<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14833/14833-h/14833-h.htm>;

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/varney-an-early-vampire-story>

Illustration No.8

Title: "A ruffian"

Penny novel: *Charley Wag; the new Jack Sheppard, a New and Intensely Exciting Real Life Romance* (London: George Vickers, approximately 1861-1862), p.463.

Author: Uncertain, but thought to be Charles Henry Ross

Illustrations by: *Robert Prowse Sr.* (if United Kingdom Press, 1860 is same)

Available: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100632992>

Illustration No.9

Title: "The dark deed in the Pellew's dressing-room"

Penny novel: *The Work Girls of London: their trials and temptations*, No.3 (London: Newsagents' Publishing Company,1865), p.17.

Author: Unknown

Illustrated by: possibly Harry Maguire and Robert Prowse, according to Adcock.

Available:http://illustrationarchive.cardiff.ac.uk/page_turner/002251855/1/0;

<http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/penny-dreadful-the-work-girls-of-london>

Illustration No.10

Title: "The mysteries of the photographic business"

Penny novel: *Charley Wag; the new Jack Sheppard, a New and Intensely Exciting Real Life Romance* (London: George Vickers, approximately 1861-1862), p.241

Author: Uncertain, but thought to be Charles Henry Ross

Illustrations by: *Robert Prowse Sr.* (if United Kingdom Press, 1860 is the same)

Available: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100632992>

Illustration No.11

Title: "Hearthstone Ned witnesses the punishment of Mildred"

Penny novel: *The Wild Boys of London; or, the Children of the Night*, Book the second (London: Newsagents' Publishing Company, 1866), p.137.

Author: Unknown, but a linguistic investigation by John Adcock suggests the writer to be Vane Ireton Shaftsbury St. John.

Available: http://illustrationarchive.cardiff.ac.uk/page_turner/002251848/000013/0;

<http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/penny-dreadful-the-wild-boys-of-london>

Illustration No.12

Title: "The hag and her victim"

Penny novel: *Rose Mortimer; or, The Ballet-girl's Revenge* (London: Newsagents' Publishing Co., 1864-1865), p.25.

Author: Unknown, text on the cover page; "By a Comedian of the T. R. Drury Lane"

Illustrations by: *Robert Prowse Sr.*

Available: http://illustrationarchive.cardiff.ac.uk/page_turner/002559005/1/0

Illustration No.13

Title: "Ernestina's Night-Toilette"

Penny novel: *The mysteries of the court of London*, Vol. 4, second series (London: J. Dicks, 1849-1856 or 1852), p.249.

Author: George W. M. Reynolds

Drawn by: W. H. Thwaites

Engraved by: E. Hooper

Available: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007585723>

Illustration No.14

Title: Unnamed

Penny novel: *The mysteries of London*, Vol. 1 (London: George Vickers, 1846 or 1846-48), p.1.

Author: George W. M. Reynolds

Illustrations by: G. Stiff

Available:

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008323033?type%5B%5D=all&lookfor%5B%5D=The%20Mysteries%20of%20London&ft=>

Illustration No.15

Title: "Fanny dashes the porter against her father's gate"

Penny novel: *Fanny White and Her Friend Jack Rawlings, A Romance of a Young Lady Thief and a Boy Burglar* (London: George Vickers, approximately 1860-65), p.73.

Author: Authorship is uncertain. Some sources, including the British Library, names Harry Hazleton as the creator, while John Adcock explain it as a mix up and reassures that it actually was written by Charles Henry Ross and/or Ernest Warren.

Illustrations by: *Robert Prowse Sr. (if 63)*

Available:

https://books.google.se/books?id=41xRAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA49&hl=sv&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false

Illustration No.16

Title: "A Noble Lady's Vengeance"

Penny novel: *The mysteries of the court of London*, Vol. 2, first series, new edition (London: J. Dicks, 1849-1856 or 1855), p.297.

Author: George W. M. Reynolds

Drawn by: Henry Anelay

Engraved by: E. Hooper

Available: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007585723>

Illustration No.17

Title: "Indora and the Dagger"

Penny novel: *The mysteries of the court of London*, Vol. 7, 4th series (London: J. Dicks, 1849-1856 or 1849), p.289.

