UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Horrors of the Second World War: Nazi Monsters on 21st Century Screens

Abigail Whittall

ORCID Number: 0000-0002-3059-3682

Doctor of Philosophy

June 2019

This thesis has been completed as a requirement for a postgraduate research degree of the University of Winchester

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been supported from inception to completion by my supervisory team, for whom I am incredibly grateful. Laura Hubner has provided me not only with academic support but has always offered encouragement and kindness, often when I needed it most, and I only hope I can carry forward these qualities myself. I would credit Leighton Grist with making me a far more rigorous researcher, but can also not overstate the importance of his standing up for the rights and future of myself and other Early Career Researchers. Lastly, I would thank Fran Mason for not only shaping my research through examining my upgrade, but for then believing in the project enough to come on board my supervisory team and see it through to its end.

As to help from further afield, I am of course grateful to the University of Winchester for granting me my studentship with which to pursue this research. The university is filled with wonderful individuals who have helped me along the way, from my former colleagues in HSS who continue to tolerate my wandering into their office, those in the Centre for Gender Studies who are ever-wise, to colleagues in the Arts Faculty who have been kind enough to listen to my work every year in the seminar series and give thoughtful feedback. In particular, credit should be given to Neil Ewen for creating such a welcoming and supportive environment and for constantly providing opportunities and encouragement to PGR students such as myself. Similarly, a special thank you to Shelley Cobb for her support during my time at Southampton and her encouragement to continue studying.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their assistance. They have put in the hours attending my events and listening to me read out papers, and so deserve much of the credit for keeping me going. My parents continue to be a kind ear to phone when something has gone very wrong or very right. My partner, Jamie, has been infallible, and for that I will be grateful – always and forever.

ABSTRACT

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This thesis identifies a previously neglected corpus of horror films, those which feature an explicitly Nazi or Nazi-created monster, and establishes Nazi horror as a prolific and persistent subgenre. In particular, it considers that more examples of the Nazi horror subgenre have been released in the 21st century than ever before, prompting two central research questions: why does the Nazi monster still occupy our screens and why does it continue to horrify us in the 21st century? In order to answer these questions, the thesis develops a psychoanalytic methodology which draws together the uncanny, the abject and trauma theory in order to understand the meaning of these monsters and connect them to their socio-political contexts. Such an approach thus considers whether these films are indeed a product of trauma, and if so whether they relate to historical events, the current political and cultural landscape, or both.

Three types of Nazi monster emerge, though these are not always easy to separate due to slippages and connections between them. Firstly, in the 21st century Nazi horror film the Nazi monster is often a product of the Nazis' interest in the occult, be this their interest in cults and god-men, in demonology, or in necromancy. The thesis therefore argues that there remains an interest in Nazism and the occult because it represents a literal unease about the Nazis' possible connections with the supernatural, but more importantly presents a way to explore humanity's potential to be monstrous, particularly within domestic spaces. The second chapter considers the 'Nazified movie monster', a term which refers to three central types of monster which have been hybridised with the Nazi: the zombie, werewolf and vampire. These demonstrate both differences and similarities to their non-Nazi counterparts and to each other, subverting previous archetypes of these monsters in a way which evokes both horror and terror and connects these responses to crimes committed by soldiers during times of conflict. The final chapter examines the Nazi scientist by identifying recurring images of technology and machinery, eugenics and human experimentation, and the specific spectre of Josef Mengele. These themes and images demonstrate a persistent unease about the dangerous potential of new scientific enquiries, especially when abused or weaponised by the State.

The thesis concludes by bringing these different types of monster together. It argues that the Nazi monster has come to represent both specific, historical traumas such as the Second World War, but has also been amalgamated with a number of conflicts and traumas which have occurred since that period, and continues to resonate within a current context in which the fear of Nazism has come to the fore, once again, in public discourse.

Keywords: Horror, Psychoanalysis, Trauma

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Figure 1: Unknown artist, 'Maneater', poster reproduced from the original design presented to Lord Beaverbrook, on the instructions of Marshal Stalin, issued by the Ministry of Information, colour lithograph, 1942. Victoria & Albert Museum Department of Prints and Drawings and Department of Paintings, Accessions 1962 (London: HMSO, 1964) <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O699902/maneater-poster-unknown/> [accessed 24 May 2019].

The striking image seen here is a reproduction of a 1942 poster design in which Adolf Hitler is depicted as a literal cannibal, a monster consuming the countries he was waging war against [Figure 1]. His form is hulking, his arms huge and covered in bestial hair, while his hands and mouth drip with blood. Though much could likely be said about this design and the specific circumstances from which it emerged, I include it here as the creation of such an image seems inherently linked to the words spoken by Winston Churchill on May 13, 1940, in his first address to UK parliament as Prime Minister:

> We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime.[1]

A particularly noteworthy speech, these words were designed not only to locate Churchill as a hero calling his people to arms, but to place him in direct opposition to Hitler as monster. Indeed, amongst his speeches Churchill stated that the people 'are now ground down under the heel and terror of a monster', that 'Hitler is a monster of wickedness' and a 'monstrous abortion of hate and defeat' who was part of 'the monstrous force of the Nazi war machine'.[2] Such analogies are indicative of the way Hitler was portrayed and perceived during his time in power, but this rhetoric has also persisted beyond the end of the Second World War. A current BBC timeline of Hitler's life is titled 'Man and Monster'.[3] Similarly, 'Monster' is the simple title of the fifth and penultimate episode of More4's documentary series on *Hitler: The Rise and Fall* (2016). Nor is the word 'monster' confined to descriptions of Hitler. A *Daily Mail* article published September 9, 2017, described Josef Mengele as 'The Nazi Monster Who Got Away', while the year before a *Mirror* article on Heinrich Himmler was headlined 'Diaries of a Nazi Monster'.[4] This language of the monstrous and inhuman recurring within these small snapshots on screen and in print is not accidental, then.

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[1] Winston Churchill, *Never Give In!: Winston Churchill's Speeches*, ed. by Winston S. Churchill (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 169.
[2] Ibid., (24 August 1941) p. 248; (22 June 1941) p. 241; (21 October 1940) p. 213; (14 July 1940) p. 194.
[3] 'Adolf Hitler: Man and Monster', *BBC* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/zsmm6sg> [accessed 5 April 2018].
[4] Guy Walters, 'The Nazi Monster Who Got Away: Official Dossier Reveals How Dr Mengele - Auschwitz's Angel of Death - Avoided Mossad's Vengeance Despite Being in the Buenos Aires Phonebook', *Daily Mail* (2017) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4867232/The-Nazi-monster-allowed-away.html> [accessed 5 April 2018]; Tom Parry and Allan Hall, 'Diaries of a Nazi Monster: Himmler's Sick Journals Describe Marriage, Massage... and Genocide', *Mirror* (2016) <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/nazi-monster-heinrich-himmlers-long-8542349> [accessed 5 April 2018].

These examples of the monstrous Nazi within the media immediately provide insight into what are now considered to be the key moments, ideologies and figures involved in the Second World War, for although any summary here will be inevitably simplistic it is important to note that the war extended far beyond Churchill and Hitler. Coming only 21 years after the First World War, the Second World War was a culmination of the tensions felt in Weimar Germany following their defeat. Capitalising on those tensions from 1918 onwards, 1933 saw Hitler instated as the Chancellor, from which he built towards the invasion of Poland in 1939 as an integral part of the eradication of non-Aryan races through aggressive territorial expansion on which the murderous ideology of National Socialism was premised. It was this which caused France and Great Britain to enter into war against Germany and, as Churchill was right to anticipate, the 'struggle and suffering' of the war extended until 1945, a long period which saw near the entirety of the globe embroiled in one way or another by the conflict between these Axis and Allied forces. Indeed, the main Axis powers extended from Germany to Italy to Japan, while the Allied forces of Great Britain and France were later joined by the US and the Soviet Union, the latter having had a pact with Germany at the outset of the war until the Nazis reneged. Many of those countries that remained neutral, from those in Europe to the Pacific, were still impacted by the war as they became the stage for invasions, occupations and conflicts between other nations. As leader of the Nazi party and Axis powers Hitler was instrumental in the rise of National Socialism, a totalitarian, fascist, nationalist and particularly anti-Semitic ideology. However, many other actors in the Nazi party played devastating roles translating this ideology into practice through the internment and then execution of any groups which were deemed 'undesirable'. For example, the other figures deemed monsters in the newspapers mentioned above include Himmler, a military commander, and Mengele, a scientist, both of whom played a role in the execution of the Holocaust. Ultimately, the conflict led to an estimated 40,000,000 to 50,000,000 deaths before the defeat of Germany in 1945.[5] As the ideology behind this death and destruction, Nazism has since its emergence been for many a word synonymous with evil and horror.

The Filmic Nazi Monster

Given that this rhetoric of the monstrous pervaded speeches during the Second World War and has marked non-fiction representations of the Nazis ever since, it is perhaps

[5] John Graham Royde-Smith and Thomas A. Hughes, 'World War II', in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, online edn <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-II> [accessed 25 April 2020].

unsurprising that there have also been countless examples of fictionalised Nazi villains in numerous film genres. Even so, the common construction of the Nazis as monstrous can be linked particularly to the monstrous Nazi figure which has become a staple of the horror genre. As in other genres, in horror the monstrous need not be expressed as physical monstrosity, nor supernatural monstrosity (though this is often the case). Instead, the Nazi monster can be externally 'normal' making the inner, perceived moral, monstrosity more frightening. The explicitly horrific Nazi monster is thus represented as physically and/or morally repugnant, and is framed as the antagonist of the horror film, taking either the form of a Nazi who is the monster, a Nazi who creates monsters, or a monster created by the Nazis to perpetuate Nazi ideals. Such an explicitly horrific Nazi monster appeared contemporaneously with the Second World War with *Revenge of the Zombies* (Steve Sekely, 1943).[6] By this point in time the US had entered into the Second World War against Nazi Germany, and this is represented in a plot in which a team of Americans must face a Nazi scientist who seeks to create an undead army for Hitler. While these films could be situated as a type of propaganda designed to inspire hatred towards the Nazi forces, they nevertheless insinuate a link between the horror genre and experiences of the Second World War. Extending this, Siegfried Kracauer considers that the rise of National Socialism in the Weimar period between 1918 and 1933 was linked to contemporaneous horrific filmic representation, beginning with analysis of depictions of evil, tyranny and chaos within German Expressionist cinema, which arose during the same period and was characterised by a striking aesthetic style including chiaroscuro lighting, and tracing these themes through to Nazi propaganda films. Similarly, some scholars such as Tim Snelson and David J. Skal have focused on the rise of the horror film more broadly during the Second World War.[7] Skal considers how and why the experience of war led to an influx of monsters on screen, asking whether themes arising from the experience of war 'were trivialized as horror entertainment' or 'invoked to summon real demons'.[8] It is precisely this which leads me to include Skal's phrase 'Horrors of War' in the title of this thesis, which builds upon his

[6] A sequel of sorts to the film *King of the Zombies* (Jean Yarbrough, 1941) which featured an Austrian but not explicitly Nazi scientist. As *King of the Zombies* was produced in the US before the nation's involvement in the Second World War, this suggests that Nazism has been a fertile source for the horror genre since almost its political conception.

[7] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, ed. by Leonardo Quaresima (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004); Tim Snelson, *Phantom Ladies: Horror and the Homefront* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2015); David J. Skal, 'Horrors of War', in *The Horror Film*, ed. by Stephen Prince (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2004), pp. 70-81, as retitled and reprinted from David J. Skal, *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (London: Plexus, 1993).

[8] Skal, 'Horrors of War', p. 80.

work of contemplating the specific events of the Second World War and how they may be related to the horror genre.

Following *Revenge of the Zombies* no further Nazi horror films were released in the immediate post-war setting, but after two decades had passed there emerged then further representations of a supernatural Nazi threat in films such as *The Frozen Dead* (Herbert J. Leder, 1966), *Shock Waves* (Ken Wiederhorn, 1977), *Death Ship* (Alvin Rakoff, 1980), *Zombie Lake* (Jean Rollin, 1981), and *The Keep* (Michael Mann, 1983). As in *King of the Zombies* and its sequel, the first four films depict undead Nazis either in the shape of zombies or ghosts, suggesting that the link between Nazism and the undead may be particularly important. However, as *The Keep* demonstrates, the threat of Nazism has also been connected to the mythical and mystical. In the same period a large number of Nazisploitation films were released. Beginning in the late 1960s with films such as *Love Camp 7* (R.L. Frost, 1969), Nazisploitation peaked in the 1970s with infamous examples such as *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* (Don Edmonds, 1975), before largely coming to an end in the early 1980s. These exploitation films are notable not just for being set during the Second World War, but for depicting concentration camps. The horror within them includes mental, physical and sexual torture inflicted upon prisoners at the hands of both male and female Nazi soldiers, themes which have led to the films being described as 'sadiconazista' by scholars. The sadiconazista films have been one of the most prominent areas of Nazi horror to receive critical analysis. For instance, Daniel H. Magilow, Elizabeth Bridges and Kristin T. Vander Lugt's edited volume *Nazisploitation! The Nazi Image in Low Brow Cinema and Culture* offers close readings of sadiconazista films in the chapters 'Ilsa and Elsa: Nazisploitation, Mainstream Film and Cinematic Transference' and 'The Third Reich as Bordello and Pigsty: Between Neodecadence and Sexploitation in Tinto Brass's *Salon Kitty*'.[9] Such scholarly works argue for the films' cultural significance despite acknowledging their place as 'low culture', as does this thesis in its discussion of Nazi horror.

Of other 20th century films and variants of the Nazi monster, Caroline Joan Picart and David A. Frank have also identified what they refer to as 'the Hollywood Nazi-as-

[9] Alicia Kozma, 'Ilsa and Elsa: Nazisploitation, Mainstream Film and Cinematic Transference', in *Nazisploitation! The Nazi Image in Low Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. by Daniel H. Magilow, Elizabeth Bridges and Kristin T. Vander Lugt (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), pp. 55-71; Robert von Dassanowsky, 'The Third Reich as Bordello and Pigsty: Between Neodecadence and Sexploitation in Tinto Brass's *Salon Kitty*', in *Nazisploitation! The Nazi Image in Low Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. by Daniel H. Magilow, Elizabeth Bridges and Kristin T. Vander Lugt (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), pp. 115-133.

Monster Flick'.[10] Such a title intimates the prolificacy and importance of the Nazi-as-monster, and also highlights that the Nazi monster may be found not only in exploitation films but also in Hollywood cinema. Furthermore, the chapter is located in their monograph titled *The Holocaust as Horror in American Film,* a theme which links back to the sadiconazista films, regarding which Holocaust representation is a recurring critical concern. More specifically, Picart and Frank focus on the 'Nazi-next-door', a term they use to refer to films in which the monster is a seemingly ordinary next-door neighbour who is soon revealed to be a Nazi war criminal who has escaped retribution and now lurks within an unsuspecting community. Their central case study is *Apt Pupil* (Bryan Singer, 1998), which they compare to films outside of the horror genre such as *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993) to ask whether the overtly fictional horror-thriller can be considered more 'honest' than those films which pursue the 'real' representation of the Second World War. They put forward that the representation of the Nazi in *Apt Pupil* problematises 'the boundaries that separate the normal from the monstrous', which enables them to identify central concerns such as the perceived importance of realistic representation and the function of monstrosity, both of which require further exploration as regards Nazi horror more widely.[11] Picart and Frank do recognise that *Apt Pupil* is 'not the first film to tell the story of "Nazi as bogeyman"', as they locate it thematically amongst other Nazi-next-door films of the 1970s and 1980s such as *Marathon Man* (John Schlesinger, 1976).[12] Chronologically, however, *Apt Pupil* seems to follow another gap in the Nazi horror timeline, with no other notable Nazi horror films released in the late 1980s through to the 1990s. Thus, by drawing together scholarly work on the 20th century Nazi monster we can identify potentially transferable conclusions and build a timeline of the Nazi horror subgenre as a rising and falling output that continues to recur.

A 21st Century Resurgence

Significantly, the Nazi monster has seen its largest resurgence in the 21st century. In this thesis I therefore consider over thirty films released since 2000, spanning to the recently released *Overlord* (Julius Avery, 2018), with others referenced where useful to elucidate the discussion further. It should be noted, though, that even this large selection could never be entirely comprehensive and inevitably may include works which some find

[10] Caroline Joan Picart and David A. Frank, *Frames of Evil: The Holocaust as Horror in American Film* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006).
[11] Ibid., p. 125.
[12] Ibid., p. 98.

superfluous and exclude works which others find salient. This is exacerbated by the fluidity of genres, and the horror genre can, as Peter Hutchings argues, blur with science-fiction, fantasy and thriller.[13] For one, my overview of Nazi horror in the 20th century includes horror-thrillers, an inclusion which entails challenging the work of those such as Noël Carroll, who explicitly argues that monsters must be supernatural and thus that humans should not be considered monsters in the horror genre.[14] This has been a much-discussed argument, with Aaron Smuts being one of the most recent critics to contend that Carroll's understanding of the monster would exclude too many central films. Indeed, as previously stated my definition of the Nazi monster can include human Nazis, and human and moral monstrosity is a central concern within this thesis. However, Smuts goes on to conclude that there 'appears to be a genre with two main sub-types, supernatural horror and realist horror'.[15] On the one hand, the inclusion of 'realist horror' can draw attention to 21st century horror-thrillers which include Nazi sub-plots, including *Anatomie* (Stefan Ruzowitzky, 2000) or *Crimson Rivers* (Mathieu Kassovitz, 2000). On the other hand, these examples push the boundaries of what is considered horror, are fewer in number, and rarely focus on an explicit Nazi villain in the same way that their supernatural counterparts do. As such they would stretch this thesis beyond its thematic bounds, and so while I agree with Smuts that 'realist horror' is a useful categorisation, I have chosen to focus on 'supernatural horror' in this thesis with the acknowledgement that humans can be monsters even within supernatural narratives. Conversely, there are many other 21st century films which feature supernatural Nazi monsters, particularly successful comic book adaptations such as *X-Men: First Class* (Matthew Vaughn, 2011) and *Captain America: The First Avenger* (Joe Johnston, 2011). Yet few would argue that they are horror films, and so the supernatural is not a sufficient pre-requisite for inclusion in Nazi horror.

Similarly, Nazi horror draws attention to the relationship between the horror and war genres, and Steffen Hantke considers that:

> At this convergence point, two genres meet and a new hybrid—the military horror film—is created. Both genres share basic thematic concerns, but representational and generic registers differ. What can only be articulated metaphorically within the

[13] Peter Hutchings, *The Horror Film* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 1.
[14] Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990).
[15] Aaron Smuts, 'Cognitive and Philosophical Approaches to Horror', in *A Companion to the Horror Film*, ed. by Harry M. Benshoff (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), pp. 3-20 (p. 6).

> codes of realism can appear as palpable physical reality in the modes of the fantastic.[16]

Nazi horror could similarly be considered 'military horror', and I would note further that advances in special effects have led to increasingly horrific portrayals of war wounds in the combat film, yet Hantke again draws attention to realism and the fantastic and so films belonging to the war genre are not within the remit of this thesis. A final challenge for selecting my case studies is the way in which Nazism is interconnected with fascism and right wing politics in general. Though Nazism may have inspired certain representations of dystopian, totalitarian or authoritarian states and more broadly right wing, racist or anti-Semitic monsters, such representations cannot be included within my analysis as to do so would be to devalue the specific meaning of Nazism. Not only do films depicting neo-Nazis such as *Green Room* (Jeremy Saulnier, 2015) often fall under 'realist horror', but they should also be considered separately due to their very particular and more recent historical context. That is to say, it is impossible to consider how all 21st century films depicting fascism may relate to Nazism during the Second World War, and instead it is necessary to limit my focus to characters that are clearly identifiable Nazis connected to the Second World War, whilst considering that those specific depictions of Nazism may now be related to 21st century instances of fascism. This thesis therefore focuses solely on films with explicit depictions of Nazis whose primary purpose is most obviously to horrify and terrify their audience using the supernatural; a necessarily tighter scope, but which aims to have transferable findings for other, often related films.

Nazi Horror: Cycles, Subgenres and Sub-subgenres

Having identified such a large body of horror films, including a recent renaissance, the important task follows of situating Nazi horror in relation to the genre, as a 'subgenre' or 'cycle'. The question of how to define such a corpus of films is pressing, as the label which is applied has the potential to include certain films and omit others, as well as impact an understanding of those films and their relationships to other texts. I should acknowledge here that labels can be defined by and for different groups of people; filmmakers and audiences use and understand generic labels in different ways, but my focus here is primarily scholarly. This is because the identification of a genre and the application of terms such as subgenre or cycle shape scholars' choices of texts according to breadth versus specificity and, as a result, their analysis. Though a more radical approach might be to do

[16] Steffen Hantke, 'The Military Horror Film: Speculations on a Hybrid Genre', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 43.4 (2010), 701-719 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2010.00766.x> (p. 702).

away with such labels altogether, these terms are pervasive and can be usefully interrogated and employed. For example, Brigid Cherry suggests that subgenres divide the horror genre 'along lines of plots, subject matter or types of monster', a focus which is valuable in identifying horror's recurring themes and iconography and resonates with the ever-present Nazi threat in Nazi horror.[17]

I thus consider Nazi horror a subgenre rather than a cycle, a deliberate distinction as though these terms can at times be invoked without explanation or even interchangeably, it should be emphasised that they have different meanings. For instance, Carroll refers to 'the Hollywood movie cycle of the thirties' and 'the horror cycle within which we find ourselves', suggesting that cycles refer to all films made within a particular period, not necessarily belonging to the same subgenre.[18] Cherry, however, understands cycles according to Stephen Neale's definition, 'groups of films made within a specific and limited time-span, and founded, for the most part, on the characteristics of individual commercial successes'.[19] These definitions are similar in one respect, for in either instance the term cycle refers to films from a specific period. Inversely to Carroll, though, Neale's definition suggests that cycles can be distinguished from subgenres according to specific characteristics, and in this it is the more commonly used definition. Certainly, Hutchings offers a similar description, with the addition that cycles 'exist in relation to particular times and particular places', grouping films according to both historical and geographical specificity.[20] This use of the term cycle has repercussions for how we understand films as it focuses analysis on a key trope utilised in a particular period and national context. It is not only its long history that prompts me to refer to Nazi horror as a subgenre rather than a cycle, then, but also because it includes British (*Outpost* [Steve Barker, 2008]), Norwegian (*Dead Snow* [Tommy Wirkola, 2009]), American (*Blood Creek* [Joel Schumacher, 2009]), Swedish (*Frostbite* [Anders Banke, 2006]) and New Zealand (*The Devil's Rock* [Paul Campion, 2011]) productions.

More than this, such a definition of the term cycle groups films by a specific financial context, namely their intent to 'cash in' on a commercial success.[21] In relation to

[17] Brigid Cherry, *Horror* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 3.
[18] Carroll, p. 159.
[19] Stephen Neale, *Genre and Hollywood* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 7.
[20] Hutchings also argues that 'horror can be seen as proceeding via successive waves of sequels and cycles as initial commercial hits are exploited', p. 16.
[21] 'Cash in' is the phrase used by Hutchings, p. 16. Rick Altman also suggests these terms can be distinguished according to financial and industrial context, as he argues that subgenres can be

horror in particular, groups of films may be linked by their desire to convert low production budgets into high profits on release. As Mark Jancovich argues, even by the 1940s horror films were making greater profits than other contemporaneous genres due to their often low budgets, a prime example being *Cat People* (Jacques Tourneur, 1942).[22] Similar claims about a successful low-budget horror film influencing a subsequent wave of films can be traced through certain examples of Nazi horror, as Marcus Stiglegger argues of the 1960s to 1980s Nazisploitation that 'in many cases we can find a commercially successful forerunner being copied afterwards on a cheaper production level', and Julian Petley argues that '*Shock Waves* spawned a brief Nazi zombie cycle'.[23] Focus on the cycle thus places emphasis on a profitable urtext. 21st century Nazi horror films, however, range in terms of production category from the Hollywood blockbuster (*Hellboy* [Guillermo del Toro, 2004], *Blood Creek* and *Overlord*) through to independent productions and straight-to-DVD offerings (*Fantacide* [Shane Mather, 2007]), amongst which there is no obvious profitable urtext followed by either low or high-budget copies.

That Nazisploitation has been considered a cycle is significant, as Cherry uses the word 'exploit' when paraphrasing Neale, as does Hutchings in his definition of the cycle.[24] This choice of word is noteworthy, as Ernest Mathijs and Jamie Sexton argue that exploitation can hold two meanings, firstly being 'a purely commercial manner of exploiting a property for as much money as possible', and secondly exploiting 'taboo topics as a key appeal of the films'.[25] As Nazisploitation films have been considered as both copying previous films' successes and as shocking in content, this demonstrates that horror and exploitation cinema can come to overlap especially in the form of commercially-driven horror cycles. Thus, although 'exploitation' can be utilised as a loaded term, in particular as a judgement on what is perceived to be a commercially rather than an artistically or socio-

shared amongst multiple studios but cycles belong to one studio, *Film/Genre* (London: BFI, 1999). However, as Barry Keith Grant notes, 'this claim is questionable, particularly after the decline of the studio system', *Film Genre: From Iconography to Ideology* (London and New York: Wallflower, 2007), pp. 36-37.

[22] Mark Jancovich, 'Horror in the 1940s', in *A Companion to the Horror Film*, ed. by Harry M. Benshoff (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), pp. 237-254 (p. 242).

[23] Marcus Stiglegger, 'Cinema beyond Good and Evil? Nazi Exploitation in the Cinema of the 1970s and its Heritage', in *Nazisploitation! The Nazi Image in Low Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. by Daniel H. Magilow, Elizabeth Bridges and Kristin T. Vander Lugt (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), pp. 21-37 (p. 27); Julian Petley, 'Nazi Horrors: History, Myth, Sexploitation', in *Horror Zone: The Cultural Experience of Contemporary Horror Cinema*, ed. by Ian Conrich (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 205-226 (p. 208).

[24] Cherry, p. 3; Hutchings, p. 16.

[25] Ernest Mathijs and Jamie Sexton, *Cult Cinema: An Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 154.

politically driven film, it is also a useful concept in drawing attention to the varying industrial contexts from which Nazi horror emerges. As noted above, while films such as *Hellboy* and *Overlord* were made with relatively large budgets (an estimated $66,000,000 and $38,000,000 respectively) and received wide theatrical releases, many 21st century Nazi horror films have been produced on small budgets, some even by student filmmakers as in the case of *The Golden Nazi Vampire of Absam 2* (Lasse Nolte, 2008), and so this may problematise efforts to refer to Nazi horror cohesively.[26] Certainly, this thesis will consider that some of the films having been made with so few resources has resulted not only in the 'impoverished' aesthetics which Eric Schaefer identifies within exploitation films, but that such low budget production may also affect the films' ability to engage with Nazism and monstrosity due to the quality of the filmmaking.[27] That said, this thesis will demonstrate that Nazi horror from a range of industrial backgrounds can be usefully brought together as the same themes and monsters notably arise within all of them, even if this is to varying extents and outcomes, and it is for this reason that I prioritise the term 'subgenre' over exploitation and/or cycle.

I wish to focus on 21st century iterations of this subgenre in particular because they prompt the central and pressing questions of why the Nazi monster remains so prevalent and why it is still a source of horror. My chapters aim to answer these questions by focusing on the different types of monster found within the subgenre, an approach modelled on the work of Bruce Kawin. While there have been many contributors to monster theory, Kawin's work is of note here as he understands there to be three 'primary subgenres' within the horror genre, which are 'horror films about monsters, horror films about supernatural monsters and horror films about monstrous humans'.[28] Within these, he explains, there are then 'sub-subgenres, which identify the specific kind of monster or horror object the film is about'.[29] As a result, the horror genre can be understood through a structure in which 'each film is organized by its central, defining horror'.[30] This thesis will not employ Kawin's specific categorisations, especially as he includes within his sub-subgenres such specific categories as 'minerals' and 'parasites' but the Nazi monster is not

[26] IMDb, 'Hellboy', *IMDb* (ND) <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0167190/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_3> [accessed 15 April 2020]; IMDb, 'Overlord', *IMDb* (ND) <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4530422/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_0> [accessed 15 April 2020].
[27] Eric Schaefer, *"Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!": A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 47.
[28] Bruce Kawin, *Horror and the Horror Film* (London and New York: Anthem Press, 2012), p. 47.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

allocated its own devoted section. This is a common omission, for regarding her guidelines for considering horror subgenres, Cherry refers in her book to monsters such as vampires several times, but not once the figure of the Nazi. Similarly, Hutchings' guide to horror places great importance on a section titled 'A World of Monsters', arguing that we need to be sensitive to all the specificities of each different variation, but he does not have the space (or perhaps the desire) to mention the Nazi monster here.[31] Nonetheless, Kawin's is a productive structure and terminology with which to consider Nazi horror. This is because, while my use of the word 'subgenre' to describe Nazi horror is more specific than the way in which Kawin uses the term, my understanding of Nazi horror as a subgenre is similarly defined by the recurrence of a particular type of monster, of which there are then different variations whose individualities need to be explored. Discussion of these begins with that of the Nazi occultist in Chapter One, followed by that of the Nazi 'movie monster' in Chapter Two, and finally the Nazi scientist in Chapter Three (though as I will demonstrate, these are not necessarily easily distinguishable typologies of Nazi monster and there is much overlap).

Literature Review

Though the Nazi monster has not received substantive critical attention to date, there are some recent works that have touched on the topic. For example, both Sabine Hake and Jason Lee have produced comprehensive studies of the Nazi on film, and so not only do both inevitably acknowledge the horror genre, but they also pose questions and draw conclusions which can be considered anew when focusing on the Nazi horror subgenre. Hake identifies the pervasive representation of the Nazi across cinema more widely which resonates with the recurrence of the Nazi monster in horror, asking at the very beginning of her monograph, 'what causes the almost compulsive preoccupation with "sexy Nazis" and "nasty Nazis" in popular culture? And what are the emotional sources and aesthetic effects of this continuing fascination with Nazi leaders, rituals, and symbols?'[32] This thesis shares Hake's concern surrounding the 'nasty Nazi' in particular, and similarly focuses on emotion and aesthetics in relation to horror. However, Hake's consideration of 21st century horror is brief, with any mention of horror primarily being in relation to Nazisploitation, and so there is much to be done to consider her work in relation to different and genre-specific texts. Lee, meanwhile, focuses on the 21st century, and so also considers the

[31] Hutchings, p. 39.
[32] Sabine Hake, *Screen Nazis: Cinema, History, and Democracy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), p. 3.

persistence of the screen Nazi and the relationship between representations of Nazism, the past and the present. Oddly, though, Lee notes that:

> other films, particularly of the horror genre, have Nazism as a backstory where, for example, the children of those experimented upon in Nazi camps gain supernatural powers. Like child sexual abuse, Nazism becomes a device for encapsulating evil, but this is more than a simplistic plot device.[33]

This particular description does not appear to apply to any of the horror films I have identified, but this thesis will certainly consider the conclusion he draws about the complexity of Nazism as a 'device' in horror.

There exist more specific works which discuss Nazi horror, and James J. Ward's chapter titled 'Nazis on the Moon! Nazis under the Polar Ice Cap! And Other Recent Episodes of the Strange Cinematic Afterlife of the Third Reich' in *Horrors of War: The Undead on the Battlefield* is of particular note.[34] In it he refers to the 'spate of recent films that combine some measure of historical plausibility about the Third Reich with essays in the arcane and the occult, scientific and medical experiments outside any credible limits, and staples of exploitation cinema such as zombies, robots, and hybrid beings'.[35] While Ward arguably gives the most comprehensive account of the Nazi monster yet, by it being confined to one chapter of an edited collection the depth of his analysis is limited. In turn, Ben Kooyman has written on *Dead Snow*, *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* (Uwe Boll, 2011) and *Frankenstein's Army* (Richard Raaphorst, 2013), this within a larger volume on the *War Gothic*.[36] The context of Kooyman's work is thus useful in connecting Nazi horror films to the wider tradition of the Gothic within both visual culture and literature, and the vocabulary provided by Gothic Studies with which to consider it. However, as Kooyman's work is also limited to a single chapter, while he may be able to offer deeper analysis, it is of fewer films, and accordingly Kooyman's analysis needs to be extended upon when considering the Nazi horror subgenre more completely. Lastly, Christiane-Marie Abu Sarah has written a chapter on 'Horror, History and the Third Reich: Locating Traumatic Pasts in

[33] Jason Lee, *Nazism and Neo-Nazism in Film and Media* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), p. 13.
[34] James J. Ward, 'Nazis on the Moon! Nazis under the Polar Ice Cap! And Other Recent Episodes of the Strange Cinematic Afterlife of the Third Reich', in *Horrors of War: The Undead on the Battlefield*, ed. by Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), pp. 53-73.
[35] Ibid., p. 54.
[36] Ben Kooyman, 'Snow Nazis Must Die', in *War Gothic in Literature and Culture*, ed. by Steffen Hantke and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 117-135.

Hollywood Horrors', the scope of which is confined to US productions.[37] All three of these pieces begin to delineate some of the themes I will be building upon in my chapters such as the significance of science and the occult, related to which note should be made of more subject-specific works, such as Monica Black and Eric Kurlander's volume on *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult': Histories, Realities, Legacies*, or Cynthia J. Miller's work on the Nazi zombie.[38] My aim is therefore to separate and discuss the Nazi monster films thematically to give them fuller and more nuanced analysis, while drawing upon and critically interrogating such examples of previous scholarly work.

With respect to this, both Kooyman and Abu Sarah's work is particularly useful for this thesis due to the methodological approach they take. Kooyman considers his three case studies in relation to historical trauma, putting forward the argument that cinematic Nazis 'provide an outlet for disseminating, depicting, and grappling with this historical trauma'.[39] Abu Sarah's chapter, meanwhile, is within a volume focusing on the *Horrors of Trauma in Cinema*. In addressing the core research questions of how and why the Nazi monster persists, my intention is to create a methodology through which to discover how its representation relates to particular socio-political concerns. As such, in the following section I outline a psychoanalytic methodology, as I consider psychoanalysis the most useful method of uncovering whether there are underlying or hidden truths behind the recurrence of the Nazi monster. Consequently, although I follow Kooyman and Abu Sarah in drawing on trauma theory, I begin by examining 21st century Nazi horror in relation to Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny and Julia Kristeva's theorisation of the abject.[40] Not only do the uncanny and abject overlap in significant ways in relation to the way that the Nazi monster terrifies and horrifies its audience, but I will demonstrate that these concepts are also closely related to trauma theory. By using these three particular areas of theory I therefore elaborate upon previous work so as to provide a fuller framework with

[37] Christiane-Marie Abu Sarah, 'Horror, History and the Third Reich: Locating Traumatic Pasts in Hollywood Horrors', in *The Horrors of Trauma in Cinema: Violence Void Visualisation*, ed. by Michael Elm, Kobi Kabalek and Julia B. Kohne (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), pp. 68-87.

[38] Monica Black and Eric Kurlander, eds, *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult': Histories, Realities, Legacies* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015); Cynthia J. Miller, 'The Rise and Fall – and Rise – of the Nazi Zombie in Film', in *Race, Oppression and the Zombie: Essays on Cross-Cultural Appropriations of the Caribbean Tradition*, ed. by Christopher M. Moreman and Cory James Rushton (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2011), pp. 139-148.

[39] Kooyman, p. 118.

[40] Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' (1919), in *Art and Literature*, ed. by Albert Dickson, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1985), pp. 335-376; Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

which to consider the Nazi horror subgenre's attendant cultural ramifications. Accordingly, it is necessary to apply this methodology to each of the types of Nazi monster I have identified in order to consider whether they have specific cultural meanings.

Thesis Overview

Chapter One examines 21st century horror films which represent variations of Nazism and the occult through three main strands: the presence of cults and god-men, the summoning of demons, and the use of necromancy. The Nazis' interest in the occult has been the subject of much popular interest and pseudoscholarly attention speculating on Hitler's reported fascination with occult relics and Himmler's Ahnernebe division amongst other facts and fictions. The chapter hence utilises scholarly work from different disciplines on Nazism and the occult and navigates the wealth of pseudoscholarly contributions to analyse films such as *Hellboy*, *The Devil's Rock*, *Fantacide*, *Ratline* (Eric Stanze, 2011), *Blood Creek* and *Unholy* (Daryl Goldberg, 2007). The core concern of this first chapter is therefore a consideration of how representations of the occult are combined with the Nazi monster to create 21st century horror, connecting these depictions to anxieties about the actual perceived threat of the Nazis using the occult, the wider and persistent threat which the occult represents beyond Nazism, as well as the more symbolic use of the occult to express anxiety about human monstrosity and fascist regimes.

Though a case may be made for any particular monster's importance in the history of the horror film, in Chapter Two I turn my attention to what Lyndsay Anne Hallam argues are 'the three main monsters found in the horror genre: vampires, zombies and werewolves'.[41] In this chapter I aim to consider Nazi zombie, vampire and werewolf hybrids, creatures that have generated a good number of films. The Nazi zombie is perhaps the most popular and prolific of the Nazi monsters, being present in, amongst other films, the *Outpost* trilogy (2008-2013), *Frankenstein's Army*, *Dead Snow*, and *War of the Dead* (Marko Mäkilaakso, 2011). These are also films which have received more critical attention than most that are discussed in this thesis. Werewolves feature in fewer films such as *Iron Wolf* (David Brückner, 2013), *Werewolves of the Third Reich* (Andrew Jones, 2017)*, Horrors of War* (Peter John Ross and John Whitney, 2006) and the faux-trailer *Werewolf Women of the SS* (Rob Zombie, 2007). Lastly, films such as *Frostbite* and *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* feature Nazi vampires but in strikingly different ways. I focus on these different hybrid

[41] Lyndsay Anne Hallam, *Screening the Marquis de Sade: Pleasure, Pain and the Transgressive Body in Film* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012), p. 3.

monsters in order to consider how the Nazi has been combined with each type of monster, what this suggests about both Nazism and these creatures, the result of which is that these monsters are often exceptions to generalisations, evoking different effects and meanings which relate to the traumas they are born from.

Closely related to these Nazi zombies, werewolves and vampires is the science which is often represented as creating such monsters, a theme which I explore in Chapter Three. Indeed, this final chapter considers the majority of the films from the previous chapter but focuses on the different angle of Nazi science through three particular aspects. Firstly, I consider the history and representation of Nazi 'machinery of war' such as the development of weapons of mass destruction. Secondly, I shift from the macro to the micro, analysing images of Nazi human experimentation with a particular emphasis on depictions of pain and (the lack of) consent. Lastly, I consider in closer detail the spectre of Josef Mengele and the representation of the Nazi scientist-as-monster which is especially prevalent and persistent. These three recurring themes can be connected to multiple cultural traumas surrounding militarised scientific technology and state operations, of which the Nazi experiments have become culturally-loaded, dystopic warnings.

Ultimately my consideration of the Nazi monster within the 21st century horror film seeks to understand each of these monsters' particularities, similarities and differences, and how they relate to seemingly repressed cultural traumas. There are several possibilities regarding what the Nazi monster represents, and how and why it represents it. That noted, one might argue that the Nazi monster has become appropriated and used as an example of the monstrous without any real cultural significance, and that the reason it recurs is that it facilitates an exercise in entertainment and exploitation. However, while such empty appropriation may have been the intention behind the production of some of these films, this thesis contends that a close analysis reveals that there is more underlying meaning to these films than such an argument allows. The thesis correspondingly proposes that the Nazi monster is variously the product of specific historical and national traumas to which it retrospectively refers, the product of contemporary trauma specific to the 21st century, or the product of an accumulation of traumas both past and present. By arguing that underlying trauma is what the Nazi monster represents, there are two potential hypotheses as to how and why it does so. On the one hand, such a recurrence of the traumatic may be a cathartic or comforting exercise in defeating a symbolic villain; on the other, the films' depictions of the Nazi monster may be invoking trauma in terms of particular threats in the 21st century with the potential to heal past trauma, prevent future

trauma, or cause trauma anew. As much reflects back upon Skal's analysis of horror during the Second World War which he sees as being either used as trivialised entertainment or to 'summon real demons'.[42] It is the latter which is truly at stake in 21st century Nazi horror, as I will demonstrate that the Nazi horror subgenre is at its core about numerous and perpetual traumas of which Nazism has become symbolic.

[42] Skal, p. 80.

METHODOLOGY

A Psychoanalytic Approach

In order to interrogate why the specific subgenre of the 21st century Nazi horror film is as prolific as it is, and why Nazi horror films frighten their audiences, this thesis implements a psychoanalytic methodology. Indeed, I propose that what defines this subgenre is the constant presence of the Nazi monster, and that these Nazi monsters are a frequent and continuing re-emergence of the unconscious and the repressed, the source and implications of which I wish to identify. A methodology which considers films as expressions of the repressed is not a new way in which to address the horror genre and is in large part informed by Robin Wood's conceptualisation of horror as a social or collective nightmare of both filmmaker and audience.[1] The comparison of the horror film to a nightmare is drawn from the audience's experience in particular, in which 'the spectator sits in darkness, and the sort of involvement the entertainment film invites necessitates a certain switching-off of consciousness, a losing of oneself in a fantasy experience'.[2] But this experience should not be dismissed as escapism, for as Wood goes on to argue, while the nightmarish film may offer an escape from 'the unresolved tensions of our lives […] the fantasies are not meaningless; they can represent attempts to resolve those tensions in more radical ways than our consciousness can countenance'.[3] Wood is referring in this essay specifically to American cinema at the time of writing in 1979, but as he then suggests, these tensions change according to different times and contexts and so too does the horror genre in response. This consideration of horror as nightmare could therefore be extended to the broader geography and more recent 21st century context of Nazi horror. For Wood, the subject of the horror film's collective fantasies 'is the struggle for recognition of all that our civilisation *re*presses or *op*presses'.[4] Examples of that which is repressed by society include sexuality, political ideologies, or belief in the supernatural or arcane; all issues which are at stake in the Nazi horror film.

[1] A concept which itself draws from a larger body of work on the similarities between spectatorship and dreaming, such as the work of Jean-Louis Baudry.
[2] Robin Wood, 'An Introduction to the American Horror Film' (1979), in *Movies and Methods: Volume II*, ed. by Bill Nichols (Berkeley, CA, Los Angeles, CA and London: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 195-220 (p. 202).
[3] Ibid., p. 203.
[4] Ibid., p. 201.

Central to Wood's psychoanalytic reading of the horror film is his basic formula for the genre, 'normality is threatened by the Monster'.[5] According to this reading the monster embodies the collective social and political tensions which the horror film is mediating. Such a reading is supported by Nazi horror, for what truly ties the films together are the ever-present variations of the Nazi monster, such as the Nazi vampire or Nazi scientist. This particular 'formula' needs to be investigated further in relation to Nazi horror, as Wood then expands:

> The definition of normality in horror films is in general boringly constant: the heterosexual monogamous couple, the family, and the social institutions (police, church, armed forces) that support and defend them. The Monster is, of course, much more protean, changing from period to period as society's basic fears clothe themselves in fashionable or immediately accessible garments.[6]

Applying this formula to the Nazi horror subgenre, it is significant that Nazi horror always features a monster clothed in the Nazi uniform as this suggests that it is this guise which make society's fears accessible and comprehensible, and thus indicates that analysis of the Nazi monster will reveal what precise fears these are. However, Wood's observation that the monster is protean is also of note, because although there is always a Nazi monster, the monster takes several different forms ranging from zombie to werewolf to occultist. Wood emphasises that the monster is protean according to different time periods, yet it could be noted that the Nazi monster takes on all of these different forms within the relatively short period of the 21st century. Perhaps more important here, then, is the changing context, and so Wood's observations are useful in that they emphasise the necessity of considering each of these types of monsters in turn to analyse their specificities. The protagonists of the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre, meanwhile, are not as uniformly normative as the examples from the cinema and period Wood draws upon, as they include social outcasts (*Iron Wolf* [David Brückner, 2014]) or mercenaries (*Outpost* [Steve Barker, 2008]). They do, however, despite their seemingly marginalised or outcast status, offer the nearest thing that the films have to 'normality'. Thus, Wood's basic formula has great value for my consideration of the Nazi horror film, situating my question of how and why the Nazi monster persists in a theoretical framework of underlying social and political meaning.

The Freudian Uncanny

[5] Ibid., p. 203.
[6] Ibid., p. 204.

This thesis develops such an approach to horror and repression in order to consider the Nazi monster by connecting it to Freudian psychoanalysis, and in particular to the notion of the 'uncanny'. This is a concept first explored in 1906 by Ernst Jentsch, who explains that 'someone to whom something "uncanny" happens is not quite "at home" or "at ease" in the situation concerned, that the thing is or at least seems to be foreign to him'.[7] Above all, Jentsch assigns this sensation to 'intellectual uncertainty', for instance 'doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate'.[8] It is not Jentsch who is most associated with the theorisation of the uncanny, however, but Sigmund Freud, who developed Jentsch's work in his 1919 essay. Freud's exploration of the term begins with the German word of which the term 'uncanny' is the translation, 'unheimlich', a word which can be defined as meaning unhomely or unfamiliar. However, the unfamiliar alone is not enough to provoke an uncanny sensation, and 'something has to be added to what is novel and unfamiliar in order to make it uncanny'.[9] That something is the 'heimlich' itself, which Freud demonstrates by interrogating several aspects of the German dictionary definition of the word to show that the 'heimlich' and the 'unheimlich' blur and merge, so that what is truly uncanny is simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. Thus, while Freud draws on Jentsch's work by associating the uncanny with being 'not quite "at home"', he finds that intellectual uncertainty is not a sufficient explanation of the sensation. Instead, the uncanny is a sensation which arises when that which has been repressed then returns. The uncanny is something which has been known and buried, where it 'ought to have remained' hidden, only to return to light again.[10]

There are a number of facets of the uncanny outlined within Freud's essay which demonstrate why it is so relevant to considerations of the horror genre and, as this thesis will go on to develop, to analysis of the Nazi monster. For example, the very concept of supernatural powers such as 'animism, magic and sorcery' is considered uncanny by Freud, for these are ancient beliefs which society has ostensibly repressed and overcome, yet these ideas persist.[11] This thesis as a whole considers supernatural rather than realist horror, making the uncanny a useful framework throughout, but the uncanny supernatural is of particular note when considering the Nazi occult. Moreover, one of the most

[7] Ernst Jentsch, 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny' (1906), trans. by Roy Sellars, *Angelaki*, 2.1 (1997), 7-16 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09697259708571910> (p. 8).
[8] Ibid., p. 11.
[9] Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' (1919), in *Art and Literature*, ed. by Albert Dickson, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1985), pp. 335-376 (p. 341).
[10] Ibid., p. 345.
[11] Ibid., p. 365.

fundamentally uncanny phenomena, Freud argues, is death, particularly as experienced in reaction to 'dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts'.[12] These encounters prompt uncanniness because they challenge the border between life and death, creating a liminal space in which the dead and buried return anew. Such images abound in the horror film, and any number of monsters may maim and kill leaving dead bodies in their wake, or be undead monsters themselves, making this particularly relevant to the analysis of Nazi zombies and vampires. Closely linked to this is the uncanniness prompted by the loss of eyes or 'dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist'.[13] These instances are uncanny for Freud as they are linked to the anxiety of castration, a complex which develops during childhood and is repressed but which the loss of other body parts symbolically brings back to the fore. Though the gendered dynamic of this explanation for the uncanny can be interrogated further, that severed limbs abound in horror is undeniable and this thesis will consider that the uneasy uncanniness which this prompts is present throughout Nazi horror.

Similarly central within the uncanny is the double, drawn from the work of Otto Rank in which the double is connected with 'reflections in mirrors, with shadows, with guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and with the fear of death'.[14] This category of the uncanny stems from blurring between the self and the Other and is thus found throughout the Gothic and horror, but proves of particular relevance when considering zombies as undead doubles of living humans, or the duality of the werewolf and the healer-turned-killer scientist. Of the scientist, Freud draws attention to the exacerbation of the uncanny which occurs when 'the most able and penetrating minds among our men of science have come to the conclusion, especially towards the close of their own lives, that a contact [with the departed] is not impossible'.[15] If it is rationality and scientific progression which has repressed ancient and animistic beliefs, then for those beliefs to be re-opened by science is to increase the uncanny effect. A last example to outline here, though there are many other instances which Freud identifies, is the uncanny sensation which can occur due to repetition and déjà vu. This may include the unsettling experience of returning to the same spot again and again, of a recurring number or image, and indeed anything which may remind us of what Freud considers the human mind's 'compulsion to repeat'.[16] Such a

[12] Ibid., p. 364.
[13] Ibid., p. 366.
[14] Ibid., p. 357.
[15] Ibid., p. 365.
[16] Ibid., p. 361.

facet of the uncanny is relevant not only to understanding the particular images and techniques used within the horror film, but to understanding a body of horror films such as Nazi horror as a whole. This thesis will identify all of these instances of the uncanny, and more besides, within the Nazi horror film, arguing that the uncanny return of that which ought to have remained hidden is intertwined with this particular subgenre and its monsters.

Developing the Uncanny

There has been much critical work on the uncanny since Freud's seminal essay, an indication of how influential it has been. One notable example is Nicholas Royle's monograph, titled simply *The Uncanny.*[17] While Royle proclaims in its preface that it is to his knowledge 'the first book-length study of its topic', the work draws on several theorists and their briefer interactions with the uncanny.[18] These theorists include Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Jean Baudrillard, and Royle builds upon their work to demonstrate that the uncanny is 'a "field of research" that calls for new ways of combining and transforming concerns of art, literature, film, psychoanalysis, philosophy' and more, and is 'a "province" still before us, awaiting our examination'.[19] In this way Royle is calling for a reinvigoration of the idea, arguing that it is still relevant in the 21st century. Beginning to explore this field of research as set out by Freud, he observes that:

> Freud keeps pausing to see if it is now possible to draw up an inventory, an exhaustive list of what is uncanny. It is as if he thinks, or is willing to pretend that we might think, that the uncanny can be collated, classified, taxonomized. But one uncanny thing keeps leading on to another. Every attempt to isolate and analyse a specific case of the uncanny seems to generate an at least minor epidemic.[20]

Nevertheless, Royle proceeds to structure his book around many of the elements Freud lists as uncanny, devoting chapters to 'The Death Drive', being 'Buried Alive', and 'Cannibalism', while emphasising that these chapters are not exhaustive.

When considering the Nazi monster subgenre, a particularly relevant and important chapter in Royle's book is that on 'Film'. The uncanny has been much applied in the analysis of literature and the Gothic due to Freud's own admittance that 'the uncanny as it is depicted in *literature*, in stories and imaginative productions […] is a much more fertile province than the uncanny in real life, for it contains the whole of the latter and

[17] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003).
[18] Ibid., p. vii.
[19] Ibid., p. 27.
[20] Ibid., p. 13.

something more besides'.[21] Royle implies that of those other 'imaginative productions' the study of film is an equally, if not even more, fertile field. Indeed, Royle's chapter effectively emphasises the ocularcentrism of the uncanny, in which perception and the visual are integral. I would argue that the horror film is a particularly powerful example of the ocularcentric uncanny, for it presents to its audience images of, amongst other things, eye loss, the revenant and doubles in a primarily visual fashion so as to unsettle and frighten them. Equally important, though, is the way in which these elements are presented. This observation stems from the work of Freud himself, who observes that an uncanny sensation is provoked by Wilhelm Hauff's fairy tale, 'The Tale of the Severed Hand', yet finds that no such uncanniness arises in response to the apparently similar story of the treasure of Rhampsinitus 'in which the master-thief, whom the princess tries to hold fast by the hand, leaves his brother's severed hand behind with her instead'.[22] The difference, as Freud concludes, is the focus of the story and the character with which the audience is aligned, suggesting that it is not just the subject matter but also the framing which is central to the production of the uncanny.

That the experience of the uncanny is not dependent solely on what is perceived but also on how it is perceived has ramifications for an understanding of the horror genre, and is an issue also addressed by Barbara Creed in a chapter on film and 'the uncanny gaze'. In this work Creed discusses the gaze not in a Lacanian sense but in a literal sense, and so the uncanny gaze is a term by which she refers to the very act of looking and the moment in which the spectator of a film perceives something to be uncanny. She argues that an important aspect of the uncanny gaze is that eye loss or revenants 'on their own are not necessarily uncanny. The uncanny sensation must be produced by the text itself, through the methods it adopts to uncover the uncanny'.[23] In cinema the way in which images are made uncanny is 'through a process of concealment and revelation and often in a context of shadow and light. As the horrified spectator focuses on the scenario unfolding on the screen, the uncanny gaze is constructed at that point at which the familiar becomes unfamiliar'.[24] The presence of the vampire or the zombie alone is not necessarily enough for it to be uncanny, but the effect is exacerbated by the narrative contextualisation and

[21] Freud, p. 372.
[22] Wilhelm Hauff, 'The Tale of the Severed Hand (1827), in *Hauff's Fairy Tales*, ed. by Dorothy Morris, trans. by Sybil Thesinger (London: James Finch and Co., 1905), pp. 21-39; Freud, p. 369.
[23] Barbara Creed, *Phallic Panic: Film, Horror and the Primal Uncanny* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005), p. 27.
[24] Ibid., p. 29.

stylistic effects. For example, the horror film is often steeped in chiaroscuro, relying on a night-time setting, shadows, mists and camera effects which may blur or obscure the spectator's gaze. The Nazi horror subgenre certainly contains all of these types of images, and so stylistically it has the potential to evoke the uncanny which Freud argues stems from the repression and return of seemingly surmounted archaic and 'animistic beliefs', while Wood's theory of repressed ideologies is especially relevant to the narrative re-emergence of a specific past conflict.[25]

As previous employments of the uncanny have often been within the field of literature, so the evocation of psychoanalysis and the uncanny can also usefully draw attention to the Nazi horror subgenre's basis not only in horror but within a longer history of the Gothic. Although definitions of the Gothic are as complex as those of horror, there is a common understanding that it is a tradition stretching back to the 18th century novel *The Castle of Otranto*, after which time Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy suggest that the 'Gothic has continued until the present day, albeit in constantly evolving forms, and is flourishing particularly strongly at the current time [of the 21st century]'.[26] Over this time the Gothic and horror have had a similarly evolving relationship, as for Clive Bloom 'it was Gothicism, with its formality, codification, ritualistic elements and artifice (its very origins as an aesthetic outlook and literary condition first and foremost) that transformed the old folk tale of terror into the modern horror story', but the 'link between horror and gothic was neither a necessary nor a permanent condition and by the time of Edgar Allan Poe the two were capable of separate existence'.[27] The two are thus closely, yet not inevitably, related, and it is of note that Bloom includes in this guide to Gothic horror an excerpt from Freud's essay on the uncanny. Indeed, while the Gothic has constantly evolved, at times diverging and at others converging with horror, the Gothic arguably remains defined by its emphasis on the returning past. It is for this reason, amongst others, that Ben Kooyman connects the Gothic and what he terms Nazisploitation horror. For Kooyman, 'Gothic tropes, themes and conventions – Gothic settings, mad science and scientists and the motif of past horrors intruding upon the present – are common in Nazisploitation horror'.[28]

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[25] Freud, p. 372.
[26] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764), ed. by W.S. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964); Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, 'Introduction', in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, ed. by Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1-4 (p. 1).
[27] Clive Bloom, *Gothic Horror: A Guide for Students and Readers*, 2nd end (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 3.
[28] Ben Kooyman, 'Snow Nazis Must Die', in *War Gothic in Literature and Culture*, ed. by Steffen Hantke and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 117-135 (p. 117).

Though Kooyman does not then explicitly connect the return of the past to the uncanny, it is profitable to bring all of these areas together throughout this thesis in order to identify and interrogate recurring images, settings, characters and themes, and what past and present repressed Gothic horrors they stem from.

However, in taking a psychoanalytic approach, it is important for this thesis to acknowledge and engage with those critics who may take issue with such a methodology. For instance, many feminist critics have taken issue with the gendered implications of Freud's uncanny in particular. Creed has convincingly addressed these concerns by considering that 'the uncanny gaze also brings to light things that ought to have remained hidden about the nature of the male symbolic order', suggesting that the gendered framework of the castration complex is not instinctual and inevitable as seems to be the case in Freud's work, but rather that it is indicative of the anxieties of a patriarchal society.[29] More importantly for this thesis, though, Xavier Aldana Reyes criticises previous applications of psychoanalysis to the horror genre because they do not convincingly account for the 'affect' of horror. He argues that 'because psychoanalysis is invested in totemic understandings […] and is often connected to abstract notions related to the mind or to social-organisational principles, it has been perceived as an "acorporeal" critical approach'.[30] According to this school of thought psychoanalysis is thus particularly unsatisfactory in approaching scenes of mutilation and torture, and these are frequent in Nazi horror films such as *Frankenstein's Army* (Richard Raaphorst, 2013). A potential solution offered to this problem by Aldana Reyes is a psychosomatic approach, one in which it is possible, and useful, to 'refer to both somatic responses and emotions (of varying complexity) as affects and to their study as Affect Studies', whereby 'psychosomatic' refers more broadly to the relationship between mind and body.[31] Applying some of the framework of Affect Studies to Nazi horror thus acknowledges that there can be different sources of horror within the subgenre, and that these may affect the viewer on different levels and in different ways, such as through somatic empathy with characters onscreen.

Moreover, understandings from Affect Studies inform approaches to matters of audience in respect of the Nazi horror film. For example, Aldana Reyes prioritises the term

[29] Creed, p. 27.
[30] Xavier Aldana Reyes, *Horror Film and Affect: Towards a Corporeal Model of Viewership* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), p. 28.
[31] Ibid., p. 6.

'viewer' as one 'intended to acknowledge the flexibility of disposition of the varied subjects that constitute the public for Horror as well as the fact that genre filmmakers often have a target audience in mind'.[32] Later revisiting the issue of the viewer and audience, he then argues that affect 'can potentially be applied successfully in Audience Studies and create an important bridge between the critic, the occasional viewer and the fan'.[33] So too does this thesis acknowledge not only the position of the audience but the many varied viewers this may include, especially in a generic-hybrid such as Nazi horror which may attract viewers interested in horror, representation of the Second World War, both or neither. Yet I also follow the example set by Aldana Reyes in largely considering these viewers in the theoretical sense rather than in conducting surveys and interviews of actual audiences. This is because when considering Nazi horror, a critically under-investigated subgenre, the interpretation of the Nazi monster having a psychosomatic affect on an audience as borne out by my own reading is significant in and of itself.

Kristevan Abjection

It is significant for this thesis that while Aldana Reyes is largely critical of psychoanalytic approaches, he does focus on the way in which one of psychoanalysis's 'main applications to Horror, the notion of abjection […] has become crucial to the genre and its interest in issues of corporeal representation', as this shift towards abjection is an important element of my methodology.[34] Julia Kristeva defines the abject as 'one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside'.[35] Her work on abjection is highly focused on affect and the body, for she describes the reaction to the abject as 'a gagging sensation and, still farther down, spasms in the stomach, the belly; and all the organs shrivel up the body, provoke tears and bile, increase heartbeat, cause forehead and hands to perspire'.[36] Here she is referring to the specific example of a reaction to the skin which forms on milk, but it is important to note that what makes this skin fundamentally abject is 'not lack of cleanliness or health […] but what disturbs identity, system, order'.[37] While Aldana Reyes separates abjection from psychoanalysis, Kristeva's description here suggests to me that this is not necessary, for

[32] Ibid., p. 19.
[33] Ibid., p. 119.
[34] Ibid., p. 28.
[35] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 1.
[36] Ibid., pp. 2-3.
[37] Ibid., p. 4.

even within the framework of psychoanalysis abjection can encompass both bodily and psychological (i.e. moral, philosophical) horror. The gagging and nausea we feel in response to the abject is an expulsion which protects us from what we are not, for the abject is no one object, but is that which is radically opposed to the self, threatening to break down all meaning. When confronted with the abject the very self is threatened and borders collapse.

Beyond the example of the skin which forms on milk, then, there are a number of abject phenomena which provide insight into the process of abjection and which this thesis will consider in relation to the Nazi monster. For instance, Kristeva provides further illustrations of the 'improper' and 'unclean', such as the corpse or 'a wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay'.[38] These bodily examples are grotesque because they are shed in order to continue living, the process of expulsion marking them as abject. This expunged matter is ambiguous and threatening as it cannot be entirely separated as object, nor reconciled with the subject, and such corpses, wounds and fluids are found throughout the horror genre. Similarly abject are those interactions with the body which collapse the distinction between the self and other, such as the processes of pregnancy and birth in which the mother and child are connected, or cannibalism which is abject due to the consumption of one body into another. The latter becomes particularly important in the horror genre in which the consumption of flesh is frequently depicted, and Nazi horror includes cults, demons, zombies, werewolves and vampires who all hunger for humans. Indeed, Kristeva identifies the abjection of crime more broadly, though specifically crime which is perceived to be 'immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady', and so any monster with ill intent may come to be abject.[39] In all of these instances, then, there is a border between the self and the other which is threatened, and abjection is the process through which the 'body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border'.[40] Moreover, all of these examples have come to be recognised as abject not necessarily on an individual and instinctual level but as marked out by particular societies and cultures, including through the use of religion and taboos. The action of marking out and expelling the abject is never fully complete, for the abject continues to threaten the subject and society, requiring constant expulsion. Identifying such borders and processes of abjection will be central to understanding how and why Nazi horror recurs.

[38] Ibid., p. 3.
[39] Ibid., p. 4.
[40] Ibid., p. 3.

In a similar way to the uncanny, then, the abject is a fruitful perspective from which to consider *visual* culture. Kristeva herself puts heavy emphasis on the literary, using the work of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, James Joyce and Louis-Ferdinand Céline amongst others to illustrate the abject. Yet abjection is graphic and visceral, a response particularly to images of a horrific nature. Indeed, when introducing the concept Kristeva uses a discourse of the visual, describing a feeling of abjection 'when the eyes see' the skin on milk or when corpses '*show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live' [emphasis in original text].[41] Thus, with such a focus on the visual, the body and death, it is unsurprising that abjection has been used especially frequently when considering horror films. Aldana Reyes focuses on this visuality and argues that 'it is the encounter with these specific images in the context of Horror, where they are often presented to affect viewers, which leads to the moment of fictional abjection: a form of fear close to disgust (but not synonymous with it) and which is premised on the vulnerability of the body'.[42] Aldana Reyes' argument here follows the seminal work of Creed, who sees the abject in the horror film not just in these images which 'construct a border between what Kristeva refers to as "the clean and proper body" and the abject body, or the body which has lost its form and integrity', but also in the monster.[43] As Creed argues, 'although the specific nature of the border changes from film to film', the monster is always 'that which crosses or threatens to cross the "border"', an embodiment of its abject collapse.[44] Such an argument returns us to Wood, who when outlining his 'basic formula' for the horror film notes that it contains 'three variables'; normality, the monster, and crucially both for Wood and here, in terms of abjection, the relationship between the two. By threatening the border and normality the Nazi monster therefore embodies a particular fear, puts at risk a certain border and the collapse of a certain order. We can correspondingly use the theory of abjection better to understand what exactly the Nazi monster is threatening.

The Uncanny-Abject Spectrum

I would not agree with Aldana Reyes that when considering horror which emphasises the corporeal other psychoanalytic concepts such as the uncanny should be rejected in favour of abjection, for these concepts can be profitably connected. It should be noted that although this thesis brings the work of Freud and Kristeva together, their relationship

[41] Ibid., pp. 2-3.
[42] Aldana Reyes, p. 58.
[43] Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 11.
[44] Ibid.

within the history of psychoanalysis is complicated. Kristeva's work is not only post-Freudian, but also influenced by the work of Jacques Lacan, and so conforms to and diverges from Freud's work in increasingly complex ways. In particular, conceptions of the self have continued to develop within psychoanalysis with a basis in science which was not available to Freud. In this instance, though, the uncanny and abjection can both be used to theorise individual and societal boundaries and repressed anxieties, particularly as expressed through artistic works such as literature and film, and so are not necessarily incompatible in school of thought and application. More than this, in the instance of the uncanny and the abject I would argue not only that the two concepts are compatible but that they are intertwined and even inseparable. This argument is rooted in the work of Kristeva herself, who explicitly connects the abject to the uncanny by defining the abject as 'a massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome'.[45] This suggests that abjection is similar to the uncanny, even born out of it, but to the degree that we can no longer recognise the familiar, which is reduced to the other, to the unfamiliar. With respect to this, Kristeva goes on to argue that 'essentially different from "uncanniness," more violent, too, abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory'.[46] Again, the emphasis is that abjection is more violent, and that nothing is familiar, but what Kristeva writes nevertheless suggests different and potentially conflicting relationships with the uncanny. It is significant that the uncanny is also difficult to define, in that, as Freud articulates, 'it is undoubtedly related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror; equally certainly, too, the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general'.[47] The uncanny and the abject are, therefore, two elusive and complex psychoanalytic concepts, the overlap of which has been hinted at but which I would argue needs to be clarified. While those such as Aldana Reyes favour abjection for its corporeal aspects, it may actually be difficult to speak of the abject without also referring to the uncanny, and this has implications for the psychosomatic reading of horror I undertake in this thesis.

One particularly powerful example of the blurring between the uncanny and the abject is the corpse. The corpse is mentioned by Freud and expanded upon by Royle

[45] Kristeva, p. 2.
[46] Ibid., p. 5.
[47] Freud, p. 339.

apropos of the uncanny, in that the uncanny 'can be a matter of something gruesome or terrible, above all death and corpses, cannibalism, live burial, the return of the dead'.[48] For these theorists the corpse is the pinnacle of being both familiar, resembling the person it was before, yet unfamiliar having been transformed by death. Yet the corpse is also the pinnacle of abjection; 'the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything' and which embodies that which must be rejected to allow life to prevail.[49] For Kristeva the corpse is radically separate and no longer familiar, and so this example compounds the blurring between the two theories. The uncanny focuses on the psychologically unsettling experience of viewing the corpse, while Kristeva describes the physiological experience. Perhaps, then, this is a way of illuminating the complex relationship between terror and horror, the uncanny and the abject, and instead of considering them to be distinct reveals them to be dual aspects of the psychosomatic. Such a concept could then also be applied to the likes of the reanimation of corpses, which uncannily return from the dead, and abjectly present the viewer with sickening waste. Similarly, the dual uncanny-abject can be extended to discussions of graphic horror such as amputation and loss of the eyes which both uncannily symbolise castration and abjectly make the inside of the body and its blood visible. All of these are found to be disturbingly uncanny, yet also nauseatingly abject, and are all present in the Nazi monster subgenre.

Such a relationship has been touched upon by others, but often in a brief manner which fails to suggest any serious repercussions for the psychoanalytic consideration of the horror film. For example, Anneleen Masschelein observes that the uncanny and the abject are often intertwined, and that 'by emphasizing the primitive, atavistic, and bodily roots of the uncanny and the abject, the concepts are often strategically used in defenses of […] popular or marginal genres by pointing out how they have always been a natural and, in fact, indispensable part of culture'.[50] Elsewhere she notes their similarly 'psychoanalytical, anthropological, and aesthetic perspective', viewing them as approaches which attempt 'to explain a similar phenomenon: how something disgusting in reality can be attractive in art'.[51] Yet I am not convinced that what is at stake in the Nazi horror subgenre is a defence of the horrific as natural or attractive, and the relationship between the two concepts is much deeper than this. Creed also links the two, but attempts to draw a clearer distinction

[48] Royle, p. 2.
[49] Kristeva, p. 3.
[50] Anneleen Masschelein, *The Unconcept: The Freudian Uncanny in Late-Twentieth-Century* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2011), p. 134.
[51] Ibid., p. 133.

between the uncanny gaze in which the spectator perceives something at once familiar and unfamiliar, and the abject gaze which she defines as the moment the spectator looks away in response to images of radically unfamiliar horror. Thus, for Creed the splatter film 'does not invoke an uncanny gaze because in the excess of blood and gore there is nothing that transforms from the familiar into the unfamiliar. Everything is unfamiliar. Excess is the enemy of the uncanny'.[52] While a useful reading with which to begin to consider the distinctions between the uncanny and the abject, this also exaggerates differences at the expense of similarities. Although it is possible to have an image which is uncanny but not abject and vice versa, often the two are linked, and the extent to which it is one or the other depends both on the image and the way in which the image is represented. Unmediated images of vomit can be identified as abject, shadowy representations of the double as uncanny, but there is a spectrum of the uncanny-abject which exists between these two extremes and which is revealing of different forms of repression.

Trauma Studies

To explore the uncanny-abject spectrum in more detail I will appeal to a last element in my methodology associated with the experience of horror, and particularly by the horror of World War Two: Trauma Studies. Kristeva describes another example of abjection which I would argue illuminates this further component: 'In the dark halls of the museum that is now what remains of Auschwitz, I see a heap of children's shoes, or something like that, something I have already seen elsewhere, under a Christmas tree, for instance, dolls I believe'.[53] Though we must acknowledge the specific historical and political context of Kristeva's perspective in which feelings about Nazism and the Holocaust would carry additional impact, it could nonetheless be argued that such images hold the potential for a similar effect in the 21st century. Of the potential effect, this analysis of the shoes as abject suggests the ways in which the same image could be related to the uncanny, revealing further the connection between the two concepts. This is because Kristeva suggests that the shoes are familiar to childhood and to a time before war, yet this context has become unfamiliar following the trauma of the Holocaust, which might be uncanny. However, Kristeva argues that it is unfamiliar to such an extent so as to be radically separate, impossible to conceive, and thus the image is abject. The same image is also relevant to

[52] Creed, *Phallic Panic*, p. 33.
[53] Kristeva, p. 4.

Trauma Studies, as many trauma theorists have focused at length on the Holocaust and the Second World War as traumatic events.

To expand upon the ways in which the psychoanalytic components of the uncanny, the abject and Trauma Studies are connected, Freud's 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' was published just one year after 'The Uncanny' and its subject is 'traumatic neurosis'.[54] In it, Freud suggests that 'dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright'.[55] Freud then continues this work in 'Moses and Monotheism' (1939), a further study which compares trauma with the history of the Jews and in which repetition and latency remain central, for:

> it may happen that a man who has experienced some frightful accident – a railway collision, for instance – leaves the scene of the event apparently uninjured. In the course of the next few weeks, however, he develops a number of severe psychical and motor symptoms which can only be traced to his shock, the concussion or whatever else it was. He now has a 'traumatic neurosis'.[56]

This thus leads to the trauma 'formula': 'Early trauma – defence – latency – outbreak of neurotic illness – partial return of the repressed'.[57] In his essay on the uncanny Freud also argues that 'whatever reminds us of this inner "compulsion to repeat" is perceived as uncanny', making trauma an uncanny return of the repressed.[58] Some have even observed the overlap of these different pieces of Freud's work and considered that they are themselves an uncanny product of trauma. For example, Albert Dickson views Freud's 'constant recapitulations and repetitions' in 'Moses and Monotheism' as a product of 'the circumstances of the book's composition: the long period – four years or more – during which it was being constantly revised, and the acute external difficulties of the final phase, with a succession of political disorders in Austria culminating in the Nazi occupation of Vienna and Freud's enforced migration to England'.[59] On this reading 'Moses and Monotheism' is a repetitive and fragmented account and product of trauma. Similarly, for Royle, Freud is 'trembling on the threshold of letting "Beyond the Pleasure Principle"

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[54] Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Angela Richards, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 269-338.
[55] Ibid., p. 282.
[56] Sigmund Freud, 'Moses and Monotheism' (1939), *The Origins of Religion: 'Totem and Taboo', 'Moses and Monotheism' and Other Works*, ed. by Albert Dickson, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 237-386, (p. 309).
[57] Ibid., p. 323.
[58] Ibid., p. 361.
[59] Albert Dickson, 'Moses and Monotheism', p. 241.

invade "The Uncanny"', and vice versa.[60] Freud thus offers an early definition of trauma which is intertwined with his other psychoanalytic theories.

Such work has laid the foundations for considerations of trauma ever since, and though scientific and psychiatric developments have included the recognition of post-traumatic stress disorder rather than 'traumatic neurosis', in many ways the definition and application of trauma theory has retained its central core. For example, a notable proponent of Trauma Studies, Cathy Caruth offers a definition of trauma in which:

> there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event.[61]

Here Caruth is building upon the earlier work of Freud, but maintains that belatedness and intrusive dreams are defining features of trauma. From this she develops the theory that trauma takes the form of recurring images, thoughts or behaviours, that these traumatic repetitions are intrusive and outside of one's control, that they are unwitting and unconscious, and that such trauma operates as a way to make sense of something which has not previously been understood. It is this conceptualisation of trauma which this thesis will employ as a form of textual understanding, identifying Nazism during the Second World War as a traumatic event, for such a theory begins to explain both how and why the Nazi has recurred in a 21st century horror subgenre. In particular, then, it will adapt Caruth's application of Trauma Studies as a critical framework to interpret modes of expression, for she is particularly interested in the 'voice' which cries out from the site of trauma.[62] Though both Caruth and others, such as Dominick LaCapra, focus primarily on literature and writing as a specific act of testimony, they also make reference to film at times.[63] The suggestion that trauma can be profitably considered through the analysis of artistic expression thus has implications for the analysis of the Nazi horror subgenre.

The question this immediately poses, though, is whose trauma one can refer to. Both Freud and Caruth begin by focusing on a hypothetical individual, one who has

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[60] Royle, p. 90.
[61] Cathy Caruth, 'Introduction', in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 3-12 (p. 4).
[62] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, 20th Anniversary edn (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2016).
[63] Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Memory* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2001).

experienced the traumatic event first-hand. This thesis, however, considers a transnational body of contemporary films and refers to both their production and reception. It is unlikely, then, that many who make or view these films were directly involved in the Second World War, and each will have a different relationship with its events depending on their nationality, religion, race, gender, and their specific family history, to name just a few factors. In this instance, although trauma has not resulted from the lived experience of the Second World War itself, and nor can this be considered trauma due to the Second World War being experienced 'too soon, too unexpectedly' which for Caruth is often the cause of trauma, it is instead the 'overwhelming' scale which leads me to consider it as a traumatic event even as viewed from the 21st century.[64] Moreover, the possibility of expressing and understanding trauma through film is considered by Caruth when she turns her attention to *Hiroshima mon amour* (Alain Resnais, 1959), as she concludes that 'a new mode of seeing and of listening – a seeing and a listening *from the site of trauma* – is opened up to us as spectators of the film, and offered as the very possibility, in a catastrophic era, of a link between cultures'.[65] Similarly, LaCapra suggests that it would be 'misguided to see trauma as a purely psychological or individual phenomenon. It has crucial connections to social and political conditions and can only be understood and engaged with respect to them'.[66] Film can thus offer a vehicle for expressing and listening to trauma far beyond the event itself, and it can do so in a number of ways. This may be through the use of techniques such as flashbacks to abject horrors or uncannily repetitive motifs to engage with the trauma of the filmmakers or of the audience, and this may at times be associated with specific characters within the films experiencing trauma or associated with a nation's experience of events more widely making it a particular 'national trauma'. Accordingly this thesis will consider that the trauma of Nazi horror can be experienced and conveyed on a number of levels, from the individual to the nationally specific to the transcultural, from filmmaker to within the film to within the audience.

An application of Trauma Studies to the Nazi horror subgenre in this manner is one buoyed by the many critics and theorists who, following Caruth's work, have applied its theories to cinema. Linnie Blake, for example, explicitly connects trauma and horror as she reads 'both Trauma Studies and the trauma-raddled and wound-obsessed genre that is horror cinema' as 'profoundly concerned with the socio-cultural and psychological

[64] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 4.
[65] Ibid., p. 58.
[66] LaCapra, p. xi.

ramifications of trauma'.[67] More than this, although she does not then choose to focus on such psychoanalytic terms, she argues that 'the ways in which popular culture since the 1960s has repeatedly returned to narratives that privilege both the abject and the uncanny as core signifiers of traumatic historical events' have been neglected.[68] Blake thus positions her study as 'a response to the longstanding occlusion of popular cultural forms (specifically those such as horror cinema that are generically driven by the abject and the uncanny) from contemporary theorisations of the cultural legacy of trauma'.[69] This statement begins to connect the psychosomatic aspects of horror, which I have particularly identified in terms of the uncanny and the abject, with the experience of trauma in film. Indeed, what can be termed the uncanny-abject spectrum could be understood variously as a way of recreating trauma, of addressing trauma, or as a product of trauma itself. Blake goes on to address 'the ways in which the generic and sub-generic conventions of horror allow for a decoding of traumatic memories already encoded within the cultural, social, psychic and political life of the nation's inhabitants by shocking historical events'.[70] Correspondingly we might consider the sub-generic conventions of 21st century Nazi horror films and the ways in which they may be seen to enable a decoding of both past and more recent traumas, in relation to which Adam Lowenstein's concept of the 'allegorical moment' is also useful.[71] Lowenstein's understanding of allegory is indebted to that of Walter Benjamin, from whom he takes the position that historical representation, and particularly the image of death, have allegorical meaning as they 'unit[e] past and present in a volatile, momentary flash'.[72] For Lowenstein the allegorical moment is therefore the 'shocking collision of film, spectator, and history where registers of bodily space and historical time are disrupted, confronted, and intertwined'.[73] These previous studies of film and trauma therefore suggest that horror films may address not only those specific traumatic events to which they refer, but relate to further traumatic events throughout history, and this is an important possibility to explore through the Nazi horror subgenre.

Identifying the Contexts of Trauma Relevant to Nazi Horror

[67] Linnie Blake, *The Wounds of Nations: Horror Cinema, Historical Trauma and National Identity* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 2.
[68] Ibid., p. 3.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., p. 5.
[71] Adam Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).
[72] Ibid., p. 15
[73] Ibid., p. 2.

The work being done within Trauma Studies draws attention to the varying nature of traumatic events, ranging from the political to the social to the economic. Though much of the focus on trauma of the Second World War has been on the Holocaust, and understandably so, this marks a tendency to isolate the actions of the Nazis during the Second World War without acknowledging the importance of both the rise and fall of National Socialism within global politics. Of its rise, Nazism was not a sudden nor unprecedented movement, for it followed in the wake of the First World War with Germany's loss felt politically, socially and economically during the Weimar period. Though noting that the circumstances were more complex than can be conveyed in any short statement, Conan Fischer usefully summarises the relationship between the end of the First World War and the rise of the Second:

> The Weimar Republic […] became synonymous with national humiliation and confinement, and its liberal and democratic socialist aspirations were ultimately overwhelmed by a domestic opposition which took the 'shame' of the Versailles Treaty as its basic reference point. The National Socialists were the ultimate beneficiaries of Weimar's recurrent crises.[74]

As the term 'crises' suggests, Nazism was born of even longer cycles of conflict, instability and trauma. This also constitutes a longer history of socio-political crisis being explored through film, for Siegfried Kracauer suggested as early as 1947 when considering the conditions which led to the realisation of National Socialism that there 'runs a secret history involving the inner dispositions of the German people. The disclosure of these dispositions through the medium of the German screen may help in the understanding of Hitler's ascent and ascendancy'.[75] He examines both the thematic and aesthetic dimensions of German Expressionist cinema, and although the films of German Expressionism cannot be considered 'horror' in the same terms as the genre which has emerged since, some have argued that German Expressionist cinema provided a precursor for horror in its employment of disorientating camera angles, chiaroscuro lighting and an interest in monstrous figures which taps into the social anxieties of the time. Indeed, Caroline Joan Picart and David A. Frank have built upon the work of Kracauer to connect these previous filmic explorations of social anxiety to the realisation of National Socialism, suggesting that 'in appropriating German Expressionism, some of the earliest horror films used conflicted frames to represent evil and the monstrous', and so 'it is important to appreciate the connections that bind horror, Holocaust representation and Nazi imagery to the influence

[74] Conan Fischer, *Rise of the Nazis*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 1.
[75] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, ed. by Leonardo Quaresima (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 11.

of German Expressionism'.[76] This thesis thus also acknowledges the rise of National Socialism in addition to its realisation, and considers how this has continued to be grappled with in the 21st century.

Of the fall of National Socialism, its apparent demise versus its lasting legacy has been much discussed in recent years as Nazism has come to the fore of public discourse once again. For example, on August 25, 2017, Jonathan Freedland wrote an opinion piece for *The Guardian*, 'We thought the Nazi threat was dead. But Donald Trump has revived it'.[77] He wrote this in response to the events at Charlottesville, in which a 'Unite the Right' rally was held by the far right in defence of Civil War statues of Confederate soldiers, leading to the death of anti-racism activist Heather Heyer. More specifically, though, Freedland is writing here about US President Donald Trump's failure to condemn the blatant symbols of neo-Nazism at the rally. Rather than denounce the white nationalists, Trump not only argued that violence was carried out on 'many sides', but that those marching included many 'fine people'. Freedland therefore locates these events as a revival of the Nazi threat, an argument which rests on his assertion that:

> For 70 years, since the end of the Second World War, a consensus held across the democratic world that seemed so obvious it barely needed stating. It declared that some ideas are beyond the pale, that certain beliefs are taboo because they are unconscionable.[78]

Freedland therefore understands that until this point there has been a consensus that Nazism is an unconscionable ideology, but that this consensus has been broken by the open use of Nazi iconography such as the swastika and Hitler salute as seen at the Charlottesville protest. The article suggests that by failing to challenge such symbols it is Trump himself who has aided the breaking of this consensus, a move which adds to a presidential reign which for some had already become associated with Nazi and fascist ideologies due to an emphasis on hyper-nationalism and xenophobia. However, to put such emphasis on one person is to lose sight of a wider and even more troubling shift, for Trump's actions and speech are indicative of the far right views which many of his supporters endorse and had been circulating on the internet even before they were emboldened by a right wing President.

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[76] Caroline Joan Picart and David A. Frank, *Frames of Evil: The Holocaust as Horror in American Film* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006), p. 9.
[77] Jonathan Freedland, 'We Thought the Nazi Threat Was Dead. But Donald Trump Has Revived It', *The Guardian* (2017) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/aug/25/donald-trump-nazis-far-right-charlottesville> [accessed 7 February 2019].
[78] Ibid.

However, these recent political events have also provoked reflection on whether it is only now that the threat of Nazism can be said to have resurfaced. Shortly after Freedland's piece was published, another point of view was put forward in the same newspaper by Patrick McGrath on 'Why we have to cut off the head of fascism again and again'.[79] Unlike Freedland, McGrath recognises that the current rise of neo-Nazism in America is but one iteration of fascism, an ideology which has been seen time and again, even in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War when Oswald Mosley and former members of the British Union of Fascists took to London's streets with anti-Semitic messages. Furthermore, as Peter Davies and Derek Lynch's *The Routledge Companion to Fascism and the Far Right* points out, there are numerous definitions of fascism which can then be linked to countless political movements throughout history.[80] As they argue, 'some concerns emphasised by fascists were or are still shared by parties of the far right, and the boundary between the two is frequently difficult to define'.[81] Thus Nazism, neo-Nazism, fascism and far right politics are interconnected areas characterised by core nationalist ideologies, and these are not ideologies which have ever died. They remained evident in the immediate post-war setting, then in Universal National Socialism in the 1950s and 1960s, and for Davies and Lynch can be linked to Apartheid between 1948 and 1994, the history of the Ku Klux Klan, or the authoritarian regimes that led to mass killings in the 1990s in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda. Such violent movements as evidenced throughout the 20th century suggest that while Trump's America may have crystallised concerns surrounding Nazism, populist fascism often accompanied with neo-Nazi ideologies or symbolism has arguably been present to some degree throughout many periods of history all over the globe.

Indeed, even within the 21st century Trump's rise to power has been preceded by the efforts of the far right across Europe. Jason Lee, for example, also finds the current political climate a prescient introduction to his exploration of Nazism and neo-Nazism in film and media, and goes on to argue that 'the importance of Donald Trump's dominance through the media has been shown to indicate a unification of disparate fascist support

[79] Patrick McGrath, 'Why We Have to Cut Off the Head of Fascism Again and Again', *The Guardian* (2017) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/sep/08/fascism-must-be-resisted-wherever-it-raises-its-head> [accessed 7 February 2019].
[80] Peter Davies and Derek Lynch, *The Routledge Companion to Fascism and the Far Right* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
[81] Ibid., pp. 1-2. Though they continue to argue that in many instances this boundary can be defined, and this thesis has focused on images of explicit Nazism for precisely this reason, the connection between representations of Nazism and wider fascist ideologies remains important.

around the globe'.[82] This emphasises that, though Trump acts as a focus point, fascism extends beyond one individual, and beyond one country. Of note within these contemporary and widespread far right movements has been the rise of the Alt-Right (or 'Alternative Right'), a broad term for a collection of white nationalist groups marked out by their use of digital platforms. Though particularly dominant in the US, Andrew Jones notes that since 2014 the Alt-Right has seen a populist swell 'providing support for the election of Donald Trump and, through affiliates, the election of various Far-Right Eurosceptic parties across the EU'.[83] Indeed, I am writing from within the divisive setting of Brexit-Britain, a campaign which has been heralded by the UK Independence Party and has included frequent anti-immigrant rhetoric. This situation has followed the rise and fall of the British National Party in the earlier 2000s, notable not just for their xenophobic campaigns but their promotion of biological racism that can be classified as neo-Nazism, and also notable for being one of the most electorally successful far right groups Britain has seen. Far right parties elsewhere which have gained momentum in the 21st century include Alternative fur Deutschland, the Finns Party, Norway's Progress Party and Sweden Democrats, to name a few. Thus, the events at Charlottesville and Trump's response have been foreshadowed by a tumultuous political landscape in several Western countries in recent years, in which the division between the left and right has been exacerbated, if not always through the use of explicit Nazi symbols, then by the persistent and recurring fear of political ideologies that can be traced to fascist and Nazi political tenets. As McGrath summarises, 'fascism may at times seem to fade away but it does not die', a fitting rhetoric for what this thesis will establish as an undying subject of representation in the horror film.[84] The diagnostic approach of this thesis to media and society suggests that film is influenced by socio-political events and vice versa, and so the continuous representation of a Nazi threat on screen could be interpreted as a similarly persistent fear of Nazism in society.

This most recent rise of the far right has coincided with, and been connected to, a particular set of economic circumstances, which can be considered a traumatic context in and of itself explored throughout Nazi horror. In the 21st century this economic context is that of neoliberalism, a model enforced in the 1980s by figures such as Margaret Thatcher

[82] Jason Lee, *Nazism and Neo-Nazism in Film and Media* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), pp. 138-139.
[83] Andrew Jones, 'From NeoReactionary Theory to the Alt-Right', in *Critical Theory and the Humanities in the Age of the Alt-Right*, ed. by Christine M. Battista and Melissa R. Sande (Basingstoke, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 101-120 (p. 102).
[84] McGrath.

and Ronald Reagan which has persisted to the present day, advocating principles of free market capitalism and radical individualism at the expense of the humanitarian welfare state. Indeed, instead of leading to economic stability quite the opposite effect of these neoliberal principles has been observed to have taken place, with the global economic crash of 2008 being a prime example of its destructive and far-reaching consequences. This traumatic event exemplifies the power of neoliberalism, impacting near every aspect of everyday life, but especially perceptions of economic wealth versus deprivation and the role of the state versus the individual. As the films in question in this thesis were produced and received in the run-up to and aftermath of this crash, this is an important context to consider. Moreover, that these films have emerged within the horror genre is significant, for just as Blake has connected trauma to horror, so too has she connected neoliberalism to the Gothic in a volume edited with Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet. They suggest that, 'as neo-liberalism has come to dominate the ways we live, work, think, interact and introspect, harnessing the epistemological incertitude of the post-modern project in service of its aims, the gothic's ability to give voice to the occluded truths of our age has resulted in a global proliferation of gothic, and gothic-inflected, cultural artefacts'.[85] They thus identify the rise of the neoliberal Gothic, within which a similar type of 'cultural work' is carried out as in those films Blake discusses in relation to trauma more broadly, and so too will this thesis consider horror as undertaking cultural work on the particular and unstable socio-economic conditions of the 21st century.

Moreover, work connecting monsters, psychoanalysis and socio-economic contexts has provided a precedent for a consideration of Nazi horror in the same terms. For example, Japhy Wilson also draws the Gothic and neoliberalism together, arguing 'against orthodox Marxist analysis, which reduces Frankenstein, Dracula and zombie hordes to fetishized representations of class relations' and instead 'for a psychoanalytic critique of ideology […] which diagnoses neoliberalism as an anxious form of crisis management, which evolves through its failed attempts to conceal its repressed knowledge of the Real of Capital'.[86] Thus, although analysis of class and economic circumstances has proliferated in the Gothic, that Nazi horror has seen a resurgence in the 21st century in particular suggests a need to move beyond simplistic Marxist frameworks towards recognising the increasing

[85] Linnie Blake and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, 'Introduction: Neoliberal Gothic', in *Neoliberal Gothic: International Gothic in the Neoliberal Age*, ed. by Linnie Blake and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 1-18 (p. 1).
[86] Japhy Wilson, 'Neoliberal Gothic', in *The Handbook of Neoliberalism*, ed. by Simon Springer, Kean Birch and Julie MacLeavy (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 592-602 (p. 593).

ambiguity of the neoliberal era. That this ambiguity is a source of crisis and anxiety demonstrates the usefulness of trauma theory and psychoanalysis in understanding how and why these fears are explored in the horror genre. As suggested, these conditions are not distinct from the political, but rather have become increasingly tied together. As Neil Davidson and Richard Saull argue, within the neoliberal context:

> the far-right plays two roles. On the one hand, it articulates angry, resentful grievances across a range of social layers in response to the transformations, instabilities and dislocations of neoliberalism […] On the other hand, it is an important agent of populist insurgency that has come to provide an important democratic and popular veneer to the transformations wrought by neoliberalism and, in particular, the reconfiguration if not actual dismantling of the embedded welfare states that emerged across (Western) Europe after 1945.[87]

The relationship between the far right and neoliberalism is equally ambiguous, then, and at times even contradictory. That Nazi horror has proliferated in contemporary neoliberal and politically divided societies reinforces the suggestion that this is an increasingly pressing concern, and so this thesis will consider a wide range of socio-political contexts in its attempt to understand the renewed rise of the Nazi monster.

Uncovering the Meaning and Purpose of Nazi Horror

Ultimately, then, by bringing together these three psychoanalytic components and considering the ways in which they have previously been applied to cinema and to the horror genre, I will argue that the Nazi monster is powerful and recurrent due to its uncanny-abject nature and its relationship with trauma. What exactly makes it uncanny and abject, and how it complicates the heretofore separation of these theories, will be at stake. Furthermore, what traumas it may be connected to and how it processes this trauma will be vital. It is through this last question that I will ultimately consider the meaning and effect of the Nazi monster, for as Caruth argues, Trauma Studies opens up 'a perspective on the ways in which trauma can make possible survival […] through the different modes of therapeutic, literary, and pedagogical encounter'.[88] This optimistic view emphasises the curative potential of Trauma Studies, yet Caruth also considers 'the danger, as some have put it, of the trauma's "contagion", of the traumatization of the ones who listen'.[89] Wood also stresses that the horror genre's relationship with the socio-political has the potential

[87] Neil Davidson and Richard Saull, 'Neoliberalism and the Far-Right: A Contradictory Embrace', *Critical Sociology*, 43(4-5) (2016), 707-724 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920516671180> (p. 708).
[88] Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, p. 10.
[89] Ibid. Here Caruth takes the term 'contagion' from Lenore Terr, 'Remembered Images and Trauma: A Psychology of the Supernatural', *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 40 (1985), 493-533.

to be progressive and radical, while noting that 'it is obvious enough that this potential is never free from ambiguity. The genre carries within itself the capability of reactionary inflection, and perhaps no horror film is entirely immune from its operations'.[90] Horror is fascinating precisely because of such ambiguity. Thus, the Nazi horror subgenre articulates a complex form which is constantly mediating the progressive and reactionary and the therapeutic and dangerous, as well as the abject and uncanny. It is through this breaking down of binary oppositions that a previously neglected subgenre may shed light on a number of well-established psychoanalytic theories and suggest a new way of bringing them together to consider other closely related subgenres and monsters.

[90] Wood, p. 215.

CHAPTER ONE – NAZISM AND THE OCCULT

Introduction

While my understanding of the term 'monster' in this thesis is not necessarily defined by supernatural monstrosity, as the Nazi can be of inhuman or human bodily form, capable of either paranormal or scientific crimes, it is often the case that the Nazi monster as seen in 21st century horror films is of supernatural origins. One reason for this common emphasis on the supernatural may be that the connection between Nazism and the occult has been subject to much speculation, and that it continues to be explored by scholars and filmmakers alike indicates that this is an area of (at times pseudo-) history that continues to fascinate. Indeed, scholars such as Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke have approached the connection between Nazism and the occult from a historical perspective, seeking to understand 'the myths, symbols and fantasies that bear on the development of reactionary, authoritarian, and Nazi styles of thinking'.[1] The Nazi relation to the occult is also the focus of Eric Kurlander's recent monograph *Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich,* within which Kurlander argues that 'without understanding the relationship between Nazism and the supernatural, one cannot fully understand the history of the Third Reich'.[2] Nor is this the first time Kurlander has explored this area, having previously edited the volume *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult': Histories, Realities, Legacies* with Monica Black.[3] Such scholarly works are useful in clarifying the actual historical links between Nazism and the occult as opposed to what may be unverified or incorrect and why these connections emerged. They therefore also benefit an understanding of how the Nazis' fascination with the occult has been remembered, and in particular the way in which the Nazi occult has been remembered as sufficiently significant so as to be the thematic basis of many Nazi horror films. Yet, as the use of quotation marks in the title *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult'* indicates, the concept of the 'Nazi occult' is a contested and constructed one which requires further consideration.

Defining the 'Nazi Occult'

To begin, the occult itself is a difficult term to define, overlapping as it does with philosophy, religion, esoterism and science. For example, the *Oxford English Dictionary*

[1] Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), p. 1.
[2] Eric Kurlander, *Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2017), p. xi.
[3] Monica Black and Eric Kurlander, eds, *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult': Histories, Realities, Legacies* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015).

defines the occult as 'the realm of the unknown; the supernatural world or its influences', a broad definition which does little to clarify what precisely constitutes the occult as represented in 21st century Nazi horror.[4] A more specific concept is offered by Carrol Lee Fry who connects New Religious Movements such as Wicca, Spiritualism and Satanism to occultism in his monograph, *Cinema of the Occult: New Age, Satanism, Wicca and Spiritualism in Film*, one of the few works to take the representation of the occult in film as its focus. In it he chooses to focus on representations of these occult religions over those films which 'meet the definition of occult only in the most general terms—the portrayal of supernatural events as opposed to religious practices'.[5] Such a definition is certainly useful in stressing the important role of religion in occultism, but I would argue is too limiting when considering Nazi horror. This is because while some Nazi horror films explicitly refer to the occult in their marketing, plot or dialogue, the same films do not always have an equally explicit and specific reference to religion, suggesting that religion is not an essential feature of the Nazis' beliefs in the occult. However, as Fry indicates, some exclusions when defining the occult are necessary. For example, Fry chooses not to 'address films with occult characters from legend, such as vampires or werewolves', and I too find this a useful distinction to make as regards 21st century Nazi horror, reserving discussion of such supernatural monsters for the following chapter in order to allow a more nuanced consideration of their history and themes.[6]

The distinction between occultism and a broader definition of the supernatural is an important one. For instance, Kurlander suggests that the supernatural includes 'border sciences' such as astrology, graphology, mediumism, and '"miracle" technologies'.[7] According to this line of thought, the supernatural may refer to either pseudo-science or

[4] 'Occult, n.', in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd edn (2004) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/130166?rskey=t9QEFY&result=1#eid> [accessed 4 March 2019]. Such a broad definition seems to inflect the work of James J. Ward, who refers to *The Bunker* (Rob Green, 2001) and argues that it is 'more of a study in fear, claustrophobia, and paranoia than an essay in the occult. Still, its allusions to supernatural forces and to vengeance exacted over an unspecified, but presumably wide, arc of historical time place it among Nazi occult films', 'Nazis on the Moon! Nazis under the Polar Ice Cap! And Other Recent Episodes of the Strange Cinematic Afterlife of the Third Reich', in *Horrors of War: The Undead on the Battlefield*, ed. by Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), pp. 53-73 (p. 59). Yet it is for this same reason that I do not consider *The Bunker* in any detail, for not only is it unclear whether the supernatural is at work, but even if it were it would be a very broad sense of the supernatural rather than a specific concept of the 'Nazi occult'.

[5] Carrol Lee Fry, *Cinema of the Occult: New Age, Satanism, Wicca and Spiritualism in Film* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2008), p. 13.

[6] Ibid., p. 26.

[7] Kurlander, p. xv.

the occult, as these are two different, but not necessarily opposing, sources of the supernatural. Kurlander finds these branches of the border sciences to be essential to a discussion of Nazism, and consequently chooses to discuss the 'supernatural imaginary' more broadly, rather than solely with respect to the occult.[8] However, for the purposes of this thesis I would again argue that a discussion of the Nazis' interest in the occult can, and should, be separated from such other closely related concepts. Thus, although I will inevitably touch on Nazi science briefly in this chapter due to it being intertwined with the occult in the supernatural imaginary, by reserving a sustained analysis of Nazi science for Chapter Three the subject can be considered in more depth, in terms not only of its links to the occult but also its own history and themes such as human experimentation and war-time machinery. Ultimately, Kurlander puts forward a definition of the occult which excludes certain elements, yet his understanding is broader than Fry's, as he argues 'under the rubric of occultism we might include a broad range of practices (astrology, clairvoyance, divining, parapsychology, etc.), beliefs (witchcraft, demonology), and syncretic doctrines that share elements of both (Theosophy, Anthroposophy, Ariosophy)'.[9] These are further potential markers to look for in order to recognise and define the 'Nazi occult' as facets of the Nazis' interest in occult powers.

It is therefore useful to bring together these strands of theory on the occult, its relation to film, and its relation to Nazism, in order to consider 21st century horror. This is a natural progression as these areas of scholarly debate have already begun to overlap. Kurlander's largely historical approach begins with a consideration of *Captain America: The First Avenger* (Joe Johnston, 2011), demonstrating that such texts are of interest to scholars investigating perceptions of the Nazis' interest in the occult. Similarly, Fry argues that 'one need look no further for a preliminary example of a successful film adaptation of the occult' than the 'Indiana Jones' series, including *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Steven Spielberg, 1981) and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Steven Spielberg, 1989) with their depictions of Nazi villains pursuing occult powers.[10] As these two examples of scholarly introductions suggest, filmic representations of the Nazis' interest in the occult are equally valuable both to historical studies of the Nazis and to studies of the occult more broadly as seen in film.

[8] For Kurlander, the supernatural imaginary refers to 'the vast reservoir of supernatural thinking' and is modelled to an extent on Charles Taylor's concept of the 'social imaginary', with the emphasis that it is a way of thinking widely shared within a society, but with the distinction that the supernatural was reframed rather than expelled by society during the Second World War, pp. xvi-xvii.
[9] Ibid., p. xv.
[10] Fry, p. 18.

Furthermore, in their edited volume Black and Kurlander include contributions on the Nazis' interest in the occult as portrayed in video games, mass media, and popular music. This work is particularly pertinent to this chapter, as Black and Kurlander state that their focus is not the occult roots of Nazism, identifying instead a gap in the literature regarding 'possible connections to be drawn between Nazism and occultism after 1945'. [11] Thus, by progressing from a section titled 'Histories' to a section on 'Legacies', Black and Kurlander establish a goal which I emulate: to connect an understanding of how and why the occult and Nazism have historically been associated with their representation in the 21st century. Yet in none of the works that I have mentioned here has there been a detailed or sustained analysis of the representation of Nazis using occult powers in film, nor an identification of the occult as used by Nazis in horror film, the horror genre being especially well-positioned to consider not just the fascination with, but the fears and anxieties surrounding, the Nazis' interest in the occult. It is therefore important to bring together the work of Fry, Kurlander and Black in order to consider how the history of the occult, the history of Nazism, and the legacy of both intersect in the horror genre.

While it is a valuable exercise to interrogate such works in order to recognise both central themes and potential exclusions when identifying the occult, a consideration of the 'Nazi occult' should then be built upon by turning to the 21st century Nazi horror films themselves, and in particular by looking to their recurring monsters. For instance, the films are populated with monstrous god-men and/or deranged cults in *Fantacide* (Shane Mather, 2007), *Ratline* (Eric Stanze, 2009) and *Soldiers of the Damned* (Mark Nuttall, 2015). Films such as *Hellboy* (Guillermo del Toro, 2004) and *The Devil's Rock* (Paul Campion, 2011) consciously invoke the term 'occult' and connect it to a persistent fear of demons and witchcraft. Lastly, within witchcraft there is a particular connection which arises between Nazism and necromancy, a complex concept within black magic which is evoked in *Unholy* (Daryl Goldberg, 2007), and especially as regards re-animating the dead in *Blood Creek* (Joel Schumacher, 2009) and the *Puppet Master* series (1989 - 2018). These are therefore the three areas around which my analysis of the occult as represented in Nazi horror is structured, and through which the loose term 'Nazi occult' becomes more specific and useful as a shorthand for the Nazis' actual interest in, supposed use of, and perceived connection to occult concepts such as these. It should be noted that these areas are not

[11] Monica Black and Eric Kurlander, 'Introduction', in *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult': Histories, Realities, Legacies*, ed. by Monica Black and Eric Kurlander (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015), pp. 1-19 (p. 1).

entirely distinct, with many films featuring aspects of more than one category. Moreover, as Peter Hutchings argues, 'any approach to monsterdom that seeks to marginalise or efface […] differences in the interests of producing a neat cohesive model of the monster's meaning can lead us […] to an overly simplistic view of the horror genre'.[12] However, by considering these monsters in turn I would argue that we can understand better the reason such images of the Nazis using the occult continue to recur in the 21st century. All pertain to the racist ideology of the Nazis and the power of the State more broadly, but each monster has their own specific basis in historical actuality, and as such different monsters reveal different emphases on the role of race, gender and the family, amongst others.

Analysing the Nazi Occult: The Uncanny, Abjection and Trauma

I would argue that the underlying meaning of the occult as represented in the horror film can be profitably approached using psychoanalytic concepts such as the uncanny. With respect to this, though Fry takes a broad Cultural Studies approach to consider the relationship between occult cinema and society, he goes into great detail considering definitions of the occult both academic and popular which focus on its 'hidden' nature. As Fry summarises, 'most definitions of the occult use either the word "hidden" or cognates and assume the necessity for some kind of special training or special gift in order to perceive or practice it'.[13] Though a rare usage, one definition of the word occult is indeed 'a hidden or secret thing', while the verb form is defined as 'to hide, conceal; to cut off from view by interposing something'.[14] Thus, although Fry does not use the language or theory of the uncanny it seems nevertheless relevant, as for Sigmund Freud a central tenet of the uncanny is that 'everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light'.[15] The occult may therefore be considered one such realm which should remain secret but which has returned, and the Nazis' interest in the occult more so, for though the supernatural is arguably that which is incomprehensible and unharnessable, it inspires some to believe that they can wield it; whether they can harness it or they unleash an unharnessable power, it is precisely this dangerous power which the 21st century Nazi horror film explores.

[12] Peter Hutchings, *The Horror Film* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 39.
[13] Fry, p. 13.
[14] 'Occult, v.', in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd edn (2004) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/130167?rskey=3QxSr8&result=2#eid> [accessed 4 March 2019].
[15] Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' (1919), in *Art and Literature*, ed. by Albert Dickson, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1985), pp. 335-376 (p. 345).

Moreover, the occult may be linked to the uncanny as Freud counts 'animism, magic and sorcery' amongst those things which 'turn something frightening into something uncanny'.[16] He discusses the supernatural further when he turns his attention to the fear of the omnipotence of thoughts, and again later when he refers to the fear of ghosts and the dead which are linked to an animistic view of the world. For Freud, such fears are:

> characterized by the idea that the world was peopled with the spirits of human beings […] by the belief in the omnipotence of thoughts and the technique of magic based on that belief; by the attribution to various outside persons and things of carefully graded magical powers, or '*mana*'; as well as by all the other creations with the help of which man, in the unrestricted narcissism of that stage of development, strove to fend off the manifest prohibitions of reality.[17]

This is a significant aspect of the supernatural uncanny which resonates with representations of the Nazis' pursuit of the occult in two ways. The first relates to the Nazis' own use of the occult, which could thus be framed as a re-emergence of archaic thinking as a way to address what they perceived to be a troubling social and political reality, and which we can now view as one outlet of their traumatic actions. The second aspect, though, is how the Nazis are viewed from the context of the 21st century, in which fascination with their use of occult ideas is no longer just literal but also in itself a turn to the occult to understand the trauma which the Nazis inflicted. Furthermore, Nicholas Royle builds upon Freud's work by explicitly linking the uncanny and the supernatural, as 'the uncanny is ghostly. It is concerned with the strange, weird and mysterious, with a flickering sense (but not conviction) of something supernatural'.[18] That Royle suggests the supernatural must be hinted at, not confirmed, may seem at odds with my reading of the Nazi horror film as uncanny, for these are films which explicitly depict supernatural monsters. Yet these are fictional films with varying relationships to historical actuality, and so the supernatural on our screens occupies an ambiguous space intended to question the presence of the supernatural in reality; arguably this is part of the threat which such horror relies upon. It is therefore important to consider how Nazism may have been connected to the occult in 21st century Nazi horror films, as the return of the occult realm and of animistic beliefs may also signal the return of other repressed fears.

In the uncanny experience of the ancient supernatural returned in the modern, the liminal experience of the hidden coming to light, we may also understand the ways in

[16] Ibid., p. 365.
[17] Ibid., pp. 362-363.
[18] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 1.

which the Nazis' pursuit of the occult can be considered as being abject. Liminality is a product of blurred dichotomies and borders, and Julia Kristeva notes that this is where abjection is produced, for abjection confronts 'the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border'.[19] Furthermore, Barbara Creed applies Kristeva's theory of abjection to the horror film and also focuses on the ways in which abjection and the monstrous are produced at borders, key examples of which she argues are the borders 'between the normal and supernatural, good and evil'.[20] Significantly, the films to which Creed connects this supernatural type of abjection are *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973), *The Omen* (Richard Donner, 1976) and *Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968), all of which engage with occult themes such as demonic possession and witchcraft. Not only this, but there is also a bodily aspect to occult practices which are transgressive by nature. Kristeva notes that the corpse is the pinnacle of abjection, for 'the corpse […], that which has irremediably come a cropper, is cesspool, and death', and so it is significant that in filmic representations the Nazis' use of the occult often creates and/or reanimates such abject corpses through its magical practices.[21] Similarly, those practising black magic, or the monsters that they create, often consume human flesh, a consumption which is related to abjection as Kristeva argues, 'I give up cannibalism because abjection (of the mother) leads me toward respect for the body of the other, my fellow man, my brother'.[22] Images of cannibalism thus signal the breakdown of respect for and separation between bodies, transgressing the border between self and other. The Nazi occult film therefore prompts an abject response of at once fascination with and rejection of its images of Nazism through the use of the supernatural and bodily transgression, perhaps beginning to explain why this aspect of history finds representation in the horror genre.

As to why the Nazi occult is a significant source of horror in the 21st century, in this chapter I will argue that representations of the Nazi occult can be analysed using the uncanny and abject to uncover what traumas are being negotiated, the horror genre being for Linnie Blake 'profoundly concerned with the socio-cultural and psychological

[19] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 3.
[20] Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 11.
[21] Kristeva, p. 3.
[22] Ibid., p. 79.

ramifications of trauma'.[23] Firstly, this may be the historical trauma of the Nazi occult itself, for as Goodrick-Clarke makes clear, the Nazi occult was not separate from the Nazi ideology, but rather Nazi occultists 'anticipated the political doctrines and institutions of the Third Reich'.[24] Moreover, being related to the trauma of a previous harmful ideology, it is important to consider that the Nazi occult in 21st century film may also negotiate more recent political and cultural traumas which have come to be related to or represented by Nazi occult horror films. Lastly, some research suggests that there is a close link between the representation of and interest in the supernatural and the nature of trauma itself. For example, although not the primary focus of her chapter in *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult': Histories, Realities, Legacies*, Anna Lux draws on popular culture, entertainment studies and the work of Annette Hill to conclude that 'engagement in paranormal matters is a response to anxiety and uncertainty, allowing for a possibility to play with ideas of mortality, death, and afterlife, or to deal with both individual and national trauma'.[25] Lux thus connects this reading of the supernatural and trauma to the Second World War as one such period of anxiety, and, as discussed in relation to the uncanny, locates interest in the occult during this time as a possible response to uncertainty. Such an argument suggests not only that the connection between Nazism and occultism in the Nazi horror film draws upon potentially traumatic events and ideologies, but also that the connection between the two in contemporary media may be a way of working through trauma more broadly. As I will argue, both of these aspects are attested to by the 21st century horror films I have identified as depicting Nazi occult figures, epitomised in monsters such as cult members, god-men, demons, witches and necromancers around which the films revolve.

Cults and God-men

Ariosophy and the Rise of National Socialism

Firstly, the connection between Nazism, the occult, god-men and cults can be traced to the political upheaval and resulting belief systems within German culture around the emergence of the Second World War. As Goodrick-Clarke explains, the rise of National

[23] Linnie Blake, *The Wounds of Nations: Horror Cinema, Historical Trauma and National Identity* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 2.
[24] Goodrick-Clarke, p. 1.
[25] Anna Lux, 'On All Channels: Hans Bender, the Supernatural, and the Mass Media', in *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult': Histories, Realities, Legacies,* ed. by Monica Black and Eric Kurlander (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015), pp. 223-247 (p. 224), drawing on Annette Hill, *Paranormal Media: Audiences, Spirits and Magic in Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 2011).

Socialism was connected to Ariosophy, the belief in the wisdom of the Aryan race. According to his study, Ariosophy arose ahead of the Second World War in response to a modern world characterised by political turmoil, wealth inequality and 'racial confusion'. Thus, 'in order to counter this modern world, the Ariosophists founded secret religious orders dedicated to the revival of the lost esoteric knowledge and racial virtue of the ancient Germans, and the corresponding creation of a new pan-German empire'.[26] These Ariosophist foundations can then be distinguished from the *völkisch* movement which developed, as it was 'the *völkisch* movement which combined these concepts into a coherent ideological system'.[27] While a useful distinction to bear in mind, I would put forward that no such distinction is apparent in the Nazi horror subgenre, which mentions neither Ariosophy nor the *völkisch* movement by name. What is present instead is a generalised sense of the influence of Aryanism as combined with the occult, and this generalisation resonates with what I have referred to at times as a pseudo-history, and Goodrick-Clarke refers to as 'an underground history' or at one point a 'cryptohistory'.[28] I use these terms here because they emphasise that any account of the Nazi occult is a varying mixture of well-known truth, little-known historical actuality, conspiracy and fantasy. Such a mixture is embodied by the types of Nazi occult monster represented in the 21st century horror film, examples of which include the 'secret religious orders' becoming cults and the 'ancient Germans' being represented as supernatural god-men, with the cults tending to be concerned with what they perceive to be the racially pure status and unassailable power of the gods.

Almost invariably these cults and gods are connected to occult relics and ruins in the 21st century Nazi horror film. This too seems to stem from the history of the Nazi party, for images and objects from the past and from mythology were inherently linked to Nazi symbolism. For example, the Nazi uniform was influenced by occult beliefs, as Fry states:

> the twin lightning flashes on the SS uniform are actually runes from Teutonic prehistory. The *völkisch* revival and the German occult tradition that sprang from it had long been fixated on these runes as remnants of an idealized Aryan past. A devoted occultist and patron of scholars of the arcane, Himmler authorized

[26] Goodrick-Clarke, p. 2.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., p. 1; p. 221. This is a term also examined by J. Eric Starnes in relation to Nazism in 'The Riddle of Thule: In Search of the Crypto-History of a Racially Pure White Utopia', in *Cryptohistories*, ed. by Alicja Bemben, Rafał Borysławski and Justyna Jajszczok (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), pp. 127-142.

> expeditions to sites around the world to find evidence of the Aryan god-men, past or present.[29]

What precise relics and ruins are of interest to Nazism is part of what Fry refers to as 'a long and tangled story', but may include Christian artefacts or even Viking runestones, drawing on different sources which the Nazis perceived to be Aryan.[30] That the relics and ruins must be searched for due to their hidden and lost status is another aspect of the uncanniness of the Nazi occult, for the word 'secret' recurs throughout Freud's efforts to define the 'unheimlich'. Furthermore, the cryptohistory of these relics suggests that they are not just evidence of the Aryan race but that they are the gateway to an otherwise incomprehensible supernatural power. Such relics will thus be discussed throughout this chapter, as they are also connected to witchcraft and necromancy. First, though, the expeditions searching for evidence of the god-men which Fry describes resonate with 21st century Nazi horror films such as *Fantacide*, *Ratline* and *Soldiers of the Damned* due to their narratives centring around secretive cults who seek occult relics, and the hidden god-men who imbued them with power, all of which 'come to light' with horrific consequences.[31]

Indeed, the uncanny potential of these hidden relics and ruins is often accompanied by some of the most terrible abject acts, as the cults who pursue these objects will stop at nothing to obtain them. As Bruce Kawin observes of cults depicted in the horror genre more widely, 'the aims of the cults and the desires of their leaders and members are usually presented as evil, as in the real world they sometimes are […] Most cults do not directly employ supernatural power as a coven of witches and wizards might, but exercise human power in the light of their insights'.[32] Thus, even when cults are not in possession of supernatural powers they can still be a source of significant horror, and this can be traced back to the first gore films in which cult believers commit atrocities. Kawin considers *Blood Feast* (Herschell Gordon Lewis, 1963) as a prototype of the gore-ridden slasher, in which 'Fuad Ramses is the consummate threatening believer, a man driven by the demands of an ancient cult to construct a masterpiece of human sacrifice. The gore is both the literal result and the symbol of his mad violence, which is inspired by his cult project'.[33] Cults can therefore be connected to abject acts of violence such as human sacrifice and cannibalism, and more than this, it could be said that in these acts we can see

[29] Fry, p. 21.
[30] Ibid., p. 19.
[31] Freud, p. 345.
[32] Bruce Kawin, *Horror and the Horror Film* (London and New York: Anthem, 2012), p. 162.
[33] Ibid., p. 164.

humanity's underlying potential for evil, a potential which comes to light with the uncovering of the occult relic. It follows, then, that over time the uncanny and abject horror represented by human cults pursuing mythical objects has overlapped with speculation about the Nazi occult to emerge in the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre, for the Nazis are arguably held to be the epitome of man's potential to cause death and destruction.