Author: George W. M. Reynolds

Illustrators: F. Gilbert and W. H. Thwaites

Available: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007585723>

Illustration No.18

Title: "The horrors of the cave"

Penny novel: *Wild Will, or the Pirates of the Thames* (London: Newsagents' Publishing Company, approximately 1865), p.9.

Author: Percival Wolfe, although Adcock writes that "A copy of "Wild Will" held by Indiana University has a note that Percival Wolfe is the pseudonym of Charles Henry Ross". It has been speculated that CHR used the pseudonym Percival Wolfe for the penny dreadful *Wild Will*.

Illustrated by: Robert Prowse Sr.

Available: <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/penny-dreadful-wild-will>

Illustration No.19

Title: "Venetia's Lovers"

Penny novel: *The mysteries of the court of London*, Vol. 3, second series (London: J. Dicks, 1849-1856 or 1851), p.281.

Author: George W. M. Reynolds

Illustrator: W. H. Thwaites

Engraved by: E. Hooper

Available: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007585723>

Illustration No.20

Title: "Ralph Montreal meets with a pleasant adventure"

Penny novel: *The Wild Boys of London; or, the Children of the Night*, Book the second (London: Newsagents' Publishing Company, 1866), p.169.

Author: Unknown, but a linguistic investigation by John Adcock suggests the writer to be Vane Ireton Shaftsbury St. John.

Available: http://illustrationarchive.cardiff.ac.uk/page_turner/002251848/000013/0

<http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/penny-dreadful-the-wild-boys-of-london>

Photograph No.1

Title/Editorial: "Victorian Blue"

Photographer: Chad Michael Ward

Make-up/Hair/Model: Vampireleniore/Bad Charlotte

Published: 2008

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/77616793548982397/>

Photograph No.2

Title/Editorial: "French Twists"

Photographer: Annie Leibovitz

Stylist: Grace Coddington

Models: Karen Elson, Gemma Ward and Louis Garrel

Published: Vogue US, May 2004

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/394416879844081269/>

Photograph No.3

Title/Editorial: "Princesse Natalia"

Photographers: Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott

Stylist: Carine Roitfeld

Make-up: Lucia Pieroni

Hair: Odile Gilbert

Model: Natalia Vodianova

Published: Vogue Paris, March 2010

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/27584616441679497/>

Photograph No.4

Title/Editorial: "Pretty wasted"

Photographer: Fabien Baron

Stylist: Karl Templar

Model: Andreea Diaconu

Published: Interview magazine, October/November 2014

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/468867011180518774/>

Photograph No.5

Title/Editorial: "Le Noir Partie 3"

Photographers: Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott

Stylist: Katy England

Make-up: Charlotte Tilbury

Hair: Paul Hanlon

Model: Kate Moss

Published: Vogue Paris, September 2012

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/390194755192123546/>

Photograph No.6

Title/Editorial: "Interview with a Vampire"

Photographer: Karl Lagerfeld

Stylist: Andrew Richardson

Models: Anna Maria Jagodzinska and Baptiste Giabiconi

Published: Harper's Bazaar US, March 2011

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/23362491789430535/>

Photograph No.7

Title/Editorial: "Rie"

Photographer: Steven Klein

Stylist: Patti Wilson

Make-up: Kabuki

Hair: Ward Stegerhoek

Models: Jon Kortajarena and Rie Rasmussen

Published: Vogue Italia, March 2010

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/288089707387132988/>

Photograph No.8

Title/Editorial: "Midnight"

Photographer: Miles Aldrige

Stylist: Alice Gentilucci

Model: Masha Novoselova

Published: Paradise Magazine, #3 Spring 2008

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/472174342154981259/>

Photograph No.9

Title/Editorial: "Victor/Victoria"