Fantacide and the Abject Trauma of Racism: From the Second World War to 21st Century Britain

The abject potential of deranged cults is certainly realised in Shane Mather's film *Fantacide*, a low-budget horror film with an especially gory depiction of the Nazi occult. The film is set in modern-day Britain and revolves around the occult myth of the Spear of Longinus, a spear which purportedly pierced Christ's side as he hung on the cross and which a cult wishes to use in a ritual to achieve supernatural power. Though *Fantacide* does not detail much of the history of the Spear, it is said within the film that the Spear is hundreds of years old and was last owned by Adolf Hitler. Furthermore, the cult is at times referred to as a 'neo-Nazi' cult due to the presence of the character Karl Oppenheimer, who 'was part of a Nazi experiment to sterilise all non-Aryan races known as the Purity Commission'. Yet neo-Nazi is a somewhat misused term in this context, as the presence of a Nazi who served in the Second World War suggests that this is a traditional Nazi cult rather than neo-Nazi, the latter having a different historical and political context. Regardless, as is made clear by the reference to the Purity Commission, the cult and the Spear are linked to the explicitly racist ideology of the Nazis, a narrative which is reinforced by the anti-Semitic dialogue of Oppenheimer and several other characters. Yet Oppenheimer is no longer the cult leader, and as another member named Loin Tender reveals, the cult was fractured by the members' many opposing agendas. Loin, for instance, wishes to use the Spear to eradicate everything he perceives to be unclean, focusing particularly on homosexuality, and this places him in opposition to Oppenheimer who is shown enjoying bondage with other men. The character Dale Fantasy, meanwhile, is an animal rights activist repeatedly shown to take part in bestiality and who wishes to use the Spear to make animals return his interest. By comparing homosexuality and bondage to bestiality, and often focusing on other characters' disgust, all of these actions are framed as 'deviant' in *Fantacide*. These are familiar representations of the Nazis as seen in the Nazisploitation films of the 1960s and 1970s, and so are further evidence of Michael D. Richardson's argument that Nazism 'functions less as its own subject and more as a means

for assertions about sexuality and normalcy as they define the dominant cultural context'.[34] In *Fantacide* these competing agendas are juxtaposed in a complex way, locating different groups of people as the source and/or object of different forms of prejudice, the common denominator of which is the occult as a potential tool to realise their horrifying fantasies.

The actions committed in the film are similarly discriminatory and constantly abject. An extended sequence depicts the torture of a Jewish man by Oppenheimer and his accomplice. The man is burned with cigarettes before having his knees drilled into, the latter especially shot using close ups which exacerbate the horror by focusing unflinchingly and in great detail on the violence committed to the body. The accomplice claims that the Jew 'makes him sick', a sentiment he actualises by forcing himself to throw up into a bowl before feeding it to his victim, provoking even more vomiting. Kristeva refers extensively to vomiting and abjection when she writes about 'the spasms and vomiting that protect me. The repugnance, the retching that thrusts me to the side and turns me away from defilement, sewage, and muck'.[35] Vomiting is a way of expelling the abject, and so it is significant that within the film vomiting is represented as a way of 'cleansing' oneself in reaction to Jewishness, only to be followed by a grotesque act which transgresses bodily borders and provokes the same sensations within the audience, this time in reaction to the horrifying acts of the Nazis and the cult. This shifts the source of abjection, and thus horror, from the victim of racial abuse to the abuser, and shifts the reaction from within characters in the narrative to within members of the audience. Extensive violence is also committed against women in the film, as one woman is raped in a lengthy sequence including the use of a bottle to penetrate her, while another has her breasts mutilated. In the film's last, chaotic sequence, as the various fractured groups come back together to fight over the Spear, bloody mutilation abounds. In particular, a woman is violently vaginally penetrated by the Spear itself, a culmination of the ways in which such a symbol of the Nazi occult becomes a vehicle for violence against the bodies of historically persecuted and disempowered groups, abjectly rupturing the body. As Cathy Caruth suggests, 'the term *trauma* is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind', but the images of violence in *Fantacide* illustrate that bodily trauma is not necessarily distinct from

[34] Michael D. Richardson, 'Sexual Deviance and the Naked Body in Cinematic Representations of Nazis' in *Nazisploitation! The Nazi Image in Low Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. by Daniel H. Magilow, Elizabeth Bridges and Kristin T. Vander Lugt (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), pp. 38-54 (p. 41).
[35] Kristeva, p. 2.

psychological and cultural trauma and that instead these are intertwined, a 'double wound' being used here to prompt a psychosomatic response.[36]

Fantacide is thus inherently concerned with pushing the boundaries of psychological and physiological horror, but also of taste and offence. Near the opening of the film a fictionalised government broadcast warns viewers of the many things they should not do, focusing particularly on the idea that you should not upset minorities, a sentiment which is then mocked as the warning reels through numerous offensive terms. The cover of the DVD for the film includes the review comment '*Fantacide* is a film that wallows in its nonconformity and not only does it not care who it offends, it gleefully goes out of its way to offend', suggesting that nonconformity and offence are central to the film's purpose and marketing. This intent to push boundaries is emphasised by the film's closing title with its quotation from Voltairine de Cleyre (miscited as being from Voltaire):

> So long as the people do not care to exercise their freedom, those who wish to tyrannize will do so; for tyrants are active and ardent, and will devote themselves in the name of any number of gods, religious and otherwise, to put shackles upon sleeping men.[37]

This has multiple potential meanings. For example, if understood in relation to its source, it refers to anarchism and individualism, and in a film featuring Nazis it may seem at first to refer to 'tyranny' in connection to fascism. However, in the context of *Fantacide* and its faux-broadcast of censored words, I would argue that the use of this quotation suggests above all that the makers of the film are concerned by what they perceive to be the limits of censorship in the 21st century, imposed by 'tyrants' and attempting to restrict their freedom.

This concern regarding censorship being raised in a film set and produced in 21st century Britain could be connected to its particular political context in which the matter of free speech has been an increasing site of debate. In this respect, the satirical government broadcast and inclusion of numerous racial and homophobic slurs in *Fantacide* seems prescient of the British National Party's *General Election Manifesto* in 2010, in which the far right political party argued that 'Britons have been betrayed by the old parties and their politicians; they have been fleeced to pay for public services which we do not deliver, and

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[36] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, 20th Anniversary edn (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), p. 3.

[37] Voltairine de Cleyre, 'Anarchism and American Traditions' (1908), in *Exquisite Rebel: The Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre - Anarchist, Feminist, Genius*, ed. by Sharon Presley and Crispin Sartwell (New York: State University of New York, 2005), pp. 89-102 (p. 100).

they have been gagged by political correctness'.[38] As Geoffrey Hughes explores, although 'political correctness' is a difficult term to define, it is widely understood to refer to verbal sanitisation.[39] Indeed, he cites its entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of New Words* in 1997, which defines 'political correctness' as 'conforming to a body of liberal or radical opinion on social matters, characterised by the advocacy of approved views and the rejection of language and behaviour considered discriminatory or offensive', and suggests that it is from this period on that the concept became more commonly used. [40] It is striking that *Fantacide* was released in the 2000s when this term was gaining traction, only a few years prior to the British National Party's manifesto and during the period in which the party were rapidly rising from 'political obscurity to the fifth largest party in British politics'.[41] Thus, although the term is not explicitly used in *Fantacide*, and needs to be considered carefully in relation to how it can be constructed and construed by both right and left wing politics, the concept of 'political correctness' and the debate surrounding what can and cannot be said is highly relevant to the film and its evocation of Nazism.

In particular, the argument that *Fantacide* has been shaped by, and is part of, a right wing rhetoric offers two initial possibilities as to how the film uses the theme of Nazism. On the one hand, Nazism could be considered just one offensive theme to be played upon to disrupt the perceived control of the liberal left, rather than having any specific underlying meaning itself. On the other hand, this anti-censorship message may also be an attempt to disrupt what Blake refers to as the 'premature binding of the wounds that the past inflicted'.[42] One of her primary case studies is *Nekromantik* (Jörg Buttgereit, 1987), which, though a film from a different time and country, is potentially comparable to *Fantacide* as it is deeply concerned with the traumatic wound of the Second World War and expresses this through its depictions of taboo-pushing violence, including a scene of cat mutilation which is strikingly echoed in *Fantacide*. As Blake concludes, 'shocking in subject matter and unflinchingly visceral in their portrayal of sex and death, Buttgereit's

[38] British National Party, *Democracy, Freedom, Culture and Identity: British National Party General Election Manifesto 2010* (Welshpool, UK: British National Party, 2010), p. 90 <https://general-election-2010.co.uk/2010-general-election-manifestos/BNP-Manifesto-2010.pdf> [accessed 19 June 2019].
[39] Geoffrey Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 17.
[40] Elizabeth M. Knowles and Julia Elliott, eds, *Oxford Dictionary of New Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
[41] Matthew J. Goodwin, *New British Fascism: Rise of the British National Party* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p. xii.
[42] Blake, p. 38.

films thus took as their very premise the horrors of a nationally specific trauma that had already been prematurely buried in the interests of social cohesion'.[43] *Fantacide* may also perceive itself to uncover many different wounds, Nazism amongst them, prematurely bound through forms of sanitisation such as 'political correctness' which have been enforced ostensibly in the interest of creating social cohesion through avoidance of that which is offensive or uncomfortable but have instead created division. From this perspective, the occult myth of the Spear portrayed in *Fantacide* serves a dual purpose as both being a symbol of the past uncovered, and the tool with which to rip open and confront wounds, literally and metaphorically.

However, 'political correctness' is a term most often wielded by individuals and parties who use the concept of free speech as a thin guise for prejudice, and as such it should either be dismissed as a right wing construction, or if it is to be accepted as a term then such a concept would certainly be advocated, for rejection of discriminatory language and actions is something to be praised not protested. Thus, by bemoaning the perceived attempts to censor its racist, sexist and homophobic images, the film offers a platform for such views but not necessarily condemnation or confrontation. Even the potential protagonists of the piece, a reporter named Billy and a private investigator Del Fontaine, profess disgust at homosexuality and enjoy jokes at the expense of other races. In having all of its characters express offensive sentiments, monstrous protagonist and Nazi monster alike, such a film seems to invite the audience to laugh at and participate in the hatred on screen. As such it highlights what Caruth refers to as the problems 'of listening, of knowing, and of representing' trauma as it re-enacts rather than confronts, in addition to aligning its anti-establishment, anti-'political correctness' message with Nazism itself.[44] Moreover, this conflicting message and evocation of the Second World War resonates with the somewhat confused message of the British National Party. As Matthew J. Goodwin observes, during their campaign:

> Voters were offered an end to immigration and the war in Afghanistan, opposition to 'Islamism', and withdrawal from the European Union (EU). Among others, these policies were delivered on more than 18 million leaflets and a television broadcast that presented [Party Leader Nick] Griffin against images of Winston Churchill and the Second World War.[45]

[43] Ibid., p. 41.
[44] Caruth, p. 5.
[45] Goodwin, p. 2.

Rallying against 'political correctness' is at once situated as a return to the strength of Britain during the Second World War, yet the xenophobia it demonstrates aligns such attitudes with fascism and Nazism. As a result, in *Fantacide* no one emerges unsullied and the film ends with Loin successfully clutching the Spear, chanting the incantation which will grant him his wish of a 'cleansed' earth. The final impression is one of wish-fulfilment and of racial cleansing, revelling in the horrors of discrimination in a way which makes the film's ability to address traumatic wounds, and certainly its ability to heal them, at best an ambiguous matter and at worst a trauma in itself.

Ratline and the Horror of Cyclical Violence: The Return of Nazism in a Neoliberal US

Another horror film to connect a cult, a Nazi, and a mythical object is *Ratline*. The film opens in the midst of violence as a young woman shoots a man who in his dying moments smears blood all over her face and clothes. She and her sister burn the bloody clothes and set out on the road, and the opening credits play over footage of American highways, tunnels and road signs from their journey. In Missouri a group of young Satanists prepare in a dingy room decorated with numerous skulls, pentagrams and news stories declaring 'satanic rape on increase', before setting out to sacrifice a neighbour's dog. This is director Eric Stanze's vision of modern America, in which the Satanists flock to an abandoned and dilapidated school with a closure sign on the door, and elsewhere a graveyard sits in such disarray that the government plans to move it entirely to make way for newer, supposedly 'better' things. Such a landscape suggests an America in violent disarray, and has particular economic and social connotations. In this respect, it is significant that when disputing David J. Skal's assertion that there is a connection between periods of conflict and periods of horror film production, Jason Colavito argues instead that 'there is a stronger correlation between horror film florescence and economic volatility'.[46] As a horror film containing explicit images of both Nazism and financial deprivation, *Ratline* suggests that both contexts are central to the emergence of horror, and that the two are related. The specific period of economic volatility in question here is that of neoliberalism, for neoliberal thinkers have suggested 'that the market is the most efficient and moral institution for the organisation of human affairs, which seems to suggest that it could and perhaps even should replace all other institutions (e.g. family, state, community, and society) as the

[46] Jason Colavito, *Knowing Fear: Science, Knowledge and the Development of the Horror Genre* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2008), p. 416, in response to David J. Skal, *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (London: Plexus, 1993).

primary mechanism for producing, promoting, and preserving social order'.[47] In *Ratline* the proposed destruction of the dilapidated cemetery indicates not only a lack of financial means or motivation to maintain current establishments, revealing instead a capitalist desire to remove public landmarks in favour of private gain, but also indicates a disregard for memorialisation and remembering or honouring the past.

The Satanists are a product of this landscape, depicted as bored and rebellious youths, but ultimately their violence is quite performative. This is made clear when they capture a man going by the name of Frank Logan in order to sacrifice him in the school, but in a dramatic turn of events it is discovered that the man they have captured is much stronger, unaffected by wounds, and the true source of the supernatural in the film. As a supposed 'educational' film reel played within *Ratline* reveals, Frank Logan is a false identity created by a Nazi whose real name is Wilhelm. According to the film reel Wilhelm was part of Heinrich Himmler's paranormal division which was housed below Wewelsberg Castle, an ideological centre for the Nazi party, and he was one of the lead researchers of an occult project investigating 'blood magic theory'. At the heart of this theory is the Blood Flag, a swastika flag stained with the blood of Nazis who died for the cause, and again this story has its basis in reality. As Hilmar Hoffmann explains in more detail, the Blood Flag was specifically 'the swastika flag that had allegedly been drenched with the blood of Andreas Bauriedl who had carried it on 9 November 1923 during the legendary march to the *Feldherrnhalle*', making it an important piece of ceremonial and emotional propaganda.[48] *Ratline* connects this history of the flag to the fictional concept of 'blood magic theory' in which violence is said to create energy which can be harnessed to master phantoms. In order to open a portal through which to access knowledge of the future, the Nazis are said to have developed a ritual in which someone must be beheaded on the flag, explaining the many flickering images of headless bodies which recur throughout the film. These images are cut with other scenes in a sudden and jarring way reminiscent of Caruth's description of trauma as the 'uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena'.[49] These images of historical violence are juxtaposed with violence in the

[47] Simon Springer, Kean Birch and Julie MacLeavy, 'An Introduction to Neoliberalism', in *Handbook of Neoliberalism*, ed. by Simon Springer, Kean Birch and Julie MacLeavy (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-14 (p. 3).
[48] Hilmar Hoffmann, *The Triumph of Propaganda: Film and National Socialism, 1933-1945,* trans. by John A. Broadwin and V. R. Berghahn (Providence, RI and Oxford: Berghahn, 1996), pp. 21-22.
[49] Caruth, p. 12. Though it seems unlikely that the film is consciously making this connection, Caruth remains useful here in making sense of why such an aesthetic can arise, perhaps suggesting an unconscious expression, or at the least why its reception can be connected to an experience of trauma.

present day, as Wilhelm butchers the Satanists, sawing off one teenager's head in another act of decapitation before throwing it across the room. As he does so the leader of the cult first wets himself, then vomits pitifully onto the floor, abject displays in response to the extreme violence and evil which he has lost control of and which threatens to negate his very being. Thus, while the Nazi in *Ratline* is not part of a cult, he is very much linked to the Satanists, contrasted with them to suggest that there is some truth behind the evil they worship, but that said evil is in the form of the Nazi monster in front of them.

The Blood Flag, meanwhile, has been stored behind a wall in the abandoned school. An uncannily hidden relic, it is symbolic that a wall must be demolished for the flag to emerge once again, breaking down the thin barrier between past and present. Furthermore, the horrors of the past which are uncovered with the Blood Flag are not just military secrets, but also take the form of family secrets. For instance, the woman from the beginning of the film, Crystal, discovers that she is Wilhelm's daughter. By coincidence or fate Crystal has moved into the home of Penny, who is introduced with her grandfather, only for it to be revealed that they are related to another of the Nazi occult scientists Wilhelm worked with. I would therefore agree with Christiane-Marie Abu Sarah when she observes of *Ratline* that 'in redirecting viewers from a "goth" threat to a Nazi one in its opening scenes, the film declares that the Nazi menace is not fully vanquished. Rather, it is concealed within mainstream American society, waiting to reemerge as soon as US Americans shift their focus to other concerns'.[50] In this respect the Satanists are not the true source of horror; it is Crystal and Penny who represent a younger generation burdened with the sins of their fathers, and grandfathers, and so on, and they must make a decision about how to confront this past. Crystal chooses to defy her father, but she is killed for her efforts. Penny also seems to attack Wilhelm, only for the end of the film ambiguously to show them both alive and together. Ultimately, then, as Penny's grandfather comments, 'time has gone by so swiftly', and the Nazi past continues to be a threat in a modern America in which divisions abound and violence succeeds – precisely what the Nazis desired and what the occult blood magic theory thrives upon.

Soldiers of the Damned **and the Trauma of the** ***Völkisch*** **Ideology**

[50] Christiane-Marie Abu Sarah, 'Horror, History and the Third Reich: Locating Traumatic Pasts in Hollywood Horrors', in *The Horrors of Trauma in Cinema: Violence Void Visualisation*, ed. by Michael Elm, Kobi Kabalek and Julia B. Kohne (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), pp. 68-87 (pp. 77-78).

Though less concerned by cults, the plot of *Soldiers of the Damned* centres around locating Aryan god-men and a relic with which to communicate with them. The film follows a group of German soldiers sent into a Romanian forest in 1944 on a mission with Nazi professor Anna Kappel, and from the very outset a voiceover explains some of the central tenets of the film. For instance, the introduction immediately identifies the Ahnenerbe as a division founded by Himmler dedicated to researching the archaeology and culture of the Aryan race and the occult.[51] The film goes so far as to claim that it is 'inspired by real events', an over-exaggeration of its blatantly fictional story being connected to the real existence of the Ahnenerbe. As Goodrick-Clarke explains, Himmler founded the Ahnernebe in 1935, 'an initially independent institute, with a mandate to pursue research into Germanic prehistory and archaeology. The Ahnenerbe was subsequently incorporated into the SS, its academic staff carrying SS rank and wearing SS uniform'.[52] That the Ahnenerbe was a division of the SS is particularly important as *Soldiers of the Damned* repeatedly argues that not all German soldiers supported the Nazi cause, and this is reinforced throughout as the protagonist Major Kurt Fleischer and his men are not members of the SS and are at odds with the members of the Ahnernebe. Given that the film is a British production rather than German, it seems unlikely that this is a defence of German soldiers as a matter of national guilt or pride. Such a distinction between SS officer and German soldier operates instead as a simplification, perhaps an unintentional one which demonstrates a lack of nuanced understanding of the past, or an intentional move through which to highlight the different conflicts within the film. This conflict is reflected through Fleischer's dialogue in which he often refers with disgust to 'the Nazi ideology' and their 'vile doctrines'. As Goodrick-Clarke argues, 'racism and elitism also had their place in the *völkisch* ideology. The fact of racial differences was exploited to lend validity to claims of national distinction and superiority'.[53] Accordingly, in *Soldiers of the Damned* the Ahnernebe express admiration for the 'pure race' of the proto-Aryans and wish to harness their powers.

As becomes increasingly clear, though, the powers of the god-men cannot be harnessed and instead are used to torture those who venture into the forest. As Fleischer's men approach the trees, fog lingers near the edge. This setting becomes increasingly

[51] The Ahnernebe is referred to from this point as a pseudo-scientific division, and Kappel is also referred to at times as a 'scientist'. However, while the intersection between the occult and science will be addressed in Chapter Three, *Soldiers of the Damned* puts no emphasis on the scientific aspects of archaeology, instead focusing more heavily on the occult as the supernatural and ancient.
[52] Goodrick-Clarke, p. 178.
[53] Ibid., p. 4.

frightening as their journey takes them through day into night and the men run frightened from shapes that flit between the trees. The disorientation of characters and audience is exacerbated by a confusing and ambiguous plot which, while at least in part a product of the low budget and poor production values of the film resulting in a lack of signposting in both the script and editing, is also a result of its subject matter. The god-men are able to manipulate time and space, and so Fleischer's men and the other units of German and Russian soldiers who are negotiating the forest seem to be trapped in time loops and destined to die horrible deaths. One by one the men burn to ash only to appear in another part of the forest seemingly weeks previous, a journey marked visually by the camera panning rapidly past trees and coming to a still in a forest which is now red-hued rather than cool-hued. This journey through time returns them to various locations in which they have had previous encounters, recalling what Freud considers the uncanny situation 'when, caught in a mist perhaps, one has lost one's way in a mountain forest, every attempt to find the marked or familiar path may bring one back again and again to one and the same spot, which one can identify by some particular landmark'.[54] Thus, although the setting of the Romanian forest does not relate to any particular historical event, it operates instead as a space of timeless Gothic appeal in which to explore uncanny horror. As Fleischer comes to realise, the god-men are 'toying' with them, to his mind like children pulling the wings off flies, and this is emphasised by the aerial shots of the forest which demonstrate the vastness of the setting and the comparable insignificance of the humans within it.

Yet by toying with the humans, the god-men ultimately demonstrate that there is more than one type of monster at work in *Soldiers of the Damned*. The god-men inflict cruel and absurd violence upon the humans, dropping tanks from great heights and leaving bodies crushed and abjectly open, but in the strange time-loops the violence is more often inflicted by humans upon one another. Soldiers stab each other, drawing out knives covered in brain matter, and hammer empty shells into foreheads. Like *Fantacide* much violence is committed against women, as even before Fleischer's men embark on the mission to the forest they witness the rape of a Romanian woman, the camera focusing on her glazed expression as she is attacked. Later a female Russian soldier is discovered tied to a tree with 'SS' carved into her flesh. The association of the 'SS' symbol with the act of rape connects the two, and this is significant as the anxiety about the relationship between fascism and misogyny is one which has persisted into the 21st century. This is because the

[54] Freud, p. 359.

far right are often concerned by the shift of gender roles, and the Alt-Right in particular 'broadly aims to establish identity and status for white men who feel aggrieved, is deeply antagonistic towards feminism, and holds that men and women – and the world more generally – should be ordered in strict hierarchies'.[55] To connect Nazism with sexual violence in a recent film is thus to implicitly juxtapose such violence with 21st century far right misogyny, and where *Fantacide* represents sexual violence alongside other hate crimes without clearly condemning these attitudes, *Soldiers of the Damned* elucidates anxieties about such an ideology and critiques it.

However, where sexual violence is just one facet of the horror in these films it could be argued that Nazi horror is not concerned by the gendered specificities of this violence. Travelling back in time one of the men, Private Nadel, sees the rape itself. As it is revealed that Nadel's own wife was raped and killed while he was away at war, so the film appears to be preoccupied with sexual violence as an indictment of war and humanity. As Andrew Tudor suggests, the threat in such horror 'is that of the omnipotent human predator, seen at its most intense (though not exclusively) in situations of male-upon-female pursuit'.[56] Indeed, other war-time crimes come back to haunt the soldiers as the shapes that flit between the trees are there to taunt SS Major Metzger for the atrocities he committed hanging Jewish children. The children appear with blood flowing from their eyes and brandishing nooses at him. The temporal and geographical shifts in the film, and the violence which occurs through them, can therefore be connected to Caruth's understanding of trauma as 'a breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world', built upon by Adam Lowenstein and what he refers to as the allegorical moment, 'a shocking collision of film, spectator, and history where registers of bodily space and historical time are disrupted, confronted and intertwined'.[57] The god-men are responsible for the supernatural events which throw men together and taunt them with their fears, but it is once again those such as the Nazis who are the cause of much of the horror as they commit crimes against their fellow humans, a perpetual trauma which bleeds through time and space.

Conclusions

[55] Patrik Hermansson, David Lawrence, Joe Mulhall and Simon Murdoch, *The International Alt-Right: Fascism for the 21st Century?* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020), p. 181.
[56] Andrew Tudor, *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 69.
[57] Caruth, p. 3; Adam Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 2.

By bringing together analysis of these films we can conclude that god-men and those who worship them are recurring monsters in the 21st century, and while few scholars have observed this trend they are films worthy of critical attention. First and foremost, this is because relics and god-men have basis in the racist ideology of the Nazis, and thus are symbols of that traumatic past. While these are powerful ideas even without suggesting that such relics and monsters truly existed, in the 21st century Nazi horror film they are imbued with supernatural power as a way of bringing back those horrors, a narrative device which allows the audience to confront the trauma the Nazis represented. This device may also be linked to Lux's suggestion that the supernatural is used in popular culture as a means of dealing with traumatic events. The depiction of the occult also plays into a 'what if' situation which contributes to the horror of these films where on a literal level the audience are prompted to question, or at least consider, what would happen if the Nazis really did get access to occult powers, or on a more symbolic level what would have happened if the Nazis had triumphed and gained global political power comparable to the all-consuming power of the occult. Most importantly, though, these films demonstrate that the Nazi occult in the form of relics and god-men cannot be horrific without the aid of humans. As Loin suggests in *Fantacide*, 'the Spear has always attracted every kind of filth, its history is riddled with it'. These monsters refer to multiple traumas, some embodied by Nazis, some by war, some by the violent potential of cults. As Blake suggests, the trauma of the Second World War finds expression in horror films which may include supernatural tropes, but the trauma itself is not about the supernatural, for traumatic events are defined as 'man-made historical phenomena such as genocide or war'.[58] The Nazi occult is therefore being represented in 21st century horror films not simply because the idea that the Nazis really had supernatural weapons has persisted, but because the occult is a way of weaponising and emboldening the worst of humanity, with racist and sexual violence being a particularly common thread. Thus, the occult relics and ruins become transgressive symbols which invoke the evil of humanity, and the uncanny-abject nature of relics, cults and god-men is used in Nazi horror as a means of suggesting its constant violent return, which we see arise during particular times and places such as a politically divided 21st century Britain in which fascist parties such as the BNP have grappled for power or a troubled modern-day America struggling in the wake of financial and political crisis due to the influence of a neoliberal state and the commensurate rise of the far right.

[58] Blake, p. 2.

The Demonic

A History of Nazism, Witchcraft and Demonology

Just as Aryan god-men and the cults that worship them have some basis in the history of Nazism, so too do witchcraft and demonology which feature prominently in the 21st century horror films *Hellboy*, *The Devil's Rock* and, to a lesser extent, *Nazi Vengeance* (Tom Sands, 2014). For example, Kurlander devotes a section of his work to the SS Witch Division which was founded by Himmler and operated between 1935 and 1944. This particular division was responsible for the accumulation of a 'massive card catalogue and library documenting hundreds of accounts of witchcraft and the occult'.[59] Furthermore, not only was Himmler reportedly interested in this area of the occult, but as Kurlander notes, 'in the mid-1920s Hitler almost certainly read Ernst Schertel's parapsychological tome *Magic: History, Theory, Practice*, underlining sentences such as "Satan is the fertilizing, destroying-constructing warrior"'.[60] As such, representations of Nazism have become connected over the years to varying aspects of black magic, with particular focus on either summoning demons or drawing on their powers, the result of which for Eva Kingsepp is 'a prevailing mythical image of Nazi Germany, with Hitler as the modern-day devil and the Nazis as his demon-like henchmen'.[61] While in using such language Kingsepp identifies the importance of the devil and the demonic in images of Nazism, her rhetoric is more metaphorical than literal and she does not identify the Nazi demon-summoning trope. It seems that thus far no critics have brought these films together to examine their similar representations of Nazi demonology, nor located this image amongst other Nazi horror. Conversely, there has been much work done on the representation of witchcraft and demons, but because these themes are so broad when not connected to Nazism no cohesive approach has been developed to consider them.[62] This is exacerbated by the additional complexity of there

[59] Kurlander, p. 165.
[60] Ibid., p. x, referring to Ernst Schertel, *Magic: History, Theory, Practice* (*Magie: Geschichte, Theorie, Praxis*) (Prien am Chiemsee: Anthropos Verlag, 1923).
[61] Eva Kingsepp, 'Hitler as our Devil?: Nazi Germany in Mainstream Media', in *Monsters in the Mirror: Representations of Nazism in Post-war Popular Culture*, ed. by Sara Buttsworth and Maartje Abbenhuis (Santa Barbara, CA, Denver, CO and Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2010), pp. 29-52 (p. 29).
[62] As with the 'occult' this may be a problem stemming from definition, as 'demon' has become a broad term that is interchangeable with other types of monster. Harry M. Benshoff considers *Hellraiser* (Clive Barker, 1987) through Queer theory in *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), while Creed examines *The Exorcist* through the lens of the monstrous-feminine, just two examples demonstrating the diversity of both monster and critical approach.

being two different types of monster in the roles of summoner and summoned. It is therefore necessary to build upon the work of those such as Kurlander and Kingsepp in order to address this critical gap and consider what the figure of the Nazi occultist may represent, what the demons they summon or draw upon mean, and what fears these monsters relate to in the 21st century.

When considering the meaning of this subset of the Nazi occult, it is significant that the demonic has previously been linked to trauma by Charles Derry, who defines the demonic subgenre as those films containing evil forces which 'could remain mere spiritual presences […] or they could take the guise of witches, demons, or devils'.[63] Although in the first edition of his work he focuses particularly on the demonic as a subgenre which emerged in the 1960s, particularly in the US, he argues that such a subgenre arose because 'in this period of social strife, any easy explanation of the chaos was most welcome', a broad argument suggesting that occult forces have historically offered a simpler way of coming to terms with 'evil' than engaging with social or political turmoil.[64] Derry does acknowledge that 'although the high concentration of these demonic films came in the mid-sixties and continued through the seventies, films about witchcraft and ghosts have always been with us', and in a second edition of his work revisits the demonic in the 21st century.[65] In particular he argues that following the events of 9/11 'religious rhetoric was dominating American culture' and 'it is therefore not surprising that demonic horror should be among the most continuously popular genres of the last twenty-five years'. [66] He thus offers some nuance by considering different historical contexts, but with the overall goal to reinforce his assertion that the demonic is used as a form of simplification or even avoidance of social and political strife. I would argue that the demonic as represented in the 21st century Nazi occult horror film can also be analysed to understand better society's experiences of trauma, to consider whether the trauma of the Second World War may still be inspiring such horror, or whether these films are related to more recent social turmoil, religious or not. In doing so it therefore remains important to consider whether the demonic is indeed being used to simplify evil, or whether through its connection with Nazism in the 21st century these themes are rather being used in increasingly complicated ways which challenge such binary oppositions of 'good' and 'evil'.

[63] Charles Derry, *Dark Dreams 2.0: A Psychological History of the Modern Horror Film from the 1950s to the 21st Century* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2009), p. 89.
[64] Ibid., p. 90.
[65] Ibid., p. 89.
[66] Ibid., p. 204; p. 205.

Furthermore, while Derry focuses on the demonic as an American subgenre, he notes that 'the tradition of mystic evil extends to other cultures as well',[67] and so the witchcraft and demons featured in Nazi horror films vary in line with Muireann Maguire's argument that 'in global cultural mythology, demons are polyvalent entities'.[68] Firstly, depictions of Nazi demonology may be located within the Western Christian tradition, especially due to Nazism's own Western and Christian roots and representations of demonology within this, which needs to be explored in more detail. It is arguably within this religious background especially that the binary opposition between good and evil has historically been maintained, for Maguire argues that demons within Christianity 'embody pure evil'.[69] Representations of Nazi demonology stemming from this tradition may include explicit or implicit references to Satanism, and in a similar manner to Kingsepp's consideration of Hitler as a devil-like figure, Black and Kurlander observe that 'in some popular films and video games and music, Hitler might even be said to have taken over some of the metaphysical space generally claimed by the devil'.[70] This resonates with the 21st century Nazi horror film in which figures such as Hitler, or alternatively Himmler, as head of the Nazi occult, are often referred to through photographs or archive footage which creates the sense that they are ever-present as devil-like figures. This is the case even when neither they nor Lucifer feature in the films as characters themselves, as they are shown to work instead through lower-ranking Nazis and demons respectively. However, it is also necessary to move beyond this common implication of Christianity and Satan, for, as Regina Hansen argues, 'many alternative concepts of the demonic are represented in North American literature and film', and so we must keep in mind the influence of witchcraft and demons from alternative religions.[71] Hence it is important to complicate the work of those such as Derry by considering the more specific, more recent, and more transnational 21st century Nazi horror subgenre.

The 'Occult Wars' of *Hellboy*: The Persistent and Transnational Trauma of the Second World War

[67] Ibid., p. 89.
[68] Muireann Maguire, 'Demon', in *The Ashgate Encyclopedia of Literary and Cinematic Monsters*, ed. by Jeffrey Weinstock (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 130-131 (p. 130).
[69] Ibid.
[70] Black and Kurlander, p. 3.
[71] Regina Hansen, 'North American Demons', in *The Ashgate Encyclopedia of Literary and Cinematic Monsters*, ed. by Jeffrey Weinstock (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 138-142 (p. 138).

Firstly, Guillermo del Toro's film *Hellboy,* an adaptation of Mike Mignola's comics, begins with the premise that in 1944 'the Nazis were desperate' and thus turned to an act of the supernatural, summoning a demon (the eponymous Hellboy) from an alternate dimension by creating a portal.[72] This event is then situated in a faux-history of the 'occult wars' in which Hitler purportedly joined the Thule society in 1937, an actual historical group of German aristocrats that promoted 'the occult and border scientific thinking', in order to gain access to supernatural powers.[73] According to *Hellboy* the Thule society and its opposition in the form of the US Bureau for Paranormal Research were engaged in these occult wars until Hitler died, much later than is widely held, in 1958. The correlation of science and the supernatural embodied within the Thule is a recurring duality when Nazism is linked to the occult, and in *Hellboy* the border-scientific is most clearly represented through the character of Karl Ruprecht Kroenen who is introduced in the film as 'Hitler's top assassin and head of the Thule Occult Society'. A minor character in Mike Mignola's source comic books, del Toro's elaborations result in his representation as a surgery-addicted scientist who has preserved himself to the extent that his blood has dried to dust and his body runs on clockwork mechanisms. As a result, Kroenen deserves attention as regards his mechanical body and association with the scientific element of the Thule, which will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Three. Here, however, it is more pertinent to focus on Kroenen's partner Grigori Rasputin, another figure drawn from history who more fully represents the mythical, mystical, and supernatural elements of the Thule, as well as the demons he is responsible for summoning.

In contrast to his mechanical partner, Rasputin is styled from the opening of the film with embroidered robes and a shaven head, images which evoke the West's construction and conception of the East as Other and in particular the colonial discourse of Eastern mysticism. This choice of costume and the connection between Rasputin and Nazism is evidence of Kingsepp's argument that 'linking traits of orientalism—that is, of the east as something irrational, undeveloped, even barbaric—with Nazism enhances the idea that Nazism is a counter-image of what westerners consider themselves to be'.[74] In this way Rasputin is effectively Othered, as are the Nazis. Furthermore, in contrast to the dust-

[72] Though an adaptation, such an oeuvre seems in keeping with del Toro's body of work as it is concerned with the Second World War, and his films *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) and *The Devil's Backbone* (2001) are set within the same period. There are undoubtedly connections to be drawn, but as these films are set in Spain and concerned with a different group of fascists, it is not within the scope of this thesis to draw such connections.
[73] Kurlander, p. 40.
[74] Kingsepp, p. 34.

filled, clockwork Kroenen there is an emphasis on Rasputin being flesh and blood. His body is consumed piece by piece into the portal to the alternate dimension which he opens, before later re-emerging from a pool so covered in blood as to appear almost skinless, an abject image of bodily horror as inner appears outer and bodily fluid abounds. Rasputin's mystical origins also suggest that, as is often the case with the threat of Nazism, the supernatural means with which to commit violence pre-existed the Nazis only for them to then attempt to harness it for their particular ideology. For example, within the film it is relayed that Rasputin is Russian and reputed to have previously used his occult knowledge as aid to the Romanovs. This much is a recurring, fictionalised account of the actual historical figure, but as Glenn Ward notes, del Toro embellishes Rasputin's story through the biography of the character that is included as part of the numerous extratextual materials on the *Hellboy* DVD. The biography suggests that he 'received "Earthly powers" and "eternal life" from an angel' and that, 'after his physical death, a Nazi ceremony summoned Rasputin from the netherworld, allowing him to gather acolytes at his debauched Berlin salon and become the "true power behind the Third Reich"'.[75] Such a description emphasises that the source of power in the Nazi occult lies in Rasputin's mysticism rather than the scientific represented by Kroenen, in addition to reinforcing that occult power pre-dates the Second World War before being co-opted by the Nazis.

This emphasis on the long history of the occult is also evident in the spaces in which the Nazi occultist and demon are found. The film's first scene is set in a remote Scottish Abbey said to be built on ley lines, and it is here that Hitler's army opens a portal to release the seven gods of chaos. Such a setting's history and supernatural implications are emphasised by a fierce storm from which lightning intermittently reveals a towering statue of Christ suffering on the cross and carvings of Hell-scapes. In the present-day, Rasputin returns to locate Hellboy in New York, what may seem a strikingly different setting to that of a Scottish Abbey. Yet it is in this city that he can instigate the release of an ancient demon named Samael which has been held in the New York Metropolitan Museum, another space which has connotations around the past and memory. The museum's rooms are large and gleaming, filled with well-lit displays containing artefacts from different times and places. Kroenen approaches a statue encased in glass and caresses its surface, only for Rasputin's lover Ilsa to usher him aside and break through it

[75] Glenn Ward, '"There is No Such Thing": Del Toro's Metafictional Monster Rally', in *The Transnational Fantasies of Guillermo del Toro*, ed. by Ann Davies, Deborah Shaw and Dolores Tierney (New York and Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 11-28 (p. 18).

with a sledge hammer. This indelicate smashing of the museum's clinical preservation represents a collision of past and present, and is followed by the statue being sliced in two, revealing a large vial which is emptied onto the floor. Consequently there are multiple acts of uncovering, placing the demon as uncanny secret hidden in plain sight. It also seems significant that on fleeing the museum Samael retreats to the sewers beneath New York to lay its eggs, a place where Kroenen as Nazi monster can also often be found lurking. The Nazi occult is thus also situated symbolically in subterranean spaces, underlying a modern city and waiting to erupt. As the film ends in a Russian mausoleum, a further location which connects the past, death and the supernatural, so these spaces also demonstrate the global reach and impact of the Nazi occult.

Hellboy and the Role of Religion in Causing or Resolving Trauma

As this analysis of the monsters and settings in *Hellboy* begins to demonstrate, religious symbols are drawn upon frequently. The Abbey with its statue of Christ immediately creates a Judeo-Christian frame of reference, and Catholicism in particular is invoked through the character of Professor Broom, the scholar who finds Hellboy and raises him as his son. Broom wears a rosary, the significance of which is evident from the way it is used to frame the narrative. It is depicted in the film's opening, at the point of Broom's death, and again during Hellboy's final conflict with Rasputin. In this last image the rosary is thrown to Hellboy to remind him of his father and help him choose the right side, once again reinforcing the connection of the protagonists with Western Christianity in opposition to the Nazis as Other. The use of religion also has the effect of signalling the abject through Christianity's opposition to and rejection of abjection, for Kristeva argues that 'the heterogeneity of Christ, Son of both Man and God, resorbs and cleanses the demoniacal'.[76] Thus a Christian frame of reference can be used to indicate the abjection of the Nazi occult. Yet from a religious perspective it is interesting that Nazism is placed in opposition to Christianity and instead connected to the purposeful summoning of demons in *Hellboy*, for the history of Ariosophy would suggest that demons constituted a very negative image for the Nazis. As Goodrick-Clarke notes:

> frequently obscene and always radical interpretations of the Scriptures logically embraced the familiar Judaeo-Christian notions of linear history and an apocalypse. In place of the formerly distinct divine and demonic species, there had developed several mixed races of which the Aryans were the least corrupt.[77]

[76] Kristeva, p. 122.
[77] Goodrick-Clarke, p. 96.

According to this historical connection, the Nazi ideology would position demons as the racial enemy rather than as ally or desired state of being. This suggests that although there are specific historical links between the Nazi ideology, religion and the occult, they have been manipulated to hold quite the opposite meaning, so that while such links remain central to our 21st century interpretation of Nazism they do so in a different and even inverted way. The use of religion and the Nazi occult in *Hellboy* suggests a desire to Other the Nazi due to their crimes, even as those condemnable crimes are ones of Othering Jews and minorities, making religion a method of locating and distinguishing horror through Othering a troubling act in itself.

On the other hand, these spaces, monsters and objects' relation to Christianity is not necessarily central to the film's meaning. For example, the Spear of Longinus is shown in passing, situated as one artefact in the Bureau for Paranormal Research's cases which the camera pans past without dwelling, as part of a purposefully brief summary of the so-called 'occult wars'. By passing over these artefacts with such brevity there is a sense that del Toro is building a frame of reference without necessarily creating meaning, an argument supported by S.T. Joshi when he concludes that 'for all the fleeting Catholic references, the film is premised on the notion that the god of Christianity is simply an idle myth, and that the "real" gods are the "Seven Gods of Chaos" who, in their extra-dimensional realm, will pose a recurring threat to humanity'.[78] Indeed, when we see into the portal it is not a Christian hell that is portrayed, but something else entirely, a dark expanse through which a great tentacled creature floats encased in crystal. Unlike the inversion of Christianity's relationship with Nazism and the demonic, such a notion of a terrible realm beyond our own does resonate with the *völkisch* concept of the god-men in that the Thule also believed in powerful god-men and a terrible realm which they wished to harness for their own gain.[79]

Having confirmed the existence of this *völkisch* other world, though, *Hellboy* then satirises and passes judgement on the Nazis believing they could harness such a power. In particular, Rasputin as Nazi occultist takes the form of the overreacher who believes he can

[78] S.T. Joshi, 'Magical Spirituality of a Lapsed Catholic', in *The Supernatural Cinema of Guillermo del Toro,* ed. by John W. Morehead (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015), pp. 11-21 (p. 18).
[79] It also evokes the work of H.P. Lovecraft, for as Joshi notes, 'the film opens with a passage from *De Vermis Mysteriis*, an imaginary book of occult lore similar to the celebrated *Necronomicon* of Abdul Alhazred, invented by Lovecraft so early as 1922. *De Vermis Mysteriis* was created by Lovecraft's young friend Robert Bloch', p. 17. He also argues that the seven gods can be compared to Cthulhu due to their tentacles and god-like power, and so parallels may be drawn between the concept of *völkisch* god-men and Lovecraftian gods.

control such forces, lifting his sleeve to proudly display the tentacles moving beneath the surface. Rasputin believes this gives him a divine form of power, but in truth it makes him a vessel or a host, his subordination demonstrated by an ending in which he fails to open the portal and his disposable flesh gives way to the tentacled monster, tearing him apart. For Joshi, the depiction of this terrible realm and power as juxtaposed with Christianity is evidence that:

> del Toro challenges viewers of his films to consider alternate worldviews or cosmologies that dispense altogether with the metaphysical tenets of the Judeo-Christian religion or any other religions of the earth. We may or may not be alone in the universe, but in del Toro's vision it is unclear whether orthodox religion can provide even a modicum of comfort to assuage the awareness of our transience and fragility in the immensity of the cosmos.[80]

Nazism may be contrasted to Christianity to demonstrate its abjection, but on this reading Nazism is also connected to religion to emphasise humanity's transience and fragility in the face of such death and destruction, in relation to which religion provides a particularly unsatisfying answer.

This analysis of the differing roles of religion as a means to understand trauma and violence in *Hellboy* supports Fry's argument that occult films 'reflect some of the deepest concerns of our culture […] These films portray the spiritual groping of our time in answer to life's conundrums. Why are we here? What happens to us when we die? Why is there evil in the world?'[81] A similar sense of philosophical musings and fundamental questions about human nature are apparent in *Hellboy*, as the first words Broom speaks are 'What makes a man a man?', words echoed in the final scene by Agent Myers. By putting this question at the heart of a horror-fantasy film, it seems that the question is more what separates man from monster, and as such ponders man's identity, purpose and morality. The answer ultimately lies not in religion, nor the supernatural, but in the Nazi ideology. Although, as Fry points out, most occult films 'include a cautionary tale element: either a suggestion that the occult practice is dangerous or an outright moral lesson to that effect', both the protagonists and antagonists of *Hellboy* belong to the world of the supernatural.[82] It is thus significant that while Hellboy is the demon we first see summoned and is the key to opening the portal, he rejects his ability to bring on the apocalypse and remains the hero. Instead Rasputin, as demonic summoner and host who tries to corrupt Hellboy, and

[80] Ibid., p. 20.
[81] Fry, p. 26.
[82] Ibid., p. 18.

the tentacular gods we see reaching towards the portal, are the true threats. Within the supernatural we therefore see three different ethical stances represented, for as Kristeva observes, 'he who denies morality is not abject; there can be grandeur in amorality and even in crime that flaunts its disrespect for the law—rebellious, liberating, and suicidal crime. Abjection, on the other hand, is immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady'.[83] Within this ideology, the larger occult forces at work seem to be portrayed as amoral because they are entirely unconcerned with humanity, while the Nazis are depicted as abject and immoral by contrast, and Hellboy makes the choice to be moral. As Agent Myers concludes, it is not a man's origins which make him a man, but the choices he makes; what makes a monster is not the supernatural, but the choice to use the supernatural to 'evil' ends, 'evil' being constructed here as that which threatens the human race. The Nazis encapsulate such a threat.

The Devil's Rock: Trauma and Identity in 21st Century New Zealand

The summoning of a demon by Nazis is also central to the lesser-known film *The Devil's Rock*. In the film two New Zealand soldiers, Ben and Joe, approach Forau Island north-east of Guernsey in the Channel Islands. The opening captions inform the audience that it is 1944, the eve of D-Day, and the soldiers have been deployed to the islands to distract Hitler's forces by attacking a German outpost. A full moon illuminates the abandoned beach as the soldiers disembark their boat, a portentous sign of the horrors that they will have to face on their mission, including both psychological and literal demons. The opening, for example, sees Ben and Joe making their way carefully through a minefield. Joe unsuccessfully tries to address Ben 'moving on', and though the event from which Ben needs to move on is later revealed to be finding his wife dead in a bombing earlier in the war, this history is left unspoken in the opening scene. As the discussion becomes increasingly heated the tension is mirrored by Ben's swifter and swifter stabs into the sand, until it culminates in Joe hearing the metallic sound of his boot connecting with a mine from which he must then slowly disengage. As such the scene moving through the minefield symbolises a careful negotiation of what is under the surface, with Ben's silence in response to Joe's questions being as meaningful as any dialogue. This stoicism and silence calls to mind Caruth's suggestion that trauma can sometimes result in 'numbing', and Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson observe of the trauma of war that 'in some extreme cases, speech is denied altogether', as was the case with 'Second World War veterans

[83] Kristeva, p. 4.

suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, such as New Zealanders interviewed by Alison Parr'.[84] This soldier's silence and the setting of the minefield are therefore inherently connected to the trauma war causes, literally and metaphorically.

The tension building within the film increases when Ben enters the German outpost as he encounters a slew of grotesque dead German soldiers whose bodies suggest something supernatural may have been at work; a body lies on the floor stripped to flesh and bones while another is propped up with a rifle impaled down its throat. Shortly afterwards the men encounter the Nazi Colonel Meyer, who shoots Joe and secures Ben by his thumbs on a hook. This form of physical torture at the hands of the Nazi is also combined with Meyer verbally abusing Ben throughout the film for his New Zealand roots. He does so in somewhat contradictory ways, at first suggesting he considers New Zealanders as lowly because they are an army of 'farmers' and 'cowards' descended from cannibals, but then he takes a different approach by arguing that they are of British descent which can be traced back to Germanic roots. Though both approaches are intended to anger Ben, one exaggerates the differences in heritage between the German and the New Zealander, while the other erases them. This is an interesting subtext to a film which was co-funded by the New Zealand Film Commission, suggesting that this may be an act of self-reflection on New Zealand's origins, history and participation in the Second World War. Thus, *The Devil's Rock* plays upon potential underlying anxieties and doubts surrounding the national identity of New Zealand and whether it successfully contributed to the end of the Second World War, or at least anxiety about how this is perceived by others.[85]

Nor is the sense of 21st century New Zealand identity depicted in *The Devil's Rock* solely impacted by the period between the country's formation and the events of the Second World War, for its cultural and political landscape has continued to shift from the 20th through to 21st century. Although much scholarly focus on the rise of the far right in recent years has focused on Europe and the US, New Zealand is not exempt from such

[84] Caruth, 'Introduction', in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 3-12 (p. 4); Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, 'Introduction: "Keep Calm and Carry On": The Cultural Memory of the Second World War in Britain', in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, ed. by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 1-24 (p. 5), drawing on Alison Parr, 'Breaking the Silence: Traumatised War Veterans and Oral History', *Oral History*, 35(1) (2007), 61-70.

[85] It should be acknowledged that this is not necessarily a sentiment representative of all New Zealanders, as other evidence suggests that many New Zealanders hold a strong national pride in their actions. Gavin McLean and Ian McGibbon, eds, *The Penguin Book of New Zealanders at War* (Auckland: Penguin, 2009), notes immediately in its preface the importance of Anzac Day during which Maori Television will be unfailingly devoted to war commemorations.

considerations. As Leonard Weinberg argues of the far right, it is often 'race not nationalism that is the organising principle for these groups' and so 'the world-view of the revolutionary right is that Aryans or whites are a beleaguered race both in the United States and on a worldview basis […] North America, Europe, South Africa and Australia/New Zealand are the natural habitats of Aryans'.[86] Indeed, although less work appears to have been conducted on right wing politics in New Zealand, it has been noted that the 1970s and 1980s proved an anxious time for the nation due to shifts in their relationship with the UK, bringing to the fore postcolonial tensions between settlers and the Māori, and for Cherie Lacey 'it is still largely the case in New Zealand that diversity is viewed as a challenge rather than an asset for social cohesion'.[87] Further work in this area may follow in the wake of the 2019 Christchurch attacks on mosques, for this appears to follow decades of interrogation of the New Zealand identity as tied to colonialism, race and multiculturalism, materialising in *The Devil's Rock* as a quite literal interrogation of Ben's character by Meyer. However, at one point Meyer proclaims to Ben 'I'm a soldier like you', and this creates a different sense of a battle of identity during war in which nationality and heritage do not matter at all and soldiers are reduced to their violent actions. Such an argument has the possible effect of either justifying Meyer's actions as similar to those of the Allies or of condemning Ben's as similar to those of the Nazis, or perhaps more complexly demonstrating how Meyer justifies his own actions whilst condemning them both. This Nazi antagonist therefore serves to evoke anxieties about nationality and identity, whether such identities are exaggerated or eroded, due to his racial and nationalistic dialogue.

Furthermore, throughout Ben's torture, female moans and screams ring out around the outpost. Once Ben is able to break away he makes it to a chamber where he finds a woman chained and presumes she too must be a victim of torture. However, it is soon revealed that Meyer is a Nazi occultist and this woman is a demon he has summoned and contained, though not before she committed terrible violence against his fellow soldiers. Amongst its supernatural powers the demon also has the ability to appear to others in different forms, and once again Ben's haunted past is evoked when the demon

[86] Leonard Weinberg, 'Violence by the Far Right: The American Experience', in *Extreme Right Wing Political Violence and Terrorism*, ed. by Max Taylor, Donald Holbrook and P.M. Currie (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 15-30 (pp. 18-19).
[87] Cherie Lacey, 'Unsettled Historiography: Postcolonial Anxiety and the Burden of the Past in *Pictures*', in *New Zealand Cinema: Interpreting the Past*, ed. by Alistair Fox, Barry Keith Grant and Hilary Radner (Bristol: Intellect, 2011), pp. 99-118 (p. 108).

appears in the form of his deceased wife Helena in order to torture and coax him. The scene is made especially uncanny as the demon emerges slowly from the shadows, making Ben question whether this means that Helena never died, whether she has returned from the dead, or whether it is a form of mimicry evoking her 'double'.[88] Indeed, his response is to reel back in disbelief, stuttering and unable to comprehend her presence after seeing her 'broken' body in the wreckage of their home which was hit by a bomb, another instance of his inability to communicate his trauma. Though marketed as 'Saw with Swastikas' on its DVD cover, that the torture in *The Devil's Rock* takes a range of forms and is not solely, or arguably even primarily, physical, complicates the resulting affect for the audience. In this respect, it is significant that Xavier Aldana Reyes suggests that in the horror genre:

> identification does not rely on the character but on their body. This body is virtually interchangeable – unless the narrative manipulates one's feelings otherwise – is often presented in close-ups and is empathically approximated so that its specificities (gender, age, race) become irrelevant to the moment of horror.[89]

In this instance, then, the narrative does manipulate the audience's response as Ben's nationality as a New Zealander and his personal background as husband and soldier are central to an understanding of his character, and the result is that the viewer is positioned empathetically with his body and his emotions. *The Devil's Rock* thus uses the figure of the Nazi and the occult monster to inflict both physical and psychological horror upon the protagonist, and upon the audience.

Once summoner and summoned are revealed Meyer and the demon take it in turns to recount the history of the islands and Hitler's connection to the occult, extensive exposition which indicates the importance of this backstory to the film. For instance, the demon warns of how powerful Hitler is becoming by referencing relics he has supposedly acquired such as the Spear and the Ark of the Covenant, as well as mentioning the Old Ones, a group similar to that depicted in *Hellboy* of powerful, god-like beings. The Nazi occultist, meanwhile, explains that he has been sent by Hitler to the Channel Islands because they have been home since medieval times to witches, creatures who have drawn power from ancient texts called the grimoires. He has in his possession one such book. The

[88] Freud, p. 357.
[89] Xavier Aldana Reyes, *Horror Film and Affect: Towards a Corporeal Model of Viewership* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), p. 167.

use of all of these references to occult myths in addition to the faux-history of the grimoires may be attempts to bolster the narrative, for as Fry argues:

> Occult paths […] furnish a frame of reference for the viewer's suspension of disbelief. The portrayal of the occult path is often inexact, usually an extrapolation of its potential to establish sensational plots rather than a totally correct representation. But the premises of the occult belief system on which the film is based frame the plot.[90]

This observation can be extended to *The Devil's Rock* in which the use of witchcraft and its connection to Nazism is simultaneously detailed and inexact. As Kurlander's research indicates, the SS witch researchers actually believed that 'witches were the "guarantors of German faith" and "natural healers" from the oldest Germanic sagas. By accusing so-called witches of consorting with the Devil, the Church could criminalize the practice of German religion (and culture) and justify the murder of its spiritual leaders'.[91] Thus, witchcraft was researched by the Nazis, but it was used in connection with their Aryanism to suggest that such witches were not supernatural or Satanists, but instead connected to ancient Germanic roots as good and wise people. Like the inverted connection drawn between demonic figures and Aryanism seen in these Nazi occult films, the fear of the Nazis' interest in the occult has persisted, but the understanding of how and why the Nazis drew upon the occult has shifted.

The Devil's Rock and the Fear of the Female Monster

The occult background given in *The Devil's Rock* makes the monster which is summoned a liminal and hybrid creature, as she draws upon the mythologies of demon, witch and succubus. For example, although the monster is summoned from within the grimoire, at the same time she seems associated with witchcraft, or even like a witch herself, due to her female form and supernatural powers. Creed has offered some thoughts on woman as monstrous-feminine witch, the monstrous-feminine being 'what it is about woman that is shocking, terrifying, horrific, abject' as often constructed in the horror film.[92] She considers the history of witchcraft in which 'witches were accused, among other things, of copulating with the devil, causing male impotence, causing the penis to disappear and of stealing men's penises – the latter crimes no doubt exemplify male fears of castration'.[93] Although these accusations reflected more upon the patriarchal society of that time than the

[90] Fry, p. 18.
[91] Kurlander, p. 165.
[92] Creed, p. 1.
[93] Ibid., p. 75.

accused women, the torture of witches inevitably led to confessions of such crimes, which in turn 'would have added further to popular mythology about the depraved and monstrous nature of woman's sexual appetites'.[94] Creed draws on films such as *Suspiria* (Dario Argento, 1977) to argue that 'in the horror film, the representation of the witch continues to foreground her essentially sexual nature. She is usually depicted as a monstrous figure with supernatural powers and a desire for evil'.[95] This is a statement which resonates with the monster of *The Devil's Rock*, as in the form of Helena the monster often bares her shoulder and body in an effort to seduce Ben, while her true form is a red-skinned and horned, nude woman with an extreme appetite for flesh which could be construed as both literal and sexual. This is perhaps why James J. Ward uses the term 'succubus' when he mentions *The Devil's Rock* amongst other examples of Nazi horror.[96] However, while the monster does indeed seem to use her sexuality in her guise as soldiers' wives, the term succubus suggests that she feeds through sex. Not only is this not the case, but such a label seems somewhat reductive as it positions her as a solely sexual creature and lacks consideration of the many different occult mythologies this monster draws on such as witch and demon, which indicate myriad anxieties about both women and the Nazis.

As to the creature's role as demon, Creed has also linked the monstrous-feminine to horror and the devil when discussing *The Exorcist* and films such as *The Brood* (David Cronenberg, 1979). The former prompts Creed to opine that 'the devil of *The Exorcist*, the monster who possesses Regan, is female and far from "innocent"'.[97] *The Brood*, on the other hand, is part of a long line of representation as 'the uterus was frequently drawn with horns to demonstrate its supposed association with the devil'.[98] This analysis draws attention to the perceived dangers of the female body, and on the one hand the red-skinned, nude body of the demon in *The Devil's Rock* may suggest an abject fear of woman's especially close relationship with nature due to her reproductive role, 'the abject or demoniacal potential of the feminine'.[99] Conversely, the many protruding horns may be considered phallic and thus representative of monstrous female power and the fear of castration. In either instance the depiction of the Nazis' pursuit of occult powers is used to

[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., p. 76.
[96] James J. Ward, p. 61.
[97] Creed, p. 39.
[98] Ibid., p. 43.
[99] Kristeva, p. 65.

portray woman as dangerous. Furthermore, Colonel Meyer frequently refers to the monster as 'demon bitch' or 'whore', while the film's marketing has the strapline 'war is a bitch' accompanying images either of the nude demon, or the demon in Helena's form wearing a Nazi jacket open over her bare chest. This marketing aligns the figure of the female monster with Nazism and with war itself. I would therefore argue that the mythologies of witches and demons evoked in *The Devil's Rock* not only relate to the history of the Nazis' interest in the occult, but also that they are gendered in order to express anxieties about women. The figure of the woman is used in *The Devil's Rock* as a warning, of vulnerable women left alone at home, of women taking up active and dangerous roles, and/or of women as sexual beings. These are arguably long-held anxieties that can be traced from the present day back to the Second World War and beyond, and so the evocation of the Second World War is perhaps an engagement with one historical iteration of anxieties about women, but more likely is a means through which to channel fears regarding women which persist in the 21st century.

Yet the use of marketing to suggest that the demon of *The Devil's Rock* is a Nazi, or is associated with human conflict, does not entirely align with the representation of the demon within the film. Despite being summoned by Colonel Meyer the demon's dialogue suggests dislike or disdain for his Nazism. In one exchange she at first makes promises, coaxing 'Release me, and the forces I serve will grant you powers beyond your wildest dreams'. When Meyer dismisses her by responding 'So said Lucifer in the desert to Our Lord Jesus Christ', she replies, 'Ah! Surely that holy name turns to poison in your mouth, Nazi'. This is an interesting exchange in which Nazism is connected to Christianity only for a demonic figure to mock that connection, a condemnation which emphasises the distinction between these two different monsters and shows them to be in opposition to one another. Furthermore, it is significant that, as with the efforts to use the occult in *Hellboy*, such power cannot be harnessed successfully by the Nazis. Meyer is initially safe from the demon while he possesses one of the pages from the grimoire, but when Ben takes the page the Nazi's role changes rapidly from powerful summoner to vulnerable victim. He is caught by the demon, her jaw distending until she fits his entire head in her mouth and gruesomely decapitates him. This is not only a scene of abject female appetite, then, but also serves to separate the horrors posed by the occult from the horrors posed by Nazism. Nazism is once again aligned with the occult only for it to be satirised and mocked, suggesting Nazism is a 'lesser', more banal evil than occult forces. Above all, though, *The Devil's Rock* represents Nazism as the folly of humanity rather than the otherworldly.

Nazi Vengeance and the Akashic Records: Transnational Traumatic Reincarnations

A last film to consider briefly as regards the demonic Nazi occult is *Nazi Vengeance*. The narrative, which takes place in modern-day Britain, centres on four friends, Ralph, Andrea, Claudia and Lucas, as they set out to the British countryside in order to understand the intrusive nightmares Ralph has been having about the Second World War. This journey is immediately linked to the occult as Claudia uses a book with a pentagram on it in order to help Ralph access his 'akashic records', a theosophic and anthroposophic concept, which the film states 'allow you to look back into an ancient, mystical library and see what karmic debts' need to be cleared. With Claudia's help Ralph recognises the village of Plumpton in one of his visions, and when they visit the village the past increasingly blurs with the present as intrusive hallucinations of military aircraft and people wearing war-time clothing are interjected into and are layered over images of the present-day. It is slowly revealed that these are flashbacks and that the four young people are reincarnates of the war-time citizens Ralph keeps seeing, and most importantly Ralph is shown to have been a Nazi who visited Plumpton on a dark mission. The conceit of a British man having been a Nazi in a past life suggests a transnational trauma, in which the 'evil' committed during the Second World War radiates out beyond the perpetrators to condemn other countries and further generations. In a further twist, it is revealed that Ralph and his friends are not the only ones to draw on the occult to understand the past and present, as a badly burned victim of the Second World War seeks vengeance. The nameless man is first seen in a dark room littered with skulls and occult symbols, where he calls on powers to help him in his mission. Although a demon is not explicitly shown, it is suggested that a demonic influence is used to locate the four young people so that he can torture them. Once again, then, the occult as portrayed in *Nazi Vengeance* is almost a neutral force, used to aid both the protagonists and the 'villain' of the piece. In the Nazi occult horror film it is the occult which remains constant, while past and present, hero and villain, good and evil are intertwined in shifting and complicated ways.

Conclusions

As this last example makes clear, these three films, with their different settings and stories, can be brought together by their depiction of Nazis, demons and witchcraft, and in particular through their shared representation of ancient occult texts. The use of occult texts is not in itself a new element within the horror genre. As Kawin argues, the ancient text is a common trope in which 'the information in old books and manuscripts is more

reliable than conventional scientific information, for it comes from the sciences practiced by alchemists and wizards. The student of old, sometimes occult texts is usually a substantial authority figure in supernatural movies'.[100] Kawin's analysis resonates with the 21st century Nazi horror film in which scholars of the occult may be antagonists like Colonel Meyer and Grigori Rasputin, or protagonists like Professor Broom, but all draw upon occult texts to evidence and explain the Nazis' interest in the occult to the audience. Furthermore, this emphasis on the occult text can be used to distinguish these films from the more modern horror of Nazi scientists I will discuss in Chapter Three. However, the way in which these texts are portrayed indicates not just that they are ancient, but that they are dangerous due to their association with the occult. For example, both the grimoire of *The Devil's Rock* and the guide to past life regression in *Nazi Vengeance* are bound in black and emblazoned with occult symbols, both of which connote darkness and danger. In the sequence in which the grimoire is discovered in the former, the opening of the book is accompanied by a sudden burst of fraught music, with increasingly loud chanting as the pages turn revealing images of devils and skeletons which are alternated with images of dead bodies surrounding the reader. *De Vermis Mysteriis* in *Hellboy*, meanwhile, already has an intertextual connotation as an occult text from the work of Robert Bloch. These types of texts therefore relate to the 'forbidden text', defined by Kawin as 'one we are not meant to open, and we may feel drawn to or repelled by […] The person who reads it and perhaps acts on it is usually destroyed'.[101] Indeed, the occult texts in the Nazi horror subgenre are marked both visually and aurally as ominous, whilst the use of close-ups create a sense of reluctant fascination, and often the texts lead to the Nazis' destruction. A distinction therefore needs to be made between the Nazis who possess monstrous texts and the monsters contained within them as these films demonstrate the two are not necessarily aligned. As Kingsepp also observes, representations of the occult are often connected to hubris, 'represented by the arrogance of the Nazis, who profess superiority in all things and proclaim the right to rule in all matters racial, social, military, and political'.[102] This is their downfall, but also the reason this horror continues to recur, for there is a sense that their arrogance is so great that they cannot recognise defeat and will be tempted by the possibility of power again and again, a message created both within individual narratives and within the corpus of films as a whole.

[100] Kawin, p. 108.
[101] Ibid., p. 9.
[102] Kingsepp, p. 37.

In the case of witchcraft and demons, these films reinforce that Nazism is a human evil, not an otherworldly one. Such a conclusion counters a frequent criticism of the representation of Nazism in popular culture, which is that the emphasis on the connection between Nazism and supernatural monsters such as demons and witches is detrimental to an understanding of the actual crimes the Nazis committed. For instance, Glenn Ward takes the stance that *Hellboy* partakes 'in sensationalist caricatures of Nazism as the paradigm of unfathomable evil, rather than as a brutal political ideology arising at a specific sociohistorical conjuncture'.[103] Yet by exploring the relationship between occult forces and the Nazis in these 21st century horror films, and finding in each instance that demonology and witchcraft do not serve the Nazis' purposes, there is a sense that the Nazis are not agents of 'unfathomable evil' but rather bathetic or banal by comparison. This is not quite the realistic and brutal representation that Ward seems to suggest would be most fitting, but I would argue is more nuanced than a 'caricature'. Furthermore, as Kawin observes, 'demons bring out the worst in people, but the worst is already there, the part of human nature that has created figures who represent its evil, figures as ancient as Satan'.[104] A reading of representations of the Nazis' pursuit of occult powers, and in particular the summoning of demons, as the unequivocal source of the Nazis' evil rather than one of its symptoms is at best an oversimplification, and at worst a foundational misunderstanding. Instead, occult forces in the 21st century Nazi horror film have a complicated relationship with Nazism concerning national and personal trauma caused by war, at times working through the struggle to find closure in the face of the particular human evil of the Nazis, at others emphasising the sense of a greater and inescapable horror at work in the world.

Necromancy

Necromancy as Witchcraft in *Unholy*: The Trauma beneath the American Domestic

Another area of the occult closely intertwined with demonology and black magic is 'necromancy', a somewhat contested term that is of note here because it is mentioned explicitly in the Nazi horror film *Unholy*. Historically, the word necromancy has been used as a synonym for demonology, for as Sophie Page notes, 'in the thirteenth century discussions of appropriate and inappropriate magic […] used necromancy as a critical label for all illicit rituals directed to spirits', and due to this 'association with "illicitness",

[103] Glenn Ward, p. 26.
[104] Kawin, p. 94.

necromancy began to be more specifically applied to experiments, texts, or manuals which involved conjuring demons'.[105] This particular definition might suggest that *Unholy* should be discussed in connection with films such as *Hellboy* and *The Devil's Rock*. However, *Unholy* overtly uses the term necromancy and does not depict any demons, which suggests that this is not the specific definition of necromancy which the film draws upon. Instead, in *Unholy* a tale is told about the necromancer and one character immediately responds, 'a witch?!', suggesting that necromancy as used in *Unholy* is an alternative expression for black magic as a whole. In this respect the concept of necromancy is not unconnected to films such as *The Devil's Rock* which refers to witchcraft, but within this broad understanding of magic *Unholy* then has its own specific depiction of occult powers such as time travel and mind control, in which it is unique. It is therefore important to consider this evocation of necromancy in its own right, in order to understand why this particular film focuses on these particular acts of black magic. Although the 'witch' in question is a Nazi there is no reference in the work of Fry, Kurlander, Black, or Goodrick-Clarke to necromancy. This absence not only reinforces that necromancy may be difficult to define, but suggests that unlike other depictions of the Nazis' interest in the occult there is no specific point of reference in historical actuality, a difference which needs to be explored. By devoting separate analysis to *Unholy* it is possible to consider what its interpretation of necromancy may reveal about 21st century fears and trauma when it is connected to Nazism.

Unholy opens with a woman, Martha, returning to find her daughter, Hope, in the cellar of their home threatening to commit suicide. Despite Martha's efforts Hope shoots herself, her last words being the ominous warning 'beware the experiment', and so begins a mother's quest to understand why her daughter was driven to take her own life. As Martha and her son Lucas dig deeper they find recordings Hope made of her terrified ramblings about a necromancer, prompting the recurring question of whether this necromancer is a real person or a folklore bogeyman. Their search for answers shortly leads them to the home of Gertrude, an elderly woman dismissed as being insane but who seems well-informed about the necromancer. This character resonates with the idea of the Nazi occult being an uncanny 'underground' or cryptohistory, as the secrets about the necromancer take the form of a purposefully 'hidden' conspiracy which few know the truth

[105] Sophie Page, 'Medieval Magic', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Witchcraft and Magic*, ed. by Owen Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 29-64 (p. 49).

about and struggle to bring 'to light'.[106] She tells them that the necromancer's name was Lester Kraus, a Nazi from the Second World War who used black magic to pursue the Unholy Trinity: time travel, invisibility and mind control. I would argue that, of these forms of black magic, time travel and mind control are particularly significant for two reasons. First, they create an uncanny effect as they bring the previously repressed fears of 'the omnipotence of thoughts and the technique of magic' into the 21st century.[107] Secondly, they relate to the experiences of trauma stemming from the Second World War. For example, the trope of time travel can be a way of expressing how the horrors of the Second World War have impacted on the world today, creating a sense that trauma knows no historical bounds, and connecting to Caruth's understanding of trauma, drawn from Freud, in which trauma is caused by 'a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind's experience of time'.[108] Similarly, mind control is closely connected to memory, and so can be construed as a comment on the ways in which past trauma may be remembered, unconsciously or purposefully misremembered, or forgotten entirely. Thus, although the exploration of these necromantic powers has less basis in historical actuality compared to other areas of occultism which the Nazis were purportedly interested in, they resonate most strongly with Lux's argument that the supernatural can be a way of dealing with trauma, a device through which to explore and express its complexities.

The film is full of plot twists and turns, however, and Kraus's status as necromancer is questioned at times. For instance, one character argues that Kraus was a scientist, not a witch, and that the misunderstanding issued from his science being ahead of his time and thus beyond comprehension. This creates a potential parallel to so-called 'witches' being historically persecuted for practising medicine and science which was misunderstood as 'magic', which, as previously mentioned, has been framed as a feminist issue by Creed. Notably, though, in *Unholy* the evocation of witchcraft does not relate to gender and does not operate as a demonisation of an otherwise innocent act; necromancer or scientist Kraus is still a villain. Furthermore, that the elements of the Unholy Trinity are time travel, mind control and invisibility could, if framed through an emphasis on science rather than magic, all belong to what Kurlander refers to as the 'border-sciences'. Yet beyond the use of the word 'experiment' these acts are not connected to any notable symbols of science;

[106] Freud, p. 345.
[107] Ibid., p. 362.
[108] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 63.

there are no scientific explanations or jargon, no laboratory or medical equipment which, as I will argue in Chapter Three, are recurring and important dialogue and images in Nazi science horror. Martha's brainwashing seems to consist of her being strapped to a chair and listening to an ominous record which when slowed sounds like a man's voice, a process which does not seem obviously scientific *or* magical. The argument that Kraus was merely a human scientist who has since died, meanwhile, seems to be undermined by the conclusion of the film. Kraus emerges from the shadows, his image precisely as the folklore had painted him earlier in the film complete with long claws and a swastika within a triangle on his forehead. This styling, combined with his apparent return from the dead, suggests that Kraus may well be considered an occult necromancer, a final twist which has the power to revert the narrative's source of the supernatural from science back to the occult. Thus, although there is some ambiguity in the film and the theme of Nazi science demands further exploration, I would argue that *Unholy* suggests that the occult remains a possible, and perhaps the most important, explanation behind the Unholy Trinity.

The Nazis are not the only political party implicated in the film's discussion of the occult, however, as another twist reveals that Martha herself has been continuing Kraus's work for the American government. She has been testing time travel on her daughter, invisibility on her son, and mind control on herself, brainwashing her own psyche so that knowledge of the Unholy Trinity will be buried and kept safe. From the beginning of the film the involvement of the American government is foreshadowed, as Gertrude is first introduced shouting, 'don't let your babies join the army, they don't know what they're fighting for'. It is significant that it is unclear which particular conflict Gertrude is referring to, as within the context of the film this may be a reference to the Second World War, but as a film released in the 21st century may equally be about more recent conflicts. In this sense *Unholy* may be placed alongside other horror films such as *28 Weeks Later* (Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, 2007) which Jon Towlson identifies as being concerned with US involvement in foreign conflicts, and which having 'dealt allegorically with the War on Terror—particularly the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq—highlighted the shortcomings of the Bush administration and its militaristic foreign policy'.[109] By bringing together the themes of war and horror, of Nazism and necromancy, of 20th and 21st century, *Unholy* is similarly critical of the State during times of conflict. This anti-war rhetoric is then

[109] Jon Towlson, *Subversive Horror Cinema: Countercultural Messages of Films from Frankenstein to the Present* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014), p. 211.

connected to Martha, who puts her unsuspecting family through great suffering in the name of Uncle Sam, her patriotic discourse contrasting with Gertrude's protests.

Martha's actions contribute to a sense of paranoia created on multiple levels throughout the film, as characters come to distrust their country, their family, and their own minds. Though ostensibly about a Nazi necromancer, the film is also an indictment of the American government, and of the American family. The sense that secrets and past traumas can impact on family life is supported by a particular emphasis on the domestic as the film begins and ends in Martha's basement, a symbolic space underneath the seemingly benign suburban home. It is in her cellar that Martha accidentally shoots her own son, who with his dying breath reveals to Hope that Martha has been working on the Unholy Trinity. As a result Hope kills her mother, and then Hope kills herself, completing a grim cycle. Gertrude is also shown living in a home like Martha's, but a dilapidated version with walls pasted with newspaper clippings, mise-en-scène which may usually signify that this is a frightening and unsafe space. However, these parallel spaces demonstrate the real source of horror in *Unholy*, as the Gothic and decrepit home of Gertrude which might traditionally be seen as a site of horror is actually the place in which the truth is revealed, while Martha's home is the dangerous space precisely because of its seeming normality. Thus, *Unholy* uses necromancy to connect Nazism to a tale of horror inflicted by an obviously horrific Nazi as well as the less immediately recognisable monster hiding in the form of an American mother.[110]

An Alternative Definition: Necromancy as the Raising of the Dead

An understanding of necromancy as primarily meaning witchcraft is therefore a central premise in *Unholy*, within which analysis of the specific necromantic powers and those who enact them helps us to understand how the film interacts with the lasting ramifications of trauma. However, there is another potential meaning of necromancy which is alluded to in *Unholy*, a definition which has both potential similarities and differences when considering how the Nazi occult horror film depicts trauma. This alternative understanding of necromancy also stems from the historical definition given by Page in which black magic appeals to 'spirits', as Michelle Belanger explains that 'in modern magick, the term

[110] This may also relate more widely to the frequent demonisation of the mother in American horror films. Such demonisation can be traced back to a shift in the 1970s during which the American family, having been 'generally revered as a positive icon of "normal" human society, […] underwent severe assault', Tony Williams, *Hearths of Darkness: The Family in the American Horror Film* (London: Associated University Press, 1996), p. 13.

necromancy has come to indicate a method of magick that harnesses the dead—usually in body as well as soul'.[111] This definition therefore suggests that the connection of necromancy with the raising of the dead may be the most common usage in the 21st century. In *Unholy* it thus seems significant that Hope refers to her missing father in a recording, saying 'people leave, but it doesn't mean they can't come back'. It is said that her father vanished, and Martha erects a gravestone for him which Hope finds a premature action, but the phrase 'come back' framed within the occult and necromancy seems to hint that even if her father were to be dead he may not be gone forever. This is reinforced by an even more explicit reference to the return of the dead when Gertrude's husband Charlie professes that he believes the dead can come back, which may also inflect our understanding of Kraus's supposed return from the dead at the conclusion of the film. Thus, while not the primary focus of the film, the representation of necromancy in *Unholy* seems connected to the return of the dead, and this then links the film to *Blood Creek* and the *Puppet Master* series which both depict Nazi occultists attempting to revive the dead. It is therefore an increasingly complicated, but necessary, undertaking to try to understand what necromancy may be in relation to Nazism and the occult, how it is represented in the Nazi horror film, and why it is represented in the 21st century.

It should be noted here that the occult practice of raising the dead may appear to overlap with the following chapter which discusses Nazi zombies, but there are key differences which suggest these types of monster can be profitably separated. Work on the Nazi monster thus far demonstrates how these areas may blur together, as Abu Sarah refers to the villain in *Blood Creek* as an 'undead super-soldier' which is an equally applicable term for other Nazi zombies, but this is not an especially useful description as it lacks nuance.[112] Though a fine line, what distinguishes these monsters from those I will discuss in the next chapter is the ways in which they come to be 'undead'. I would argue that this focus on typologies of the undead is essential in understanding how and why different myths have become attached to Nazism. For instance, Wirth in *Blood Creek* has achieved extreme longevity and raises the undead through particular occult rituals, and

[111] Michelle Belanger, *The Dictionary of Demons: Names of the Damned* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 2010), p. 73. She also notes here that 'taken literally, necromancy is a method of divination that makes use of the dead', and this is reflected in most dictionary definitions, but as Belanger continues, necromancy 'tends to have much darker connotations than simple methods of spirit communication'.

[112] Abu Sarah, p. 73. This is similar to Glenn Ward's reference to Kroenen in *Hellboy* as 'part of a Nazi-zombie tradition stretching from *Shock Waves* (Ken Wiederhorn, 1974)', p. 24, which I would also argue effaces the differences between different types of undead monster.

Puppet Master refers to potions and demon lords, while those creatures that are raised in the Nazi zombie film have different origins in scientific experiments or draugar-like curses. The emphasis in the Nazi occult horror film is therefore on the necromancer, which locates the horror within quite a different monster, or at least within the occult processes. Thus, although necromantic monsters may be uncanny and abject in similar ways to Nazi zombies in drawing attention to a liminal space between 'heimlich' life and 'unheimlich' death, the role of black magic to raise the dead is significant and needs to be explored in its own right to understand the particularities of Nazi horror. Lastly, this distinction between zombies and the occult undead is important because it opens up a discussion of the animation of other 'dead' flesh, as in *Puppet Master*, which offers a significant avenue of exploration.

The *Puppet Master* 'Axis Trilogy' and (Re)animation: More than a Caricature?

The *Puppet Master* series deserves mention here in regard to the intertwined concepts of witchcraft, necromancy and summoning the dead, as amongst its many entries the films *Puppet Master: Axis of Evil* (David DeCoteau, 2010), *Puppet Master: Axis Rising* (Charles Band, 2012) and *Puppet Master: Axis Termination* (Charles Band, 2017), sometimes referred to as the 'Axis trilogy', feature Nazi occult sub-plots. The introduction of the Nazi sub-plot can be traced back to the earlier entry *Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge* (David DeCoteau, 1991) in the 20th century, but has increasingly become the focus of these most recent films in the 21st century. Indeed, despite the many films released between the two, *Axis of Evil* resumes the plot during the Second World War where *Toulon's Revenge* begins, recapping the tale of André Toulon for the audience using a mixture of narration and archival footage. The owner of a collection of puppets which can move by themselves, Toulon is said to be on the run from the Nazis as one of his puppet shows mocked Hitler, but the puppets also gained the attention of the Nazis as they wanted the secrets behind his magic. *Axis of Evil* therefore begins with Toulon's death, in which he commits suicide rather than having his work fall into the hands of the Nazis, and then follows American protagonist Danny who takes ownership of the puppets and with their help foils a Nazi plot to blow up an arms factory. This reboot of the Nazi sub-plot emphasises that the occult is a neutral force, which in this instance is used by the protagonists for good. At the conclusion, however, one puppet falls into the hands of the Axis powers, and it is here that *Axis Rising* begins. *Axis Rising* centres on the antagonist Commandant Moebius, a man obsessed with the occult and magic. Moebius recounts the previously established mythology which lies behind the series of films, in which the magic responsible for the puppets' animation is an elixir which can give or return life, the knowledge of which was derived from an ancient

scroll stolen from an Egyptian demon lord. These origins emphasise that the magic is Other as it is non-Western, while the ancient nature of the scroll is reinforced as it is said to pre-date 'magic, dreams [and] nightmares'. In *Axis Rising* necromancy and Nazism are thus important concepts which are intertwined as a means of demonstrating the horrific results when such an elixir falls into the wrong hands.

The results are experiments in reviving the dead so that the Nazi forces can be populated by undying bodies, and when these are unsuccessful (to the extent that the dead rise only to have their faces melt away in an abject disintegration of flesh) the Nazis turn to creating their own magically animated puppets. The puppets they create are named Bombshell, an Ilsa Koch-like figure from a long tradition of sexualised representation in Nazisploitation, Blitzkrieg, a gasmask combined with a tank, and Wermacht, a werewolf wearing a Nazi uniform. These may at first seem like reductive caricatures, not least because they are toys, and no less reductive caricatures are the humans represented in the film, including Nazis who are signified simply by their uniform and accents, Japanese characters, including a geisha, as well as a puppet named Kamikaze, and an American protagonist who shouts the words 'never screw with America!'. However, each of the Nazi puppets connect with other types of monsters which I will explore throughout this thesis, their names symbolise destruction and death as they are linked to Nazi war weaponry, military tactics and the armed forces respectively, and they constitute a real threat as they maul and kill. The Nazi soldiers may be dismissed as one-dimensional villains, but they are also a real source of horror as they are at times connected to necrophilia, a dark subtext regarding their fetishisation of the dead that is revealed by expressions such as 'do what you want with the body' or referring to 'playing' with bodies. Furthermore, their dangerous intent is left ominously open at the conclusion of the film as one of the Nazi doctors still holds the serum in the penultimate shot. Lastly, although Danny's patriotism, signalled by his desperation to serve and jealousy of his brother going into the forces, may seem to contrast with analysis of an anti-conflict message within the Nazi necromancer film *Unholy*, its overtness borders on the ridiculous and as such the representation of nationalities and nationalism in *Puppet Master* could be considered as satirical.

The last film in the 'Axis trilogy', *Puppet Master: Axis Termination*, continues in much the same vein. The narrative continues immediately after the events of *Axis Rising*, and features the same puppets. The characters are swiftly replaced with a similarly patriotic American, Corporal Saunders, and a pair of Nazi villains. However, this last instalment also adds several new characters who reinforce the importance of the occult

with significant effect. The audience are introduced to Allies Dr Ivan Ivanov, Doctor of Theology with psychic powers, his daughter Elisa who has psychic visions in her dreams, and the Nazi villains Gerde Ernst and Steiner Krabke whose powers enable them to read minds and inflict pain respectively. Those associated with the occult are Othered whether they belong to the Allied or Axis forces, for even Dr Ivanov and his daughter play upon Russian and Eastern mysticism in comparison to American Saunders who acts as the sceptic uninvolved with the occult, but this range of characters nevertheless reinforces the previous films' sense that the occult can be drawn upon for either good or evil. In particular, it does so by emphasising that the puppets always require a 'master', a reference to the title of the series which in turn alludes to the idea that the occult is something that needs to be harnessed, and which once again the Nazis fail to do. The additional emphasis on the occult is also used in *Axis Termination* to explore trauma, as Elisa's psychic dreams show her Saunders' time fighting in the war in which he sustained both physical and psychological scars. He refers to 'combat fatigue', a way in which the film acknowledges post-traumatic stress disorder and how it was referred to during the Second World War with less understanding than we have today. In this respect, the occult operates in the film as a way of uncovering this trauma which has been repressed, resonating with both a description of traumatic intrusive dreams (though these are experienced by Elisa rather than Saunders) and the concept of the occult as a way to make sense of political and personal turmoil. *Puppet Master: Axis Termination* is thus a continuation of many of the same themes and messages from the previous films, but its focus on the occult makes even clearer the connection between the occult and trauma.

Trauma Made Explicit and Extreme in the *Puppet Master* Reboot

Even more recently, the *Puppet Master* series has undergone a change of production company, and with it, a change to its mythology. *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* (Sonny Laguna and Tommy Wiklund) was released in 2018 in association with Fangoria, and though its creator Charles Band remains a producer demonstrating some continuity, as its title suggests this incarnation of the franchise shifts to focus on the Nazi occult even more heavily and with an overtly comedic approach. For example, the opening sequence of the film recasts central character André Toulon as a Nazi villain complete with disfigured face, fedora, the style of glasses associated with Himmler and a German accent. The film begins in a bar in Texas, 1989, where Toulon encounters a lesbian couple. When they kiss in front of him he exclaims 'disgusting homosexuals' and storms out, unleashing his puppets to eliminate them just as they discuss the possibility of having a child together. His suggested

Nazism is then confirmed through a series of illustrations tracing his journey to Germany. In stark colours of black and red Toulon is shown approaching the Nazis, hat in hand, and unleashing his puppets on a hiding and presumably Jewish family. The puppets eviscerate then burn the family, images with a disturbing impact despite the illustrated format, setting a precedent in the film for explicit references to the Nazis' hate crimes. In the present day a convention is held on the anniversary of his 'death' where his puppets will be sold, but instead it descends into a massacre of 'undesirables' as protagonist Edgar realises too late. The puppets kill Jewish, black, 'gypsy' and gay victims, targeting men, women and children alike, including the gruesome killing of a foetus. Indeed, the deaths are designed to be abject as one puppet burrows into flesh and bones, another decapitating a man in the bathroom so that he urinates onto his own severed head. The convention being held at a hotel means that the film uses the hotel rooms as a series of vignettes, each with a new type of victim and new and horrifying death.

All of these images have the potential to horrify, shock and exploit, and have been marketed as such. One poster declares the film 'uproarious' and includes comic actor Thomas Lennon's casting as a central selling point. Yet the film combines these abject images with numerous contemplations of hate crimes and modern Jewish identity. One Jewish couple, immediately signified by the wearing of a kippah, contemplate why they are even at the convention, with the husband offering the explanation that 'lots of Jewish people collect Nazi memorabilia' as both a 'reminder' but also a form of 'empowerment'. This is a line which seems to seriously engage with remembrance of the Holocaust by the Jewish community, but it is then immediately undermined by the Kaiser puppet burning him alive, a shocking juxtaposition which suggests that he has achieved no such empowerment. Similarly, Edgar's friend Markowitz discusses his Jewish identity throughout the film, referring to his great-grandfather as a Holocaust survivor, praying over a menorah to act as bait for the puppets, and on his death bed asking to be remembered as 'a great Jewish hero'. The occult magic, meanwhile, is connected to Nazism during a tour of Toulon's home by situating the papyrus scrolls, which are the source of his occult power, alongside volumes from the private library of Adolf Eichmann, the man responsible for inventing the Final Solution, as the film explicitly notes. Again, this juxtaposition has the effect of connecting the occult to a very dark reality, yet in the same film there is a puppet called Junior Führer which is depicted as a baby doll with a Hitler moustache. *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* creates a complicated engagement with the Nazi atrocities as seen from the present day. In some ways it strikes a similar tone to *Fantacide*, a

purposefully shocking backlash against widely held social norms which might dictate a more 'respectful' treatment of such subject matter, or even dictate that such matters should not be represented in a horror film at all. In other ways it differs due to its engagement with Jewish identity and a clearer alignment of the audience with innocent protagonists in opposition to Nazi antagonists.

Of the protagonist Edgar, the film focuses not on his identity as any minority, but instead begins by situating him in a family trauma. His relationship with his father is shown to be fraught as he moves back home following a divorce, whilst it is suggested that his brother died when young in a mysterious accident. As Edgar explores his brother's old room and unearths a box of toys there is a sense of childhood nostalgia, and it is here that he finds one of Toulon's puppets. As he later suggests, the idea of using occult puppets as a weapon during the Second World War was likely due to their ability to infiltrate the homes of children, and so the occult Nazi threat is particularly located in the domestic as a monstrous threat to the innocent. This narrative relates to Kristeva's notion that 'the abjection of Nazi crime reaches its apex when death, which, in any case, kills me, interferes with what, in my living universe, is supposed to save me from death: childhood, science, among other things'.[113] Nazi crime is inherently abject for Kristeva, but especially so when it interferes with the sacred notion of childhood. Edgar concludes that the puppet must have killed his brother, and so his own family trauma stems from the Nazis. While the film focuses on the way in which these puppets can threaten the American home in particular, reinforced by the image of Toulon arriving at Ellis Island during the opening credits, the setting of the convention has the effect of bringing together people from all over the world with the explanation that the puppets had been shipped globally. The focus remains on couples, children and even pregnant mothers as the victims, but the convention demonstrates that this extends beyond the American family. As the film ends, Toulon himself has risen from the dead in a rotting skeletal form, inflicting more personal trauma on Edgar by killing the woman he loves, before disappearing into the forest, at large to cause death and destruction once more. With this rebooted and reimagined mythology and yet another open ending, the *Puppet Master* series connects Nazism to the occult and necromancy to demonstrate that war, conflict and violence continue to rise again and again, a fitting message for its reanimated and undying monster and the very nature of a series, which includes thirteen films and counting.

[113] Kristeva, p. 4.

***Blood Creek*: The Trauma of War beneath the American Rural**

A particularly American trauma is at stake in the Nazi horror film *Blood Creek*. The importance of an American setting is signalled immediately by the opening of the film – a long shot of a bleak landscape shot in a washed-out sepia with a caption stating that this is West Virginia in 1936. The film then focuses on a farm run by the Wollners, a German emigrant family, and the camera shifts in focus from the barbed wire surrounding their property to an immense house in the background. This is not an innocent and picturesque farm, then, as is further reinforced by the representation of the slaughter of a pig. Though the film is edited so as to cut away from the death, the screams ring out across the farm, and the body of the pig then hangs dripping with blood in the foreground. Outside of the farm the film pans past prisoners carrying out hard labour by the river. This series of images in muted colours combined with the use of shifting focus emphasises that there is something dark and Gothic underlying the rural American landscape. As the camera pans across the fields a voiceover tells the audience that 'in his early thirties Adolf Hitler became obsessed with the occult'. This filmic technique has the effect of connecting the Nazi occult to the setting of West Virginia and suggests that part of the Gothic looming threat is that of war, and more than this, of the supernatural. This threat is soon realised by the entry of a German scholar named Wirth, sent to the Wollners' home with an occult mission. When the film returns to the house in the present day it is run down and ominous, locating the Gothic threat not just in a rural location but in the domestic. It seems the family home has become haunted by the terrible events which have occurred in the interim, a potentially uncanny phenomenon, for as Freud observes, 'some languages in use to-day can only render the German expression "an *unheimlich* house" by "a *haunted* house"'.[114] Yet the Wollners' home is haunted by something much more visceral than a ghost, and its fences and windows are painted with bloody symbols through which red light filters. The Wollners are still there, but they are unable to age and are in stasis; they have become its prisoners.

It is in the present day that we are first introduced to the protagonist Evan as he attends a violent crime in his role as a medic. A man lies on the ground with blood spurting from his neck while a woman staggers around holding a knife, and it is swiftly revealed that the caravan in the background is a methamphetamine factory which then explodes. What is notable about this scene is Evan's lack of reaction, which suggests that these events are

[114] Freud, p. 364. Though discussed by Freud as a limitation of translation, it also places the haunted house as 'perhaps the most striking of all' examples, an example which remains even as other nuances may be lost.

commonplace in modern day 'backwoods' America, a setting comparable to the areas of financial deprivation seen in *Ratline*. Here it is state resources such as policing and medical services which have become woefully inadequate, and so in its laissez-faire framing, its brevity and its nonplussed protagonist, *Blood Creek* offers a casual critique of this 21st century neoliberal context. Evan's story is then linked to his brother, Viktor, who went missing two years previous just after his return from the Iraq War. Evan presumes him to be dead, to the extent that he has a gravestone erected in the hopes that it will provide closure for Viktor's wife and children, providing a similar image of unresolved trauma to that of the father's empty grave in *Unholy*. Yet despite his efforts Evan himself is haunted by memories of the night his brother went missing, which are presented in intrusive blurry flashbacks with echoing sound. Evan's father seems similarly haunted by the loss of his favourite son, a fact exacerbated by his Alzheimer's which leads to disorientation and him misremembering events. The sense that memories may be constructed rather than being infallible truths is supported by a veritable shrine to Viktor, including several photographs of him in his military uniform. I would argue that these rural settings and references to different conflicts and traumas connect with what Victoria McCollum identifies as Heartland Horror, contemporary films with a rural setting and political subtext. While not one of the films McCollum identifies, *Blood Creek* depicts rural, run-down and violent landscapes which evoke a sense of hopelessness, and are in turn linked to the controversial Iraq War, which is in keeping with Heartland Horror being 'predominately characterised by its exaggeration of anxieties arising from the intense resurgence of right wing populism and the decline of US democracy in the post-9/11 era'.[115] As Viktor then returns, and it is revealed that he has been held hostage by the Wollners as a source of blood for the Nazi occultist Wirth, *Blood Creek* further links Heartland Horror to Nazi horror, and the Iraq War to the Second World War.

What ultimately connects these two periods, the past and the present, is the ancient occult power that is literally underlying the Wollners' home as there is a Nordic runestone built into the very foundations of the barn. It is to this runestone Wirth is sent with the mission of using the stone to attain immortality, feed his necromantic abilities, and win the Second World War. The moment he first discovers the stone is shot in black and white which exaggerates the shadows and moonlight playing across its surface and the dark crevices which form an intricate swastika-like pattern. As he explains, the runestones

[115] Victoria McCollum, *Post-9/11 Heartland Horror: Rural Horror Films in an Era of Urban Terrorism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 2.

allow him to draw on the powers of the Nordic gods and were left behind by his 'Viking ancestors', a faux-history of the discovery of the United States in which 'Columbus was a fraud'. Through this speech the film rewrites history, a narrative which seeks to unsettle what is understood to be the American past, and which draws attention to it being a nation defined by constant conflicts and wars for territory and ownership. Thus, where Colavito argues that periods of war are not a satisfactory correlative with the production of American horror films because 'the inclusion of the nebulous Cold War and War on Terror meant that the United States would have been at war of some sort for nearly all of the years covered by horror films', this continuous conflict is precisely what Nazi horror films such as *Blood Creek* can be connected to.[116]

Indeed, the sense that American soil is defined by previous conflicts is supported by the open ending of the film in which it is revealed that the Wollners' is not the only house affected, for there were eight scholars dispatched to the American countryside, and a map shows that the locations of the stones can be connected to make a swastika. As Goodrick-Clarke suggests, the history of the swastika as used by the Nazis can actually be traced back through occult societies such as the Thule due to its symbolism, which is associated either with fortune and health or decline and death depending on its usage.[117] While the long and tumultuous history of the US is central to the film, that this is brought to light specifically through symbolism of the Second World War suggests that this is an event which holds particular significance. Abu Sarah argues that by locating the Nazi occult in a domestic home in rural America, 'the backstory of *Blood Creek* implies that Nazi atrocities were a collective experience that ravaged average US Americans on the home front. However, the film also brings these historical traumas into the present, asserting that the Third Reich continues to terrorize the American nation'.[118] The open ending certainly creates the sense that the trauma of the Second World War continues to linger, and inscribes the horrors of the Nazi past, as embodied by the Nazis' interest in the occult, onto the very topography of America.

The occult is not solely inscribed on the landscape in *Blood Creek*, however, but also on the body. For example, like the relic runestones, the bones of Wirth's ancestors are important and tangible symbols of the past which hold immense power. One of Wirth's ancestral bones is fashioned into a knife and used to slice open flesh for him to feed upon,

[116] Colavito, pp. 415-416.
[117] Goodrick-Clarke, p. 151.
[118] Abu Sarah, p. 72.

and the consumption of blood is a recurring abject image central to Wirth's necromantic powers. Furthermore, when Wirth first performs a necromantic ritual in 1936 he leans over a dead white bird, whispering an incantation in another language. The bird rises for a second and Wirth is triumphant, but his nose trickles with blood. This rupturing of the body, blood leaking from its orifices, is an abject display of the border which has been transgressed bringing the dead back to life. In the present day Wirth has also persisted in a form of unnatural preservation by using his occult powers, though unlike the Wollners' perfectly preserved forms Wirth seems almost rotten. His body is revealed piece by piece, emerging from the shadows as the film progresses. First, he stands in the moonlight which illuminates what seem to be soaked bandages encasing his face and framing cloudy, white eyes. Next a close up reveals long claw-like nails which he uses to gut a horse before raising it from the dead. By the light of the fire he unpeels the bandages to reveal heavily scarred flesh, before peeling off that same flesh under an eclipse to reveal a deeper layer of decayed tissue. Finally, he hammers into his forehead releasing a rush of thick, translucent liquid, to reveal his third eye which surfaces wet and cloudy. The monstrous body of the Nazi necromancer is therefore peeled back layer by layer in an abject display which potentially nauseates the audience as inner becomes outer. This is not solely about physical monstrosity, though, as Abu Sarah argues, 'physical appearance is clearly not the only fearsome attribute of Nazi antagonists in horror film, nor is it the primary characteristic that makes them terrifying'.[119] Wirth's physical descent is an external symbol of his inner corruption, and also has the effect of mirroring the scars he has left on his victims such as Lisa Wollner and Viktor, which they lift their clothing to display in dramatic revelations.

Wirth's demise is equally symbolic, for both the necromancer and the protagonists. Even as they fight the Nazi monster Evan and Viktor come to blows over what it meant for Viktor to sign up for the military covertly, debating what it is to sacrifice yourself for your country or to take the role of caring for your family, a scene strikingly paralleled by the brothers in *Puppet Master: Axis of Evil* constantly discussing how one of them signed up to fight in the Second World War but the other could not. The importance and value of sacrifice culminates in Evan finally taking the role of martyr and allowing himself to be fed upon by Wirth, while Viktor cuts his hands open getting a piece of barbed wire to decapitate the monster, with both brothers spilling their blood for what they perceive to be the ultimate good. The struggle culminates in Evan blinding Wirth's third eye in another

[119] Ibid., p. 73.

release of thick liquid, which brings to an end his occult vision. By assisting with Wirth's death the remaining Wollners also sacrifice themselves, their preserved bodies rapidly ageing as time finally moves on, and the dead which he raised drop to the ground. This might suggest a transition from stasis to the resolution of trauma and the bittersweet process of moving on, but as previously mentioned, the open ending of *Blood Creek* suggests that there is further work to be done. Not only are there more Nazi necromancers to fight, but there is a very ambiguous final shot in which Viktor stands over the runestone and looks into the camera as though he too may try to use the occult powers. That one of the protagonists, a tortured war veteran, becomes a potential future threat seems a comment on the corrupting and unending impact of war. Indeed, McCollum argues of Heartland Horror that 'this subgenre blazingly evokes the barbaric futility of war'.[120] The rural setting, bodily horror and political subtext in *Blood Creek* is thus one way to express a sentiment shared by all of the Nazi necromancy horror films I have examined here, which is that war and conflict never truly leave us.

Conclusions

Ultimately, what is represented across these films which focus on Nazi necromancy, whether that means witchcraft broadly or the raising of the dead more specifically, is the concept that either the Nazi necromancer will continue to return or others will be adversely influenced and perpetuate their evil. By its very nature the necromancer manipulates time or revives the dead, which has the effect of connecting the past and the present in unending and pessimistic cycles. I would conclude that it is for this reason that, while necromancy has the least specific grounding in historical actuality, necromancy continues to be connected to Nazism in 21st century horror. This is also arguably the reason both *Unholy* and *Blood Creek* include references to literal premature burial, something we see metaphorically in *Nekromantik*. As Blake argues, *Nekromantik* is a response to the society from which it emerged in which there is 'a tragic will to self-destruction. Born of the traumas of the past, and by a premature binding of the wounds that the past inflicted, it is a will that manifests itself not only in failed relationships with the living but in a confused and desperate fetishisation of the dead'.[121] Nazi necromancy revels in the dead, abject body just like Buttgereit's films, the purpose being 'to dig into the place of burial (to rip away the grave clothing) and engage passionately with the rotting fruits of the past'.[122]

[120] McCollum, p. 3.
[121] Blake, p. 38.
[122] Ibid., p. 31.

Such an argument encapsulates the at once fascination and repulsion in response to the recurring image of the Nazi occult, featuring both traumatised families in stasis and stagnation as well as efforts to raise the rotting dead, two expressions of the same central inability to move past numerous previous cultural wounds.

Conclusion

Having considered each of these Nazi occult monsters in turn, it can be seen that these are recurring monsters which address particular socio-political concerns. Firstly, I would argue that they do so by linking the Nazi occult to the themes of time and memory. The presence of occult relics and ruins throughout these different subcategories of Nazi occult film constantly evokes the ancient and persistent nature of the supernatural. This then links to the ancient and timeless monsters which take the form of Aryan god-men or occult demons, as well as the long history of those who worship and summon them. Moreover, this is embodied by witchcraft and necromantic powers which manipulate time and transgress the boundary between life and death, creating a space of perpetual undeath. All of these instances evoke ancient uncanny returns, but they also prompt abjection. As Kristeva argues, 'the time of abjection is double: a time of oblivion and thunder, of veiled infinity and the moment when revelation bursts forth', and this resonates with Caruth and Lowenstein's understanding of the experience of trauma in which different times collide.[123] The Nazi occult horror film both contains images of the horrifying consequences of the manipulation of time and constitutes a collision of time itself by bringing together the Second World War with the 21st century, all of which prove to be violent confrontations. At times the Nazi occult film explores this horror by depicting the Nazis succeeding in harnessing occult powers, such as the conclusion of *Unholy* in which the credits roll to the sound of a faux-news broadcast from the Second World War in which the Nazis have won; the necromancer has succeeded in taking his occult work back to Hitler and changed the course of history. At other times the Nazis are not powerful enough to harness the occult, creating a different message, but in which the threat is no less resolved as the open endings suggest humans always have tried, and always will try, to abuse the supernatural. All of these monsters are therefore centrally concerned by psychological and physiological horror throughout different time periods from the ancient to the Second World War through to the present day, and thus are arguably concerned by such horror as timeless.

[123] Kristeva, p. 9.

Secondly, I would argue that the Nazi occult films considered in this chapter illustrate a particular concern about families and personal trauma in a way not seen elsewhere in this thesis. Brothers are tested in *Blood Creek* and *Puppet Master*, a family implodes in *Unholy*, a demon takes the shape of a dead wife in *The Devil's Rock*, a mystic kills a father-figure in *Hellboy*, and children grapple with the sins of their fathers and grandfathers in *Ratline*. An awareness of the domestic therefore inflects the characterisation of the protagonists and monsters, but also shapes the settings of these films as the home is threatened in examples such as *Unholy* and *Blood Creek*. Here, there is a particular link between the supernatural Nazi occult and the domestic and personal due to the emphasis on the Nazi occult's secretive and cult status, which allows it to infiltrate and pervade the home. However, while each of these traumas is personal and operates at a micro level, they are also the product of war and as such are connected to a wider, national trauma on the macro level in which 'the family' as a symbol of normality has been threatened. As Caruth argues:

> traumatic experience can never with certainty be reduced to, or framed within, the boundaries of an individual life. The annihilation of experience at the core of what we think of as personal trauma is never wholly extricable from larger social and political modes of denial. In this sense, I would suggest, the 'individual' and the 'collective' cannot be extricated from each other.[124]

Of the collective, there are considerations of particularly American traumas in *Ratline*, *Blood Creek* and *Unholy,* what it means to be from New Zealand in *The Devil's Rock*, and a specific evocation of Britain in *Fantacide* and *Nazi Vengeance*. This suggests that the personal traumas the films evoke are mapped against a wider landscape and a specific sense of national trauma. Yet, more than this, by bringing these films together and considering them in detail it becomes clear that representations of the traumatic Nazi occult are not always specific to one nation, but instead a global phenomenon. Even within *Nazi Vengeance* the British characters discover they were German in a past life, while *Hellboy* is a film which travels the world to confront the Nazi occult. Thus, the supernatural aspect of the occult which is connected to Nazism and perpetuates in the 21st century is not just the confrontation of different times but also different spaces and places: the personal, the national, and the transnational.

This exploration of the Nazi occult in 21st century horror has thus traced two potential outcomes: the occult as a broad concept lends itself to understanding trauma;

[124] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 121.

each facet of the Nazi occult lends itself in specific ways to understanding particular fears. Both are true to varying extents as regards the different films. In exploring the former I have found that the theme of the occult can be used to explore the concepts of time and space in a way which makes it a useful expression of traumas such as that of the Second World War. In exploring the latter I have considered the ways in which Nazi horror conforms with and diverges from historical actuality in order to understand better the reason for its recurrence, exploring Kurlander's assertion that 'most popular representations of Nazism, even in documentary form, […] fail to investigate deeper connections between supernatural thinking and policies and practices in the Third Reich'.[125] Often I have challenged such an argument as several of the 21st century Nazi horror films do demonstrate an awareness of the ways in which Nazi occultism was closely related to Nazi ideology, and make reference to actual historical artefacts and events in order to express fears regarding such an ideology persisting in the present day. Yet at the same time some of these films diverge from historical actuality, such as by contradicting research which would suggest that the Nazis used the idea of witches as positive non-supernatural figures and demons were symbolically racially impure. In these cases, the films are not always expressing specific fears about the history of the Nazi occult, but about the interpretations it offers. In either instance, however, there is a more complex interaction with the past than Kurlander allows for.

Having concluded that, although the occult may have broader uses in society and the horror film as a way in which to grapple with trauma, representations of the Nazi occult more importantly offer an interrogation of more specific traumas, there remains a last question regarding their purpose. It is important to ask whether the 21st century Nazi occult horror film addresses these specific traumas only to simplify the concepts of good and evil in order to placate its audience, or alternatively whether its engagement with trauma is more complex. This is provoked largely by other critics who have analysed the supernatural in film, for whom a common conclusion is that the occult problematically presents a way to simplify trauma. For example, Michael J. Blouin connects images of the supernatural to neoliberalism in particular, but with the suggestion that many films 'employ fantastic tropes to demonstrate humanity's limited knowledge and/or to provide fanciful resolutions for social ills. In so doing, they distract audiences from the hard decisions required to

[125] Kurlander, p. x.

address the systemic roots of these problems'.[126] However, if Nazi horror films do employ the occult to draw attention to human limitations, they rarely do so to absolve humanity of responsibility or morality. Rather, attention is drawn to the idea that the occult merely intensifies pre-existing conditions, is more often the cause of than the solution to far right ideology, and certainly does not offer any solution to the problem of economic instability which haunts the background of films such as *Ratline* and *Blood Creek*. Unlike the films which Blouin considers, and which he argues ultimately recapitulate neoliberalism by celebrating simplistic forms of change, Nazi occult films do not suggest that change comes easily, or at all.

Yet those critics who have considered the Nazi occult more specifically have also concluded that it is a simplification with even more problematic consequences for the audience's understanding of Nazism, shutting down deeper analysis of the traumas it may be connected to rather than opening it up. This is the argument put forward by Kurlander who claims that 'victims or long-time critics, had an interest in portraying the Third Reich as preternaturally evil, insane, or barbaric – ignoring in some cases the utter banality of Nazi evil'.[127] Kingsepp, on the other hand, concludes that in popular culture 'Nazis are not of this world and need not be treated as such' as they are inhuman, 'something that need not worry the audience'.[128] She links this particularly to profits and marketing, in that 'as a commercial product, Nazi Germany sells. And it sells better when it is packaged in simple binaries than in complex ideas, with primacy given to images over words, surface over content'.[129] Yet I would argue that my close reading of Nazi horror films in this chapter suggests that the Nazi occultist is not so simple a monster. Whether Nazism is contrasted with the occult to show it is a 'different' type of evil, or combined with it to exacerbate its evil, interpretations of the Nazi occult are used to create complex meaning and ambiguity, not resolution. Thus, although some may do so in an attempt to heal wounds where others are far more troubling and inflict wounds anew, these Nazi horror occult films all provoke precisely what Kurlander, Kingsepp and Blouin suggest is silenced: a consideration of history and contemplation of our own society.

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[126] Michael J. Blouin, *Magical Thinking, Fantastic Film, and the Illusions of Neoliberalism* (Basingstoke, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 10.
[127] Ibid., p. xix.
[128] Kingsepp, p. 37.
[129] Ibid., p. 47.

CHAPTER TWO – 'THE THREE MAIN MONSTERS': (NAZI) ZOMBIES, WEREWOLVES AND VAMPIRES

Introduction

This thesis centres on the premise that the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre invariably contains a version of the Nazi monster as an expression of trauma, which reinforces Bruce Kawin's argument that 'monsters gather, concentrate and express horror as if they were focusing it'.[1] While there are endless examples of monsters in the horror genre, three particularly infamous creatures recur again and again. Indeed, though a case may be made for any particular creature's cultural significance, it is hard to deny the importance of what Lyndsay Anne Hallam identifies as 'the three main monsters found in the horror genre: vampires, zombies and werewolves'.[2] Each of these three has numerous volumes dedicated to it, in any compendium of horror each will have its own entry, and just as often the three will be mentioned in the same space to denote the movie monster as a whole. They are brought together by their inhuman and supernatural abilities, bodily transformation, and their consumption of humans. However, I would like to bring the three together in another respect, in that they are all classic movie monsters which have been 'Nazified'. Amongst the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre we find several zombies (such as in *Overlord* [Julius Avery, 2018], the *Outpost* series [2008-2013], *Dead Snow* [Tommy Wirkola, 2009], *Dead Snow: Red Vs Dead* [Tommy Wirkola, 2014], *Frankenstein's Army* [Richard Raaphorst, 2013] and *War of the Dead* [Marko Mäkilaakso, 2011]), a handful of werewolves (*Werewolves of the Third Reich* [Andrew Jones, 2017], *Horrors of War* [Peter John Ross and John Whitney, 2006], *Iron Wolf* [David Brückner, 2014] and *Werewolf Women of the SS* [Rob Zombie, 2007]) and a few vampires (*Frostbite* [Anders Banke, 2006], *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* [Uwe Boll, 2011] and *The Golden Nazi Vampire of Absam 2* [Lasse Nolte, 2008]). With so much written on these classic creatures, the task remains to consider their 21st century Nazi hybridisation, and the similarities and differences which arise between the hybrids.

Nazi Hybrids

It is not so simple a task to clearly delineate these different types of Nazi monster, however. In his examination of the horror genre, Kawin dedicates an entire section of *Horror and the Horror Film* to monsters. In it he refers to different types of monster as subgenres, splitting them into the categories 'Monsters', 'Supernatural Monsters' and

[1] Bruce Kawin, *Horror and the Horror Film* (London and New York: Anthem, 2012), p. 50.
[2] Lyndsay Anne Hallam, *Screening the Marquis de Sade: Pleasure, Pain and the Transgressive Body in Film* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012), p. 3.

'Humans', and it is within 'Supernatural Monsters' that he then lists the sub-subgenres of 'Zombies', 'Vampires' and 'Werewolves'. Significantly, although this is a taxonomy of monsters from horror films, Nazi monsters do not appear here. More than this, though, they would not neatly fit into the categories Kawin describes. Kawin does not outline a sub-subgenre of fascists or Nazis, but presumably it would belong under the 'Humans' subgenre. Equally, almost all of the creatures I will be discussing here are 'Creatures from the Lab' and appear alongside 'Mad Scientists', two other sub-subgenres Kawin delineates, and discussion of which must wait until the next chapter. Thus, immediately by being composite Nazis and monsters these creatures transgress delineations between usually distinct types of non-fascist monsters, and belong under several of Kawin's headings. Furthermore, although I will be referring to the separate entities of Nazi zombies, Nazi werewolves and Nazi vampires to organise this chapter, further to their Nazi hybridisation the different types of Nazi monster blur together in terms of their monstrous characteristics, and as a result their function and meaning. For instance, in the *Outpost* series alone we find both ghost-like zombies and wolf-like zombies.[3] Clearly the Nazified movie monster is a complex one, and by interrogating its identity I will suggest that these slippages are indicative of particular cultural and social anxieties resulting from specific national traumas.