Photographer: Dusan Reljin

Stylist: Lauren Bensky

Make-up: Hilde Pettersen Reljin and Anne Kohlhagen

Hair: Leonardo Manetti

Model: Andrej Pejic

Published: ELLE Serbia, January 2013

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/506092076849480092/>

Photograph No.10

Title/Editorial: "The lines and the shapes"

Photographer: Craig McDean

Stylist: Karl Temper

Model: Gemma Ward

Published: Vogue Italia and/or UK, February 2005

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/200410252139554489/>

Photograph No.11

Title/Editorial: "Psycho Killer"

Photographer: Matt Irwin

Stylist: Robbie Spencer

Make-up: Ayami Nishimura

Hair: Tomo Jidai

Model: Artur

Published: Dazed and Confused Magazine, June 2009

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/432697476675817711/>

Photograph No.12

Title/Editorial: "Ravenous Affections"

Photographer: Renee Keith

Designer/Stylist/Model: Pretty Macabre, i.e. Andrea Hansen

Make-up and hair: Erin Chaney

Published: 2010, <https://prettymacabre.com/>

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/185210603396094220/>

Photograph No.13

Title/Editorial: "Institutional White"

Photographer: Steven Klein

Stylist: Ludivine Poiblan

Make-up: Mark Carrasquillo

Hair: Paul Hanlon

Models: Crystal Renn and Karolina Kurkova

Published: Interview Magazine, March 2012

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/392446555004008774/>

Photograph No.14

Title/Editorial: "Institutional White"

Photographer: Steven Klein

Stylist: Ludivine Poiblan

Make-up: Mark Carrasquillo

Hair: Paul Hanlon

Models: Crystal Renn and Karolina Kurkova

Published: Interview Magazine, March 2012

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/392446555004008784/>

Photograph No.15

Title/Editorial: "Kate/Bride"

Photographers/Stylists: Vinoodh Matadin and Inez Van Lamsweerde

Model: Kate Moss

Published: W Magazine, 2003

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/418271884120136487/>

Photograph No.16

Title/Editorial: Alexander McQueen pre-fall collection 2009, runway look 17.

Published: <http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/pre-fall-2009/alexander-mcqueen#collection>

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/142918988145713992/>

Photograph No.17

Title/Editorial: "Horror Movie"

Photographer: Steven Meisel

Stylist: Karl Temper

Make-up: Pat McGrath

Hair: Guido

Models: Issa Lish and Bernd Sassmannhausen

Published: Vogue Italia, April 2014

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/389561436490316537/>

Photograph No.18

Title/Editorial: Alexander McQueen Fall/Winter 2014 ad campaign

Photographer: Steven Klein

Stylist: Camilla Nickerson

Make-up: Lucia Pieroni

Hair: Paul Hanlon

Model: Edie Campbell

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/391672498816799938/>

Photograph No.19

Title/Editorial: “Erotica/ Haute Couture: Tribute to Alexander McQueen”

Photographer: Steven Klein

Stylist: Carine Roitfeld

Make-up: Stephane Marais

Hair: Paul Hanlon

Model: Lily Donaldson

Published: Vogue Paris, May 2010

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/500462577314545544/>

Photograph No.20

Title/Editorial: Naomi Campbell interview by Tony Shafrazi

Photographers: Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott

Stylist: Karl Temper

Make-up: Hannah Murray and Ralph Siciliano

Hair: Eugene Souleiman

Models: Naomi Campbell and Alex Kovas

Published: Interview Magazine, October 2010

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/105623553732152455/>

Photograph No.21

Title/Editorial: “Lara fiction noire”

Photographer: Steven Klein

Stylist: Marie-Amélie Sauvé

Make-up: Peter Philips

Hair: Jimmy Paul

Models: Lara Stone, Doug Porter and uncredited.

Published: Vogue Paris, February 2009

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/454582156118854067/>

Photograph No.22

Title/Editorial: Lara Stone interview by Marc Jacobs

Photographers: Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott

Stylist: Ludivine Poiblan

Make-up: Lucia Pieroni

Hair: Sam McKnight

Model: Lara Stone

Published: Interview Magazine, March 2010

Available: <https://se.pinterest.com/pin/445293481878371406/>