Not only is the composition of the Nazi creature complex, but accordingly the *affect* of any Nazi monster is potentially complicated. Linda Badley argues that 'classifying monster icons by primary affect, we might say that ghosts are uncanny, vampires erotic, werewolves bestial and violent, and zombies grotesque'.[4] Here Badley's use of the term 'affect' seems to envelop effect and meaning, associating each monster with a particular form of representation imbued with textual or cultural meaning which evokes certain sensations in the viewer.[5] Yet the Nazi monsters are hybrid creatures, and I will argue that

[3] Such slippages between ghost and zombie or wolf and zombie do occur elsewhere in the horror genre, the former discussed by Anthony J. Fonseca's entry 'Ghosts' in *Encyclopedia of the Zombie: The Walking Dead in Popular Culture and Myth*, ed. by June Michele Pullium and Anthony J. Fonseca (Santa Barbara, CA, Denver, CO and Oxford: Greenwood, 2014), pp. 109-110, for example, but the hybridisation of these monsters is particularly apparent in the Nazi monster subgenre.

[4] Linda Badley, 'Zombie Splatter Comedy from Dawn to Shaun: Cannibal Carnivalesque', in *Zombie Culture: Autopsies of the Living Dead*, ed. by Shawn McIntosh and Marc Leverette (Lanham, MD, Toronto and Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow, 2008), pp. 35-53 (p. 35).

[5] Badley does not define her use of affect, but its use differs somewhat from that in the growing field of Affect Studies as applied to horror. As discussed in the methodology, Xavier Aldana Reyes uses the term more specifically, when he argues that the 'anchoring point [of affect] is the body, especially the moment of visceral contact between the viewer's and the character's', *Horror Film and Affect: Towards a Corporeal Model of Viewership* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), p. 3.

we find uncanny zombies, bestial vampires and grotesque werewolves as a result. Thus, while Badley's generalisations provide a helpful framework for the discussion of these types of monsters, I will demonstrate that the Nazified monster constitutes a notable exception to such observations. To understand better their nuanced and shifting affects, the theories of the uncanny and the abject are integral. Badley herself brings attention to Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny, which we might also associate with psychological terror, but the grotesque and the bestial are better understood as facets of physiological horror and the abject.[6] Julia Kristeva describes the abject as the sickening and grotesque, 'an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion'.[7] Yet as always we should note that the abject is linked to the uncanny, for as Kristeva argues, the abject is both 'imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us'.[8] Not only are Badley's observations helpful to consider the complexities of hybridised monsters, they are also useful in drawing out complexities amongst affects which have previously been considered separate or even opposed.

As indicated by Kristeva's terminology, these complicated sensations are ones which 'boomerang', 'summon', and 'beckon', a language we can use to begin to understand the recurrence and prolificacy of the Nazi monster in the 21st century. As much as the Nazi repulses it can also fascinate and emerges from underlying cultural and political anxieties through the medium of the horror film again and again. Here the Nazified movie monster does not just have implications for 'monsterdom' as Kawin indicates, but also for understandings of trauma as an experience which 'repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly'.[9] Certainly, for Ben Kooyman 'Nazisploitation horror films and their genre-fication of Nazism provide an outlet for disseminating, depicting, and grappling with this historical trauma'.[10] However, where Kooyman considers three films in particular to evidence this argument (*Dead Snow*, *Frankenstein's Army* and *BloodRayne: The Third Reich*) I wish to consider a wider body of films to understand Nazi horror's 'allegorical moment'.

This is affect as feeling *for* and feeling *with*, which seems to be part of Badley's understanding and is useful for a psychosomatic methodology as used in this thesis, but is not the precise meaning as used here.

[6] Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' (1919), in *Art and Literature*, ed. by Albert Dickson, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1985), pp. 335-376.

[7] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, trans. by Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 1.

[8] Ibid., p. 4.

[9] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, 20th Anniversary edn (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), p. 2.

[10] Ben Kooyman, 'Snow Nazis Must Die', in *War Gothic in Literature and Culture*, ed. by Steffen Hantke and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 117-135 (p. 118).

For Adam Lowenstein the allegorical moment is a depiction which both represents and evokes trauma, and which challenges the binary oppositions 'that govern the study of trauma and its representation: melancholia/mourning, acting-out/working-through, historically irresponsible/historically responsible'.[11] According to Lowenstein, too many critics are quick to dismiss some films as irresponsibly acting-out trauma, that is to say, re-enacting traumatic events without interacting with them, and praise others as responsibly working-through it, by which he means critically interrogating trauma so as to 'resolve' it. For example, Lowenstein refers to the work of Dominick LaCapra who specifically praises realist works and dismisses other forms of representation such as modernist texts, suggesting that only certain types of representation can meaningfully interact with trauma.[12] This, in turn, would suggest that we should dismiss the far-from-realist form of Nazi horror as merely acting out trauma in a historically irresponsible way. However, these are not helpful conclusions to draw, first and foremost because these possible interactions with trauma should not be held in opposition but are instead interconnected. By building upon the work of Freud, Kristeva and Lowenstein, I will demonstrate that Nazi horror films need not be dismissed and are instead useful for illustrating these interrelated responses to trauma. Each evokes fluctuating sensations which suggests that the Nazified movie monster is hybridised precisely because it encapsulates a range of horrifying meanings and responses within a range of historical and geographical contexts.

Zombies

An Abject and Uncanny Monster

I will begin with the Nazi zombie, for as Shawn McIntosh argues, 'few monster types have embedded themselves in the popular imagination as thoroughly as zombies have'.[13] Indeed, the Nazi zombie is perhaps the most recognisable of these Nazi monsters, populating more films than the Nazi vampire or werewolf, including the better-known instalments of the Nazi horror subgenre such as *Dead Snow,* which has garnered a cult following. Yet McIntosh goes on to argue that 'zombies are often upstaged by the flashier

[11] Adam Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 3.
[12] Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Memory* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2001).
[13] Shawn McIntosh, 'The Evolution of the Zombie: The Monster That Keeps Coming Back', in *Zombie Culture: Autopsies of the Living Dead,* ed. by Shawn McIntosh and Marc Leverette (Lanham, MD, Toronto and Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow, 2008), pp. 1-17 (p. 1).

monster types such as vampires, Frankenstein's monster, and fantastic science-fiction creatures'.[14] Similarly, Jamie Russell claims that 'while vampires, werewolves and even serial killers command respect, the zombie is never treated as anything other than a buffoon who stumbles around on the margins of horror cinema messily decaying'.[15] Here, Russell's argument that the zombie is a decaying buffoon is similar to McIntosh associating the zombie above all with the grotesque, and these readings therefore focus on the zombie as a walking wound of decay and defilement. Applying such readings to the Nazi zombie would suggest that although the Nazi zombie is a similarly 'embedded' and popular variation of this monster, ultimately its status as walking wound amounts to no more than a maligned and disgusting joke. However, Russell then goes on to address this assumption about the zombie's (lack of) meaning by tracing the zombie's historical and cultural contexts. Moreover, considering the time in which Russell and McIntosh were writing, their work could not take into account the decade of zombie films which has followed, films which have been so numerous and varied as to inevitably challenge such generalisations. Thus, although the 'messily decaying' zombie does continue to exist, it is but one strand amongst what Laura Hubner, Paul Manning and Marcus Leaning refer to as 'a global explosion of zombie mania, with zombie representations and zombie-related material infiltrating the media and contemporary society in multiple and changing forms'.[16] Furthermore, as they note, this explosion of zombie texts has inspired a range of critical approaches to consider not only the form of the zombie text but also how audiences engage with them.[17] As a result of this explosion of both texts and theoretical work on the zombie we can reconsider applying McIntosh and Russell's arguments to the Nazified zombie for two reasons: one, the grotesque zombie need not be dismissed but can instead be theorised through the psychological and political; two, the zombie has been subject to many variations and so is not necessarily solely grotesque, but can evoke other effects instead/as well.

Firstly, we might interrogate the connection between the Nazi zombie, the grotesque and the abject, for in developing her theory of abjection Kristeva argues that 'wounds', as zombies have been much connected to, are psychosomatically significant. She

[14] Ibid.
[15] Jamie Russell, *Book of the Dead: The Complete History of Zombie Cinema* (Guildford, UK: FAB, 2005), p. 7.
[16] Laura Hubner, Marcus Leaning and Paul Manning, 'Introduction', in *The Zombie Renaissance in Popular Culture*, ed. by Laura Hubner, Marcus Leaning and Paul Manning (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), pp. 3-14 (p. 3).
[17] Ibid.

writes that 'a wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay […] These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being'.[18] The abject response to the decaying zombie suggests that it is not necessarily a meaningless 'buffoon', but instead that it is important to consider further what it is in these images that is prompting such confrontation and rejection. To this end, it is notable that the rhetoric of wounds also saturates the discourse of Trauma Studies. Cathy Caruth argues that 'the term *trauma* is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind', while Lowenstein refers to traumatic events as 'wounds in the fabric of culture and history that bleed through conventional confines of time and space'.[19] Nazism in the Second World War is one such wound, and so it is perhaps unsurprising that it would combine with the walking wound of the zombie as an expression of trauma. In the same vein, Linnie Blake's monograph is titled *Wounds of Nations* precisely because it considers the horror genre as obsessed with wounds. For Blake this allows 'for a decoding of traumatic memories already encoded within the cultural, social, psychic and political life of the nation's inhabitants by shocking historical events', which I would suggest is an important form of analysis to apply to the explicit connection between war and horror embodied in the Nazi monster.[20] As these films are set and produced in diverse countries I will analyse these different Nazi zombies to consider their respective and specific iterations of national trauma. To add further factors which require consideration, the opposing soldiers who must face the monsters often hail from different places and times, being set either during the Second World War or in the 21st century, and even include soldiers who have fought in different wars. In this way the Nazi monster subgenre is the product of numerous historical and contemporary conflicts, with each entry interpreted through the lens of its own national trauma.

Not only can the grotesque be complex and meaningful, but the zombie can also be connected to other psychoanalytic concepts such as Freud's understanding of the uncanny. Due to the frequent consideration of the zombie through the lens of the abject, the zombie film may not normally be associated with the uncanny, for the abject is by its nature an extreme bodily reaction and Barbara Creed argues that 'excess is the enemy of the

[18] Kristeva, p. 3.
[19] Caruth, p. 3; Lowenstein, p. 1.
[20] Linnie Blake, *Wounds of Nations: Horror Cinema, Historical Trauma and National Identity* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 5.

uncanny'.[21] Jeffrey Sconce has even gone so far as to argue that zombies are increasingly a 'spectacle of social disintegration' whose abjection leaves no space for ambiguity.[22] For Sconce, 'the modern zombie is a creature of the *post-uncanny* – an era when models of horror born of modernity and repression become improbable, if not completely impossible'.[23] By this he means that zombies are explicit, they are '*all there*, wholly of the surface', and as such cannot possibly be products of the unconscious.[24] While both Creed and Sconce's observations are helpful in exploring the perceived differences between the uncanny and abject and their potential application to the zombie, I would argue that to claim there is no ambiguity about zombies is to overstate the case and that considering the zombie in terms of the repressed and ambiguous remains not just possible but useful. Even within the abject there is ambiguity, for as Hubner, Manning and Leaning argue, 'the zombie, just like Kristeva's example of the corpse, refuses to be easily classified, managed and "safely" disposed of. It cannot be understood as either "alive" or "dead"; it is in transition and it is this which has the powerful and disturbing effect upon us'.[25] Such a description emphasises the liminality of the abject and of the corpse, and the way in which it challenges borders. No matter how disgusting zombies may be, they are ultimately reanimated corpses, and as Margaret Schwartz also argues, the corpse both 'figures (represents) and literally is a figure of a relation: between life and death, this life and the next, the present and the time of memory'.[26] The decaying but persisting body of the zombie complicates these relations even further, as it is neither alive as it was in the past, nor fully dead in the present, instead existing in a liminal afterlife. Indeed, they may be considered revenants, for a revenant is defined as 'a person who returns from the dead; a reanimated corpse; a ghost', a definition which emphasises the zombie's liminal nature and, by connecting it to the ghost, demonstrates a possible sensation beyond the bodily and abject.[27]

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[21] Barbara Creed, *Phallic Panic: Film, Horror and the Primal Uncanny* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005), p. 33.
[22] Jeffrey Sconce, 'Dead Metaphors/Undead Allegories', in *Screening the Undead: Vampires and Zombies in Film and Television*, ed. by Leon Hunt, Sharon Lockyer and Milly Williamson (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), pp. 95-111 (p. 99).
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Hubner, Manning and Leaning, p. 6.
[26] Margaret Schwartz, 'An Iconography of the Flesh: How Corpses Mean as Matter', *Communication +1*:, 2 (2013), 1-16 (p. 2).
[27] 'Revenant', in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd edn (2010) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/164711?rskey=H0r1e2> [accessed 7 April 2019].

The same attempts to focus on the physiological abjection of the zombie therefore also demonstrate that it is inherently connected to the uncanny, which Nicholas Royle expands upon as an unsettling 'crisis of the proper and natural [….] an experience of liminality'.[28] Certainly, Freud uses the corpse as a key example of the uncanny. More than this, he claims that 'many people experience the feeling in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts'.[29] He goes on to argue that there is no other matter 'upon which our thoughts and feelings have changed so little since the very earliest times […] as our relation to death'.[30] Freud was writing almost a century ago, but it would be difficult to argue that humanity is entirely at ease with the corpse in the 21st century. For instance, Freud cites the inability of science to explain all facets of death and the afterlife as one part of the corpse's uncanniness, and despite much progress many mysteries persist. Despite the corpse being the most powerful example of the uncanny in many respects, however, Freud does not begin his essay with such an example. He explains that he 'refrained from doing so because the uncanny in it is too much intermixed with what is purely gruesome and is in part overlaid by it'.[31] The gruesome here is related to abjection, and thus in this sentence Freud returns us to the closeness of the abject to the uncanny, and may suggest why so many other scholars have also refrained from discussing the uncanny zombie in favour of the abject. I would argue, though, that we can acknowledge both of these facets of the zombie. Abject horror may take over when we see the zombie's insides, for example, but a sense of liminal uncertainty, hesitation and terror is often vital to our first reaction to the reanimated corpse shuffling from the shadows.

As the image of the zombie emerging from the shadows suggests, it is not simply the form of the zombie itself which can be considered abject and/or uncanny, but its effect can also be impacted by how the zombie is represented. Such a theory is drawn from Freud himself, who argues that uncanny potential will not inevitably be realised:

> Apparent death and the re-animation of the dead have been represented as most uncanny themes. But things of this sort too are very common in fairy stories. Who would be so bold as to call it uncanny, for instance, when Snow-White opens her eyes once more?[32]

[28] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 2.
[29] Freud, p. 364.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., p. 369.

From this assertion that the emergence of the uncanny relies on its context, Creed develops the concept of the 'uncanny gaze' in relation to the horror film in particular, a term which recognises that 'the uncanny sensation must be produced by the text itself, through the methods it adopts to uncover the uncanny'.[33] Such methods might include concealment through the use of night-time settings, shadows and darkness, in which 'there is a gradual development, an ambivalence, a difficulty in at first seeing clearly the nature of the uncanny thing or event'.[34] Thus, having established that the form of the zombie has both abject and uncanny potential, the work of Freud and Creed suggests that the realisation of such potential depends on the way in which zombies are represented by the filmmaker. Moreover, the representation of the zombie as an animated corpse within a film entails that the audience's view of it is transient and so its representation can vary from frame to frame, scene to sequence; even after its introduction the zombie may evoke fluctuating effects. I intend to explore the full range of these effects in relation to the Nazi zombie sub-subgenre in order to argue that the 21st century Nazi zombie prompts both terror and horror as a result of its myriad meanings.

Outpost: Ghostly Zombies and Haunted Mercenaries in War-Torn Europe

To begin, the first film of the *Outpost* series (Steve Barker, 2008) is a significant entry in the subgenre and a productive point from which to start. This UK-produced and shot film is set in present day Eastern Europe, where a group of mercenaries are tasked with escorting a mysterious scientist named Hunt to an underground bunker. There the team is faced with an unstoppable force of Nazi monsters, led by Brigadeführer Götz (also known as 'the Breather'), who have been locked away since the Second World War. As I have mentioned briefly, the Nazified movie monster is particularly blurred and liminal due to its hybridisation, and the *Outpost* 'zombies' are an important example of this. As Kyle William Bishop notes, *Outpost* contains 'less traditional zombie monsters' and instead depicts 'powerful revenants with supernatural abilities (e.g., ghost-like teleportation) that torture and murder their human victims, usually with bayonets'.[35] These creatures are far from the buffoons zombies are at times reduced to, and despite their hulking forms move with speed and precision. They are alternately elusive and physically brutal, and speak to the fine line between the uncanny and the abject. The Breather's pale and gaunt figure,

[33] Creed, p. 27.
[34] Ibid., p. 28.
[35] Kyle William Bishop, 'Nazi Zombies', in *Encyclopedia of the Zombie: The Walking Dead in Popular Culture and Myth: The Walking Dead in Popular Culture and Myth*, ed. by June Pulliam and Anthony J. Fonseca (Santa Barbara, CA, Denver, CO and Oxford: Greenwood, 2014), pp. 180-183 (p. 181).

meanwhile, lurks in the corner of frames, haunting the soldiers with his silent stare in a way which might suggest he is a spectre until he takes his place commanding the zombie soldiers. Such slippage between ghost and zombie is obvious even in the behind the scenes footage from the trilogy. In the 'Making Of' feature of the first *Outpost*, producer Arabella Croft corrects Kevin Parker's commentary, asserting that 'it's a ghost, not a zombie!' By the time of the 'Making Of' featured on *Outpost: Black Sun* (Steve Barker, 2012), however, the same crew are freely using the term 'Nazi zombies'. Even within a singular franchise the Nazi monster is seen to be ambiguous and shifting.

The band of mercenaries which face the hybrid monsters of *Outpost* are also an interesting combination of different sources, as they are brought together from various countries and wars. Leading the men is the stoic British Royal Marine D.C. and in his team are the Northern Irish and Parachute Regiment member McKay and the Scottish Jordan. This does not necessarily centralise any tangible and specific sense of British trauma, however, as the latter wears the uniform of a French Foreign Legionnaire which is a unique French military branch open to foreign recruits. Such a costume choice creates a character who is British but has volunteered to fight for another nation, perhaps even signalling a lack of patriotism. Furthermore, they make up only a small part of an incredibly diverse team as the squad also features members of the US Marine Corps, Yugoslav military, Russian Alpha Group and a Belgian Peacekeeper. Their histories are carefully depicted by detailed costumes, including authentic firearms which are also associated with certain nationalities. For instance, D.C.'s weapon is a G36C which would be familiar to British police, while many others have a range of AK rifles which indicate a wealth of additional historical conflicts and the seemingly war-torn region they are travelling through. That this is a troubled country is signalled from the very first meeting between D.C. and his employer, as the bar they sit within is seedy and run-down, while in the background out of focus a single woman half-heartedly dances on a pole. Next, they drive through the bleak palate of rural streets, and that the country is never specified creates a sense that this could stand in for anywhere in Eastern Europe. Here lies a critique of the failure of the neoliberal agenda on a number of levels, from an entire country seemingly torn apart by an abstract war with likely financial motivations, to the individual desperate to earn money in any way they can. Indeed, that the soldiers are mercenaries creates an additional dimension to the film's narrative, in that their primary mission is solely for financial gain, not out of any sense of duty to one country.

Their mixture of costumes and backgrounds combined with their 'hardened' personas as established at the outset of the film indicate that they are soldiers who are no longer surprised by war, nor seem to have much capacity for any emotion having been numbed by trauma. For example, as they travel to the outpost Jordan suggests that the medical equipment he has been provided with is inadequate, to which McKay replies 'so don't get hit', a nonchalant response to the prospect of peril which makes all the men chuckle. Moreover, McKay is so nonplussed by their destination that when the topic arises of what the mission will be like he replies 'Fucked if I know. Same if I care.' However, as the storyline progresses the portrayal of these hardened mercenaries is complicated by their growing fear, and the men are initially depicted as selfish, as indicated by D.C.'s immediate desire to 'pull the plug' on the operation and get as far away as possible rather than concerning themselves with the greater good. That they are then cut off and must fight regardless, determined to stop the 'ultimate' Nazi threat (embodied by the equally important costume of the Breather with his recognisable SS armband), perhaps offers a storyline constructed to redeem their previously ambiguous morality. Indeed, the men begin reflecting on their previous actions with Jordan concerned that the souls of the men he killed will haunt him in the afterlife, while the Belgian Peacekeeper Cotter has no time for religion: 'we gave up that right when we started killing men who believe in things for money'. This dialogue has the effect of further critiquing capitalist and neoliberal models by connecting religion, morality and money. Jordan and Cotter's philosophising also implies character growth and development, and so the mercenaries who largely had no relationship to one another at the outset are united by their final acts trying to stop the Nazis, offering some atonement for their previous sins.

On the other hand, the uncannily cyclical structure of the film's narrative could be argued to be nihilistic. Mid-way through *Outpost* the scientist Hunt, who has paid the mercenaries to accompany him, receives the message 'second team compromised expect min. 72 hrs delay'. At the conclusion of the film we are led to believe there are no survivors from D.C.'s team (though the sequel will reveal that Hunt has been captured and kept alive), and see the secondary team arrive too late. The second team then go through an accelerated version of the same actions, finding the Breather in the pile of bodies, then being surrounded by the zombies in the eerily lit up woods. Freud recognises that repetition is not always uncanny, but argues that 'this phenomenon does undoubtedly, subject to certain conditions and combined with certain circumstances, arouse an uncanny feeling, which, furthermore, recalls the sense of helplessness experienced in some dream-

states'.[36] Here the repetition of images and plot creates an indefinite cycle of horror and defeat akin to a nightmare, resulting in the dystopian hypothetical: what if the Nazis won? Such a pessimistic plot does have precedent in the zombie genre, as following George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), Russell argues, filmmakers were able to 'approach serious issues with a grim, apocalyptic nihilism that was shocking and exhilarating in equal measure'.[37] Just as 'Vietnam lurks in every frame of Romero's film', the trauma of the Second World War and the myriad conflicts alluded to in the mercenaries' costumes similarly lurk in every frame of *Outpost*.[38] Furthermore, as the audience are powerless to stop the endless killing, *Outpost* becomes the vehicle for 21st century audiences being traumatised anew. In this respect, though a redemptive mission for the hardened mercenaries could signify within the narrative the 'working-through' of trauma, their unstoppable demise and the resulting horror of the audience could equally be considered the 'acting-out' of trauma due to a lack of resolution. As Lowenstein argues, working-through and acting-out have been constructed as binary oppositions, but analysis of *Outpost* suggests that representations of trauma are not so easily categorised.

The relationship between uncanniness, abjection and trauma is reinforced by the setting in the *Outpost* series and the acts of violence which unfold there. The bunker, for example, marks a metaphoric descent into a labyrinthine hell. The subterranean setting is a marked Gothic trope established by literary texts such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, in which underground spaces symbolise hidden and buried secrets.[39] Furthermore, the rooms and corridors are difficult for the audience to distinguish as the camera tracks the men's movements. Once again repetition can be uncanny, and Freud makes particular reference to disorientating geography and the sensation of being lost or travelling through the same area again and again.[40] This sensation is exacerbated by the lack of natural light, the space being illuminated instead by dim torches which leave deep shadows. The chiaroscuro combined with a mise-en-scène of abandoned wartime furniture creates a deeply unsettling effect. When the men do emerge from the bunker it is into a forest which is equally dark and shadowed, and so a space which may in other Gothic or horror texts represent wilderness

[36] Freud, p. 359.
[37] Russell, p. 70.
[38] Ibid., p. 69.
[39] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764), ed. by W.S. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964); Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), ed. by Bonamy Dobrée (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[40] Freud, p. 359.

and liberation instead comes to be oppressive and entraps the men. In one sequence, Russian mercenary Taktarov is captured in the woods by two of the Nazis, and the others in the team struggle to see what is happening, unable to locate his screams. The audience, meanwhile, is forced to watch Taktarov's torture, as a bullet is slowly pushed into his eye. A grotesque moment in which blood pours forth complete with unpleasant sound effects, this scene could be interpreted as the 'excess' which defeats the uncanny. It certainly invokes the abject as the violence draws attention to the thin and delicate surface of the eye, a surface which is breached to break down inner and outer. Yet we do not explicitly see the puncturing of the eye as Taktarov's face is only shown in profile, leaving it to the imagination. Furthermore, eye loss is an injury especially associated with the uncanny, as for Freud eye loss 'is often enough a substitute for the dread of being castrated'.[41] In this specific example eye gouging undoubtedly aligns with a moment of impotence, as the rest of this male team can only stand by while Taktarov is similarly helpless. I would argue, therefore, that for a traditionally grotesque creature the setting and violence of *Outpost* entail that its Nazi zombies often have a strongly uncanny effect which calls up repressed traumas of penetrability and impotence in the face of war.

This image of a Russian soldier being tortured in an Eastern European forest combined with the use of British characters who are neither entirely central to the film, nor depicted as especially patriotic, might suggest that the UK mode of film production and the self-funding of the initial *Outpost* has not entailed any specifically British reflections on the trauma of the Second World War. However, this lack of a clear sense of nation may be connected to the Second World War itself. As Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson argue, while undeniably 'the cultural memory of the Second World War […] remains a key aspect of post-war British life' such memories are 'shifting and contested, constantly interrogated and regenerated'.[42] It could therefore be said that the memory of the Second World War in Britain being shifting and contested is precisely the reason the British mercenaries are represented in this way, as the de-centring and instability of national identity has been one aspect of the war's impact on Britain. In this respect, the failure to defeat the Nazi monster is particularly important. As Noakes and Pattinson observe, 'many nations have looked back to the war years, in different contexts, as a touchstone for their "sense of self" in the post-

[41] Ibid., p. 352

[42] Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, 'Introduction: "Keep Calm and Carry On": The Cultural Memory of the Second World War in Britain', in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, ed. by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 1-24 (p. 19).

war period', and 'Britain has not been immune to the impact of these "memory wars", as the battle over the cultural memory of the war is restaged across a range of cultural texts'.[43] One site of tension within these 'memory wars' has been nostalgia for the 'Blitz spirit' and a sense of community and stoicism in times of hardship, the result of which is that some perceive recent generations to be lesser than those previous. In this respect the failure of the mercenaries, with their lack of patriotism and inability to stop the Nazi monster, could be considered a comment on the failure of contemporary Britain in comparison to the 'Greatest Generation'. Indeed, the sense of the mercenaries' redemption in fighting the Nazi monster could be questioned in that their actions did not result in any change and there were no witnesses, making their fight futile. The nihilism of *Outpost* can be considered a general comment on the futility of war, or a specific comment on the weaknesses of recent British generations, but in either instance there is a despair about the 21st century.

Expanding the *Outpost* Universe: New Locations, New Monsters

The emphasis on nihilism and uncanniness perpetuates in the straight-to-DVD sequel *Outpost: Black Sun.* The plot picks up immediately after the events of the first film, but follows the journey of new protagonist Lena, an American Nazi-hunter who is also accompanied by physicist Wallace. Discovering that the previous band of mercenaries never returned from their mission, the two join with a British military unit to attempt to rid the bunker of evil once again. The setting of the film therefore remains much the same, though with a marked effort to expand the *Outpost* world through the representation of nearby rural communities and another hidden level of the bunker. The journey through nearby Eastern European villages creates a particularly uncanny-abject effect, as Lena and Wallace must make their way through abandoned homes and schools. In one home Lena follows tiny bloody footprints only to find a Nazi zombie, a site which the audience have already seen through a soldier's headcam footage when a young girl is violently attacked by one of the monsters. Similarly, as Lena wanders through a playground scattered with debris the absence of children is striking and horrifying, and Kristeva regards that which threatens childhood as particularly abject.[44] Such crimes also evoke uncanniness, as the familiar images of childhood are made unfamiliar when juxtaposed with violence and murder. Both of these sensations are contained within traumatic memories of the Second World War, a

[43] Ibid., p. 2; p. 3.
[44] Kristeva, p. 4.

war which *Outpost: Black Sun* depicts spreading across the geography of present-day Eastern Europe, engulfing all in its way. That it is set in Eastern Europe is also significant and reinforces this reading, as this setting evokes memories of the Bosnian war from 1992 to 1995 following the disintegration of Yugoslavia. In this war thousands of Bosnian Muslims were killed, including the massacre in Srebenica which was the largest genocide Europe has seen since the Second World War. Thus, the crimes of the Second World War collide with those of the Bosnian war, suggesting that the trauma of these genocides continues to occupy 21st century filmmakers and audiences.

Not only does the geography of *Outpost* expand, but its range of protagonists and monsters also increases, and this relates to another trauma surrounding gender and the role of women. For example, in addition to the Breather Götz and the same trench coat and helmet ensconced soldiers, a nurse figure emerges in *Outpost: Black Sun*. It is notable that the nurse Nazi zombie is made the most abject and grotesque of the creatures in the bunker for her femaleness. She is shown stooping, with sagging skin and patchy, withering hair, in which respects she is as much hag as she is zombie. This sets her apart from the male monsters who are comparatively unchanged by death, especially Götz who is at times mistaken for a human, and creates a uniquely gendered transformation from young nurse to aged witch-like monster. This relates to the female Nazi occult monster discussed in Chapter One, as the nurse zombie is a similar example of the 'monstrous-feminine', defined by Creed as 'what it is about woman that is shocking, terrifying, horrific, abject'.[45] The nurse zombie is also granted a more prominent vocal role than her male counterparts, but not, importantly, a voice. Where all the other Nazi monsters may grunt or occasionally shout, the Nazi nurse shrieks, titters and murmurs in a manner close to hysteria, an expression of emotion and trauma historically associated with women in a derogatory way. I would therefore argue that the especially abject female monster invites a troubling gendered reading of the film which relates to a wider patriarchal structure in which women are secondary to men and which *Outpost: Black Sun* works within and reinforces. This structure is particularly stark in the war-time setting, for as Barbara Ehrenreich argues, war is 'one of the most rigidly "gendered" activities known to humankind'.[46] For Ehrenreich the lines between genders are starkly delineated in the male-dominated setting of war, and

[45] Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 1.
[46] Barbara Ehrenreich, *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), p. 125.

this is reinforced (and arguably reproduced) by the film's use of the war genre and setting in which the female cannot be assimilated and is made monstrously Other.

However, in its second instalment *Outpost* also creates a female lead in the form of Lena, which may suggest that there is an awareness of such gendered roles and an attempt to redress and navigate these issues. In many of the Nazi zombie films I will discuss in this chapter women are largely absent in comparison to the group of military men who remain a genre staple. If anything, the military unit is less diverse and more anonymous in this second instalment than the first, with no effort made to distinguish each man from a traditional archetype (the leader, the hothead, etc.). As a Nazi-hunter, Lena offers a strong female protagonist who is capable of defending herself, surviving even as the military unit are all eventually killed. In this respect she could be compared to what Carol Clover describes as a 'Final Girl', a recurring female character which emerged from the slasher film who survives until the conclusion to either kill the monster or be rescued due to her possessing certain traits.[47] These traits include 'smartness, gravity, competence in mechanical and other practical matters, and sexual reluctance', making her in mentality and sometimes physicality 'boyish'.[48] Certainly, Lena is depicted with short hair and androgynous clothing, at times demonstrating brutality as when she is introduced breaking the fingers of an elderly Nazi, and at others showing her quick-thinking which enables her to outmanoeuvre the zombies. As a result she holds the potential to unman the Nazi monsters, and perhaps also the Allied male soldiers, yet is 'not so feminine as to disturb the structures of male competence and sexuality'.[49] Thus, although the concept of the Final Girl is drawn from a specific subgenre and period, it is nonetheless useful to extend such considerations to 21st century Nazi horror as these continuities demonstrate a persistent concern surrounding sexual difference. Lena is a significant addition to *Outpost: Black Sun* not simply by virtue of being a woman, but due to the particular way in which she is represented which suggests a 'limited' femaleness. While there is some evidence in *Outpost: Black Sun* of a self-aware exploration of the instability of gender roles during a traumatic period or event, the ultimate effect is one that rewards women such as Lena for being 'masculine' and punishes those such as the nurse who are 'feminine', connoting

[47] Carol Clover, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015).
[48] Ibid., p. 40.
[49] Ibid., p. 51.

anxiety and conservatism in response to trauma and the resulting instability of gender roles rather than an exploration of them.

Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz **and the Toxicity of War**

Where the second *Outpost* film considers the role of women in greater detail, even if the result is problematic, the third does so far less as it focuses on the representation of men and masculinity. With previous producer Kieran Parker stepping into the director's role, *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* (2013) goes back in time to the Second World War and the beginnings of the bunker. In the place of the female protagonist is a troop of Russian soldiers led by Dolokhov, and the very opening of the film establishes a new brand of super-masculine soldier. This is perhaps a result of, and complicated by, the generic hybridity of Nazi horror which combines the combat and horror genres, both of which have complex relationships with the representation of masculinity. For example, Robert Eberwein argues that the combat film is unique in that it originates from the gendered context of war in which masculinity, even aggressive masculinity, is valorised.[50] Horror has similarly been examined in relation to masculinity and sexuality, such as considering the monster as a threat to heteronormative masculinity which needs to be defeated by the male hero.[51] In *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* the result of these gendered generic contexts is the introductory sequence of the Russian soldiers in which they lie in wait for a German car, and when it arrives they attack with a brutality previously associated with the Nazi monsters. On the one hand, this juxtaposition might suggest that violence carried out by the Nazis is typical rather than aberrant. On the other hand, though, it can suggest that such violence is always aberrant (and abhorrent) but not exclusive to the Nazis, and this alternative is supported by the framing of the Russians' violence as shocking and horrific. One soldier, Fyodor, rips out teeth as trophies while another, Osakin, licks a Nazi soldier's ear as he whispers 'it doesn't matter how I fuck you Nazi bitches, asshole or bullet hole, in the end you all scream just the same'. He follows these ugly words, a notably sexual threat, by slowly cutting the Nazi's throat which the audience must watch in an extreme close-up of skin tearing and blood flowing. These moments reinforce the sense of the body's

[50] Robert Eberwein, *Armed Forces: Masculinity and Sexuality in the American War Film* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2007), p. 6.
[51] As explored in the work of Harry M. Benshoff, *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), for example, though there is far more nuance to his argument and this has been built upon by many others.

permeability, transgressing the boundaries of inside and outside in an abject display which suggests the male body in particular is at once perpetrator and victim of violence.

Following their brutality, the Russian soldiers are soon attacked by the Nazi forces lurking in the woods, and this immediate reversal of events suggests that there are similarities between the Russian and Nazi troops. Indeed, the blurring between the actions of the Allied and Nazi soldiers is furthered by the events which take place inside the bunker once Dolokhov and Fyodor are captured. They awaken inside a locked room, where the leader of the bunker, Colonel Strasser, releases the Nazi zombies to test the Russians' resolve. This setting and conceit is gladiatorial, a fight to the death as the Colonel watches on behind the safety of a window. Dolokhov is depicted as the most powerful gladiator, stripping off his uniform until he is dressed in a white vest which has been associated with the action hero since *Die Hard* (John McTiernan, 1988). Furthermore, when he dispatches the first zombies quickly, Strasser sends in 'the child killer'. The increasing excess of the trilogy has entailed that 'just' Nazi monsters are no longer enough, but now the zombies must also be the most heinous Nazi characters imaginable. This particular Nazi monster (credited as 'the Berserker') is played by James Thompson, a British Mixed Martial Arts fighter, and thus is also a physical match for the very muscular Dolokhov. The Berserker is let loose and begins slaughtering indiscriminately while Dolokhov must also fight his way out in an attempt to escape, and so both 'men' kill untold numbers of Nazis throughout the base. Like Lena and the Nazi nurse, the representation of Dolokhov and the Berserker invites a comparison, in this instance of their aggressive masculinity. However, the comparison drawn between the two is not solely a matter of gender, but more widely can be considered an ideological reflection on the collective evils of war as it depicts both Allies and Nazis as brutal and violent, a matter which is complicated by the film's conclusion. On the one hand, Dolokhov emerges the victor which could be argued to reinforce the binary oppositions which the film had previously blurred, ensuring that the Allies are aligned as good and the Nazis remain undeniably Other and evil. Such a conclusion seems to align with what Aaron Kerner identifies in many films as 'a narcissistic stupor' in which we rest 'reassured that the West defeated and purged the fascist taint, that good ultimately vanquished evil'.[52] On the other hand, as *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* is a prequel the audience understands that the threat has not been safely defeated, and once again the film

[52] Aaron Kerner, 'On the Cinematic Nazi', in *Holocaust Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Images, Memory, and the Ethics of Representation*, ed. by Gerd Bayer and Oleksandr Kobrynskyy (New York and Chichester, UK: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 203-220 (p. 213).

concludes with an open ending which shows an elderly Dolokhov being asked to return to the bunker. This suggests that the fascist taint is far from defeated, and that the cycle of violence will envelop both sides again.

***Frankenstein's Army*: Stitching Together Monsters, Subgenres and Traumas**

Even within the same year the threat of the Nazi zombie rose again, in the form of found footage horror *Frankenstein's Army*. A strikingly similar tale of Russian forces encountering Nazi zombies, *Frankenstein's Army* takes place in an equally indistinct German village, and it is not surprising that the trailer for *Frankenstein's Army* was included on the 2013 DVD release of *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz*. Furthermore, where the third *Outpost* film includes excessive and grotesque depictions of death during the Second World War, *Frankenstein's Army* attempts much of the same, if not more. The bunker is replaced by a labyrinthine basement under a warehouse which is home to numerous 'zombots', the disgusting results of the synthesis of soldiers, civilians and machines. This includes men stitched together with gas masks, drills, long blades, and even a creature which has a propeller for a head. Once again, the Nazi zombie is hybridised and liminal, further blurring the boundaries of different types of monsters with a particularly abject effect here. Human and machine are mixed, but the results are far from flawless, so that the audience is confronted with mangled masses of flesh and stitches. For example, when the first zombot is found the camera circles the creature, showing from every angle in graphic detail the fusion of inner and outer, dead flesh and metal, the biological and the synthetic. These creations are then used to create even more corpses, chasing the men deeper and deeper within the basement as though through the circles of hell. When the remaining men reach the very last level we are welcomed to view the live creation of a zombot, including the opening of Russian soldier Sergei's skull. Here the film reaches its nauseatingly abject climax, as the creator of the zombots hacks at glistening brain tissue.

It is significant that this abject spectacle is framed through the conceit of found footage. In this particular scene such a method amplifies the abjection, as the creator gestures and speaks to the camera, demanding it focus closer on the experiment. The shaking of the device but the inability to look away mimics the reaction of the audience; there is a sense of being nauseated and trapped. The trapped spectator can be connected to trauma as Caruth observes that traumatic events and their return through the nightmares of the survivor take the form of 'a series of painful events to which they are subjected, and which seem to be entirely outside their wish or control', but there is a sense

of perhaps also being unwillingly fascinated.[53] As Peter Hutchings argues, 'the abject also offers a source of fascination and desire, seductively drawing our attention to the limits of our selfhood even as we seek to distance ourselves from that experience'.[54] Yet the effect of the found footage also adds to moments of uncanniness in the film. As Alexandra Heller-Nicholas observes, found footage seeks 'to create a space where spectators can enjoy having their boundaries pushed, where our confidence that we know where the lines between fact and fiction lie are directly challenged', a space of liminal faux-reality.[55] Furthermore, although it is excessive at times, the found footage style can also emphasise that the monsters of *Frankenstein's Army* are still revenants which emerge from the shadows. In one sequence a zombot descends from the ceiling, but the style of the found footage with its instability and shallow focus emphasises the 'corner of the eye' quality of the monster's emergence. It is seen only briefly in the corner of a frame, and only after a lull does it attack. Thus, the found footage mode is in one moment unsettling, but in another is used to frame explicit moments of abjection, intersecting uncanny and abject images in a chaotic depiction of running and movement. In this respect *Frankenstein's Army* has a similar effect to that of *REC* (Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza, 2007), the latter noted by Aldana Reyes as offering 'a threatening adventure in "total immersion"' and achieving the sensation of a 'roller-coaster ride' of horror.[56] The audience of *Frankenstein's Army* is immersed in the horrors of the Second World War and subjected to a fluctuating yet relentless experience.

Frankenstein's Army, in many ways, is like its own zombots. It is a synthesis of different monsters, subgenres, and effects. The result is a disorientating one, and this extends to its representation of national trauma. It is difficult to locate a singular, defining voice of national trauma amidst its indistinct setting and 'Russian' team, played largely by British actors. The director, Richard Raaphorst, is from the Netherlands, while some principal photography was shot in the Czech Republic (which also lent some actors to the cast). Similarly, in regards to *Frankenstein's Army* Kooyman comments on Raaphorst's 'historical distance from but evident connection to and fascination with World War II' stemming from his life in Rotterdam which was bombed by the Luftwaffe.[57] 'Historical

[53] Caruth, p. 1.
[54] Peter Hutchings, *The Horror Film* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 36.
[55] Alexandra Heller-Nicholas, *Found Footage Horror Films: Fear and the Appearance of Reality* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014), p. 4.
[56] Aldana Reyes, p. 105.
[57] Kooyman, p. 120, drawing on numerous interviews with Raaphorst.

distance' is important here as it has the effect of diluting a specific experience of trauma, especially when mixed further with British actors and the production in the Czech Republic which has its own history of oppression in the Second World War. This distance is also what allows the film to comment not just on the Second World War but on conflicts since. The result is a generic but nevertheless strong sense of trauma which echoes in the piles of white naked bodies in *Outpost*, or the piles of burnt bodies in *Frankenstein's Army* that wordlessly evoke images from the Holocaust and more recent genocides. It echoes in the red arm bands of the SS uniforms, and the swastikas on costumes, walls, flags and documents. Thus, even if Raaphorst cites insanity as his primary inspiration, and director Steve Barker claims he wanted an 'interchangeable villain' in *Outpost* – ultimately, as Cynthia J. Miller argues, this is not the result, as the Nazi iconography and themes 'seem inseparable' from these films as signifiers of war and conflict.[58]

Dead Snow, Draugar and Norwegian Experiences with the Far Right

A very specific sense of national trauma does arise in another film of the subgenre, however, the Norwegian *Dead Snow*. The monsters of *Dead Snow* are quite unusual in that 'the decomposing soldiers attack and kill their victims with fists and bayonets, as well as their teeth, and because their bite does not communicate their condition to their prey, the foe are more like *draugar*, animated corpses that protect burial sites and treasure'.[59] Unlike traditional zombies, these draugar are Nazis who occupied a Norwegian village in the region of Øksfjord, mistreating the villagers and stealing all of their gold until finally being driven out in a violent revolt to die in in the freezing mountains. The soldiers awaken again in the 21st century to reclaim their gold, though in the place of the villagers they now attack a group of medical students staying in a remote lodge. Like 'the child killer' zombie in *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz*, there is the suggestion that because the Nazis were evil during their lifetime this is the reason for their exaggerated evilness once they are undead. Thus, unlike many films featuring this movie monster in which 'the zombie is a corpse reanimated through some form of magic or mad science that returns to "life" without regaining any of its former personality', the Nazi zombies retain their previous brutality and

[58] Haleigh Foutch, 'Richard Raaphorst Talks *Frankenstein's Army*', *Collider* (2013) <http://collider.com/richard-raaphorst-frankensteins-army-interview/> [accessed 1 July 2017]; Cynthia J. Miller, 'The Rise and Fall – and Rise – of the Nazi Zombie in Film', in *Race, Oppression and the Zombie: Essays on Cross-Cultural Appropriations of the Caribbean Tradition*, ed. by Christopher M. Moreman and Cory James Rushton (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2011), pp. 139-148 (p. 146).

[59] Bishop, p. 182.

even continue to kill with their army-issued weapons.[60] Not only this, but the zombies in *Dead Snow* are led by Colonel Herzog, just as those in *Outpost* are led by the Brigadeführer Götz, undermining Russell's assertion that 'there are no aristocrats, blue bloods or celebrities among zombies'.[61] Not only are the Nazis immediately recognisable due to their costumes, but so too are their leaders, who retain their ranks in the afterlife. This is another way in which the Nazi monster is made to be markedly different to other types of zombie and indicates the centrality of hierarchy to representations of fascism.

The Norwegian experience of trauma arises out of the interactions between the hapless medical students and Herzog's undead army. One possible reading of the film offered by Miller is that:

> *Dead Snow* effectively resituates the Nazi zombie in contemporary popular culture. Its strong use of the symbols, icons, and lore of the Third Reich are decontextualized, plucked from the fields of war and inserted into the midst of snow tubing, heavy drinking, and post-adolescent courtship rituals—ghastly caricature, void of ideological power, which parody, rather than represent their history.[62]

For Miller, the combination of the buffoon-like zombie with the symbols of Nazism is 'the embodiment of parody itself […] which, by its very existence, mocks its own origins'.[63] Similarly, Kooyman considers *Dead Snow* to be the most 'lightweight' of the three films he considers as Wirkola's use of zombies is ultimately 'self-defeating' and his 'chosen vessel also impedes its transmission'.[64] This not only suggests that the zombies of *Dead Snow* align more closely with the previous buffoons of horror cinema and as such may be dismissed, but in particular that such a buffoon-like zombie is inherently at odds with the serious threat of Nazism. Certainly, these monsters are the most laughable of the Nazi zombies as they flail around in the snow getting their intestines caught on trees, which may undermine the potential threat and political weight they hold. The protagonists are equally laughable, led by haemophobic doctor Martin and including the horror-nut Erlend. The latter lends a self-aware quality to the film, as he jokes about the dangers of youths in a cabin in the middle of nowhere, and wears a *Braindead* (Peter Jackson, 1992) t-shirt, perhaps further undermining the horror of the film.

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[60] Russell, p. 8.
[61] Ibid., p. 7. As *Dead Snow* was released after Russell's work was published, and the horror genre is often self-aware, this may even be a self-conscious challenge to such assertions.
[62] Miller, p. 147.
[63] Ibid., p. 148.
[64] Kooyman, p. 125.

Yet this intertextual reference to *Braindead* is meaningful, for Badley argues that *Braindead* 'may be zombie cinema's purest example of a carnival in which political satire is disseminated throughout a text whose tone and purpose are ultimately festive and anarchic'.[65] Thus, rather than suggest that *Dead Snow* being similarly carnivalesque and anarchic undermines the importance of the Nazi zombie, as Badley suggests the carnivalesque and abject can be inherently political, so I would argue that it is possible for this horror-comedy to engage with, rather than purely parody, Norway's history. Indeed, while Sven Jüngerkes and Christiane Wienand also admit that Martin and Erlend are part of 'a youth culture that is, at least in the beginning, completely defenceless against the re-emergence of history in the shape of the Nazi zombies', they ultimately argue that 'the undead Nazi zombies serve as memory fragments, vehicles or images of repression, which still subliminally impact the residents of the Øksfjord area'.[66] Thus although the youths fail to recognise the danger of the past even when a wanderer comes to the cabin and explicitly tells them about it, this acts as a metaphor for a culture which 'only recently […] developed an increasing discourse about their collective Nazi past'.[67] Furthermore, their ensuing defence of the cabin, in which they attempt to board up the windows and doors, reinforces a psychoanalytic reading of the horror genre, as Russell argues from a psychoanalytic perspective 'the reason why the characters of zombie movies spend most of their time barricading themselves away inside houses, cellars and attics is that they're terrified of coming face to face with what they previously refused to acknowledge'.[68] Importantly, though, the youths do emerge from their hiding, facing the past armed with creativity and chainsaws. Not only this, but the slapstick violence which ensues can actually be read as part of the relationship between the uncanny, the abject and trauma, as for Kristeva 'laughing is a way of placing or displacing abjection' and for Royle 'the uncanny is never far from something comic'.[69] This suggests that comedy is not necessarily in opposition to horror, but rather that experiences of horror-comedy may be unsettling or nauseating. The representation of the draugar and the choice of their victims is indicative of a struggle to come to terms with a history of both occupation and rebellion, passivity and activity, which has lain dormant beneath the snow for too long, and that this film's

[65] Badley, p. 46.
[66] Sven Jüngerkes and Christiane Wienand, 'A Past that Refuses to Die: Nazi Zombie Film and the Legacy of Occupation', in *Nazisploitation!: The Nazi Image in Low-Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. by Daniel H. Magilow, Elizabeth Bridges and Kristin T. Vander Lugt (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), pp. 238-257 (p. 247).
[67] Ibid., p. 239.
[68] Russell, p. 69.
[69] Kristeva, p. 8; Royle, p. 2.

struggle takes the form of an anarchic and excessive horror-comedy does not necessarily lessen the 'genuine insights' it provides into the national trauma of Norway.

***Dead Snow: Red Vs Dead*: Bringing War to Norway**

The sequel *Dead Snow: Red Vs Dead* reinforces this latter reading by expanding upon the history of Herzog and the Øksfjord area. Where in the first film the zombies appeared content to pursue their gold, merely motivated by greed and violence, *Red Vs Dead* begins with Herzog remembering his original mission. With a soundtrack of Adolf Hitler's impassioned speech playing, Herzog gazes across the fjord to the nearest town; he will continue the mission of the Third Reich and bring war to Norway. The use of this authentic historical sound clip is a method of legitimising the mythology of these Nazi zombies, as is the subsequent use of a war museum as a setting. Martin, the only survivor of the first film, travels to the museum to find out more about Herzog. Here he finds a photograph of Herzog with Hitler and various documents supposedly left over from the war. Herzog is not, in truth, a real figure from history and, as Jüngerkes and Wienand point out, his costume is not authentic either: 'The film does not depict the zombies as either *Wehrmacht* soldiers or members of the SS *Einsatzgruppen*, the notorious "task forces" that perpetrated Holocaust atrocities' and instead 'the undead German soldiers appear as an amalgamation of those Germans who had been involved in the Third Reich's occupation efforts, and thus they are depicted as prototypical occupation soldiers'.[70] Despite their generic costumes, then, the sequel situates these amalgamations in a complex faux-history which remains indicative of Norway's time during occupation. That the visitors to the museum are slaughtered by the coach-load is a scathing continuation of the portrayal in *Dead Snow* of Norway's inability to truly acknowledge its past, and of the shallowness of tourism's interaction with such trauma. More than this, the tourists are resurrected and controlled by Herzog, meaning they are not just passive victims, but that their passivity becomes dangerous and causes further harm.

By contrast, Martin and his new helper Glenn are able to use their knowledge of history gleaned from the museum to defeat Herzog, suggesting that interaction with the past is vital to stopping conflict in the present. The present context is of note here, for not only can the *Dead Snow* films be considered in relation to contemporary attitudes to past wars, but the 21st century political landscape of Norway has been similar to that across Europe and the US in seeing the return of the far right. In particular, though the status of

[70] Jüngerkes and Wienand, p. 245.

the Norway Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, or FrP) as far right has been disputed by some, Anders Widfeldt nonetheless situates the party amongst the rise of the Scandi right.[71] According to Widfeldt the FrP has become increasingly populist and popular since 1993, including notable success in the elections of 2006. This electoral success provides a context for *Dead Snow* in 2009 in which the far right is certainly being debated and discussed in Norway, and arguably even increasing its hold. Moreover, the FrP was then subject to high profile media attention when it was connected to the terrorist attacks of former member Anders Behring Breivik, who killed 77 people in Oslo in 2011. Once again, although there was much debate about the extent to which Breivik could be said to represent the views of the Progress Party, and this resulted in immediate drops in their polls and a cry to moderate their position on immigration, what is evident is that this connection between the far right and terrorist acts became a pressing source of anxiety in Norway just three years before the release of *Dead Snow: Red vs Dead*. A developing fear of history repeating itself in the present can thus be mapped against the two films, indicative of a complex trauma in which the past returns in repeated and intrusive ways.

In this case Martin and Glenn are aided in their fight against the returning Nazis by their knowledge of the opposing forces, and as in *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* and *Frankenstein's Army* it is Russian soldiers who are called upon to defeat the threat. The Russian soldiers are raised from the dead by Martin (using Herzog's arm which has been used to replace the one Martin self-amputated, no less). Here, the Russian Prisoners of War are depicted as tortured, but loyal and fierce, and where the Nazi zombies are made abject by their decaying flesh and moral monstrosity, the Russians' zombieism as evident in their scarred and decaying flesh only adds to their sympathetic treatment as those wronged by war due to their situation as Allies. The ensuing battle thus has the effect of extending the narrative beyond a solely Norwegian trauma. A similar effect is achieved by the inclusion of American characters, a 'professional' zombie fighting squad. These particular characters may be dismissed as a concession to the first film's success and global audience as they dilute the national voice at the centre of *Dead Snow* quite literally by speaking in English. As this squad is revealed to be little more than three geeks with no experience, I would argue that they act as a globalised version of Martin's band of youths in the first film, and in particular Erlend. Fairly ineffective, but increasingly creative, the American squad ultimately assist with the demise of Herzog due to their knowledge of zombie films. In such

[71] Anders Widfeldt, *Extreme Right Parties in Scandinavia* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015).

a self-aware film, the best ammunition against the return of the Nazi monster seems to be shared knowledge. *Dead Snow* thus facilitates analysis of both Norwegian and global trauma precisely because of its form as a satirical zomedy.

***War of the Dead*: Shifting Boundaries during Times of Conflict**

Where the Russian forces are represented as Allies and even as heroic to varying extents in *Dead Snow: Red vs Dead*, *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* and *Frankenstein's Army*, there is one film in the subgenre which depicts the Soviets not as Allies but as potential enemies as seen in the Russo-Finnish War, and that is *War of the Dead.* This 2011 film directed by Finnish Marko Mäkilaakso opens with a sequence depicting the creation of a zombie in a Nazi bunker, following which text tells the audience that in Finland, 1941, 'A small elite unit of American soldiers is dispatched to assist a Finnish task force in their fight against the Russians. Their mission: to destroy the Russian bunker. This much is true.' Such a historical and geographical setting offers another national angle on the Second World War, as the narrative 'grew out of the real-life story of a boat that left New York on December 1939, heavy-laden with volunteers to fight with the Finns against the Soviet Union'.[72] This particular moment of history saw Russia advancing on Finland in an effort to take Finnish land that the Soviet Union felt was Russian. Thus, from a Finnish perspective Russia was an enemy, yet one distinct from the evil of Nazism, and this position is embodied in the Russian character Kolya. The American-Finnish unit encounter Kolya as they flee the zombie-infested battlefield and the Finnish Captain, Niemi, immediately orders the American Captain, Stone, to shoot him, presuming he must be a threat based solely on the assertion that 'he's a fucking Russian'. However, Kolya pleads with Stone and offers to help them, proving to be one of the heroes fighting against the Nazi-created zombies. This historical period and the character of Kolya therefore represent the constantly shifting boundaries of war.

The particular type of supernatural revenants depicted in *War of the Dead* is another respect in which the film differs to others in the subgenre. These monsters are more 'indicative of the recent fast-moving, super-strong, and ultraviolent zombies' seen in horror cinema, complete with contagious bite.[73] Despite Erlend's cry in *Dead Snow* of 'Don't get bitten!' it is not actually until *Red vs Dead* that we see the spreading of zombieism by Nazi monsters. Even then, it is not spread by the conventional means of a

[72] Miller, p. 146.
[73] Bishop, p. 181, referring to the trend seen in films such as *28 Days Later* (Danny Boyle, 2002).

bite, but by the supernatural powers of Herzog. As *War of the Dead* offers a different type of zombie, so the zombies do not just pick off the platoon one by one but convert them. As a result, it is not only the Nazi zombie which is dangerous but the platoon's own men, in particular Captain Niemi who is infected and becomes another of the white-eyed zombies. The infected Niemi's blank stare could be connected to trauma, an analogy given precedent by Karen Randell's argument that films such as *Night of the Living Dead* and *Deathdream* (Bob Clark, 1974) engage with 'many issues pertinent to the war era'.[74] Indeed, Lowenstein also refers to *Deathdream* as one of his first examples of the allegorical moment, and though Randell does not use Lowenstein's term she expands on such a reading through her analysis of the veteran zombie. Firstly, she considers that 'the oxymoron "living dead" not only incorporates anxieties around death, dying and burial, but it also speaks to the absence of men who were either classified as missing in action or prisoners of war'.[75] The Nazi zombie film, with its undead soldiers, may also evoke these anxieties as at once connected to the momentous loss of life which occurred in the World Wars and in conflicts which have taken place since. More controversially, though, Randell argues that:

> as a clearer understanding of Vietnam Syndrome began to emerge in the 1970s, Andy's catatonic state [in *Deathdream*], broken by bouts of violence, echoes the destructive elements of this condition. The hyperbolic display of these symptoms in *Deathdream* serves as a dark satire of the shell-shocked veteran.[76]

It is possible to consider Niemi and the soldier-zombie of the Nazi horror subgenre in a similar light, as certain symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder such as intrusive flashbacks or emotional numbness are made monstrous through the blankness of the zombies' eyes in this war-time setting. Though this is not obviously satirical in *War of the Dead* and such a hyperbolic parallel is a questionable treatment of trauma, Randell's work suggests that such a parallel may arise nonetheless.[77]

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[74] Karen Randell, 'Lost Bodies/Lost Souls: *Night of the Living Dead* and *Deathdream* as Vietnam Narrative', in *Generation Zombie: Essays on the Living Dead in Modern Culture*, ed. by Stephanie Boluk and Wylie Lenz (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2011), pp. 67-76 (p. 67).
[75] Ibid., p. 68.
[76] Ibid., p. 74.
[77] That Nazi horror expresses a concern regarding experiences of trauma in this way could be connected to its generic hybridity, for as Jeanine Basinger argues, in both the horror and war genres 'the enemy attacks at night, and men go mad from the strains of coping', *The World War II Combat Film: Anatomy of a Genre* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), p. 124. Though Basinger frames the shared themes of horror and war through the language of madness, this may be framed with more nuance and sensitivity through the language of trauma and mental health. This is an issue which also arises in the work of Freud, who relates madness to the uncanny when he argues that the 'effect of epilepsy and of madness has the same origin. The layman sees in them the

It is also significant, then, that in *War of the Dead* this is a contagious type of zombie, for Cathy Caruth notes 'trauma's "contagion", of the traumatization of the ones who listen'.[78] A contagious Nazi zombieism which spreads amongst the Nazi and Allied ranks may also operate in *War of the Dead* as a metaphor for trauma. However, the issue of contagion poses specific questions regarding the Nazi zombie. Russell argues that Romero originally added contagion and cannibalism to the zombie mythology because it was 'central to the film's provocative vision of individuals being consumed/subsumed into the larger group'.[79] On the one hand, it is perhaps not the same form of subsumption which is at stake in *War of the Dead*. Indeed, although McIntosh observes that 'the characters in the post-*Night* zombie movies—and, by extension, the audience watching the films and identifying with the characters—fear losing their individuality to become one of the Many', it seems less likely that the audience of the Nazi zombie film is afraid of being converted to fascism.[80] This is because a person's political stance is a mindset or belief system developed over time, and so although the creeping spread of fascism in society may be a cause for anxiety, it does not lend itself to the analogy of a sudden and involuntary transition prompted by a bite.

Nor does this seem to be a contagion which encourages the audience to recreate and participate in the same way as other zombie films. Emma Austin has argued that one reason for the zombie's appeal is that it is 'part of an overwhelming force for change that will consume the individual into a mass', and this can be a carnivalesque and liberating feeling, and one of becoming part of a wider social grouping.[81] While the Nazi zombie embodies the freedom to act unrestrained by morality and this may seem appealing to some, it most often continues to carry out organised attacks, retaining its rank, and to the end of an oppressive regime. In this way to be amongst the Nazi zombie ranks is not to be liberated and to be equal with your peers, nor to be able to attack anyone in sight, any way

working of forces hitherto unsuspected in his fellow-men, but at the same time he is dimly aware of them in the remote corners of his own being', p. 366. As Freud was writing at a time when shell shock was first being investigated, this description is equally applicable to the uncanny effect of witnessing a post-traumatic episode, further explaining the links to be drawn between war and horror, trauma and the zombie.

[78] Cathy Caruth, 'Introduction', in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 3-12 (p. 10), referring to the work of Lenore Terr, 'Remembered Images and Trauma: A Psychology of the Supernatural', *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 40 (1985), 493-533.

[79] Russell, p. 69.

[80] McIntosh, p. 10.

[81] Emma Austin, 'Zombie Culture: Dissent, Celebration and the Carnivalesque in Social Spaces', in *The Zombie Renaissance in Popular Culture*, ed. by Laura Hubner, Marcus Leaning and Paul Manning (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), pp. 174-190 (p. 184).

you like. Yet, on the other hand, this co-option into a controlling regime in which one loses a sense of freedom, individuality and self still has resonances with the overwhelming force of Nazism and the anxiety that may be felt surrounding one's ability to resist and oppose such a force. Such an anxiety is also closely tied to the neoliberal agenda which enables such conditions in the 21st century, for Sherryl Vint connects the contagious zombie to a shift within zombie narratives which has seen the living dead become the infected living.[82] On this reading the contagious zombie becomes an oddly sympathetic monster which embodies the disenfranchised labour and loss of self under neoliberalism, the opposite result to the supposed championing of individualism neoliberalism proposes. As Sabine Hake draws attention to 'the fascist imaginary as a signifying system whose primary function is to give expression not to our relationship to the past but to something else: present and often urgent concerns about democratic subjectivity', so the symbolism of the contagious Nazi zombie in *War of the Dead* is as complex as the situation of the self in a fascist versus democratic regime.[83]

***Overlord*: Psychological and Physical Trauma in the US**

Where *War of the Dead* uses the Nazi zombie to explore the psychological and political ramifications of war, the latest entry in the subgenre, *Overlord*, builds upon the tropes and traditions of the Nazi zombie film in order to explore both psychological and physical trauma. *Overlord* is set on the eve of D-Day and follows Private Boyce and his fellow soldiers on a mission to destroy an enemy radio tower in Nazi-occupied France which is blocking Allied transmissions. The film opens in the interior of a plane as the soldiers nervously await a parachute jump, a sequence which introduces the disparate group of men. There is the obnoxious and aggressive Tibbet who mocks the more sentimental and caring Boyce, the mysterious and reportedly brutal Ford, the incompetent and out-of-place photographer Chase, in addition to nervous Rosenfeld and cheerful 'hick' Dawson. Their different personalities draw on various archetypes, and though they are all American, the men come from diverse backgrounds. For example, both Boyce and Sergeant Rensin are black, and as Boyce refers to his Haitian grandmother and home in Louisiana his background acknowledges the diversity of the Allies in a way which, though never made explicit, is situated in opposition to the Nazis' racist ideology. Moreover, as the most recent

[82] Sherryl Vint, 'Abject Posthumanism: Neoliberalism, Biopolitics and Zombies', in *Monster Culture in the 21st Century: A Reader*, ed. by Marina Levina and Diem-My T. Bui (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2013) pp. 133-146.
[83] Sabine Hake, *Screen Nazis: Cinema, History, and Democracy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), p. 4.

entry into the Nazi horror subgenre, *Overlord* as a Hollywood film which makes reference to race can be considered alongside what Victoria McCollum refers to as Trump-era horror. McCollum considers much US horror released since Trump's inauguration as President, following a misogynistic, ableist and nationalistic campaign and linked to the wider rise of the far right in the 21st century, to be tied to this context in numerous and complex ways. Within this context she argues that 'it has become highly unsurprising to hear the US president refer to various territories (such as Haiti and countries in Africa) as "shithole countries"'.[84] Thus for *Overlord* to implicitly connect racism to Nazism is to also connect it to the 21st century, which remains far from a post-racial society.

This initial sequence is also perhaps one of the clearest examples of Nazi horror in which the combat film segues into the horror film; the preparation for parachuting is chaotic as an engine blows and enemy fire rips through the floor. One man vomits, which the camera follows and lingers on as it pools on the floor. Boyce narrowly avoids being sucked backwards into the fiery cockpit and throws himself outside, only to land in a lake and struggle further to free himself from his parachute and rise to the surface. As the men regroup and make their way through the forest, war and horror film build together once more through the shots of the dead dangling from their parachutes in the trees, eerily backlit by orange smoke. Soon a mine evaporates Dawson, a common image from war which is visceral and horrific. Throughout these scenes sound is used to build to a crescendo before being muffled and silenced during moments of extreme stress as when the light turns green to jump, or during moments when Boyce's hearing is impacted as when he is submerged in the lake or following the mine blast, creating an aural point-of-view of Boyce's experiences.

As the men get closer to their target the foreshadowing of horror beyond the 'normal' realms of war intensifies. First, they encounter the inexplicable skinless remains of what looks to be a jackal, and then on following a local, Chloe, to her home Boyce glimpses her sick and disfigured aunt through the crack of a door. As Chloe explains, her aunt was taken to the village's church by the Germans where she was a test subject for their experimental serum which creates the undead. This is the first of many grotesque bodies to be seen in the film, though one of the few locals to be focused on. Instead, *Overlord* depicts many more undead soldiers. The latter are significant in that their reanimated and mutated

[84] Victoria McCollum, 'Introduction', in *Make America Hate Again: Trump-Era Horror and the Politics of Fear*, ed. by Victoria McCollum (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 1-16, (p. 2).

bodies have often already experienced the physical trauma of war, and it is this which provides much of the horror. Critics such as David J. Skal and more recently W. Scott Poole have connected the return of wounded and disfigured soldiers from the World Wars to the images of bodily harm seen in horror cinema ever since, and this seems explicitly continued in *Overlord*.[85] For example, when trying to escape the enemy Boyce throws himself onto a truck only to recoil in horror as he finds himself lying amongst the dead soldiers being transported for the experiments; even before the experiments the dead men are horrifying as war has left them with deep wounds and lacerations. Later, when Chloe and the soldiers make their way into the subterranean compound in order to destroy it and the radio tower, Chloe is chased by one particularly threatening zombie who has lost a limb. Its right arm ends at the elbow from which two jagged bones protrude, and the monster attempts to stab Chloe with these sharp bones. In all of these instances it is not a process of decay and decomposition which causes disgust, as is often the case in the zombie film, but rather the unnatural preservation and mobilisation of war-wounded bodies. In many instances, it becomes impossible to say whether injuries have been inflicted as part of the war or part of the experiment, locating physical trauma as a prominent source of horror in *Overlord*.

Lastly, the Nazi threat is encapsulated by Captain Wafner, a character who reinforces and builds upon many established tropes in the representation of the Nazi monster. Firstly, in his human form Wafner threatens Chloe's young brother, Paul, then begins sexually assaulting her before Boyce interrupts. As explored in relation to 21st century representations of the Nazi occult in Chapter One, sexual assault is a horrific act commonly portrayed in both action and horror films and is often associated with the Nazis to reinforce their criminality. Later, Wafner sustains an injury to his face which prompts him to use the serum on himself, injecting himself not just once but twice in an action which emphasises his 'double' evil of becoming at once Nazi and zombie. He thus takes on the role of the strongest and most threatening zombie of the film, his qualities in life of being in a position of power (as in *Outpost* and *Dead Snow*) and a reprehensible rapist (a parallel to the child killer in *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz*) being carried over into his representation as undead. This has the effect of Othering the Nazi as perhaps the 'ultimate' monster, in opposition to which Boyce is shown to be the hero precisely because of his kindness and caring, while Tibbet evolves from obnoxious aggressor to protector of

[85] David J. Skal, *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (London: Plexus, 1993); W. Scott Poole, *Wasteland: The Great War and the Origins of Modern Horror* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2018).

childhood innocence through his connection with Chloe's brother, suggesting that in *Overlord* cruelty and the monstrous are associated with the Nazis while traits such as kindness and heroism are valued and located in the Allies. Yet, as is often the case in the Nazi zombie film, the protagonists do not emerge unscathed. Chase is injected with the serum and becomes a danger to his own team, while Ford injects himself in the final battle only to decide he must die so as not to become a further threat. Ford declares that the underground compound must be 'buried' with him in it, a rhetoric which resonates with the uncanny and that which must remain hidden. Though Ford's self-sacrificing actions may suggest that, in contrast to the Nazis, he has retained his humanity after administering the serum, it is only in as much as Ford is able to recognise and pre-empt his inevitable descent, ultimately suggesting that neither Allies nor Nazis are immune from becoming monstrous. *Overlord* suggests that there are horrific repercussions of war for both the body and the mind, affecting both the 'good guys' and the 'bad guys'.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Nazi zombie is one result of the 'global explosion of zombie mania', as the 'blankness' of the everyman zombie has allowed it to be hybridised to represent different social anxieties.[86] Indeed, the zombie can even encompass opposing political views, for as Marc DiPaolo argues:

> Liberal zombie movie fans tend to gravitate to films that depict the zombie apocalypse as being caused by evil multi-national corporations (*Resident Evil* [Paul W.S. Anderson, 2002]), the military industrial complex (as in proto-zombie-apocalypse narrative *Day of the Triffids* [Steve Sekely, 1963]), or a rebirth of the Nazi movement (*Shock Waves* [Ken Wiederhorn, 1977]). Conservatives see the zombie invasion as a natural consequence of runaway immigration […] or an uprising of the urban poor, especially the homeless and black populations.[87]

This suggests that zombies can be both portrayed and received through the lens of different political anxieties, and that the 21st century Nazi zombie is a continuation of the particular left wing iteration which DiPoalo sees in *Shock Waves*. In this, the Nazified zombie is a noteworthy exception to many of the rules which have governed the zombie film, characterising its own specific 'explosion'. Its meaning is governed at once by the way it conforms to certain zombie tropes, such as its form as abject and uncanny walking corpse which prompts terror and disgust, and by the ways in which it diverges as hybridised with

[86] Hubner, Leaning and Manning, p. 3.
[87] Marc DiPaolo, *War, Politics and Superheroes: Ethics and Propaganda in Comics and Film* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2011), p. 250.

draugar, robot and ghost so as to connect these sensations to a fear of that which is hierarchical, controlled and fascist. As Miller observes, the Nazi zombie is nigh unstoppable, not only in the nihilistic narratives which rarely see the monster defeated, but also in that, 'as their cinematic history illustrates, they just… keep… coming'.[88] As I have argued that the Nazi zombie is a walking wound signifying the trauma of the Second World War amalgamated with other recent conflicts and experiences of national trauma, so its prolificacy demonstrates the strength and perpetuation of these traumas.

Werewolves

Zombies, Werewolves and Ambiguity

There is another example of the Nazi zombie film which requires discussion, and that is *Horrors of War*, a film I separate here due to the unusual fact that alongside zombies there are werewolves wandering the battlegrounds of World War Two. The zombies of the piece are fairly sparse and indistinct considering the film has also been released under the title *Zombies of War*. Like the zombies of *Outpost* they are played by hulking actors. Similar to those in *War of the Dead* they have blank sightless eyes, though this time they are a flat black which gives the illusion of gouged out pits. That there are both zombies and werewolves is more notable, and is further evidence of the hybridised and liminal nature of Nazi horror which breaks down borders between different types of monster. Not only are the effects of each monster changeably abject, uncanny and traumatic, but in this film two different creatures share the stage. Furthermore, in *Dead Snow* Wirkola purposefully created zombies which were 'aggressive, like rabid dogs, and will hunt you down'.[89] This is even more the case in *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz*, which features a zombie dragged around on a lead, snapping and snarling and kept like a hound. Inside the Nazis' underground facility the protagonist comes across many failed experiments locked behind doors, one of which is labelled 'wolf soldat'. We are not afforded a glimpse of this creature, only the sound of its growls, but the audience's imagination can fill in the gaps. Such slippages are further evidence of the blurred and hybridised Nazi monster, but also indicate the need to interrogate the connection between Nazism and the werewolf and what fears it represents.

[88] Miller, p. 148.
[89] Ibid., p. 146.

To consider these fears we can return to Badley's argument that the werewolf is primarily associated with the 'bestial', which in turn can be linked to the abject, for Kristeva argues that 'the abject confronts us, on the one hand, with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of *animal*'.[90] That is to say, the unthinking and instinctual animal is abject as positioned in opposition to, or lesser than, the rational human who has a sense of individual will. In particular, acts of sex and murder represent a loss of control which strays into the animalistic, the primitive and the primal. Furthermore, the transformation of the werewolf is bodily horrific as the beast bursts forth and ruptures the skin. Creed offers an analysis of the werewolf in these terms, linking it to the abject in which the skin is a fragile container.[91] Creed also links this same abject phenomenon to the uncanny, though, for the two are never far apart, and 'the wolf-man, or werewolf, is the uncanny skin monster of myth and legend […] a creature who is able to turn his skin inside out as he metamorphoses from human to animal'.[92] In this way the skin of the wolf-man is an uncanny-abject liminal border through which a horrifying and terrifying breakdown takes place. Not only this, but the sudden, agonising transformation embodies the 'sudden emergence of uncanniness' which constitutes the abject. It is also a sudden transformation which results in a state of unthinking rage, and so the madness of the werewolf may evoke the particular feeling of uncanniness, which Freud perceives as being brought about by watching bouts of insanity or fits, in addition to the abjection of being reduced to instinctual action in the absence of conscious thoughts, all of which may also be related to the 'unknowing' and 'unwitting' re-enactment of trauma.[93] It is important to note here that both Kristeva and Creed are referring to 'man' in particular as Nazi horror also features primarily male werewolves making these traits seemingly masculine features in the context of the Nazi werewolf film. The werewolf, like the zombie, may therefore be considered through the lenses of uncanniness, abjection, trauma and gender, and, as I will suggest in this section, the Nazi werewolf especially so.

A History of Bestial Monstrosity and *Horrors of War*

Firstly, I would argue that the Nazi werewolf has a unique relationship with history and trauma. Skal suggests that there have long been connections between the wolf and war rooted in the status of the wolf as 'an ancient symbol, deeply linked to militarism and the

[90] Kristeva, p. 12.
[91] Creed, *Phallic Panic*, p. 144.
[92] Ibid., p. 124.
[93] Freud, p. 366; Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 2.

battlefield, with special meanings in Norse and Teutonic mythology. The ancient warriors called berserkers were said to wear the skins of wolves and other animals to increase their ferocity'.[94] Skal argues that this is directly related to the Second World War, and such mythological connections likely informed Hitler's own fascination with the wolf and werewolf as exemplified by his insistence on naming his residences and the people around him after wolves.[95] Similarly, Eric Kurlander traces a connection between Nazism and the werewolf, referring to the 'Weimar-era Werewolf (*Wehrwolf*) paramilitary organization' which he links to the creation of Operation Werewolf during the Second World War.[96] Of the latter, he argues that:

> the Werewolves never enjoyed the full support of the German population. Nor did they have a significant political or military impact. They did capture the popular imagination, however, constituting the epitome of what the Third Reich hoped to create through its last-gasp exploitation of the supernatural imaginary.[97]

Not only this, but the Nazi werewolf has a cinematic precedent of sorts, for Skal argues that the popularity of *The Wolf Man* (George Waggner) in 1941 ensured that of all Universal's movie monsters 'the wolf man's saga was the most constant and sustained monster myth of the war, beginning with the first year of America's direct involvement, and finishing up just in time for Hiroshima'.[98] This combination of ancient mythology, cinematic tradition and Hitler himself connecting war and the wolf has ensured that this link has persisted in the form of the 21st century Nazi werewolf film.[99]

For example, the US-produced *Horrors of War*, the narrative of which follows American Lieutenant John Schmidt who must take multiple groups of men into Germany and occupied France to battle Nazi monsters, demonstrates that Operation Werewolf not

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[94] Skal, p. 212.
[95] Ibid., p. 211-212.
[96] Eric Kurlander, *Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2017), p. 278.
[97] Ibid., p. 281.
[98] Skal, p. 218.
[99] We might also consider the 20th century example of John Landis's *An American Werewolf in London* (1981) due to its depiction of a werewolf and Nazi monsters, though significantly Daniel Anderson argues that it is less about Nazism and more about Jewishness as the film 'employs the figure of the werewolf to explore the repression of Jewish identity in America, and it ultimately exploits the uncanny-producing nature of the werewolf to illuminate the complicated process of cultural sharing between Jew and non-Jew that comes with assimilation', 'A Terrifyingly Fragile Border: Jewish Assimilation in *An American Werewolf in London*' in *Monsters of Film, Fiction, and Fable: The Cultural Links between the Human and Inhuman*, ed. by Lisa Wenger Bro, Crystal O' Leary-Davidson and Mary Ann Gareis (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2018), pp. 363-376 (p. 364). Furthermore, 'the fusion of a Jew with the Nazis, as portrayed in David's nightmare, illuminates the inherent tension that arises with assimilation', p. 375.

only captured the imagination of the German public but of other nations as well. Christina von Hodenberg offers an insight into the links between werewolves and the US's involvement in the Second World War, observing that 'many aspects of the German-American encounter during the Second World War remain deeply engraved in the American mind' and that 'one of them is the story of the German "werewolves," Hitler's last underground fighters, who challenged the occupying armies in the war's closing months'.[100] As a result of this legacy Hodenberg argues that certain patterns emerge in films such as *An American Werewolf in Paris* (Anthony Waller, 1997):

> First, the heroes are young American men who travel to Europe as a group, as the G.I.s did in 1944. Second, a foreign girl is their temptation and ultimately the cause of their doom, just as the non-fraternization campaign preached. And third, the actual werewolves are either male teenagers or appear directly linked to an SS elite (if not to Hitler himself), harkening back to the many times that U.S. soldiers were told to be especially wary of HJ boys and SS men.[101]

Horrors of War is a more literal evocation of this plot as it portrays the G.I.s themselves facing supernatural werewolves created by the SS at Hitler's orders, though it offers some important variations. For example, the soldiers take refuge in a cottage where they find two French women, but rather than a seduction taking place the most aggressive of the soldiers rape the women.[102] Although this is not the sole cause of their downfall, the women's brother is a werewolf who soon kills many of the perpetrators, which could be perceived as a warning about the dangers of fraternisation. Yet the women are not lures or seductresses but instead innocent victims, which frames the men's deaths not as punishment for fraternisation (a word which implies joining or befriending and as such requires consent) but for their sexual violence. Thus, by following some of the patterns which Hodenberg observes in US werewolf narratives, *Horrors of War* similarly demonstrates how 'individual memories morphed into much less sharply contoured, increasingly attenuated, but still recognizable patterns of collective memory. The Nazified werewolf began to operate outside the historical context of guerrilla war and evolved into a more generalised signifier for Nazi evil'.[103] Where it diverts from these patterns it demonstrates further evolution and generalisation of this historic text, indicating an additional anxiety over war crimes and the inhuman treatment of others by the US forces.

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[100] Christina von Hodenberg, 'Of German Fräuleins, Nazi Werewolves, and Iraqi Insurgents: The American Fascination with Hitler's Last Foray', *Central European History*, 41.1 (2008), 71-92 (p. 71).
[101] Ibid., p. 86.
[102] Here there also seem to be similarities with 'Little Red Riding Hood', an early and influential tale in which wolves and temptation are connected in a rural setting.
[103] Hodenberg, p. 91.

Iron Wolf: A German Perspective on the Nazi Werewolf

The connection between Nazism, the werewolf and sexuality is also evident in one of the few German entries in the Nazified movie monster subgenre, *Iron Wolf*. Although shot in the English language, *Iron Wolf* features German actors, is directed by German David Brückner, and is set in Berlin. It opens in 1945 with the Red Army at the gates, forcing the Nazi soldiers to bury their secret weapon: a werewolf bursting from a Nazi uniform complete with giant red armband. 70 years later the lab is stumbled upon by a hedonistic group of wannabe rock stars, the history of the area striking them as the perfect place for a rock concert. Indeed, the anarchy of punk is positioned in opposition to Nazi fascism, with the youths discovering various swastika covered paraphernalia which they proceed to urinate upon and burn, their acts distancing the youths of modern Germany from the history of the Second World War. Yet one of the band members had been expelled from the group previously for his Nazi beliefs, and it is he who becomes the protagonist of the piece. As the werewolf has been trained not to attack those he recognises as fellow Nazis, the protagonist is able to use a Nazi uniform he finds against the creature, later attacking the werewolf with an army-issued knife and stuffing a silver Nazi signet ring into the wound to finally fell it. There is a degree of symbolism in the youth first adopting the Nazi iconography, seeming to reflect his true nature, only to shed it again and use it against the werewolf. Such a process seems indicative of a struggle to come to terms with Germany's Nazi past in a way which continues to affect the present, for as Caroline Pearce argues, in Germany 'the Nazi past, including the Holocaust in particular, remains difficult to "process" as it is so alien to the democratic, tolerant and anti-extremist profile of the country today and it continues to both repel and fascinate as a period of history that defies rational explanation'.[104] Of course, it is of note that Pearce was writing in 2008, since which the German political landscape has continued to shift, and it seems significant that *Iron Wolf* was released in the same year that the far right party Alternative für Deutschland was formed. This more recent context does not discount Pearce's observation that addressing Nazism, past and present, remains a challenge in German society, but rather suggests that this threat and tension is being felt anew after a period of marked anti-extremism. Not only does this resonate with the depiction of the Nazi youth, then, but the supernatural figure of the Nazi werewolf could be said to represent the alien and irrational, and Pearce's

[104] Caroline Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy: Remembrance, Politics and the Dialectic of Normality* (Basingstoke, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 2.

identification of both repulsion and fascination resonates with the abjection of the horror film, making *Iron Wolf* a fitting expression of this struggle.

It should be noted that during their battle with the Nazi werewolf, the hedonistic youths of *Iron Wolf* take every opportunity to have sex, constantly grabbing at each other and suggesting threesomes. As the American soldiers in *Horrors of War* are also positioned as aggressively sexual and then as rapists, these films seem to link war and werewolves further to sexuality. Such links are largely absent in the Nazi zombie films, despite the persuasive accounts found in *Zombies and Sexuality* of the 'multifarious ways in which zombies and sex have been brought together in zombie texts and […] the latent sexual themes zombie narratives explore'.[105] Perhaps this is because, as I have argued, the Nazi zombie reflects on trauma and the uncanny more acutely than other traditional and especially abject zombies. They display less of the potentially sexual 'mindless appetite for human flesh' than the traditional zombie as they focus on their military endeavours even in the afterlife.[106] Outbursts of sexuality are perhaps more common in the Nazi werewolf film, then, because as Hodenberg stresses 'the transformation from man to wolf that occurs at night and gives way to an outburst of aggression and lust can be read as a tale of temptation, suppressed sexual desire, and forbidden love'.[107] The psychosexual burst of aggression is common to both the war and horror genres, as the soldier and the werewolf emerge from contexts in which humans, particularly men, are stripped of their cultural and civilised attributes and their repressed id is allowed to be unleashed. Admittedly neither *Horrors of War* nor *Iron Wolf* depict the werewolf as participating in the sexual acts, but it is often depicted as lurking just outside the scene, passing a window or nearing a door, threatening to burst in at any moment. In this instance, then, the unthinking state of the werewolf does not seem to operate as a metaphor for the experience of trauma, but rather man in his most aggressive state is a potential source of trauma. Sexuality, war and beastly nature are closely linked, with horrifying consequences for all involved.

Nazi Werewolves and Female Sexuality

[105] Steve Jones and Shaka McGlotten, 'Introduction: Zombie Sex', in *Zombies and Sexuality: Essays on Desire and the Living Dead*, ed. by Steve Jones and Shaka McGlotten (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014), pp. 1-17 (p. 2).
[106] Ibid. The one exception may be *Dead Snow* in which Erlend and Chris have sex in the outhouse, and in the sequel Martin reanimates his dead girlfriend, but these purposefully disgusting scenes act primarily as a satirical comment on slasher films and their libidinous victims due to the films' self-aware quality.
[107] Hodenberg, p. 86.

Despite the foregrounding of the relationship between man and werewolf in both *Horrors of War* and *Iron Wolf*, the latter actually ends with one of the women revealing her hand which has been burned by silver with her eyes glowing yellow to imply she is a werewolf, reversing the roles and suggesting that female sexuality might also be dangerous. It is also women who are linked to sexuality and the Nazi werewolf in Rob Zombie's mock trailer *Werewolf Women of the SS*, his contribution to the collaborative project *Grindhouse* (Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez, 2007). While this faux-trailer is only two-minutes in duration and this might suggest such a text is unworthy of equal attention to other films in the subgenre, there exists a five-minute extended trailer which still only hints at the half hour of footage Zombie captured and, more than this, the mock trailer is a form which has the effect of alluding to a larger narrative through the use of brief scenes and images. In it, Zombie creates the most blatantly sexual and exploitative example of the 21st century Nazi monster films by connecting the sexuality of the werewolf to another 'erotic' part of the Nazi horror subgenre: the Nazisploitation cycle of the 1970s. As James J. Ward argues, Zombie 'deliberately references the *Ilsa* series', in particular drawing upon *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* (Don Edmonds, 1975).[108] For instance, the casting of Sybil Danning refers to *Ilsa* and a cult exploitation tradition as 'Danning enjoys a cult reputation scarcely less impressive than that of Dyanne Thorne [the eponymous Ilsa] herself', having risen to fame through a number of B-movies in the 1970s and 1980s.[109] Parallels could also be drawn to other films in the cycle such as *Salon Kitty* (Tinto Brass, 1975) or *Love Camp 7* (R.L. Frost, 1969). These films depict women during the Second World War as sadistic Nazi officers torturing others, as prostitutes for the Nazis, or even as victims in the concentration camps at the mercy of male commanding officers, in explicit and often pornographic detail. This tradition of Nazisploitation has thus arguably contributed to the sexual themes of *Iron Wolf* and *Horrors of War* as much as the nature of the werewolf itself, and especially visibly so in the close ups of breasts surrounded by fur and swastikas in *Werewolf Women of the SS*, Nazisploitation and the werewolf coming together due to their shared interest in the links between primitive beast, the violence of war and sexuality.

Exploitation Cinema with a Message: *Werewolves of the Third Reich* and its Criticism of the US Military

[108] James J. Ward, 'Utterly Without Redeeming Social Value? "Nazi Science" Beyond Exploitation Cinema in Nazisploitation', in *Nazisploitation!: The Nazi Image in Low-Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. by Daniel H. Magilow, Elizabeth Bridges and Kristin T. Vander Lugt (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), pp. 92-112 (p. 93).
[109] Ibid., p. 109.

Lastly, we might consider the most recent entry in the Nazi werewolf sub-subgenre, *Werewolves of the Third Reich,* in light of exploitation cinema, from which both its protagonists and antagonists seem to derive. For example, the beginning of the film is heavily indebted to Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), which plays upon the Nazisploitation tradition. It takes place in a basement bar standoff in Germany during the Second World War and introduces the audience to characters Billy 'The Butcher' and 'Mad Dog' Murphy, the latter of which is a drawling American in the style of Brad Pitt's Aldo 'the Apache'. The Butcher and Mad Dog then meet two more outcasts to form the Fearless Four, in a parallel to the Basterds, who operate outside of traditional military spaces which enables them to be brutal and violent without limitations. Mad Dog and the Butcher are entirely defined by their love of violence as Mad Dog declares, so often as to become a catchphrase, 'know what I take pleasure in most in this world? Killing Nazis'. The focus on the Fearless Four's violence suggests that, like *Inglourious Basterds,* there is a potential reversal of perpetrator and victim in which the Allies become associated above all with brutality.[110] This is further complicated by the fact that Mad Dog explicitly states that his desire to kill Nazis is not due to a love of his own country. On the one hand this may suggest that it is solely a matter of pleasure akin to sadism and therefore separates his violence from a sense of patriotic duty which might usually condone such actions, or on the other hand may suggest that alongside such pleasure is a more universal sense of duty. In either instance there is an avowed lack of patriotism. His lack of patriotism is reinforced by his shooting a member of the US military police in the foot for purposefully risking Mad Dog's life instead of his own. This constitutes an act of rebellion against what Mad Dog views as the incompetence and cowardice of those in positions of power and regulation. The introduction of Mad Dog and the Butcher thus draws on previous exploitation cinema in order to explore issues of violence and power, themes which can be linked to or even foreshadow the bestial werewolf which they later encounter.

'Fighting Joe' Kain, meanwhile, is introduced in a scene being reprimanded by his commanding officer for wanting to leave the army using repeatedly homophobic language which immediately constructs the Allied forces as a heteronormative patriarchy. Kain cites his reason for wanting to leave the war as it being 'bullshit' fought amongst politicians,

[110] An argument explored in Michael D. Richardson's work, though notably in *Werewolves of the Third Reich* this is a blurring between Allies and Nazis, but not Nazis and Jews, the latter an even more complex relationship, 'Vengeful Violence: *Inglourious Basterds*, Allohistory, and the Inversion of Victims and Perpetrators', in *Quentin Tarantino's Inglourious Basterds: A Manipulation of Metacinema*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky (New York and London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 93-112.

questioning its democratic and patriotic motivations. In reply, the commanding officer refers to this mindset as 'high-minded liberal dog shit'. Such a discourse places the two men in opposition in a way which relates to public perceptions of war. As Tanine Allison argues, in the popular imagination the understanding of different wars has been impacted by their perceived motivations, and so the:

> cultural imaginary projects the Vietnam War as a 'bad war'; films about this conflict typically question the meaning of war, expose the brutality of military life, and show Americans as corruptible (or just corrupt). But World War II had both a justification (the evil Nazis and imperialistic Japanese) and a 'happy ending.' Stories of the Second World War celebrate everyday heroes fighting the 'good fight'.[111]

Thus, Kain's attitude is arguably less often associated with the Second World War, and instead associated with more recent conflicts such as Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. This might suggest that *Werewolves of the Third Reich* is unusual in this regard, and perhaps even that this exchange should be understood as an allegory about other wars. However, while this is a common perception of the Second World War film, Allison argues that it is a broad generalisation and in truth 'the genre is far more complex than it is often purported to be'.[112] This is evidenced by recent re-imaginings of the Second World War genre, including *Inglourious Basterds* which I have noted as being such a clear influence here, suggesting that there is precedent for such a treatment of the Second World War.

Furthermore, Allison includes Spike Lee's film *Miracle at St. Anna* (2008) as an example of a more nuanced representation of the Second World War due to its acknowledgement of segregation in the armed forces, and this is significant when considering *Werewolves of the Third Reich* due to the introduction of the final member of the Fearless Four, 'Reckless' Reggie Brown.[113] Brown tells of the discrimination he has faced as a black soldier which prevented him from joining the Marines or the Navy and how in the army he was asked to give up his bus seat for a Nazi, prompting his violent resistance. Again, rather than reinforcing the sense that the Second World War was the 'good fight', *Werewolves of the Third Reich* instead suggests that racism was an issue amongst the Allied forces. The experiences of the Fearless Four are therefore a representation of the moral ambiguities of the Second World War, but they also seem to resonate with the 21st century context in which the film has been produced. In particular, Brown's experience on the bus, which symbolises a hierarchy in which black Allied soldiers are valued less than Nazis, can

[111] Tanine Allison, *Destructive Sublime: World War II in American Film and Media* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2018), p. 5.
[112] Ibid., p. 6.
[113] Ibid.

be understood by 21st century audiences as a parallel to Rosa Parks' resistance to segregation on buses in the US. Moreover, the close-up of Reggie's hands in handcuffs recalls the imagery associated with a history of black slavery as well as the recent and recurring images of black men in handcuffs due to the persistent prejudice and persecution of people of colour. Like *Overlord*, then, *Werewolves of the Third Reich* engages with the fact that racism remains an open wound in contemporary society, but it does even more to suggest that these attitudes are not only propagated by Nazis but held more widely. Similarly, the term 'liberal' has a particularly pronounced cultural currency in the current political landscape as it has become shorthand for all that the particular sect of the Alt-Right opposes (i.e. 'neoliberal globalization, progressive identity politics, and liberal institutions/bureaucracy'), suggesting that the exchange between Kain and his commanding officer is equally applicable to the 21st century political divide between the left and right.[114] The Fearless Four are a band of non-conformists and the armed forces represents a negative, homogenous force which is racist and fascist, a representation which is at once historically specific and widely applicable. The representation of the Fearless Four thus not only echoes *Inglourious Basterds* in its employment of exploitation but also in that these films are 'not about a specific war but about the making of the war film and its discourse in society and history'.[115] As such, Nazi horror contributes to the Second World War genre which addresses rather than erases the period's complexities, and relates it to the 21st century.

It may be noted that thus far discussion has focused on the protagonists of *Werewolves of the Third Reich*, but that no werewolves have been mentioned. This is because the film follows two sets of characters which only converge at the end. Juxtaposed with the formation of the Fearless Four is the introduction of Camp 7, Josef Mengele and his Nazi werewolf experiments, one of whom is Ilsa Koch. This setting and these characters demonstrate even more clearly that *Werewolves of the Third Reich* is inspired by, if not almost a pastiche of, works such as *Grindhouse* and *Inglourious Basterds*, and their forerunners *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* and *Love Camp 7*. In Camp 7 Mengele and Koch are depicted as in a relationship, a collapsing together of separate perpetrators during the

[114] Andrew Jones, 'From NeoReactionary Theory to the Alt-Right', in *Critical Theory and the Humanities in the Age of the Alt-Right*, ed. by Christine M. Battista and Melissa R. Sande (Basingstoke, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 101-120 (p. 102).
[115] Robert von Dassanowsky, 'Introduction', in *Quentin Tarantino's Inglourious Basterds: A Manipulation of Metacinema*, ed. by Robert von Dassanowsky (New York and London: Continuum, 2012), pp. vii-xiii (p. xiii).

Second World War, and their relationship is central to the creation of the werewolves. This is because, as is often the case, Ilsa Koch features as a sexualised character, seemingly desirous of one of the concentration camp inmates as she runs her hands over his chest (though this is then subverted to relate to Ilsa Koch's purported use of prisoners' tattooed skin to create a lampshade which is a different, but equally monstrous, abuse of the body), in addition to having an affair with another Nazi officer. Mengele thus decides to use the Nazi officer as his first werewolf experiment, injecting him with a serum. When Koch discovers her lover-turned-werewolf she is at first horrified, then on drawing nearer and realising that he still recognises her she declares that he is 'still human' and decides to inject herself to join him. The werewolf plot is therefore framed by romance and jealousy which has the potential effect of separating the werewolf from Koch and Mengele's Nazism and instead focusing on their personal relationships. In a way this might almost 'humanise' the Nazi monsters, a representation which is useful according to Kerner's argument that the depiction of sympathetic Nazis challenges the dangerous sense that the Nazis were Other and have been entirely defeated.[116]

The representation of the Nazi monster as potentially sympathetic may be reinforced by Koch declaring that the Nazi werewolf is still 'human', and in this it is useful to explore the way in which the monsters of *Werewolves of the Third Reich* are depicted transforming from man to beast, but not returning from beast to man. In contrast, the werewolves of *Horrors of War* do return from beast to man, while in *Iron Wolf* the human is only alluded to as the werewolf is introduced and remains in its monstrous state. As Laura Hubner notes, 'the werewolf of folklore, fairy tale and fictional texts is a mutable beast, whose habitats and origins vary at the story teller's discretion', but it is often held that 'once bitten, infected or born into the state, the werewolf exists as an indeterminate being, somewhere between the realms of wolf and human […] Etymologically half person, half wolf, the werewolf transforms physically from one to the other—from person to (were)wolf and back to person'.[117] That the Nazi werewolf offers different variations of this myth may, on the one hand, be due to the respective limits of the films' budgets, a practical consideration that cannot be discounted given their production values. However, it is possible to interpret this point of difference on a more conceptual level. Firstly, in comparison to considerations of the werewolf by those such as Badley arguing that

[116] Kerner, p. 213.
[117] Laura Hubner, *Fairytale and Gothic Horror: Uncanny Transformations in Film* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 117.

werewolf transformations are about blooming sexuality and the liminal experience of coming of age as in *The Howling* (Tom Holland, 1980) or *The Company of Wolves* (Neil Jordan, 1984), the 21st century Nazi werewolf which only transforms from man to beast is a realisation of inner monstrosity rather than a state of flux.[118] Furthermore, where Badley identifies the primary affect of the werewolf as bestial, in *Iron Wolf* the werewolf has been trained, and in *Werewolves of the Third Reich* the werewolf recognises and does not attack its lover, both of which suggest that the werewolf is not completely uncontrolled and animalistic. Yet adversely, in first being a Nazi, it shows more explicitly that the human is not un-bestial. Like the Nazi zombie, the Nazi werewolf therefore evokes a range of effects including horror in response to the Nazis' controlled fascism as much as their bestial brutality. This is a point of nuance, for the werewolf as discussed elsewhere also undermines the simple distinction between human and beast, and so the Nazi werewolf is similarly concerned by the potential evil of humankind but uses the monster to explore this in unusual ways.

Conclusions

Like the everyman zombie which has led to its specific Nazified version, the werewolf is 'possibly the most ubiquitous of all human beasts', yet is also a very unique creation when hybridised with the Nazi, one which has a specific meaning and coding of images.[119] The 21st century Nazi werewolf contains within it a history which has increasingly intertwined war and the symbol of the wolf. It is an exception to some of the rules which often govern werewolf narratives due to the slippages between zombie and werewolf, its varying depictions of the werewolf transformation and the way in which its bestial nature is at times controlled. Yet ultimately this hybrid has arisen due to the werewolf's defining feature and central meaning, that 'in pointing to the boundary between human and animal, the werewolf brings to light what should have remained hidden: the absolute fragility of that border'.[120] The boundary between human and animal, self and other, and good and evil is located within both Nazi and Allied soldiers in order to explore humanity's potential for evil as brought to light by the context of war and illustrated by the werewolf. This is highly gendered, as in *Horrors of War* which explores the potential evil of man, the transgression of which results in abject and often sexual violence against women. Yet

[118] Badley, *Film, Horror, and the Body Fantastic* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood, 1995), p. 121.
[119] Creed, *Phallic Panic*, p. 125.
[120] Ibid., p. 124.

women are also made monstrous as epitomised in *Werewolf Women of the SS* expressing further anxieties about gender roles for which both the werewolf and war-time setting provide context. Gender within the Nazi werewolf film therefore demonstrates a tension and struggle surrounding the potentially dangerous nature of sexuality. In this respect it is also striking that all of the films within the Nazi werewolf sub-subgenre may be considered 'exploitation' films. This chapter has considered that the werewolf may be a particularly potent monster for exploitation cinema due to its connections to sexuality, but has also suggested that these films' ability to explore the complexities and nuances of the hybridised Nazi werewolf can be limited by the films' low production values. Though it may be carried through to varying extents, ultimately it is precisely the combination of the liminal werewolf and the evocation of the Second World War which allows the traumas of brutality and fascism as connected to war, gender and contemporary society to be explored.

Vampires

Connecting Nazism and Vampirism

There are fewer entries in the Nazi vampire film sub-subgenre, but like their movie monster cousins they deserve consideration. There are only three obvious films to discuss (*Frostbite*, *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* and *The Golden Nazi Vampire of Absam 2)*, and these are different in many ways. This means that it is a challenge to draw out any conclusive patterns concerning the Nazi vampire, but then it is important that we be concerned 'as much with the differences between horror films and horror monsters as with what they might all have in common'.[121] Indeed, a consideration of the three films and their differences provides an interesting continuation of the analysis of the Nazified movie monster and its meaning. For instance, the vampire is not usually associated with the abject in the way the zombie or werewolf might be. Despite being a revenant like the zombie, there is an important distinction between different types of corpses. The corpse may be 'that which has irremediably come a cropper, is cesspool, and death' and 'the most sickening of wastes' for Kristeva, but as Aldana Reyes observes, the preserved and traditionally beautiful or handsome bodies of vampires do not waste.[122] Thus, for Aldana

[121] Hutchings, p. 39.
[122] Kristeva, p. 3. Such generalisations are useful, but refer primarily to the popular conception of vampires today, as opposed to notable exceptions such as *Nosferatu* (F.W. Murnau, 1922).

Reyes the reason vampires 'have been received more positively is precisely that they do not usually corrupt and decay'.[123] For this same reason vampires may still be considered uncanny due to their liminal state, but above all are represented and received in terms of the seductive. Jeffrey Weinstock similarly argues that the vampire is 'always, inevitably, about sex on some level', and Badley argues that the vampire's primary affect is erotic.[124] Interestingly, in focusing on Nazi zombies Miller also alludes to vampires, not including them in her wider analysis because 'there is more "elegance" to vampires: they are sexual beings, with personalities, and they suggest a more "elitist" quality, with new members of their world either choosing or being chosen. In contrast, zombies and werewolves share similar brutal, arbitrary origins'.[125] This suggests that vampires do not lend themselves to being Nazified because of their frequently eroticised treatment.

However, in her 1975 essay 'Fascinating Fascism' Susan Sontag draws attention to what she terms 'Nazi chic', by which she means the common depiction of Nazis as fetishised.[126] As Sontag explains, many aspects of the Third Reich had even at that point in time been eroticised in troubling ways. She argues that:

> Photographs of uniforms are erotic material, and particularly photographs of SS uniforms. Why the SS? Because the SS seems to be the most perfect incarnation of fascism in its overt assertion of the righteousness of violence, the right to have total power over others and to treat them as absolutely inferior.[127]

This analysis of photographs is particularly notable as it suggests that the uniforms in themselves are not necessarily 'erotic', but that their representation can be, and this has the potential to impact the Nazi horror film. Such fetishisation could perhaps be connected to the sexuality and bestiality of Nazisploitation and the Nazi werewolf film, yet the hierarchical connotations seem to align more closely with what Miller describes as the elitism of vampires, suggesting that the sexual vampire could be easily aligned with the eroticised Nazi. Sontag even aligns fascism with vampirism in an aside on what is considered fascinating and popular, noting that 'there is a general fascination among the young with horror, with the irrational. Courses dealing with the history of fascism are, along with those on the occult (including vampirism), among the best attended these days

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[123] Aldana Reyes, p. 61.
[124] Jeffrey Weinstock, *The Vampire Film: Undead Cinema* (New York and Chichester, UK: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 7; Badley, 'Zombie Splatter Comedy from Dawn to Shaun', p. 35.
[125] Miller, p. 145.
[126] Susan Sontag, 'Fascinating Fascism', *New Yorker* (1975) <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1975/02/06/fascinating-fascism/> [accessed 7 April 2019].
[127] Ibid.

on college campuses'.[128] Such an observation suggests that there is a connection between the two as they represent the 'exotic', and this treatment of both vampirism and fascism arguably persists, and is perhaps even exacerbated by our growing historical distance to Nazism. Thus, whether it is a point of difference or similarity, the issue of eroticism is central to these comparisons between Nazism and vampirism.

***BloodRayne the Third Reich*: Ambiguity in the Work of Uwe Boll**

The third film in the *BloodRayne* franchise, *BloodRayne: The Third Reich*, is of interest here due to its setting in the Second World War and its multiple erotic scenes of both heterosexual and lesbian encounters.[129] The protagonist Rayne is an ancient dhampir (half-human half-vampire) and her bearing and costume denote wealth and power; although Rayne herself is not a Nazi, her depiction alongside Nazis might still suggest a connection and therefore a continuation of 'Nazi chic'.[130] Yet the vampires of *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* are shown to be animalistic and even clumsy, as the narrative has Rayne unwittingly create a Nazi army through the accidental transfer of her blood to an SS captain. This narrative creates a certain ambiguity, as for Kooyman it is unclear whether director Uwe Boll's depiction of the Second World War 'derives from intellectual fascination with the subject, deliberate provocation and easy shock value, or ironic self-awareness'.[131] These perceived intents are important here as they impact the reception of the film's message or attitude towards Nazism, stakes which are raised as *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* interacts explicitly with the Holocaust. Rayne is seen saving Jews from a train destined for a concentration camp, an image and historical event which does not feature anywhere else in the 21st century Nazi monster subgenre. This is likely because, as Kerner argues, 'the knee-jerk assumption that the Holocaust should be represented "as it really was," maintains a strong hold on the popular imagination', and so representation of the Holocaust includes a financial and critical risk.[132] Thus, for *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* to include this historically specific plot, and alongside erotic scenes, is to connect it more closely to the previous cycle of Nazisploitation than many 21st century Nazi horror films. As

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[128] Ibid.
[129] It should be noted that *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* is actually Boll's interpretation of the *BloodRayne* video game (2002).
[130] Indeed, this is a connection made by Margit Grieb, though in relation to the video game rather than film adaptation, in 'Fragging Fascism', in *After the Digital Divide? German Aesthetic Theory in the Age of New Media*, ed. by Luiz Kopnick and Erin McGlothlin (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), pp. 186-204.
[131] Kooyman, p. 128.
[132] Kerner, *Film and the Holocaust: New Perspectives on Dramas, Documentaries, and Experimental Films* (New York and London: Continuum, 2011), p. 1.

a result this representation of the Nazi vampire is a realisation of the overlap between highly eroticised vampire and sexualised Nazisploitation tradition. However, the extent to which it uses this overlap to either perpetuate Nazi chic or to evoke a horrified response to the Nazi is complicated by its uneven treatment of the vampire and the Holocaust, for its deployment of exploitation filmmaking draws attention to this overlap even as it complicates its ability to either intentionally or unconsciously work through its nuances in any depth.

Interestingly, Boll has engaged with the Second World War in two other films released the same year, yet with polaric qualities which further complicate the meaning of *BloodRayne: The Third Reich*. One is the film *Blubberella* (2011), made using the same set as *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* for financial reasons, but replacing the lead actress with Lindsay Hollister. The result is a horror-comedy, with much the same plot but many new jokes at the expense of the eponymous Blubberella, focusing on her weight. Boll reduces the exploitation eroticism of the first film only to replace it with gags about overeating, and places himself within the film in a comedic role *as* Hitler. When situated alongside *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* this representation seems to emphasise that vampirism is not being used to explore Nazism in a serious or meaningful way; rather it suggests that Nazism and vampirism may be entirely unrelated in these films, or that it becomes a way to make light of Nazism by subverting the vampire's eroticism. Yet this provides a stark contrast to Boll's commentary preceding the documentary he made the same year, *Auschwitz* (2011). In this commentary Boll cites other recent events such as the Rwandan genocide to argue that we need more films which show the horror of Auschwitz in order to educate ourselves and ensure such atrocities are not repeated. This commentary is played over several real photographs of piles of bodies at Auschwitz. Boll also interviews young German students to gauge their knowledge on the subject, in addition to recreating scenes from Auschwitz, all in an effort to sombrely remind the audience of the past. When considered alongside *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* this suggests that the Second World War setting has the potential to evoke a sense of trauma and reflection on the Nazi atrocities, particularly an understanding of the scale of these horrific events not being 'available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor'.[133] Thus, that the image of barbed wire windows in the train cars and the arrival of Jews at the camp is used in all three films might be perceived as a potentially contradictory

[133] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 4.

message, but considering these films as linked can instead suggest that they offer three different ways to react to the trauma of the past, amongst which the vampire can take on different roles according to whether it conforms to or subverts the trope of eroticism.

Frostbite, Swedish Shame and the Grotesque Nazi Vampire

The varying extent to which the vampires of *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* can be considered erotic is evidence that, as Erik Butler contends, 'not all vampires inhabit Gothic castles, and they do not uniformly display the powers of sexual seduction that many enthusiasts consider their distinguishing feature', and this is even more pertinent when considering the Nazi vampires of *Frostbite*.[134] In *Frostbite*, the teenagers of a small town in Sweden are turned into vampires after being contaminated by a surviving SS soldier working in a local hospital. The soldier is the last of a group of Swedes who served with the SS during the Second World War, and whose team was attacked by vampires when hiding in a Ukrainian cabin. That this chain of infection culminates in a mass turning due to a spiked punch bowl at a teen house party actually satirises the erotic vampire, as a setting usually associated in horror with fornication descends into a grotesque and purely violent affair. For instance, when one tuxedo-clad teen raises up from behind a sitting girl, a vampiric trope might usually be for him to bite her neck sensuously but instead he wildly mauls her face. The massacre culminates in one vampire being impaled on a gnome, a ridiculous scene which would trouble any reading of the film as 'sexy'. Moreover, the Nazi vampire himself is the most grotesque of the creatures, changing his form to a grey skinned and deformed being which scuttles along walls and ceilings. This extreme transformation is shown through a special effects sequence which depicts his bone structure and flesh changing with the same uncanny effect as the transformation from man to wolf. As Butler argues, then, the defining feature of the vampire is not the erotic but:

> The power to move between and undo borders otherwise holding identities in place. At this monster's core lies an affinity for rupture, change, and mutation. Because of its inimical relationship to stability, tradition, and order, the vampire embodies the transformative march of history.[135]

This reading is certainly borne out by the mythology and history of the SS vampire in *Frostbite*. The narrative addresses a national historical trauma, and the unending and decidedly negative 'march of history', as 'the name "vampire" designates, above all, a

[134] Erik Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire in Literature and Film: Cultural Transformations in Europe, 1732-1933* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), p. 1.
[135] Ibid.

process of invasion'.[136] Vampirism acts as a monstrous metaphor for Nazism and conflict, one which is literally 'in the drink' at the party, and contagious in every act of violence thereafter.[137]

That *Frostbite* positions the Swedish soldiers as perpetrators is, like *Iron Wolf*, an exception to many of the Nazi monster films, and warrants further investigation. More specifically the Swede soldiers are part of the 5th SS Panzer Division Wiking, an elite Panzer division recruited from foreign volunteers. The film opens with a placard declaring that the events depicted took place in 'Ukraine 1944', continuing the common theme of opening text which historically legitimises the film and locates it in a particular national trauma. The choice of music played in the film reinforces its historical grounding, particularly through its use of 'Dark is the Night' by Leonid Utyosov, a piece of Soviet music associated with the Second World War.[138] However, this is juxtaposed with more modern Swedish music in the rest of the film, an opposition which relates to the collision of past and present. Indeed, of the 21st century context from which *Frostbite* emerges, its release in 2006 situates the film between the sudden success of the extreme right wing New Democracy party in 1991 and the breakthrough of the similarly right wing Sweden Democrats in 2010. Although the success of the latter came as a shock to many, its rise during this period adds to a sense of potential national shame, and is certainly of note when considering the socio-political anxieties expressed by Nazi horror due to the party's Neo-Nazi roots.[139] Through the deployment of the Nazi monster and the music which accompanies its return, past and present are brought together both explicitly and implicitly.

The disorientating collision between past and present is also evoked by the use of ancient vampire mythology in the present day. This is because the vampires which are found in the Ukraine are not Nazis, and instead seem to be much older. They conform to the ancient mythology of the vampire, being burned by crosses and garlic and suffering from an insatiable thirst. Yet this history is brought into the present only by the last Nazi vampire using modern technology to combine vampirism with the 'rhabdovirus' which is

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[136] Ibid., p. 2.
[137] Butler also draws interesting parallels between vampirism and the rhetoric of the Second World War, but in his analogies it is the Jew that is vampire. For instance, *Nosferatu* draws on anti-Semitic rhetoric which emerges in is Hitler's own portrayal of the Jew as 'Blutsauger' (bloodsucker). While a significant link between the vampire film and the Nazi, this does not appear to be the relationship in *Frostbite*, however.
[138] Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society Since 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 105.
[139] Widfeldt, p. 174.

similar to rabies. Here it wreaks havoc, infecting the town's teens who mistake it for a drug. The result is the anarchic party of bloodshed, an aptly chaotic collision of vampire mythology and modernity. This chain of events is thus grounded specifically in Swedish history, and is a nationally self-aware and critical depiction of a destructive, traumatic collision as brought about by a Swedish soldier.

It could also be noted that *Frostbite* links closely to *Dead Snow*, the Swedish-set vampire and Norwegian-set zombie films being united by their satirical tone, slapstick violence, and frozen landscapes. The latter seems a suitable metaphorical setting for the unthawing trauma of these nations and their involvement in the Second World War, and the harsh environments in which their battles were fought. That it is a shocking yet humorous threat which bursts from these frozen depths is even more thought-provoking. Kevin Newmark's reflections on trauma centre on the work of Charles Baudelaire, for whom 'it is of the essence of laughter to bring us face to face with a radical discrepancy or disjunction within the very composition of the human self'.[140] This indicates that laughter is a complex phenomenon which can be as much about trauma as it can joy. Furthermore, Christina M. Knopf provides an analysis of World War Two gallows humour as evident in contemporaneous horror films *King of the Zombies* (Jean Yarbrough, 1941) and *Revenge of the Zombies* (Steve Sekely, 1943). For Knopf the foolishness of these films was 'a marker of strong morale and a spirit of resistance', and so I would argue they can be read as a precursor to the even darker and more grotesque humour found in *Dead Snow* and *Frostbite*.[141] Such an interpretation of laughter as linked to times of trauma reinforces my argument that these two films can portray the Nazi monster in an abjectly-uncanny humorous way without compromising their meaningfulness.

Further Contradictions and Ambiguities: *The Golden Nazi Vampire of Absam 2*, *What We Do in the Shadows* and Humorous Nazi Vampires

The use of humour and parody is also present in *The Golden Nazi Vampire of Absam 2*. A 45-minute German language film loosely connected to the video game series *Wolfenstein* (1981-2017), *The Golden Nazi Vampire of Absam 2* ridicules both protagonists and monsters through its combination of slapstick and Nazi occult mythology. For example, its

[140] Kevin Newmark, 'Traumatic Poetry: Charles Baudelaire and the Shock of Laughter', in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 236-255 (p. 242).
[141] Christina M. Knopf, 'Zany Zombies, Grinning Ghosts, Silly Scientists and Nasty Nazis', in *The Laughing Dead: The Horror-Comedy Film from Bride of Frankenstein to Zombieland*, ed. by Cynthia J. Miller and Bowdoin Van Riper (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), pp. 25-38 (p. 27).

protagonist takes the shape of William 'B.J.' Blazkowicz from the US paranormal activity division, who defines his specialism as 'magic tricks'. He is introduced occupying a basement-like office into which pipes spew sewage, a grotesque space which symbolises his place in the hierarchy. When called to General Donovan's office Blazkowicz demonstrates why he has been banished to the basement as he not only breaks ornaments and misfires guns, but on being told he will be dispatched to fight the enemy in Castle Kottlitz as America's last resort he soils himself in fear, further associating his character with abject degradation and pollution. This has the effect of subverting the masculine and heroic B.J. of the *Wolfenstein* games and satirising the concept of the brave American soldier. The Nazi forces are also subject to satire, though, as the General shows Blazkowicz a film reel of the Nazis' occult experiments, including a clip labelled 'werewolf' which simply shows a large dog on a bed licking a man's face, in addition to a short clip of Nazi soldiers dancing around a pentagram. Both of these images are comic inversions of the Nazi occult and the Nazi werewolf which I have discussed elsewhere, and though they reinforce the connection between Nazism and the supernatural they suggest that it ultimately holds no power.

However, when Blazkowicz arrives at the castle he encounters real horrors. For example, he encounters a lampshade made of human skin which, as discussed in regards to *Werewolves of the Third Reich,* draws on the very real and awful horror of the Holocaust. In the castle he also encounters Nazi vampires led by SS General Otto von Grimm who plans to use the preserved teeth of Dracula to gain ultimate power and coat himself in molten gold so that he and his undead forces will be able to reflect the sun's rays and fight during the day. I would suggest that the use of Dracula's teeth is, similar to other occult relics, a form of legitimisation and historicisation in which the monstrous threat is shown to pre-date the Nazis but to be manipulated by them. The history of this relic also has racial connotations as connected to Grimm's vision of 'a Germanic empire'. Indeed, much has been made of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and its adaptations, the eponymous monster of which on the one hand symbolises the aristocrat and so aligns the vampire with the Nazis' hierarchical system through their shared obsession with bloodlines, though on the other hand has also been discussed in terms of the foreign Other which sits uncomfortably with the use of his teeth to pursue a Germanic empire.[142] This occult vampiric relic is central to Grimm's plans for domination and, as is often the case in the Nazi occult horror film, this

[142] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1897), discussed by, amongst many others, Kawin, p. 102.

leads to his downfall. Blazkowicz succeeds in tricking the Nazi vampire with a sleight of hand and giving him a fake replica of Dracula's teeth so that when Grimm falls willingly into the gold he is not powerful enough to withstand the heat and the flesh melts from his bones. Such an ending is at once horrific but is also bathetic as the threat is vanquished by a petty magic trick. These conflicting affects speak to the ambiguity of the subject matter, though this is also inevitably compounded by the film's 'exploitation' mode of filmmaking, with its poor scripting and execution being combined with a shorter run-time which allows less time to explore the figure of the Nazi vampire fully. *The Golden Nazi Vampire of Absam 2* is thus a film full of contradictions, but even within its limited scope it uses both humour and horror to undermine any sense of the Second World War as a 'good' or 'brave' fight, and like *Iron Wolf* reinforces that the Second World War remains a difficult trauma to process in 21st century Germany.

Lastly, *What We Do in the Shadows* (Jemaine Clement and Taika Waititi, 2014) only contains a brief and explicitly humorous scene depicting a Nazi vampire, but the way in which it is framed is significant. A mockumentary about four vampires living in 21st century New Zealand, the first half of the film establishes the characters and their history. In a montage set to the nihilistic lyrics of Norma Tanega's 'You're Dead', paintings from what seem to be different times and cultures depict vampires, followed by images of battles. Like the werewolf, 'traditions about the vampire go back to the ancient world', and so it seems almost inevitable that the vampire has been located in the Second World War amongst this long history.[143] More importantly, though, this montage links vampires to recurring periods of human violence and conflict. As Kawin argues, amongst the many different iterations of the vampire there is 'one indispensable element, the only one that always shows up: blood', and in this the nature of the vampire is linked to humanity's recurring need for bloodshed.[144] The montage is interpolated by the vampires recounting moments from their past; Deacon, the 'young rebel' of the group, tells of his time as a Nazi vampire. Another common trope evoked here is the use of real footage of Hitler intersected with fictional footage, though *What We Do in the Shadows* takes the additional step of creating a faux-reality by falsely subtitling Hitler's speech. In contrast to the use of real footage, however, the makeup effects of the vampires appear purposefully unconvincing, as is the effect of Deacon 'hovering' over a body in a laboratory which clearly shows that wires have been used. This creates a comic atmosphere, the punchline of which is that if being a vampire is

[143] Kawin, p. 97.
[144] Ibid., p. 105.

'uncool' or 'bad' then being a Nazi vampire was doubly so: 'if you were a Nazi after the war [grimaces] and if you were a vampire [shakes head] and if you were a Nazi vampire… no way'. Furthermore, Deacon shows that he is ignorant about the long-standing impact the Nazis have had on human culture when he says 'I don't know if you know, but the Nazis lost'. This is an inherently foolish thing to say, but also suggests that in Deacon's long life the horror of the Nazis was not that noteworthy, and when situated in a montage suggests that this is because it has blended with other atrocities seen throughout history. In a film entirely predicated on satirising the vampire, the Nazi vampire receives the same comic treatment, but has a somewhat darker subtext.

Conclusions

Though I noted at the beginning of this section that the comparatively small number of Nazi vampire films poses challenges when drawing definitive patterns, that the issue of comedy arises in each entry, either inadvertently or purposefully, is important. As Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdain Van Riper suggest, comedy 'has the potential to significantly alter—or enhance—the impact of the undead'.[145] When considering the Nazi vampire questions about the meaning of the horror-comedy monster have recurred:

> Are we mocking them and their hold on some dark corner of our psyches that houses our superstitions and unrelinquished childhood fears, or are they mocking us instead? Does laughter mitigate our fears of things that go 'bump' in the night or simply add a pinch of irony?[146]

As Miller and Van Riper conclude, 'the answers are varied, and complex', and so too is the Nazi vampire a complicated monster which evokes a range of responses.[147] Most often, though, my analysis of the 21st century Nazi vampire suggests that mocking the monster gives way to the monster mocking us, as at first we may laugh but on further contemplation many of the jokes are indicative of some flaw within the Allies or of the dark subtext of the Nazi. In particular, the use of references to the Holocaust have an undeniably horrific effect which cannot be negated by comedy. Thus, the Nazi vampire, for all its comic and grotesque treatment, serves as a reminder of the long history of human bloodshed, and through its hybridisation suggests that this did not begin nor end with the Nazis. The vampire is Nazified in these films in a way which complicates the otherwise

[145] Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper, 'Introduction', in *The Laughing Dead: The Horror-Comedy Film from Bride of Frankenstein to Zombieland*, ed. by Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), pp. xiii-xxiii (p. xiii).
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.

'sexy' and 'elite' status of both the Nazis and vampires, and this has consequences for how we understand the fears which the Nazi vampire represents. It does not pose the problem of Nazi vampire chic, glossing over and fetishising the past as Sontag identifies as such a recurring issue, but instead the opposite: it grapples with trauma in a messy, uncomfortable effort to come to terms with the past and present.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to go beyond an underdeveloped body of scholarly work, and in order to do so I have suggested a methodology to consider the Nazified movie monster in greater detail. This includes not just the Nazi zombie on which substantially more has been written, but also the lesser acknowledged yet still important Nazi werewolves and vampires. Indeed, I have considered the work of others who have written on the 'traditional' forms of these monsters in great depth, in addition to those who have touched briefly upon their Nazified versions, and built upon their analysis by using the concepts of abjection, the uncanny and trauma. These three areas of study can be combined to elucidate why the Nazi zombie, werewolf and vampire are so popular, and what exactly their presence in the 21st century means. I have found that they do not mean one thing, but instead speak to a range of interpretations of history. If any pattern emerges, it is that the Nazi monster transgresses previously established patterns; they are united by their divisiveness. The Nazified movie monster exacerbates the already uncanny and abject form of the zombie or werewolf, for example, and in doing so challenges any attempt to speak about those monsters in general terms. I do not imagine that Badley argues that there are no exceptions to the primary affects she assigns, and such generalisations are useful in identifying meaningful exceptions. I would argue that the Nazi monster is one such exception, and constitutes a large body of exceptions from which we can learn. The Nazi zombie is more uncanny than many readings would suggest, the werewolf's bestial nature belies both the uncanny and abject and has specific historical resonances, while the grotesque Nazi vampire is far from erotic.

By considering these monsters together it seems that all three have been hybridised as they are types of transformed human, and so a discussion of the Nazi zombie, vampire and werewolf brings to light a recurring focus on the soldier and the battlefield. Such a focus demonstrates a persistent anxiety about the soldier's role in war as explored through the monstrous, and this extends to the films' treatments of their protagonists. As

many of the films feature soldiers as their protagonists it is useful to consider them in relation to Steffen Hantke's concept of the military horror film, a hybrid genre of which Nazi horror can be considered a specific variation. When considering three examples of the military horror film (*Deathwatch* [Michael J. Bassett, 2002], *The Bunker* [Rob Green, 2001], and *Dog Soldiers* [Neil Marshall, 2002]), Hantke argues that the structure of the military unit is of note. This is because 'in most horror films, the social body consists of randomly or accidentally assembled parts. Groups are haphazardly thrown together'.[148] In war films social bodies have already been established, and 'depending on their political stance—can have the group strengthen or weaken under fire. In the military horror film, however, only one route seems available: as soon as the external threat begins to manifest itself, the social body begins to disintegrate'.[149] This may be true of Hantke's selection of films, but this is less certain in Nazi horror in which there are examples of both 'haphazard' groups within the military (*Outpost*, *Werewolves of the Third Reich*), as well as established groups who do not turn on each other (*Overlord*, *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz*), and even non-military groups (*Iron Wolf*, *Frostbite*). These variations suggest that Nazi horror offers different considerations of the social body in order to explore the many possible reactions to the trauma of war rather than one inevitable outcome. Furthermore, Hantke suggests that the war-time setting of this hybrid genre has two functions, as it is a backdrop 'against which, to a lesser degree, questions of individual ethics and psychology can be projected, and, more importantly, dynamic physical action and gunplay can unfold'.[150] As Nazi horror is concerned by the myriad responses to trauma, so ethics and individuals become more important than action and gunplay.

In considering the relationship between the monster and the human, the Nazi zombie, vampire and werewolf film also explores the extent to which war can be considered in terms of a united 'us' versus 'them'. As has been a recurring point of discussion, Kerner believes that such a distinction is a lamentable cinematic tradition, as 'there are very few films that even attempt to position identification with a Nazi character'.[151] Though this is a controversial argument and many would disagree, he warns against such representations as most films create 'a narcissistic stupor' in which the West

[148] Steffen Hantke, 'The Military Horror Film: Speculations on a Hybrid Genre', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 43.4 (2010), 701-719 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2010.00766.x> (p. 715).
[149] Ibid., p. 716.
[150] Ibid., p. 705.
[151] Kerner, 'On the Cinematic Nazi', p. 204.

rests reassured that the fascist taint has been defeated once and for all.[152] Though Kerner acknowledges that there are a few exceptions to his observations, he briefly alludes to *Dead Snow* as one such example of the monstrous Nazi which creates a stupor, and so we might extend his argument to Nazi horror as a whole. Yet that this is the resulting effect of the Nazified movie monster is contestable. This is because, although Nazi horror does little to suggest that the Nazis were 'normal' or 'human' in the way Kerner suggests, what they do is suggest that the Allies may also have been barbaric and thus question such an 'easy' distinction. This blurring of culpability and brutality is a familiar element of the war film as seen in *Saving Private Ryan* (Steven Spielberg, 1998), one of the examples of the increasingly complex Second World War genre which Allison discusses.[153] In Nazi horror this is made explicit in *Outpost* when Hunt observes to D.C. 'You're not so different from them out there. Men that once had a purpose and now have nothing but death', and such comparisons are invited throughout the subgenre in which the Allied soldier is violent or susceptible to being changed into a monster themselves. The very prevalence of representations of Nazis in this subgenre in which the threat is unresolved at the conclusion provides an alternative reading to Kerner's argument that the representation of Nazis on screen is an exercise in showing that 'the fascist taint' is a socio-cultural anxiety which has been safely vanquished.

This anxiety is one which arises in a range of cultural contexts, but is invariably one born of trauma, for diversity is connected to the very nature of trauma. As Peter Leese and Jason Crouthamel argue, 'there is then no straightforward or easily described relationship between culture, trauma, and history; social psychologies are differently inflected according to time and place'.[154] Indeed, it is an understanding of these differences between experiences of trauma which Caruth argues is 'opened up to us as spectators of the film, and offered as the very possibility, in a catastrophic era, of a link between cultures'.[155] The same type of monster can provide insight into a nation's guilt over passivity and occupation, or of its active part in terrible crimes. It can be a vehicle for the national voice of Sweden or Norway, or give a less specific account whose recurring images of the Holocaust are just as significant. Indeed, they may engage implicitly or explicitly with the

[152] Ibid., p. 213.
[153] Allison, p. 6.
[154] Peter Leese and Jason Crouthamel, 'Introduction', in *Traumatic Memories of the Second World War and After*, ed. by Peter Leese and Jason Crouthamel (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 1-19 (p. 6).
[155] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 58.

Holocaust with very different consequences. Equally, these films not only allude to the Second World War, but also to traumas from other conflicts throughout history as well as the return of the far right across Europe and the US since the 1990s. Thus, although it may seem unexpected to some that one of the products of the relationship between the uncanny, the abject and these historical events is a Nazi zombie or werewolf, these monsters encapsulate the complexity of the trauma which has arisen from the Second World War and how we now engage with it. Despite their multiplicity, though, what is undeniable is that 'the Second World War and its aftermath constitute a formative moment in the social, cultural, and political history of trauma'.[156] The Nazi monster is one product of this formative moment, a rupture which has come to signify the horrors of war more broadly.

[156] Leese and Crouthamel., p. 7.

CHAPTER THREE – SUPERNATURAL SCIENCE AND FASCIST FRANKENSTEINS

Introduction

My previous chapter discussed numerous Nazified movie monsters and provided analysis of their resulting hybridity. It did not discuss in much detail, however, the processes through which these hybrid monsters are created in the films' narratives. An overwhelming number of these Nazi creatures are depicted as the result of the Nazis' scientific experiments, offering another important type of monstrosity to consider. Examples of such Nazi science-inspired horror include the *Outpost* (2008-2013) trilogy's pseudoscientific unified field theory; the secret serums and diseases which create vampires in *Frostbite* (Anders Banke, 2006) and *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* (Uwe Boll, 2011), zombies in *War of the Dead* (Marko Mäkilaakso, 2011) and *Overlord* (Julius Avery, 2018), and werewolves in *Iron Wolf* (David Brückner, 2013), *Werewolves of the Third Reich* (Andrew Jones, 2017) and *Horrors of War* (Peter John Ross and John Whitney, 2006); and the inhuman splicing tests of *Frankenstein's Army* (Richard Raaphorst, 2013). In all of these instances it is science which interferes with the natural order through means which are perceived by society to be immoral and cruel, that is closely linked to the horror that ensues. Where these films and others have already been discussed in Chapter Two in relation to their hybrid monsters and the nature of Nazi zombies, vampires and werewolves, this chapter will thus consider the same texts from the alternative angle of 'forbidden science'. In many of the above films forbidden Nazi science is shown to be entirely responsible for the creation of monsters such as zombies, but even in those films in which vampires or werewolves are shown to pre-date the Second World War, science is presented as a force harnessing and using such conditions for the Nazis' purposes. The theme of science is prevalent to such an extent in the Nazi horror subgenre that in *Dead Snow* (Tommy Wirkola, 2009) Nazi draugar-like-zombies rise from the dead to reclaim their lost gold, only to have a Nazi zombie scientist superfluously added to the narrative in the sequel *Dead Snow: Red vs Dead* (Tommy Wirkola, 2014).

As the superfluous scientist of *Dead Snow: Red vs Dead* suggests, in the Nazi horror subgenre there is a varying but constant relationship between the supernatural, as monsters such as the zombie, vampire and werewolf may often be classed, and science. This is a potentially complicated relationship, for some definitions describe the

supernatural as that which 'cannot be explained by science'.[1] This would suggest that 'supernatural science' is an oxymoron, especially in those narratives in which science is used to explain entirely the creation of the monster. However, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the supernatural as 'belonging to a realm or system that transcends nature, as that of divine, magical, or ghostly beings; attributed to or thought to reveal some force beyond scientific understanding or the laws of nature; occult, paranormal'.[2] Such a definition suggests that there is more nuance in the relationship between the supernatural and science; the two are not necessarily in opposition, but rather the supernatural constitutes an extension beyond the known scientific world. These monsters thus have their basis in science but also move beyond previously established boundaries such as that between life and death or human and beast. This definition also connects science to the occult, as discussed in Chapter One, in regards to which it is significant that Eric Kurlander uses the broad term 'supernatural imaginary' to refer to the Nazis' interest in both the occult and the border sciences.[3] Kurlander defines the border sciences as investigations into the spiritual, focusing on examples such as parapsychology which are concerned with the mind rather than the body. While this is not truly the type of science at stake in this chapter, as Nazi horror films represent mainstream sciences such as physics, chemistry and biology and make them monstrous, such a discussion is nevertheless useful in exploring the numerous connections which may arise between science and the supernatural. Indeed, the underlying theme of the occult and of science is that of knowledge, for as Jason Colavito argues, 'the monsters of horror can take many shapes, and they can symbolize many things, but one constant remains across time, from the earliest horror stories to the most recent: Knowledge, whether forbidden or achieved, is a primal source of horror'.[4] Such a statement holds true for Nazi horror and this chapter will consider representations of forbidden knowledge and monstrous science in these 21st century films.

Science as a Source of Horror

[1] 'Supernatural', in *Cambridge Dictionary,* online edn <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/supernatural> [accessed 25 May 2019].
[2] 'Supernatural', in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd edn (2012) <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/194422?redirectedFrom=supernatural#eid> [accessed 25 May 2019].
[3] Eric Kurlander, *Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2017).
[4] Jason Colavito, *Knowing Fear: Science, Knowledge and the Development of the Horror Genre* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2008), p. 6.

A specific aspect of Colavito's work relevant here is that 'for twenty-first century individuals, it is sometimes difficult to imagine a way in which knowledge could be bad, or in fact the source of horror. Instead, when we think about horror at all, we think about it in the terms of Freudian psychoanalysis, positing a range of explanations for the "true" meaning of horror stories'.[5] Here Colavito is discussing the themes of science and knowledge in the horror genre broadly and arguing that 21st century audiences primarily perceive advances in knowledge as positive, and as such they are more likely to consider the fear that horror films provoke as stemming from other sources, an argument which is interesting in two respects. Firstly, such a generalisation is at odds with the work of Michel Foucault, whose conceptualisation of science and power points to an ongoing anxiety surrounding the role of science within society. In particular, Foucault's consideration of 'biopower' has been influential, locating a shift in the 18th century since which:

> Society's control over individuals was accomplished not only through consciousness or ideology but also in the body and with the body. For capitalist society, it was biopolitics, the biological, the somatic, the corporeal that mattered more than anything else. The body is a biopolitical reality; medicine is a biopolitical strategy.[6]

This has taken on more and more weight as structures of power have been increasingly intertwined with emerging technologies. Furthermore, Foucault's work in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* similarly draws attention to 'military science', a theorisation of military organisation and behaviour through the lens of science, and the ways in which it has historically been utilised to support (often violent) ideologies.[7] Thus while Colavito's generalisation may be useful in drawing attention to more utopic considerations of science and the potential that cultural attitudes may shift towards the subject, and though he then goes on to explore the relationship between horror and science, I would immediately interrogate the suggestion that it is 'difficult' for a contemporary audience to consider science as dangerous.

Secondly, Colavito's analysis of the perception of science in the 21st century is of interest to this thesis in that it refers to Freud, particularly as Colavito prefaces his work with the claim that 'critical obsession with psychoanalysis often obscures other facets of horror, especially those that are not directly linked to emotions or the libido', and so argues that contemporary audiences and critics alike are focusing on psychoanalytic and

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[5] Ibid.
[6] Michel Foucault, *Power: The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984, Vol. 3*, ed. by James D Faubion (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 137.
[7] Ibid., *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1977).

psychosexual sources of horror.[8] As a result, he continues, what many critics 'miss is that illicit sexuality is but a subset of a larger horror, one that views knowledge – sexual knowledge included – as the deepest and most profound source of horror a human can know'.[9] He therefore considers psychoanalytic approaches to horror as potentially detracting or distracting from the wider, and more important, theme of knowledge. While it should be noted that Colavito is contemplating the horror genre as a whole when he argues that the theme of knowledge has been overlooked, in contrast to which the Nazi horror subgenre contains explicit images of science and scientists and so readily invites contemplations of the horror of forbidden knowledge, his arguments still have potential implications for my work in this chapter. This is because psychoanalysis is crucial to my understanding of filmic Nazi monsters, and I would contend that this methodology is not at odds with the analysis of scientific knowledge as a source of horror, but quite the opposite.

The Abuse of Science as Uncanny-Abject Trauma

Central to Sigmund Freud's essay on the uncanny, as quoted in Chapter One, is the concept that 'everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light'.[10] As Colavito points out, this concept is often linked to sexual phenomena such as the castration complex or uterine fantasies.[11] However, to say that the uncanny is entirely based in the psychosexual would be to overstate the case. Moreover, as noted above, Colavito argues that sexual knowledge is but a subset of knowledge more broadly. This more general notion of knowledge is at work in Freud's writing on the uncanny, and so this psychoanalytic concept is a useful way of understanding Nazi science as leading to dark and dangerous knowledge which in filmic representations has become supernatural and arcane. This is a type of knowledge which should have been left unexplored and repressed but which the Nazi horror film suggests was brought to light by Nazi scientists, and has again been revealed by the horror film itself. Indeed, Freud specifically connects the supernatural uncanny with the theme of knowledge when he argues that 'anyone who has completely and finally rid himself of animistic beliefs will be insensible to this type of the uncanny', referring particularly to the perceived uncanniness of death and the return of the dead.[12] This might suggest that gaining scientific knowledge would usually work in opposition to

[8] Colavito, p. 2.
[9] Ibid., p. 6.
[10] Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' (1919), in *Art and Literature*, ed. by Albert Dickson, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1985), pp. 335-376 (p. 345).
[11] Colavito, p. 126.
[12] Freud, p. 371.

the supernatural and arcane, especially when this includes the supernatural creation of zombies or vampires, for instance. Yet Freud also mentions the role of science in the uncanny when he writes:

> In our great cities, placards announce lectures that undertake to tell us how to get into touch with the souls of the departed; and it cannot be denied that not a few of the most able and penetrating minds among our men of science have come to the conclusion, especially towards the close of their own lives, that a contact of this kind is not impossible.[13]

Thus, while scientific knowledge may usually be presumed to dispel the uncanny, when science is instead connected with the supernatural this has the converse effect of exacerbating and legitimising animistic beliefs and the uncanny sensations they provoke. Uncanny forbidden knowledge is likewise significant in representations of supernatural science in the Nazi horror subgenre, making psychoanalysis a valuable tool in this chapter to understand better the horrific effect of and meaning behind Nazi science.

Another psychoanalytic concept which can aid our understanding of horrific representations of Nazi science is abjection. Julia Kristeva discusses Nazi science explicitly when she argues that 'the abjection of Nazi crime reaches its apex when death, which, in any case, kills me, interferes with what, in my living universe, is supposed to save me from death: childhood, science'.[14] Science and medicine are supposed to be used to save all lives, yet the Nazis abused them in order to strengthen those they found worthy and kill those they did not. Kristeva expands on this idea when she identifies abject crime, as quoted in Chapter One, as 'immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady'.[15] Kristeva is referring here to a specific type of evil, premeditated and sinister, which resonates with the crimes carried out secretly with strategic, military precision in the name of Nazi science. In the Nazi horror subgenre these crimes are rendered supernatural, as science is corrupted to create undead Nazi ranks, and both the methods used to create the monsters and the violence the monsters then wreak are represented as grotesque. In this chapter I will therefore explore in more detail the ways in which these representations of Nazi science draw upon historical instances of science being abused to commit crimes, and how these representations exacerbate the abjection of those crimes.

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[13] Ibid., p. 365.
[14] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 4.
[15] Ibid.

Lastly, to develop further the analysis of Nazi science in horror films, I will draw on Kristeva's description of the Second World War as a 'wound that […] never ceases to palpate'.[16] In this particular instance Kristeva is referring to the work of Louis-Ferdinand Céline, but as she goes on to argue, all literature 'is probably a version of the apocalypse'.[17] That is to say, post-war literature has been irrevocably and abjectly affected by the devastating events of the Second World War, and, as many scholars have done with Kristeva's work, we may extend this to film, and particularly the horror genre. Indeed, the rhetoric of wounds is also one employed by Linnie Blake, for whom the horror genre, as outlined in Chapter Two, is both 'trauma-raddled and wound-obsessed'.[18] Acts of Nazi science can therefore be understood as traumatic wounds which continue to be represented and explored in the Nazi horror subgenre. This is to some extent the argument put forward by Christiane-Marie Abu Sarah, when she states that 'as an open signifier, Nazis can be inserted into other traumatic cycles as images and representation used to interpret new events and wounds'.[19] Such a model of recurring cycles of trauma resonates with my previous readings of Nazi zombie, vampire, and werewolf films as linked to both the trauma of the Second World War and other more recent conflicts. In this chapter I will interrogate the various scientific advances which have informed these 21st century uncanny and abject representations in order to demonstrate that an analysis of the Nazi science which creates these monsters reveals similar links to past and present traumas. In doing so, I will consider three particular areas: the machinery of war, eugenics and human experimentation, and finally the scientists responsible for these developments. An analysis of these three categories suggests that the Nazi horror subgenre is a culmination of a range of historical and cultural wounds, the common theme of which is that scientific knowledge is a continuous source of horror and trauma.

The Machinery of War

The Mythology of Super Weapons and Fear of Mass Scale Destruction

[16] Ibid., p. 153.
[17] Ibid., p. 207.
[18] Linnie Blake, *The Wounds of Nations: Horror Cinema, Historical Trauma and National Identity* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 2.
[19] Christiane-Marie Abu Sarah, 'Horror, History and the Third Reich: Locating Traumatic Pasts in Hollywood Horrors', in *The Horrors of Trauma in Cinema: Violence Void Visualisation*, ed. by Michael Elm, Kobi Kabalek and Julia B. Kohne (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), pp. 68-87 (p. 84).

To begin, one strand of scientific advancement that has a long history of actual and filmic horror is the machinery of war, a term I use to refer particularly to developments in chemistry, physics and technology designed to kill on an ever-larger scale. For instance, advances during the Second World War produced new types of missiles, rockets and bombs. For the Nazis these specifically included new U boats and a particular type of long-range artillery called the V weapons, amongst many more. As time passes the events of the Second World War become increasingly removed, yet as James J. Ward argues:

> Our lengthening distance from the Nazi period seems to work in inverse proportion, so that Wehrmacht generals, SS officers, and scientists and engineers who contributed to the machinery of war and genocide grow ever more familiar, especially for audiences whose entire knowledge of those twelve years comes from movies, computer games and the History Channel.[20]

While Ward's claim can be disputed in some respects – it seems likely that those who lived through the Second World War would know many more details than those who have not – his observation here is useful in that this growing 'familiarity' correlates with the generalisation and mythologisation of those specific details. By this I mean that Nazi figures have been reiterated on our screens again and again, to the extent that 21st century depictions of these figures refer increasingly to a mixture of previous representations and historical actuality. Although Ward is focusing here on the figure of the scientist, I would argue that the same can be said of representations of the machinery of war itself, for Nazi weaponry has also become a screen staple with more and more extreme depictions in the war genre benefitting from advances in special effects and ever-larger budgets. It is therefore important to consider previous representations of the Second World War and how they may have contributed to the images of supernatural super-weapons in Nazi horror films which I will discuss in this section.

It is also important to consider that the reason these weapons have been the subject of an increasingly mythicised accumulation of depictions may be traced to the representation of these weapons *during* the Second World War. Ian Hogg draws attention to a speech made by Adolf Hitler, including a line translated literally as 'the moment might very quickly come for us to use a weapon with which we could not be attacked'.[21] Hogg

[20] James J. Ward, 'Utterly Without Redeeming Social Value? "Nazi Science" Beyond Exploitation Cinema in Nazisploitation', in *Nazisploitation!: The Nazi Image in Low-Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. by Daniel H. Magilow, Elizabeth Bridges and Kristin T. Vander Lugt (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), pp. 92-112 (pp. 96-97).
[21] Ian Hogg, *German Secret Weapons of the Second World War: The Missiles, Rockets, Weapons and New Technology of the Third Reich* (Barnsley, UK: Frontline, 2015), p. 9.

argues that due to mistranslation and misrepresentation this was soon taken to be 'Hitler's Secret Weapon', resulting in a large amount of fearful speculation about what exactly such a weapon may be, with guesses ranging from 'the Panzer [armoured tank] division to the nuclear bomb'.[22] The latter is of particular interest here, as the atomic bomb of the Second World War has become a loaded cultural site. As David J. Skal argues, 'from its first deployment the atomic bomb began radiating metaphors about knowledge, sin, and science that gave startling new life to ancient ideas'.[23] This is perhaps unsurprising given the rhetoric used by the scientists involved; '"I am become Death, shatterer of worlds," said bomb scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer, quoting the Upanishad after the first test detonation'.[24] This rhetoric soon spread to concepts such as 'Promethean presumption, the spoiling of Eden, Pandora's box, the golem, Faust, and Frankenstein [which] all absorbed new energy from the atomic blast and in the process gave popular culture of the postwar years its particular mythic intensity'.[25] While the atomic bomb was ultimately used by the Allies rather than the Nazis, this mythicised concept of the atomic bomb has beyond the immediate post-war context become increasingly tied to Nazism in a complex history of reality and representation. As Ward also notes, B-films made in the 1960s and 1970s, which might otherwise be critically dismissed, can tell us how audiences during this period remembered the Third Reich and were 'gripped by the fear of atomic weapons, with which former Nazis might somehow be involved'.[26] Thus I would argue that wartime representations of the machinery of war are closely linked to the cycles of representation which have occurred since, with images of the atomic bomb being of particular significance, and further exploration is needed to understand the ways in which this has informed the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre.

That the atomic bomb has come to be associated with Nazism is perhaps because its perceived potential for evil was even more potent if wielded by the Nazis rather than by the Allies, for Nazism was centred around the destruction of others through genocide and so the presumption is that they would have used it for such purposes. However, I would argue that the connection between the two may be even more complex. As Ward notes, 'National Socialism was uniquely destructive. From the first, it proclaimed a cult of death

[22] Ibid.
[23] David J. Skal, *Screams of Reason: Mad Science and Modern Culture* (London and New York: Norton, 1998), p. 167.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ward, p. 95.

[…] In this universe of mass death, German science, engineering and technology made their substantial contributions'.[27] This suggests that there is a link between the Nazi ideology and a world in which death was increasingly possible on a mass scale due to weapons such as the atomic bomb. The cult of death was the term used by the Nazis themselves to signify their belief that death had the power to unite individuals in glory, and, as Dina Khapaeva argues, this attitude was evident in the SS motto 'to love death' or the Hitler Youth slogan 'we were born to die for Germany'.[28] As Khapaeva continues, the cult of death was also linked to the occult through the cult of Wōtan (Old High German for the god Odin), 'which contained some clearly sadistic and necromantic elements'.[29] The connection between Nazism and a love of death therefore had mythological and supernatural roots from the very beginning. The mass death that the atomic bomb or other weapons of mass destruction have the potential to wreak has consequently been linked to this cult of death and mythicisation, creating fertile ground for the horror genre. Such concepts of mass death are horrifyingly abject, and the rhetoric of destruction, catastrophe and the apocalyptic saturates Kristeva's work. This is especially the case when she discusses the literature of Céline which, as previously mentioned, she considers to be a pinnacle of the abject, and which she sees as inherently shaped by the Second World War.[30] The examples she gives are passages about rotting bodies and ruined landscapes, creating a coarseness which, 'issuing from the global catastrophe of the Second World War, does not, within the orb of abjection, spare a single sphere: neither that of morality, or politics, or religion, or esthetics'.[31] Thus Kristeva argues that in such works 'the tremendous unveiling of suffering and death of the Second World War' brought about by the Nazis is ultimately abject, which is a useful view to extend to an analysis of horrific depictions of Nazi weaponry.[32]

Iron Sky: Horror Inflected Science Fiction

By understanding weapons of mass destruction and the Nazis' cult of death as linked, mythicised, and inherently abject, we can understand better the horrific science Skal and Ward have traced through different post-war cycles of representation, and argue that this has culminated in the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre. For instance, the film *Iron Sky*

[27] Ibid., p. 108.
[28] Dina Khapaeva, *The Celebration of Death in Contemporary Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), p. 73.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Kristeva argues that 'without the war it is hard to imagine a Célinian scription; the war appears to trigger it off, to be its very condition', p. 152.
[31] Ibid., pp. 207-208.
[32] Ibid., p. 154.

(Timo Vuorensola, 2012) centres on the premise of Nazis on the Moon, to where they have fled after the Second World War, and where they lie in wait to launch an attack on Earth. They attempt to do so with what they refer to as a 'miracle weapon that has been under development for 40 years, the dream of our beloved führer', and this phrase resonates with the speculation which surrounded 'Hitler's secret weapon'. In *Iron Sky* the weapon is conceptualised as a Death Star-like machine which can destroy entire planets, a significant comparison in itself as numerous scholars have linked images and themes from the *Star Wars* franchise (1977-2018) to Nazism and fascism, while Peter W. Rose observes that 'the focus on an ultimate weapon, the Death Star, to quell all resistance resonates with the origins of the atomic bomb and the increasing menace of the military industrial complex' throughout the 20th century.[33] The depiction of a super-weapon in *Iron Sky* makes these connections explicit as it resembles a behemoth of cogs and chains embossed with swastikas, imagery which specifically equates machinery and weapons of mass destruction with Nazism through the use of their familiar iconography. At the conclusion of the film the weapon begins to fire, its beam eroding a chasm in the surface of the Moon as its trajectory slowly moves towards the Earth before being stopped just in time, but the fear that the Nazis may have lain in wait and have now developed the technology to destroy every other 'inferior' being has been established. It could be said, however, that *Iron Sky* does not explore the abject and uncanny horror of this scenario in too great a detail, for the weapon is depicted as swiftly evaporating victims without any focus on the psychological or physiological effect of this destruction. This is perhaps because the film relates more to science fiction than horror. It is not necessarily an easy task to clearly delineate the two genres, for as Colavito points out, 'horror is often found in dark works of science fiction, and science fiction trappings are often used in horror stories'.[34] I would argue, though, that *Iron Sky* belongs to the former category of horror inflected science fiction, and while its

[33] For example, Jeff Stone argues that 'strong Nazi themes' in *Star Wars* include 'an opportunistic chancellor who is only elected after he invents a military threat to an otherwise peaceful republic. The chancellor then declares emergency powers, names himself emperor, and creates an army of "Stormtroopers" to destroy any resistance' in 'Germany in Film and Television (American) After World War Two', in *Germany and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History: A Multidisciplinary Encyclopedia*, ed. by Thomas Adam (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), pp. 338-340 (p. 339). Robin Wood also refers in *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan...and Beyond: A Revised and Expanded Edition of the Classic Text* (New York and Chichester, UK: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 151, to 'the prototypical Fascist beast Darth Vader', whose costume Rose also argues echoes the Nazi uniform; Peter W. Rose, 'Teaching Classical Myth and Confronting Contemporary Myths', in *Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema*, ed. by Martin M. Winkler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 291-318 (p. 312).

[34] Colavito, p. 15.

portrayal of a mythical Nazi super weapon is of note, its analysis can be built upon by turning to science fiction inflected horror.

Outpost: Science Fiction Inflected Horror

One such film in this category is *Outpost* (Steve Barker, 2008), in which a band of mercenaries are recruited by a mysterious scientist named Hunt to travel to an Eastern European bunker. Hunt is very evasive when asked about the bunker, and it soon becomes clear that he has failed to tell the mercenaries the real reason for the mission when they discover that the outpost is occupied by undead Nazis. It is only when they stumble across an old film clip that Hunt finally tells the men the whole story, narrating over the projection's images of what appears to be an experiment with an explanation of its pseudoscientific underpinnings. He reveals that the undead Nazis have been created using 'unified field theory', a theory associated with Einstein but used here to denote a pseudoscientific concept which distorts time and space so that the Nazi soldiers can live indefinitely. While the found-footage style film projections create a patina of education and historical reality, the film is self-aware of its pseudoscientific explanation. Hunt himself argues that the Third Reich was infamous for its 'mixture of fantasy and science', making unified field theory perfect for their purposes.

During Hunt's explanation he also notes that America attempted to develop the same form of science, referring to the USS Eldridge and the Philadelphia experiment conspiracy. This is a popular myth that the USS Eldridge was rendered invisible and/or teleported as part of an American-led experiment, with some versions of the tale including horrific elements such as the bodies of those on board being left fused with the ship's hull or stuck between floors. This anecdote thus has the effect of connecting unified field theory with another myth about the dangers of science, notably one with grotesque elements. Significantly, the tale of USS Eldridge also blurs the lines between perceptions of the Allies' 'good' and Nazis' 'bad' use of science by indicating that both sides pursued dangerous knowledge, and Hunt explicitly links the science at work in *Outpost* to nuclear weaponry when he notes that Einstein was working on unified field theory but abandoned it when he saw the atomic bomb. Indeed, such a scene serves as a reminder that it was the US who ultimately used nuclear weaponry in the Second World War, bombing Hiroshima and killing hundreds of thousands of civilians. The bombing of Hiroshima has been explored extensively within Trauma Studies, for Cathy Caruth analyses the film *Hiroshima mon amour* (Alain Resnais, 1959) and Adam Lowenstein considers Hiroshima to constitute an

'allegorical moment'.[35] Such allusions to the atomic bomb within Nazi horror demonstrate that Hiroshima was a trauma inflicted by the Allies which has become woven together with other experiences of trauma arising from the actions of the Nazis during the Second World War. Furthermore, since this time all uses of nuclear technology remain surrounded by myriad anxieties, with an ever-present discussion in 21st century media about armed countries and the threat of a nuclear war as exemplified by the very recent antagonism between the US and North Korea. Even those non-weaponised instances such as technology used to harness nuclear power are a source of fear for many due to nuclear disasters at Chernobyl, Russia in 1986 or Fukushima, Japan in 2011. These traumas become increasingly intertwined as the dialogue suggests that the machine in *Outpost* is either part of nuclear technology, or at least of a comparable technology, and the film thus implies that the use of unified field theory has ethical implications, to a certain extent connecting this to Allied nations, but particularly suggesting that the Nazis pursued the same technology to the most immoral extreme.

The importance of the mythical and pseudoscientific unified field theory is embodied in the machine through which it operates. It is the machine which Hunt seeks, and which helps him to unlock the Nazis' secrets. Accordingly, when they come to the machine it is illuminated from above, lit up to demonstrate its significance, and Hunt refers to it as 'the holy grail of physics'. Once again, the 'grail' signifies a mythical tone whilst 'physics' grounds it in the realm of science and fact. Its appearance is that of a generator, a mass of pipes, tubes and wires. Cynthia J. Miller reads the complexity of this machine and the Nazi science it represents as offering a clear contrast to the mercenaries, as 'the gritty mercenaries are cast as volatile and rugged – blunt instruments – in opposition to the stoic order and control of Nazi science. The team's commander, D.C. (Ray Stevenson), is ignorant of the horror to come as he surveys the laboratory and mutters "I never really trusted science"'.[36] D.C. is right to be wary as it is this machine which sustains the undead Nazis and therefore the horror the mercenaries experience, including the film's nihilistic conclusion. In the final sequence Hunt appears for a second to have been successful in

[35] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, 20th Anniversary edn (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2016); Adam Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

[36] Cynthia J. Miller, 'The Rise and Fall – and Rise – of the Nazi Zombie in Film', in *Race, Oppression and the Zombie: Essays on Cross-Cultural Appropriations of the Caribbean Tradition*, ed. by Christopher M. Moreman and Cory James Rushton (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2011), pp. 139-148 (p. 146).

shutting down the machine, as the Nazi soldiers crumple, but mere moments later the machine jogs back to life. The moment of horror comes with the electrical hum, the clatter of machinery, and a prolonged pause as the Nazis begin to stir once again. Here the machine could be considered as being similarly uncanny to the undead zombies in that it also comes back to 'life'. Machinery and technology are considered by Ernst Jentsch and Freud to be uncanny, as the sensation can arise when there is doubt as to 'whether a lifeless object might not perhaps be animate'.[37] While Freud argues that this is not the strongest example of the uncanny compared to others he gives, and in both instances Jentsch and Freud are referring to especially life-like automata, the machine in *Outpost* seems unsettlingly alive and even disobedient. Moreover, as the machine has the dangerous power of sustaining the zombies, it relates to Nicholas Royle's argument that machinery can be uncanny because 'more rapidly than can be comprehended or controlled, "we humans" are becoming decentred, invaded, mixed up with the strange reality and effects of "new technology"'.[38] The machine in *Outpost* is indeed depicted as interfering with the human realm, with a destructive effect which resonates with the uncanny fears Royle describes.

An understanding of the unified field theory machine as being central to the horror of *Outpost* and as uncannily 'alive' is reinforced by the other films in the trilogy. For example, in *Outpost: Black Sun* (Steve Barker, 2012) a new group of soldiers accompanied by an American physicist named Wallace and a Nazi hunter named Lena must travel to the outpost as it has grown in power since the events of the first film. The electromagnetic field in which the undead Nazis exist is depicted as spreading across nearby towns, engulfing all in its way. Moreover, the geography of the bunker has become more complex, with Lena and the soldiers discovering a further concealed underground level. It is on this new level that Lena finally discovers the machine, which rather than being illuminated from above now emits huge rays of light from within, with a tortured Hunt dangling in the wires above it. It is revealed in this moment that Hunt did not die in the first *Outpost* film as suggested, but instead was kept alive as a source of power for the machine. This plot twist has the effect of personifying the machine, which has outgrown the scientists which have created or can master it and is beginning to feed upon them in a monstrous and painful process. Once again, the machine is uncanny for when Wallace attempts to shut it down he

[37] Ernst Jentsch, 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny' (1906), trans. by Roy Sellars, *Angelaki*, 2.1 (1997), 7-16 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09697259708571910> (p. 11).
[38] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 37.

struggles to do so, repeating the actions only for the machine to roar back to life each time, causing him to shout, 'the system's well designed, it doesn't want me to kill it!'. By *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* (Kieran Parker, 2013), the third film in the series, and a prequel set during the Second World War, the grandiose rhetoric around the machine has shifted even further as one character exclaims that, 'the whole place is purpose built, one giant machine'. In this sense the title *Outpost* increasingly refers to the machine itself, simultaneously object, monster and setting.

Pseudoscience and the Occult in the *Outpost* series

In addition to taking on increasing significance and its field spreading geographically, over the course of the *Outpost* series the machine's mythological significance also expands to combine Nazi pseudoscience with occultism. As Monica Black and Eric Kurlander argue, 'from supposed SS expeditions in search of the "Spear of Destiny" to Heinrich Himmler's fascination with witchcraft or Adolf Hitler's "Jewish clairvoyant," there has been no shortage of material over the decades suggesting a close connection between Nazism and the occult'.[39] Having addressed the myth of the Nazis' use of occultism and its perpetuation in horror films such as *Hellboy* (Guillermo Del Toro, 2004) and *Blood Creek* (Joel Schumacher, 2009) in the first chapter of this thesis, many of these elements are hybridised with increasingly mythologised accounts of Nazi science. In this respect, Hunt calling the machine 'the holy grail of physics' takes on further meaning as it also links the image to a pseudohistory of Hitler's search for relics, both religious and occult. By placing the machine as both occult relic and scientific breakthrough, *Outpost* supports Abu Sarah's claim that 'many horror plotlines also link the Third Reich's science with its forays into the occult. Such a narrative choice serves to further represent Nazi science as a deviation from Enlightenment values'.[40] Such values include the challenging of old systems to construct the new, and intellectual progress to improve human society, and so in contrast to these principles the machine in *Outpost* is a tainted holy grail which draws on both the old and new in order to harm human society.

The process through which the machine draws upon the occult is not explicitly delineated, but the importance of this occult sub-plot is evident in the very title of the second film, *Outpost: Black Sun*. The Black Sun is a symbol of esoteric and occult

[39] Monica Black and Eric Kurlander, 'Introduction', in *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult': Histories, Realities, Legacies*, ed. by Monica Black and Eric Kurlander (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015), pp. 1-19 (p. 1).
[40] Abu Sarah, p. 79.

significance which was used by the Nazis, one example being its incorporation into the floor of Wewelsburg Castle which was an ideological centre for the SS. In *Outpost* it is associated with a special Nazi weapon division, and it is also the name of the fortress in *Iron Sky*. Although the symbol's meaning is largely unspoken beyond these references, its importance in *Outpost: Black Sun* is reinforced by the plot point that the machine can only be operated using a ring with the symbol on, making the occult the key to this horrific science. As Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke observes of the symbol, it was used in Wilhelm Landig's writing after his time as an SS officer:

> Throughout the books of Landig's Thule trilogy, the Black Sun is a mystical symbol for an esoteric order within the SS, the refined distillate of the Nazi spirit, temporarily eclipsed but still potent during the postwar ascendancy of the Jews and their superpower puppets. According to this neo-Nazi mythology, the lost war of 1939-45 is but a prelude to an even greater metaphysical conflict. However, like all powerful symbols, the Black Sun is many-sided. Besides the myth of alchemical occlusion, signifying the latency of Thulean-Nazi power, Landig also identifies the Black Sun as the source of spiritual light and inspiration, a symbol of divine illumination and coming salvation.[41]

Firstly, then, the Black Sun symbol is indubitably a racist and anti-Semitic one, and so when connected to a powerful piece of war weaponry alludes to the genocidal intent behind such creations. Secondly, it is not just a Nazi symbol but one associated with more recent iterations such as neo-Nazism, linking depictions of Nazi occult science to present day society in which racism and anti-Semitism remain pressing concerns. Lastly, it is fundamentally a symbol of knowledge old and new, and it is here Nazi science and the occult come to overlap, for both are the pursuit of forbidden knowledge and are combined in the form of the machine of the *Outpost* series.

These films thus bring together themes which are often considered to be dichotomous, creating collisions between science and the occult, fictional narratives and references to historical actuality, past and present. These collisions can be considered indicative of trauma or what Lowenstein refers to as the 'allegorical moment', in which film, audience and history collide and disrupt registers of space and time.[42] While Lowenstein does not mention amongst these collisions the intertwining of fact and myth I would argue that this would be an appropriate addition as the two are intertwined in a way which disrupts a conventional understanding of historical time to create a shocking and

[41] Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2003), pp. 147-8.
[42] Lowenstein, p. 2.

horrific effect. Furthermore, Lowenstein discusses the Second World War at length as an example of a traumatic conflict which should be recognised as a wound 'in the fabric of culture and history that bleed[s] through conventional confines of time and space'.[43] The language used here to describe the representation of the Second World War as an allegorical moment is important for the films I am discussing for two reasons. Firstly, the Nazi horror subgenre brings together the scientific developments of the Second World War with the 21st century setting and viewer, making the allegorical moment an apt concept with which to consider these films. Secondly, within the *Outpost* films unified field theory is conceptualised as undead Nazis bleeding through time and space, placing this pseudoscientific concept as something of a striking parallel to Lowenstein's description. Hence in the *Outpost* trilogy science itself is implicated in opening a 'wound' in time and space representative of a significant trauma.

Hellboy and Cultural Anxieties Surrounding the Abuse of Technology

The concept of bleeding through time and space is one which is also found in the Nazi occult films *Unholy* (Daryl Goldberg, 2007), in which there is a very ambiguous connection between the figure of the necromancer and scientist who makes time travel possible, and *Hellboy*, in which there is a more explicit alignment of the occult and science. The latter is particularly relevant here as the eponymous demon is summoned through a portal to another dimension which is conceived of as a large mechanical structure, a machine of similar significance and comparable design to that of *Outpost*. The portal has been built in a Scottish Abbey, a notable location as it said to be built on ley lines, lines along which significant monuments and man-made structures seem to spiritually align according to a pseudoscientific theory. The situation of the portal within the Abbey thus suggests that its power is connected to the geographical convergence of the spiritual and scientific. Indeed, it is striking that the Abbey is depicted as historical with its ageing bricks and statues, yet is artificially and starkly lit by the industrial-sized lamps the Nazis have brought, while the ground is littered with generators and machinery, further demonstrating the duality between ancient and modern, occult and science. This duality is also reflected in the monstrous villains who oversee the operation, the scientist and SS officer Karl Ruprecht Kroenen and Russian occultist Rasputin Grigori, and it is the latter who opens the portal. He does so by wielding a large metal gauntlet with thick wires trailing from it, and from which a bright energy emerges to fill the circle and create a portal to another dimension. This

[43] Ibid., p. 1.

energy is at once electrical and otherworldly, while Rasputin's occult powers are arguably central to the film but must be harnessed through the use of technology. The consequence of these combined powers is apocalyptic, for if Kroenen and Rasputin succeed, their vision is that of an earth destroyed. Such a destructive vision makes the portal akin to a weapon of mass destruction and once again demonstrates the dangerous potential of technology when harnessed by those such as the Nazis to rupture and tear the very fabric of our reality. Even more clearly than *Outpost*, then, *Hellboy* depicts a tear in time and space in the form of the portal as a symbol of the trauma the Nazis have inflicted.

Moreover, the damaging use of technology and machinery is embodied, literally, by the character of Kroenen. The SS officer is at first depicted wearing a stylised metal mask and is covered head to toe in his trench coat and leather gloves. The effect of this costume is that of a robot, exacerbated by his swift and precise movements and the trademark knives which emerge from his sleeves, associating his character above all with the mechanical. It is said within the film that Kroenen became so obsessed with body modification and surgery as to slowly remove much of his organic tissue and replace it with machinery with horrifying results, and this underlying body is revealed layer by layer. First, Kroenen removes his trench coat to reveal a waistcoat comprised of clockwork mechanisms. Beneath the waistcoat is pale and mutilated skin, beneath the skin he reveals cogs and sand. This gradual unveiling of Kroenen's mutilated body is framed so as to be both abject and uncanny. For example, Kroenen is shown unwinding some of his cogs, leading him to seemingly collapse so that he can be taken to the institute where Hellboy resides, and Hellboy and his team fall for the trap. They examine his body on a surgical table in great detail, a close up revealing his lipless mouth and exposed teeth, and his lidless eyes protruding. Here the effect is that of abjection, a rejection of a corpse-like body and the exposure of inner gums and eyes, yet the use of close ups prevents the audience from seeing him as a whole. This then leads to the production of the uncanny when Kroenen is left alone and silently rises, obscured by the plastic sheeting surrounding the surface he lies on, which exacerbates the already uncanny re-animation of an automata-like figure in its liminal status between biological and mechanical.[44] Kroenen thus provokes

[44] As Freud observes of Olimpia, in reference to E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'The Sandman' (1816), in *Tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann*, ed. and trans. by Leonard J. Kent and Elizabeth C. Knight (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 93-125. As Freud observes that the automaton is not the sole, or even primary, source of the uncanny as opposed to the loss of eyes in *The Sandman*, so it is not merely uncertainty whether Kroenen is animate or inanimate but rather his liminal and weaponised status as mechanical and biological.

both unease and nausea, a manifestation of the anxiety which arises when machinery and technology are aligned with Nazism to interfere with the natural body.

***Frankenstein's Army*: Human Machines and Machine-Like Genocide**

Frankenstein's Army also resonates with anxieties surrounding Second World War weaponry and machinery as inflicting traumatic wounds by literally fusing them with human flesh. This found-footage style film follows a group of Russian troops on a mission through the German countryside where they find increasingly strange corpses, at first piles of burnt bodies, then a living creature with drills for hands. The creature soon rears up and disembowels their commander, Novikov, and so the rest of the men must journey through a labyrinthine basement on the run from other 'zombots'. It is finally revealed that the zombots are the creation of a descendent of Victor Frankenstein whose goal is to create the 'perfect soldier'. Alongside 'Hitler's secret weapon', the perfect soldier is another mythicised fear born of Nazi science experiments which sought to 'enhance [soldiers'] mental focus […] while decreasing the need for food and sleep'.[45] These experiments were drug-based and also connected to Nazi eugenics, but while eugenics is an important branch of science that I will go on to consider in this chapter, I think it is important to note first the very literal interpretation *Frankenstein's Army* takes of the machine-like super soldier, and the fear of weaponry this involves. For example, Anke Snoeke observes that in the Nazi experiments, and other cases, there is a further ethical line which is crossed when 'super soldiers are turning into killing machines', an image which resonates with many of the zombie experiments depicted in the Nazi horror subgenre, and especially the mechanically enhanced super soldiers of *Frankenstein's Army* whose lobotomised machine-like actions are controlled by their maker.[46] This offers a different, yet still uncanny, take on the blurred lines between machine and human. Where in *Outpost* the unified field theory machine operates as though it is alive, in *Frankenstein's Army* the human body continues to operate beyond death as though it is a machine. This parallel embodies the uncanny 'doubt as to whether an apparently animate object really is alive and, conversely, whether a lifeless object might not perhaps be animate'.[47]

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[45] Anke Snoeke, 'Among Super Soldiers, Killing Machines and Addicted Soldiers: The Ambivalent Relationship between the Military and Synthetic Drugs', in *Super Soldiers: The Ethical, Legal and Social Implications*, ed. by Jai Galliott and Mianna Lotz (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 95-108 (p. 100).
[46] Ibid., p. 105.
[47] Jentsch, p. 11.

Yet the zombots are not just psychologically unsettling fusions of body and machine, but also physically grotesque. The fused creatures are achieved using largely physical effects rather than CGI in order to create visceral masses of metal, wires, stitches and rotting body parts. The effect of these creatures is nauseating, for as Kristeva argues, the corpse 'is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life'.[48] One particular zombot has a helmet which clamps open and shut threateningly, revealing a rotting face underneath intermittently, and thus embodies the abject dualism of dead flesh and Nazi machinery. Indeed, that this is Nazi technology being used in a Nazi-influenced experiment is emphasised by many of these pieces of machinery being emblazoned with swastikas. Furthermore, the types of machines the human body is fused with are important, as corpses are combined with saws, sickles, naval mines and even turbines. These examples are symbolic of the mounting arms race throughout the Second World War, in which there was a desperation to find ever more effective methods of killing the enemy. The turbine, for instance, represents developments in airborne weaponry and divisions such as the Luftwaffe, while the naval mines and old-fashioned diving suits are combined with the human body to represent the war at sea. Yet even the simpler weapons such as saws and sickles are significant when fused with the common man fighting on land, representing the way in which technology is abused during war to push the human body beyond its feasible bounds. As Julian Reid suggests, building upon the work of Foucault, the biopolitical agenda is 'a war that is being fought for political order, not among states, or on the territorial battlefields where military forces clash, but on the terrain of the human body', but *Frankenstein's Army* amalgamates the battlefield and the human body in order to explore the biopolitical extreme.[49]

The representation of zombots therefore connotes a persistent fear about Nazi machinery and technology, but I would argue that the film's place in the 21st century suggests that this fear is linked to more contemporary concerns as well. One such concern surrounds modern warfare, in which the concept of the super soldier persists. An online search for 'super soldier' reveals any number of 21st century articles on innovative technologies being developed by government branches such as the US's Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency with the biopolitical goal of making their soldiers quicker, smarter and stronger. Thus, as Daniel Dinello notes, 'posthuman evolution – the

[48] Kristeva, p. 4.
[49] Julian Reid, 'Life Struggles: War, Discipline and Biopolitics in the Thought of Michel Foucault', in *Foucault on Politics, Security and War*, ed. by Michael Dillon and Andrew W. Neal (Basingstoke, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 65-92 (p. 68).

development of human/machine fusion – is clearly under way', as evident in advances such as 'tiny cameras, serving as artificial eyes, wired directly into the brain' and 'mechanical hands and legs controlled by nerve impulses'.[50] On the one hand such advances need not be specific to warfare, and may seem to offer a technological utopia where even the average citizen will soon be able to use technology to escape pain, ageing and death. Yet, as Dinello goes on to argue, 'the rapid development of posthuman technologies – according to the requirements of war and profit – will have profoundly disturbing, perhaps revolutionary effects on our world'.[51] Indeed, despite biopolitics' ostensible concern with life rather than death, Foucault observes that 'wars were never as bloody as they have been since the nineteenth century, and all things being equal, never before did regimes visit such holocausts on their own populations'.[52] This suggests that despite the potential benefits of technology, a fear began in the 20th century and remains in the 21st that these technologies are likely to be weaponised and if misused could have potentially dangerous consequences. For Dinello this is precisely the focus of science fiction, which in contrast to a 'bright vision of a pain-free, posthuman techno-heaven […] frequently paints a dark picture of technology'.[53] *Frankenstein's Army* is one such dystopian nightmare which represents posthuman technologies as abjectly horrifying, and through its Second World War setting effectively links 21st century posthumanism to the myth of 'the Reich of a thousand years'.

This posthumanist dystopia is also reflected in the setting of *Frankenstein's Army* being a vast underground space which resembles a factory. Body parts are wheeled in containers along tracks and dumped down chutes as though they are discarded scrap metal. The zombots, meanwhile, double as killers and factory workers as at times they ignore the Russian soldiers in their midst to carry out their duties on the assembly line. The imagery is especially similar to that in *Outpost: Black Sun* when Lena descends to the subterranean machine where bodies are dragged around and piled up by the grunting zombies. Here too the facility seems industrial in scale, as it has been purpose-built to destroy inferior beings and create super soldiers. Indeed, in *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* one character refers to the facility as a 'killing jar', a device used to kill captured insects

[50] Daniel Dinello, *Technophobia! Science Fiction Visions of Posthuman Technology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), pp. 4-5.
[51] Ibid., p. 5.
[52] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 2, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 137.
[53] Dinello, p. 1.

quickly and efficiently. When considering what particular trauma this may represent, it is significant that when discussing the allegorical moment Lowenstein specifically mentions Auschwitz alongside Hiroshima and Vietnam as 'these are names associated with specific places and occurrences, but they are also wounds in the fabric of culture and history'.[54] Here lies the darkest sub-text of these films, perhaps, in that these spaces give rise to memories of the Holocaust. The concentration camps were designed to be factories of death, and the mass-scale of killing and disposing of bodies echoes implicitly in these films, as evoked by the industrial settings and other images of machinery and technology. Through these representations we may thus reconsider Caruth's understanding of a traumatic event which is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor'.[55] Here it is less the immediacy of the event which is important but rather the vast scale of the traumatic events of the Holocaust that entail a belatedness extending beyond the survivor to a wider and more indirect form of trauma. The representation of scientific development in the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre is therefore indicative of many different fears and traumas, old and new, caused and represented by micro examples of individual machines as well as the macro context of machine-like genocide.

Eugenics and Human Experimentation

Nazi Horror and the Fear of Posthumanism

One of the driving ideologies behind the machines and facilities in the *Outpost* trilogy, *Hellboy* and *Frankenstein's Army* is therefore the Nazis' desire to create the perfect soldier, and more than this, the perfect race. As Dinello argues, 'in the transhumanist contempt for natural flesh-and-blood humans and its desire to create an elite technologized posthuman species, a potential for fascism, religious fanaticism, and species warfare is revealed'.[56] While transhumanism is the broader belief that the human species will be modified by all kinds of emerging science rather than just intelligent technology as in posthumanism, it shares with posthumanism a certainty that humans are not yet at their final stage of development and are moving as a species towards a radically changed future. Dinello's

[54] Lowenstein, p. 1.
[55] Caruth, p. 4.
[56] Dinello, p. 29.

argument thus suggests that both transhumanist and posthumanist science can be potentially linked to fascism and concerns around race and species, and I would suggest that in Nazi horror the connections between these ideologies and concerns are brought to the very fore. Furthermore, Sherryl Vint's consideration of (particularly scientifically-created) zombies further argues that 'new and abject posthumans raise anxieties about massification and material collapse that emblematize our current state of neoliberal crisis and biopolitical governance'.[57] This suggests that concerns surrounding posthumanism are tied to both political and economic contexts, especially in the instance of the science-created Nazi zombie but with transferable implications for both the vampire and werewolf, providing further avenues of exploration in Nazi science horror to consider why this subgenre has seen such a revival in the 21st century.

Implicit beneath this discussion of ideology and science in Nazi horror more broadly is the specific field of eugenics. Although he does not use this term, Ward notes that 'the idea of German scientific, technological and military capabilities harnessed to Nazi ambitions for racial utopia and global domination has been one of the more venerable and influential themes in post-World War Two science fiction'.[58] Even more prolific than the mythicisation of Nazi machinery and weaponry, then, is the belief underpinning eugenics in improving the genetic quality of a population by controlling breeding in order to increase the occurrence of 'desirable' heritable characteristics (and therefore also decrease 'undesirable traits' such as genetic defects). While the field of eugenics had various exponents and proponents in the first half of the 20th century, it was also propagated by the Nazis particularly because it suited their racial agenda.[59] Eugenics as utilised by the Nazis thus constitutes the pinnacle of the biopolitical in which 'the mechanisms of power are addressed to the body, to life, to what causes it to proliferate, to what reinforces the species, its stamina, its ability to dominate, or its capacity for being used'.[60] Having considered the Nazi horror subgenre's horrific representations of large-scale destruction inflicted by machinery and technology, I will now turn to representations of the individuals victimised by this system and their suffering. The legacy of Nazi eugenic human

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[57] Sherryl Vint, 'Abject Posthumanism: Neoliberalism, Biopolitics and Zombies', in *Monster Culture in the 21st Century: A Reader*, ed. by Marina Levina and Diem-My T. Bui (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2013) pp. 133-146 (p. 134).
[58] Ward, p. 106.
[59] Alison Bashford and Phillipa Levine, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), situates Nazi eugenics amongst the much wider international context.
[60] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 147.

experimentation haunts almost every Nazi zombie, vampire and werewolf film in the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre, and requires further analysis to understand the connotations of its representation.

Abu Sarah writes that 'more than the mass murder of millions of people, American horror films emphasize the Nazi adulteration of science and utilitarian use of the human body as the primary deviant characteristic of Nazi antagonists'.[61] While I am not solely focusing on American cinema as Abu Sarah does, it is true that many of these films contain scenes of human experimentation that are not explicitly located in the Holocaust, and feature Allied soldiers as victims rather than civilians. However, I would contend that the Holocaust remains implicit in every representation of Nazi human experimentation as the two are closely connected. That these eugenics-based experiments have been made supernatural in the Nazi horror subgenre has its basis in the actual history of Nazi eugenics performed in the concentration camps. As Lucette Matalon Lagnado and Sheila Cohn Dekel note, 'the line between science and quackery was not a very fine one at Auschwitz' and the 'experiments, although ostensibly performed in the name of scientific truth, followed few scientific principles'.[62] Eugenics, and especially Nazi eugenics, is considered by most to be a pseudoscience in that it is based more on racial prejudice than any tangible scientific evidence. For instance, innocent people in the concentration camps were tested against their will by being intentionally infected with diseases and subjected to unnecessary surgeries, the supposed dual aim of which was to understand better their 'inferior' biology and bring about posthumanist advances for the Nazis. Yet that these experiments could yield any scientifically reliable results is highly contested; though undertaken apparently in the name of science, and seen as an opportunity to test on otherwise healthy human beings which would normally be forbidden, these experiments were often no more than excuses for extreme cruelty. This blurring of fact and fiction is therefore a fertile ground for the horror genre, which has a long history of representing 'mad science'.

The Myriad Traumas of Human Experimentation

Firstly, the idea of consent, or the lack thereof, is integral to the horror of these films. This is particularly the case in *Frankenstein's Army*, *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* and *BloodRayne: The Third Reich*, all of which share the common image of constraints.

[61] Abu Sarah, p. 76.
[62] Lucette Matalon Lagnado and Sheila Cohn Dekel, *Children of the Flames: Dr Josef Mengele and the Untold Story of the Twins of Auschwitz* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1991), p. 65.

Frankenstein's Army and *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* are two strikingly similar films depicting Russian soldiers in Germany and Eastern Europe who fall foul of Nazi scientists. Released the same year, both also feature scenes depicting Russian soldiers strapped to Nazi scientific machines and unable to escape. In *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* it is Fyodor who is held down, injected, and forced into the microwave-like machine that will transform him into a super soldier. In *Frankenstein's Army* the fate of Sergei is arguably even worse, as he is strapped to a chair and subjected to brain surgery whilst still conscious. In both instances the actors cast are tall and athletic, exacerbating the effect of seeing them constrained and physically helpless. Furthermore, Sergei is depicted as a leader who fights admirably to keep his team alive, a quality which contrasts him with the aggressive and hot-headed character Vassili or villainous Dimitri, situating Sergei as the hero of the piece. In *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* Fyodor is similarly shown to be brave and strong during the opening fight with the Nazis, and so these films align the audience with these more admirable characters in order to intensify the horror of seeing them experimented upon. The audience is equally helpless as they cannot prevent the horror, and this is reinforced in *Rise of the Spetsnaz,* in which Dolokhov is unable to intervene as he watches his comrade being tested on, and in *Frankenstein's Army,* as Frankenstein demands the shaking camera focus on the lobotomy. This sensation of helplessness created both on screen and in the audience is connected to trauma, which for Cathy Caruth includes the 'return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits'.[63] The lack of consent represented in the Nazi horror film is thus not only part of the trauma of the Second World War, but also represents the insistent return of that trauma.

These scenes therefore represent the specific trauma of Nazi human experimentation, but I would argue that this is connected to other similar traumas. For example, in *Frankenstein's Army* it is suggested at the conclusion of the film that the Russians have obtained knowledge they can use from the zombots, as the soldier Sacha removes Frankenstein's head before being pictured smiling next to Stalin. This open ending suggests that the evil of these experiments will continue in another guise, radiating out beyond this particular historical moment and the Nazi context. This is significant, in that the films I am discussing have been produced and released in the 21st century, by which point there has been a long history of nations carrying out human experiments without consent. For instance, the image of Stalin in *Frankenstein's Army* may especially call to mind the

[63] Cathy Caruth, 'Introduction', in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 3-12 (p. 5).

Soviet 'Poison Laboratory', as following the break-up of the USSR information emerged that a covert facility had been used by the Soviet secret police to create poisons to use on their enemies, first established in the 1920s and 1930s, then reactivated so recently as the 1990s. Similarly, Skal draws attention to a series of radiation experiments carried out by the US on millions of unknowing participants between 1944 and 1974. As he argues, 'it is especially chilling to realize that the worst of these experiments were conducted around the time of the Nuremberg trials, against a backdrop of high-profile international outrage over Nazi medical atrocities'.[64] From these trials emerged the Nuremberg Code, which was a set of research principles regarding ethical and legal human experimentation, with examples of the tenets including that participants must be consenting and well-informed, and that the experiments should not lead to death or unnecessary pain. Thus, as Skal observes, even as the horror of Nazi scientific experiments was coming to light and informing this code there were other experiments being committed and breaking those principles, and by the Allies no less. This unfortunate history shows that human experimentation was not a crime committed by the Nazis alone, and while the Nazi experiments are a particularly culturally loaded site of trauma, they also speak to other similar non-consensual human experiments carried out elsewhere which continued well beyond the Second World War.

The most recent tale of non-consensual testing which alludes to the dangers of such science falling into the 'wrong hands', *Overlord* first builds upon the symbolism of the horrific laboratory and its associated imagery of human experiments. The film begins with Private Boyce and his unit being dispatched on a mission to destroy an enemy radio tower located within a French church which threatens to block vital transmissions on the eve of D-Day. Their plane is soon hit and the men regroup in a French forest before making their way to the radio tower, but they discover an even larger threat to the Allied forces lurking beneath the tower; a Nazi scientist has harnessed the qualities of an ancient tar in order to create undead beings. Firstly, the horror of the film emerges from the scene of the experiments, its subterranean nature symbolising the covert and unspeakable nature of the laboratory. The symbolism of the subterranean space is exacerbated by its history as a religious space, the result of which situates the Nazis as scheming and manipulative, as Sergeant Rensin suggests when he tells his soldiers that the Nazis are using the church as a base 'because the Nazis are rotten sons of bitches', implying that it is a strategic move

[64] Skal, p. 243.

which relies on the Allies being so moral as to avoid destroying it. More than this, though, the real reason the Nazis have occupied the church is worse than Rensin fears and so this places the Nazis as sacrilegious and immoral in opposition to the church and Allies. That the Nazis have chosen such a space because it is the location of the ancient tar suggests a pre-existing significance of the scientific and spiritual comparable to the Scottish Abbey seen in *Hellboy*. Indeed, that the tar lurks beneath the surface indicates that the potential for evil has lain dormant for some time, akin to the vampire or werewolf which has pre-existed the Nazis but is then harnessed by them. In this sense, it is ominous that Rensin tells his men that the only way to beat the Nazis is 'to be just as rotten as they are', an early warning that the difference between 'good' and 'bad' can be blurred in war.

Of the experiments themselves, Boyce finds suspended bags full of fluid against which hands emerge and stretch the surface, and strapped to a table is his fellow soldier, Rosenberg. The Nazis had already begun testing on Rosenberg and so Boyce finds a tube stitched to his stomach which first he must tear free, followed by a large spike penetrating the body which he must remove. This sequence offers a particularly bodily horror and prompts nauseating abjection as the surface of the body is breached not once, but twice. Furthermore, Boyce follows a cry for help to a sheet, which when pulled back reveals a woman's still animate head suspended and connected only to a section of spinal cord. Again, this prompts bodily horror as the inner bodily structure is revealed, but also produces psychological unease as Freud includes 'dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist' amongst those images which prompt the uncanny.[65] Although Freud refers to these images as uncanny as he argues that dismemberment evokes the repressed fear of castration in particular, in the instance of *Overlord* the uncanny sensation seems more closely linked to 'feet which dance by themselves' as it is that which should be inanimate but is animate, a liminal state of undeath.[66] In this the bodiless head is not only physically horrifying but terrifying, as echoes of the woman's cries for help follow Boyce as he runs away, adding new meaning to the disembodied voice. Importantly, she repeatedly cries 's'il vous plaît', begging for help and emphasising that she is an unwilling victim of what she has become. Such experiments demonstrate the perversion of the ancient tar carried out to its fullest in terms of the body, its potential to be abused, and its potential for undeath. It is for this reason Boyce's team rigs the laboratory with explosives, even leaving his leader Chase to be destroyed with it. Chase takes the serum himself in order to

[65] Freud, p. 366.
[66] Ibid.

battle the Nazi zombies and so recognises his own dangerous potential, imploring Boyce to leave so that no one else can access the tar and harness its power again. Thus, even as Boyce emerges to a new dawn there remains an ominous pause as he chooses to lie to a commanding officer that there is nothing to find amongst the rubble.

Nazi Science and Sadism

The horror provoked by these representations of experiments carried out without consent is exacerbated by an emphasis on sadism and pain in the Nazi horror subgenre, as the slow removal of the stitched tube from Rosenfeld and the desperate pleas of the severed head suggest. In *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz*, Fyodor remains lucid throughout the experiment, his agony evident in his screams, and his tortured physical descent into becoming an undead zombie is matched by his emotional distress. Sergei, meanwhile, suffers his lobotomy entirely without anaesthetic, complete with Frankenstein indelicately hacking at brain tissue. The horror of these scenes is twofold, then, as both men are conscious not only of excruciating pain but also of their impending, unstoppable and abject loss of self. Similarly, *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* is the third film of a series revolving around the eponymous dhampir Rayne, and in this instalment she must face the Nazis, including a vicious Nazi doctor. The doctor is introduced torturing a conscious vampire which growls and cries out in suffering, with marks from vivisection on its chest. These examples not only depict abject blood and breached bodies, but they accompany these images with screams which operate as audible abject outpourings of horror. Jonathan D. Moreno makes the distinction that the actions of Nazi scientists were tried on the different counts of 'war crimes' and 'crimes against humanity' during their Nuremberg trials: 'war crimes were acts intended to aid the Nazi military', whereas 'crimes against humanity were undertaken in the reckless pursuit of scientific knowledge or from sheer sadism'.[67] By placing such emphasis on the victims' pain, these films thus situate Nazi science as inherently reckless, unnecessarily cruel, and therefore sadistic crimes against humanity.

These portrayals of scientific torture thus return to the issue of creating a simplistic binary opposition between the 'good' Allies and 'evil' Nazis. This is because scenes of torture evoke somatic empathy in which the audience feels with and for the tortured character onscreen, and this can create complicated dynamics of audience and character alignment. In the instances of Fyodor and Sergei, I have previously suggested that the

[67] Jonathan D. Moreno, *Undue Risk: Secret State Experiments on Humans* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), p. 59.

horrific affect of the scenes of torture are exacerbated by the characters' situation within the narratives as 'heroes'. In the instance of *BloodRayne: The Third Reich*, on the other hand, the tortured body is that of a vampire, ostensibly the monster of the piece, and so this has the effect of contrasting the vampire as victim with the Nazi as villain. The films having centralised these scenes of scientific torture and establishing villains and victims, this then poses the question of what happens to somatic empathy when the tables are turned and the Allies become aggressors towards the Nazis, in particular when Fyodor and Sergei are freed of their constraints and enact revenge against their oppressors. As Aldana Reyes argues, in such instances:

> it is possible to still feel corporeally under threat and remain morally on the side of the source of threat, because the emotions we feel almost inevitably gravitate towards the body of the victim and because the film will give the images a specific, horrific treatment.[68]

Though I will discuss the significance of the demise of the Nazi scientist in more detail within the next section of this thesis, it is of note here that at the conclusion of *Frankenstein's Army* the tortured Sergei descends upon Frankenstein only for the scene to cut before the audience sees his death. Here, the potential moral and emotional quandaries of revenge on the Nazi are left unexplored. In *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz*, however, Colonel Strasser is killed by Dolokhov driving his fingers into the Nazi's eyes and the scene lingers on Strasser's agony. According to Aldana Reyes, it may be possible to remain morally on the side of Dolokhov even as the audience experiences the horror with Strasser, *if* this has been the ideological framework established throughout the film. However, in a film which began with mirror images of Nazis and Allies brutalising their enemies, I would argue that characters such as Dolokhov, Fyodor and Sergei are positioned as limited or even flawed heroes, and so the ideological ramifications of violence against Nazis are not uncomplicated. Instead, in Nazi horror the matter of somatic empathy complicates who the audience is empathising with, which exacerbates the ambiguity of this subgenre. It could be noted that different types of violence are at stake: scientific and medical torture compared to the violence of combat. On one hand, both operate within an overall framework of violence, pain and suffering within Nazi horror and so they can be considered together. On the other hand, scientific torture is a specific subject matter, the particularities of which need further interrogation.

[68] Aldana Reyes, p. 99.

Significantly, the emphasis on and connections between pain and science locates torture as a biopolitical issue. The concept of torture as biopolitical is explored by Hilary Neroni, who argues that torture can be viewed through one of two lenses: the biopolitical and the psychoanalytic.[69] According to Neroni, these are two ways of framing the issue of torture, the biopolitical focusing entirely on bodies as controlled by the state with no sense of the individual concerned, or the psychoanalytic focusing on the thoughts and sensations of the individual experiencing torture. It is precisely this juncture between the state/body and individual/mind to which these scenes within Nazi horror draw attention. By connecting torture of the body to the military and times of war these Nazi horror films suggest that biopolitical structures are a source of anxiety, and they do so through their focus on the individual's experience of that torture. These connections between the macro and micro are central to representations of trauma, for as Dominick LaCapra argues, 'it is misguided to see trauma as a purely psychological or individual phenomenon. It has crucial connections to social and political conditions and can only be understood and engaged with respect to them'.[70] Here the individual experience of a trauma acts as a means of understanding wider structures of traumatic experience and vice versa. Moreover, by invoking images of torture these films connect the past to the present, for it is striking that torture has been ruled inhumane by the United Nations since 1945. Once again this demonstrates the politicization of the body, but it also suggests that the fear and prohibition of torture was a reaction to the horrors of the Second World War, and for torture to take place in the 21st century is to see a recurrence of that past barbaric state. Experiences of torture, even indirectly through film, are thus born of trauma, for although Freud and Caruth suggest that 'the wound of the mind […] is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event', the representation of torture and the mutilated body in Nazi horror and its psychosomatic reception emphasises the difficulty of healing the wounds of trauma and the inevitability that it will leave scars.[71]

However, as Marcus Stiglegger notes, depictions of sadistic Nazi science may also be linked to the 'sadiconazista' cycle between the 1960s and the 1980s. This sadiconazista cycle was a group of exploitation films featuring Nazi villains who mentally and physically torture their prisoners, often set in concentration camps. As Stiglegger argues, 'although

[69] Hilary Neroni, *The Subject of Torture: Psychoanalysis and Biopolitics in Television and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
[70] Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Memory* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. xi.
[71] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 3.

marginal during these decades, the influence of sadiconazista stereotypes has proven highly influential in international cinema and popular culture up to today'.[72] Although these films often connected Nazism with sexual sadism, which is less evident in the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre, a proclivity for torturing unwilling victims is central. Therefore, while 21st century Nazi horror films may be influenced by historical accounts of cruel experiments, they may also be influenced by other representations as much as fact, leading to the extreme, mythologised and supernatural experiments described here. Moreover, such images of sadism and torture not only resonate with a history of medical abuses and Nazisploitation, but also a more recent 21st century trend in the horror genre of torture horror, or 'torture porn'. This term has been applied to films such as *Saw* (James Wan, 2004) and *Hostel* (Eli Roth, 2005) in which the main source of horror is the infliction of torture. They provide many parallels with the Nazi horror films discussed above, such as images in *Hostel* of characters strapped to chairs, trays of bloody instruments, and even a torturer who 'always wanted to be a surgeon'. Aaron Kerner also puts forwards that the *Hostel* films 'follow the contours of Holocaust visual culture', which would further connect these subgenres.[73] Kerner is referring particularly to the factory-like setting in *Hostel* as echoing the concentration camps, but also the detail of the film's syndicate members having tattoos comparable to SS soldiers' blood type tattoos. As Kerner notes, this has some precedent in the 1976 film *Marathon Man* (John Schlesinger) which features a sadistic Nazi torturer. I would therefore consider that 21st century Nazi horror and other horror cycles and subgenres are interconnected, linked by previous representations of Nazism, torture, and the actual Nazi science experiments.

Nazi Torture Horror: Abu Ghraib and Beyond

Torture horror has also been associated by many with the 21st century events following 9/11, with Stephen Prince arguing that 'the context established by Iraq and the Bush administration's policies of torture inevitably inflects the films'.[74] He therefore considers the scenes of extreme violence in torture horror films to have socio-political meaning, and it is these scenes which so compare to the Nazi horror subgenre due to their similar

[72] Marcus Stiglegger, 'Cinema beyond Good and Evil? Nazi Exploitation in the Cinema of the 1970s and its Heritage', in *Nazisploitation! The Nazi Image in Low Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. by Daniel H. Magilow, Elizabeth Bridges and Kristin T. Vander Lugt (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), pp. 21-37 (p. 24).
[73] Aaron Kerner, *Torture Porn in the Wake of 9/11: Horror, Exploitation, and the Cinema of Sensation* (London and New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015), p. 120.
[74] Stephen Prince, *Firestorm: American Film in the Age of Terrorism* (New York and Chichester, UK: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 284.

depictions of the victims' anguish and their lack of control over their own bodies. While not directly comparable in every respect, tales of torturous Nazi eugenics research can be effectively linked to the news of torture in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, firstly in that they were both reprehensible actions carried out by governments. Indeed, as previously mentioned eugenics has little foundation in science and has historically been used as a mere excuse for cruelty, while there are similar doubts about the motivations for and efficacy of torturing political prisoners. However, this subtext can be complicated somewhat by a narrative in which mad science does yield results through the creation of the monster, detracting from a reading in which the fear is of purposeless and meaningless violence. More important, then, is that not only are both acts carried out by the State, but that they came to light to the public as shocking and horrifying revelations. Though it is important to note that the field of eugenics was not itself secretive, for as previously suggested many countries openly contributed to the study of eugenics in the early 20th century, the experiments carried out by the Nazis took the field to such an extreme end that some were kept covert, occupying an odd space as an open secret. As they are acts which have been kept secret and come to light we can thus consider both of these instances of torture as having uncanny potential, as Freud describes the uncanny as that which should have been kept secret but has since come to light.[75] The filmic representations of torture in the Nazi horror subgenre support this analysis, as torture is framed as a secret activity, conducted in dark, underground spaces such as outposts, basements and laboratories. This is especially so in *Frankenstein's Army*, as the found footage conceit creates the sense that it is a 'real' account which has surfaced and suggests that this uncanny aspect is a central contributor to the horror.

Connecting 'torture porn' to Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, Steve Jones warns that 'scholars' attempts to connect these films to concurrent political circumstances, particularly those related to 9/11 […] risks overlooking how pressing "now" seems at *every* interval, whenever it is experienced'.[76] While Jones advises against such strong emphasis on the specific images of Abu Ghraib, he argues that such violence is cyclical or indicative of the human condition and that this is a more fitting method of considering 21st century 'torture porn'. I would argue that this emphasis on the recurrence of societal and political violence supports to some extent the connection I have drawn between torture horror and

[75] Freud, p. 345.
[76] Steve Jones, *Torture Porn: Popular Horror After Saw* (Basingstoke, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 190.

21st century Nazi horror, as they are both indicative of past and present traumas spanning from the events of the Second World War to the continued abuses carried out by the State in the War on Terror. However, due to its being a potentially de-historicising position, Jones' concept of recurrence may seem at odds with a theory of accretion. Similarly, Abu Sarah draws attention to cycles of trauma when she argues that 'the Third Reich in horror film is part of at least two distinct cycles: a traumatic cycle based on a World War II trauma whose meaning has been agreed upon and mythologized and a secondary traumatic cycle (or cycles) based on more recent national dislocations'.[77] Yet neither of these explanations of trauma and cyclical violence account fully for a subgenre in which images of torture are connected to the Second World War *and* the 21st century. In contrast to Jones' argument, this thesis considers that rather than the trauma being a non-specific sense of human violence it is instead a product of numerous and specific instances. In contrast to Abu Sarah's premise, this thesis considers cycles above and beyond those she identifies and sees them not as 'distinct' but as interconnected.

By connecting Nazi horror to events such as the War on Terror it may also suggest that these films are especially concerned with American trauma. This is Abu Sarah's main focus, for instance, when she argues that:

> the consistent use of Nazi science as a seat of fear and loathing in American cinema indicates that in defining an injury to the collectivity, horror films have reached a consensus: the Third Reich has traumatized the American nation by corrupting the role of science as cultural article of faith.[78]

On the one hand, it does seem significant that both *Frankenstein's Army* and *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* were partially US-produced and have some of the most vivid scenes of torturous Nazi science, but it should be noted that the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre includes films from a range of national contexts. The majority of the films I am discussing here were also discussed in the previous chapter, in which I established that they engage with the trauma of a range of European countries. *Frankenstein's Army* was directed by Dutch Richard Raaphorst and shot in the Czech Republic, for example, and Ben Kooyman comments on Raaphorst's fascination with the Second World War stemming from his life in Rotterdam.[79] Furthermore, as Jones argues, there is an international body of torture horror

[77] Abu Sarah, p. 85.
[78] Ibid., p. 79.
[79] Ben Kooyman, 'Snow Nazis Must Die', in *War Gothic in Literature and Culture*, ed. by Steffen Hantke and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 117-135 (p. 120), drawing on numerous interviews with Raaphorst.

films and 'the transnational dialogue evident among torture porn's filmmakers demonstrates that *Hostel* is not just relevant in the US context'.[80] Again, while I would not de-historicise films depicting torture entirely, Jones' argument is valuable in emphasising that there is a global context in which acts of violence have far reaching consequences and may be connected to other past and present traumas. Thus, while the American trauma of the Second World War and more recent events such as the War on Terror may have influenced the Nazi horror subgenre, they are part of a globalised amalgamation reflecting the widespread impact of covert state operations of which Nazi eugenics has become emblematic.

The Nazi Vampire: Blood and Eugenics

That *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* features vampires is significant, as the vampire narratives in both *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* and *Frostbite* can also be connected to the quasi-science of eugenics. In the latter, Gerhard Beckert is a Swedish soldier who fought with the SS, but during his time fighting he was transformed into a vampire, living on to the present day where he has become a renowned geneticist. Over time Beckert's Nazism and mission as doctor come to be the same, as he explains: 'I've tried to find a cure for this curse. Being a vampire has many drawbacks. But now I've changed my research […] When I'm done, our kind will rule over all of you, like the cattle you are!' This rhetoric is in keeping with the Nazis' denigration of what they perceived to be inferior races. For Peter Hutchings, these are connotations familiar to this particular type of monster, as 'the Nazi scientist vampire fits a certain generic template in his obsession with bloodlines and genetics and would not be out of place in, say, the bloodline-obsessed *Blade* [1998-2004] or *Underworld* [2003-2016] films'.[81] Such discourse can also be linked to an economic context, for the vampire is a prominent figure within the Neoliberal Gothic. As Aspasia Stephanou argues, vampires have long been Gothic figures connected to aristocracy and capitalist greed, but increasingly in the 21st century take on significance for a neoliberal era marked by the desire for rapid and aggressive expansion.[82] Furthermore, in this instance the vampire scientist creates disease-carrying pills and so there are also potential connections to the

[80] Jones, p. 9.
[81] Peter Hutchings, 'Northern Darkness: The Curious Case of the Swedish Vampire', in *Screening the Undead: Vampires and Zombies in Film and Television*, ed. by Leon Hunt, Sharon Lockyer and Milly Williamson (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), pp. 54-70 (p. 63).
[82] Aspasia Stephanou, 'Game of Fangs: The Vampire and Neoliberal Subjectivity', in *Neoliberal Gothic: International Gothic in the Neoliberal Age*, eds. Linnie Blake and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 21-37.

neoliberal context of capitalist pharmacology, combining different Gothic figures and different socio-political concerns. As previously argued, the biopolitical dimensions of eugenics can similarly be connected to neoliberalism, so that while this subtext is not brought to the fore in the same way as racism and fascism, it lingers, unsettlingly, nonetheless.

However, as Beckert's dialogue indicates, the relationship between vampirism and the concept of eugenics is a complex one, as the vampire can also be positioned as the diseased or corrupted body. As Robert Jay Lifton observes, according to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* 'the Jews were agents of "racial pollution" and "racial tuberculosis," as well as parasites and bacteria causing sickness, deterioration, and death in the host peoples they infested. They were the "eternal bloodsucker," "vampire," "germ carrier"'.[83] This conflicting association with the vampire is also evident in *BloodRayne: The Third Reich*, in which the Nazi doctor comments that the vampire he captures and vivisects could possibly have been a Romani (perhaps resonating with the idea that the vampires of *Frostbite* are first seen residing in rural Ukraine), and insists on the title of 'it', stating that it is not a person. He later calls a female vampire 'gypsy' as an insult, linking the Nazis' view of 'inferior' races and oppression of the Romani with vampirism. Yet at the same time vampirism offers longevity, and he is excited by the idea that he can make Hitler immortal. The vampire as depicted in *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* and *Frostbite* is thus a contradictory symbol of racial ideals, but when aligned with eugenics it can be especially dangerous as the disease of vampirism/Nazism can be spread.

This discourse around vampirism and disease links to Nazi science in another two respects; one is the purposeful infection of prisoners to study effects, but the other is the development of weaponised diseases with the intention of spreading them on a mass scale. While countries were banned from creating weaponised diseases by the Geneva protocol which emerged after the First World War, there are nonetheless 'reports' of Japan actively testing and Germany considering developing such biological weapons to use on Allied forces, and of Allied forces responding with their own research and development programmes. These instances have been the topic of much discussion in a similar manner to 'Hitler's secret weapon', with circumstantial reports being conflated and mythologised over time. Beckert's actions in *Frostbite* could be linked to this (faux-)history of weaponised

[83] Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 16, referring to Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1925), (München: Verlag Franz Eher Nachfolger, 1933).

diseases as he creates blood pills with the intention of spreading his vampirism. His weaponised disease is then subject to satire in that the teens take the pills accidentally, and the partying animalistic creatures they become hardly constitute the master race Beckert envisioned. However, the outcome is ultimately effective and horrific as the vampire disease infects the entire town and threatens to spread beyond. That these events take place in the 21st century and are unresolved at the conclusion could therefore suggest that the fear of weaponised diseases has not dissipated. Instead, such fears have been exacerbated. Kevin J. Wetmore notes that 'the Anthrax attacks evoked a powerful fear of bio-warfare and weapons of mass destruction […] in the media and citizenry. We have had plague movies and fears of bioterrorism before […] but post-9/11 the shift indicated a greater possibility of reality'.[84] The threat which biological warfare poses has thus been realised anew since 2001 when, one week after the 9/11 attacks, letters containing anthrax spores were sent to targets in the media and government, killing five and injuring more. Wetmore suggests that the fear of such bioterrorism has been evident in all manner of 21st century horror films, and I would extend this argument to include those in the Nazi horror subgenre, which, though explicitly concerned with Nazi science and disease, suggest a perpetuated fear of weaponised disease in a modern-day setting.

Nazi Zombies and the Fear of Engineered Diseases

This reading of a subgenre which collides representation of Nazi-created disease with a 21st century audience's fear of bioterrorism is supported not only by the images found in Nazi vampire films, but also in Nazi zombie films. Firstly, *War of the Dead* depicts Nazi-created zombies wreaking havoc during the conflict between Finland and Russia during the Second World War. The importance of science and disease is represented here in the opening sequence, in which a soldier is dragged through a dark and dank underground facility, strapped to a gurney and injected with an unknown substance. Once again, such a scene places lack of consent as integral to the Nazis' scientific approach as the soldier struggles and screams in vain. Shortly after he slumps, only to awaken with the blank white eyes of a zombie. While many other films in the subgenre depict the Nazis creating zombies through a mixture of radiological and biological means, that this is the result of a terrifying bioweapon is emphasised in *War of the Dead* as it is the only film in the Nazi horror subgenre in which zombieism is contagious through bites. In this it is most similar to the

[84] Kevin J. Wetmore, *Post-9/11 Horror in American Cinema* (New York and London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 8-9.

rest of the post-9/11 zombie subgenre, which for Kyle William Bishop 'tends to emphasize certain end-of-the-world metaphors, including infectious disease, biological warfare, euthanasia, terrorism, and even rampant immigration'.[85] In this list Bishop makes it clear that the 21st century zombie may speak to any number of contemporary concerns, but as the director Marko Mäkilaakso has noted that he used 'archival news accounts of Nazi science [to inform] the back-story of Hitler's plans to create the perfect human being in the film', so the zombies in *War of the Dead* seem to be especially politicised and associated with warfare.[86] Mäkilaakso's exploration of the super-soldier therefore appears to amalgamate the non-consensual tests on concentration camp inmates with testing on the German soldiers themselves, as well as hybridising weaponised diseases designed to kill with experiments designed to strengthen.

Horrors of War also contains infected zombie Nazis, the result of a serum the Nazis have developed to inject into their soldiers, and so is also evidence of the 21st century zombie representing biological warfare. Significantly, though, some soldiers are purposefully changed into werewolves, and so another monster takes on new meaning in this subgenre. In *Horrors of War* the weaponised werewolf virus is also spread using a serum, a medicalised method of infection comparable to Beckert's blood pills in *Frostbite*. In another parallel, there is some suggestion that the werewolf virus has not been created anew but has ancient origins as per traditional werewolf mythology. The film follows a group of US soldiers in wartime occupied France where they stumble upon a cabin in the woods in which they find two French women and photographs of another man who is mysteriously absent. It is here they first encounter a werewolf, the man from the photos, suggesting that werewolves already exist and are later weaponised by the Nazis. Indeed, the women in the cabin give the soldiers silver bullets, clearly understanding werewolf folklore, and as peasants in a rural setting they may allude to the gypsy character Maleva in *The Wolf Man* (George Waggner, 1941). As with the Nazi vampire, this raises similar tensions about race, as werewolves are connected to Romani people, folklore and 'tainted' blood, but are then used for Nazism which values 'pure' blood and the pursuit of a master race. This narrative also creates a tension between the arcane and mythical and the progressive and scientific, which is a tension within the Nazis' own concept of eugenics as simultaneously scientific and drawing on *völkisch* ideologies. However, the struggle

[85] Kyle William Bishop, *American Zombie Gothic: The Rise and Fall (and Rise) of the Walking Dead in Popular Culture* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2010), p. 26.
[86] Miller, p. 146.

between these usually dichotomous concepts is not articulated as explicitly in *Horrors of War* as in the Nazi vampire film, and is thus more implicit.

The Scientific Creation of the Nazi Werewolf

The Nazi werewolf film also alludes to tensions around consent and the role of the victim versus the villain. *Iron Wolf* is an entry in the subgenre in which the Nazis are shown to have created a werewolf who is trained not to kill other Nazis, as demonstrated when a Nazi soldier is thrown into the werewolf's chamber. The soldier is thrown to the werewolf by his own comrades, yet clearly against his will. He shouts that it is immoral, only to be told 'moral has no place in evolution', a line which suggests that the Nazis perceived themselves to be agents of amorality, though the reception of which more likely connects the racialised field of eugenics and practice of human testing with immorality. At first his Nazi uniform protects him as the werewolf has been conditioned to recognise the Nazi iconography. However, Russian soldiers are then thrown into the room, and though the Nazi soldier shouts and screams his protests amount to nothing; the Russians are killed in front of him, their blood covering his face as the scientists watch on impassively through the window. While the Nazi is not a victim in the bodily sense, he is nonetheless traumatised, and it is suggested that there have been many unsuccessful tests of the Nazi werewolf before him, resulting in the deaths of many Nazi soldiers either before the werewolf was created or before it learnt not to attack other Nazis. This frames the way in which the Nazi werewolf is created as a cruel experiment carried out on the Nazis' own troops without consent in which they are ultimately expendable. Moreover, in *Werewolves of the Third Reich* it is a high-ranking Nazi officer who is turned into a werewolf against his will. Despite his protests he is strapped down by the scientist and injected with a serum. However, it is notable that in this instance the officer is chosen as a result of petty jealousy; the Nazi scientist discovers that the officer has been having an affair with his wife. This non-consensual turning is thus a punishment for his affair as much as it is an experiment to further the Third Reich, satirising the Nazis' perception of themselves as agents of grand amorality.

These depictions of the Nazi werewolf seem to reinforce Barbara Creed's argument that in most werewolf narratives man 'has no desire to become a wolf; he is almost always an innocent figure who has been attacked and bitten by a werewolf'.[87] Creed's

[87] Barbara Creed, *Phallic Panic: Film, Horror and the Primal Uncanny* (Melbourne University Press, 2005), p. 127.

understanding of the werewolf importantly emphasises the centrality of concepts such as desire and innocence, though it should be noted that an alternative psychoanalytic reading might suggest that desire is unconscious, and that the werewolf offers a fulfilment of the unspoken desire to be animalistic and primitive. The latter reading seems to be evidenced in *Iron Wolf,* the narrative of which begins in the Second World War but then shifts to modern day Germany in which a young punk band encounter the Nazi werewolf. The youths' sexuality is emphasised through their promiscuity, which suggests there may indeed be underlying desires and taboos connected with the presence of an animalistic werewolf. However, as the Nazi werewolf in *Iron Wolf* has been trained to recognise other Nazis, it may be violent but it is contained and conditioned so that it cannot offer completely unrepressed freedom. It is this first context of the controlled laboratory in which the werewolf is introduced and is thus inherently connected to Nazi science and a history of experiments carried out without consent. This analysis might also suggest that the Nazi soldier is 'innocent' of the desire to be a werewolf. Yet the term 'innocent figure' might also suggest a broader meaning of innocence connoting virtue and morality, a meaning to which the soldiers in *Iron Wolf* and *Werewolves of the Third Reich* do not seem to conform due to their role as Nazis. More than this, in *Horrors of War* we see one of the Nazi scientists voluntarily inject himself with the werewolf serum in a desperate bid to fight off the American soldiers who have tracked him down. This even more clearly complicates Creed's observation as the Nazi scientist is neither unwilling nor innocent. The effect of these differences in the werewolf mythology is to place the Nazi werewolf less as what Creed suggests is a tragic fate, and more as a monstrous demonstration of Nazi science, from which even the Nazis' own men are not safe.

The Symbols and Spaces of Nazi Science: Ancient Fears Collide with the Modern

The significance of disease in the Nazi horror subgenre is reinforced by recurring images of syringes and injections. This is certainly the case in *Horrors of War* in which we see the scientist inject himself in the final battle, as well as in *War of the Dead* with the opening scene showing the soldier held down with an extreme close up of a syringe breaching his skin and injecting a mysterious liquid. In *Outpost: Black Sun* a zombie nurse is introduced whose weapon of choice is a giant syringe, which she then uses to stab one of her victims in the face repeatedly. In the same film Brigadeführer Götz is seen wielding a frightening needle towards the heroine Lena, running it over her face and neck threateningly, even though he has been framed until this point as a soldier rather than a doctor. As it is the face which is threatened in these instances there is a particular resonance with historical studies

carried out by the Nazis on eyes, which Matalon Lagnado and Dekel note 'were especially gruesome'.[88] These images and ideas are highly affective, for Kristeva argues that in such instances of bodily violence 'it is as if the skin, a fragile container, no longer guaranteed the integrity of one's "own and clean self" but, scraped or transparent, invisible or taut, gave way before the dejection of its contents'.[89] The soft surface of the face and eyes is especially vulnerable and uncannily liminal, and when punctured collapses the barrier between inside and outside to abject effect. Furthermore, the needle is closely connected to the dangers of science from the outset of *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz*, as one of the first warnings that something is amiss is the discovery of a swastika adorned syringe. While the needle is an object of terror in its own right, as it can be associated with pain and torture, it thus takes on additional symbolism and significance in the context of the Nazi horror subgenre. The needle is inherently connected to science, an invention of 1853 which has come to symbolise modern medicine in particular. Moreover, as Lifton has noted, 'the most medical of all Auschwitz killing methods was the phenol injection, which was institutionalized during the relatively early phases of Auschwitz'.[90] The injection as administered in the name of Nazi science therefore signifies disease, torture and death, a history which has come to be so mythicised that in the Nazi horror subgenre it is both used by monsters and creates monsters.

Lastly, the spaces in which these eugenics-based crimes are committed are important to consider. Where the machinery we see in the facilities of *Outpost* and *Frankenstein's Army* connote a fear of evolving mechanical warfare, these films also feature laboratories, as do *BloodRayne: The Third Reich*, *War of the Dead*, *Horrors of War* and *Overlord*. As Bruce Kawin argues, 'the laboratory may be a dominant set in a science fiction film as well as in a horror film, run by scientists either mad or sane, and may be used to create any kind of monster'.[91] It is a multifaceted and liminal space, for as Kawin notes 'the lab itself links the scientist with the sorcerer and alchemist and is a place to meddle with nature, which is dangerous'.[92] Hence it is home to both creator and creation, science and the supernatural, and a signifier for the Nazis' eugenics-inspired atrocities. These films evoke real historical accounts of the concentration camps, in that 'extreme rumours spread through [Auschwitz] about Block 10. Prisoners considered it a "sinister place" of mysterious

[88] Matalon Lagnado and Dekel, p. 65.
[89] Kristeva, p. 53.
[90] Lifton, p. 254.
[91] Bruce Kawin, *Horror and the Horror Film* (London and New York: Anthem, 2012), p. 79.
[92] Ibid.

evil' and there were widespread rumours that certain scientists were 'conducting experiments in artificial insemination, and women were terrified of having "monsters" implanted in their wombs'.[93] The camps themselves were sites of such horror that they were immediately mythicised by prisoners, and such nightmarish recollections have become a fertile ground for the horror genre, the 'monsters' becoming more literally supernatural creations. There 'were also rumours of a "museum" on Block 10: "Skulls, body parts, even mummies"', and these images are immediately recognisable in the laboratories of the Nazi horror subgenre.[94] For example, the tour through Frankenstein's laboratory acts like a museum of his bizarre specimens, including a woman's head stitched to the body of a teddy bear as displayed in a glass case. Furthermore, *War of the Dead* culminates in a shadowy laboratory lined with bizarre specimens in jars, a set equally suited to a film focused on witchcraft and thus also speaking to the fine line between science and sorcery. The organs floating in the jars are abject as innards are displayed to be gazed upon, and encapsulate the abject horror of the Nazis' scientific experiments carried out there, suspended and preserved for the 21st century audience.

The Spectre of Mengele

Identifying the Nazi Scientist

To analyse the representation of eugenics-based experiments is inevitably to consider representations of the scientists who carry them out. As Kawin argues, 'though not a literal monster, a human can fulfil the role of a monster, which is to incarnate and focus the horror, and can function in the film's structure exactly as a monster would', and this resonates with the presence of the scientist in many 21st century Nazi horror films.[95] Though usually less physically monstrous than the zombies, vampires and werewolves that they create, the Nazi scientists in these films have basis in the very real horror of the many thousands of scientists who participated in Nazi crimes. It should be clarified that although I use the term 'scientist' here, the term 'doctor' is equally applicable and is used interchangeably throughout this thesis. This is despite Kawin's argument that the two are different, and that 'the main difference between mad scientists and mad doctors is that the latter see patients'.[96] While this observation may be applicable elsewhere in the horror and

[93] Lifton, p. 271.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Kawin, p. 152.
[96] Ibid., p. 153.

science-fiction genres, no such distinction is evident here, in part due to the large focus on medical science through eugenics and human experimentation. This is exacerbated by the specific history of Nazi science in which the human body was subject to the Nazis' monstrous actions with only the intention of harming under the thin guise of 'helping'. Though there is often a complicated relationship in representations of science and medicine between harming the individual to 'help' the greater good, in Nazi horror especially the scientists/doctors do not seem to consider their victims as individuals, or even as human. This is due to the industrial scale of genocide, the divisions drawn between Allied and Axis powers, and the resulting lack of personal relationship between monster and victim. In this respect, then, neither the Nazi scientist nor doctor sees patients, and their actions are one and the same.

The influence of these historical scientists and doctors on the Nazi horror subgenre is most immediately represented by the Nazi scientist uniform. For example, the scientist in *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* wears a lab coat with a prominent red swastika armband standing out against the white sleeve, and the scientists in *Iron Wolf* have their lab coats open over their green Nazi uniforms, bringing together emblems of Nazism and science. In *Frostbite*, the opening of the film introduces an SS soldier, portrayed by Per Löfberg, whose team stumbles upon a nest of vampires in a cabin in the woods. Later in the film we discover that he has been turned into a vampire, and has been hiding under the new identity and form of scientist Gerhard Beckert, as portrayed by Carl-Åke Eriksson. The moment of discovery comes as Eriksson's Beckert disappears into the shadows, then Löfberg's SS soldier reappears from the shadows naked – revealing that they are one and the same character – at which point he immediately dons a lab coat. This is thus a significant moment in the narrative and an image which brings together his identity as SS soldier and identity as scientist. The effect of these costumes is therefore to reference the many historical figures who committed scientific atrocities in the name of the Nazi party, and situate them as a significant source of horror in these films.

The Spectre of Josef Mengele

Although Nazi horror is arguably inspired by the many Nazi scientists who took part in such crimes, the influence of one in particular stands out. Josef Mengele was an SS officer and physician at Auschwitz responsible for the selection of victims to send to the gas chambers and those to keep alive for his experiments. The latter were often acts of extreme violence that I have discussed in the previous section, such as operations without anaesthetic and

the intentional infliction of diseases. The reality of Mengele's crimes was so terrible that, as Lifton argues, 'Mengele is Auschwitz', by which he means that Mengele's name has become synonymous with the cruelty carried out at Auschwitz because he was '"so terrifying" that he was "more like an abstraction"'.[97] Mengele was therefore mythologised contemporaneously with his actions, and, coming to be synonymous with the 'Nazi doctor', is an obvious source for the horror genre. As Kawin argues:

> horrors carried out or manifested by humans in films create a world that differs from ours, though sometimes only in the degree to which it is stylized, for there is extreme, cruel and bizarre violence in the real world too, violence that goes well beyond ordinary experience and can shake the foundations of our apprehension.[98]

While the horror of Mengele is an example of such cruel violence in the real world, he has nonetheless come to be a mythical figure in the Nazi horror subgenre, the accounts of his experiments at Auschwitz being embellished with the supernatural in order to exacerbate the sense of cruelty. In this sense Mengele could be considered an embodied figure of trauma, and reminiscent of Freud's understanding of the eye-stealing Sandman from E.T.A. Hoffmann's 1816 tale in which the protagonist Nathaniel should be rational enough not to believe the gruesome and bizarre stories he has heard, and yet the dread of the Sandman becomes fixed within him. Where for Freud the Sandman becomes a figure for the gendered childhood trauma of castration, an alternative reading might understand the Sandman to be a fearsome figure of authority which becomes increasingly distorted, as is the case of Mengele as bogeyman. That Mengele has been a basis for these films is explicit in *Werewolves of the Third Reich* which includes a depiction of Mengele himself, as well as in *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* in which the scientist is named 'Dr Mangler', but I will demonstrate that Mengele's influence is implicit in almost all of the other Nazi horror films. It is thus important to explore the ways in which the figure of Mengele may have impacted upon the Nazi horror subgenre and consider why it is his spectre continues to loom so large in the 21st century.

Firstly, although the abstraction of Mengele began contemporaneously with his time at Auschwitz, this has been exacerbated by various circumstances following the Second World War. As Skal argues, when Mengele was not immediately caught after the conclusion of the Second World War, and 'because of the persistent efforts of Nazi hunters like Simon Wiesenthal, Mengele took on a mythic dimension in the postwar era, when

[97] Lifton, p. 380, drawing on the testimony of survivors.
[98] Kawin, p. 152.

images of mad doctors and science achieved a cultural critical mass in the wake of Hiroshima'.[99] Here Skal is alluding to filmic representations of mad doctors in the 1950s and 1960s, but the myth of Mengele extends beyond this to films such as *The Boys from Brazil* (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1978) through to the present day. Indeed, Mengele's escape has been fictionalised and dramatised in *Werewolves of the Third Reich* in which not only is Mengele explicitly depicted, but near the conclusion of the film his werewolf creations are let loose and the facility is rigged to explode by four US soldiers, only for Mengele to escape the fire and make his way to South America. This representation is notable for a number of reasons. Firstly, that Mengele is explicitly depicted clearly demonstrates the impact of this particular individual. However, as he is depicted alongside Adolf Hitler and Ilsa Koch, Mengele is at once situated as equally recognisable and similarly important as these other figures, yet also seems to be but one of the signifiers of the Second World War. That is to say, his character seems to serve as shorthand much in the same way as the swastika or other Nazi iconography, symbolising immediately the unnatural practices associated with Nazi science and in turn Nazism more broadly, and in being so explicit is in some ways less ambiguous and therefore meaningful than other examples of the Nazi scientist I will discuss in this section. This explicit representation also raises interesting questions about Nazi horror as engaging with trauma, for both Freud and Caruth comment upon the surprising 'literality' and 'nonsymbolic' nature of traumatic nightmares.[100] The presence of Mengele is one such instance of literality, yet as outlined here also takes on a symbolic nature and non-literal guise as a monster within the horror genre, suggesting that although literality can be a significant aspect of traumatic nightmares, so too can symbolic and mediated images which increase the experience of horror. Secondly, his escape to South America evokes the anxiety surrounding the escape of many Nazis after the Second World War, including Mengele. Lastly, though, Mengele is successfully tracked down and confronted by the US soldiers, in particular by 'Mad Dog' who takes on the role of the Nazi hunter and fulfils his life's work of 'killing Nazis', in the process perhaps resolving the fear of the escaped Nazi through the wish fulfilment of Mengele's on-screen death.

Yet such a conclusion links to another factor in Mengele's history, as Mengele was never apprehended and his remains were not discovered until 1985, which as Lifton argues proved 'psychologically unsatisfactory, especially for Auschwitz survivors. The need was to

[99] Skal, p. 239.
[100] Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Angela Richards, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 269-338 (p. 282); Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, p. 1.

capture him and put him on trial, to hear his confession, to put *him* at *their* mercy'.[101] For many, then, the circumstances around Mengele's death were too inconclusive to resolve the trauma they had experienced, and Skal also argues that 'many of the doctor's surviving victims refuse to this day to believe that he is really dead. In the time-honoured tradition of Hollywood horror movies, enough ambiguity remains so as not to preclude a sequel'.[102] It is significant that Skal relates the myth of Mengele to the Hollywood sequel, as this goes some way to explaining a long history of filmic representations of monstrous Nazi doctors that perpetuates in the 21st century. I would argue that it is this history that has culminated in depictions of ageing Nazi scientists such as the escaped Mengele in *Werewolves of the Third Reich* or Neurath in *Outpost: Black Sun* who is tracked down in South America by Nazi hunter Lena. Even more important in the latter film is Klausener, a war criminal in hiding who still inflicts horror from behind the scenes as he is shown to be continuing his search for a way to create the Thousand-Year Reich and reach immortality. Considering the speculation around Mengele's death it is perhaps unsurprising that some of these Nazi doctors have come to be literally undead, as in the case of the Nazi zombie Götz in the same film, or the vampire Beckert in *Frostbite*. These figures represent a persistent fear that Mengele and his co-conspirators may not have died, and may never die.

This fear of undying Nazism is also evident in the Nazi horror subgenre due to the presence of modern-day scientists as a source of, or as implicated in, the horror. The first two *Outpost* films are both set in the present day, and each features younger scientists, Hunt and Wallace. It should be noted that neither Hunt nor Wallace could be described as Nazis themselves, but their actions further the Nazi cause of Klausener. For instance, Hunt leads the unwitting mercenaries into danger in the first film, and even though he suggests that he has been blackmailed, his deception and his actions in reanimating the machine cost all of the mercenaries their lives. Furthermore, in the second film it is revealed that Hunt has been kept alive as part of the machine itself, which could reflect his role as a 'cog' in the Nazi machine and implicate him further. Moreover, Hunt himself agrees that he deserves the torture of being part of the machine for his actions, and there is a possible sense of redemption when he helps the heroine Lena to destroy Götz and the zombies. Yet even as Hunt may redeem himself, Wallace is revealed almost immediately afterwards to be far worse, betraying Lena and killing one of the British military team as they escape the outpost. Wallace makes it very clear that his actions are for financial gain, but also

[101] Lifton, p. 382.
[102] Skal, p. 241.

approaches Klausener with the greeting 'it's an honour to meet you sir', which indicates a degree of admiration for the Nazi doctor. Thus, the depiction of modern-day scientists contributing to the Nazis' mission is not entirely uncomplicated, but by concluding *Outpost: Black Sun* with Wallace's promise to help Klausener they are ultimately aligned with evil. These two characters therefore extend the actions of the Nazis and Klausener/Mengele into the present day as much as undead figures such as Götz and Beckert.

Tensions and Blurring within the Figure of the Nazi Scientist

Already by considering these few examples it is clear that there are some closely intertwined concepts at work in the figure of the Nazi scientist which need to be considered carefully. Firstly, there is the ageing or undead Nazi scientist who is a direct product of the Second World War as opposed to the 21st century modern scientist who has been indirectly influenced after the Second World War, and analysis of the *Outpost* trilogy suggests that the two are linked. There is also the physicist or engineer as opposed to the medical scientist or biologist, but these roles which would usually be distinct are collapsed together at times by the *Outpost* series' supernatural machine which draws together these areas of study. Within the figure of the medical scientist there is also a tension between the duties of doctor and scientist which is especially complicated. This is because, as Skal notes, 'the central perversion of medicine under the Nazis was the rejection of the Hippocratic commitments "to help the sick" and "to do no harm." To the racial hygienists, aiding the weak and infirm was tantamount to abetting degeneration'.[103] This is also part of the tension suggested by many figures in the Nazi horror subgenre whose role is both doctor and soldier, as the oath to do no harm is undermined by the soldier's duty to kill the enemy. Though the tension between doctor and soldier is not unique to the Nazi forces as every army has medical personnel, Nazi science's avowal of traditional medical ethics in pursuit of a 'master race' is especially horrifying, for Kristeva considers 'the killer who claims he is a saviour' to be a pinnacle of abjection.[104]

As I have indicated, this dual role of doctor/saviour and soldier/killer is evident in the Nazi doctor's costume of swastika adorned lab coat which situates him as a liminal character controlling both life and death, but it is also apparent in the *Outpost* films when we see both Brigadeführer Götz and Colonel Strasser become involved in the scientific experiments pursuing undeath. Götz wields a syringe against Lena in *Black Sun*, while

[103] Ibid., p. 237.
[104] Kristeva, p. 4.

Strasser orchestrates the experiments in *Rise of the Spetsnaz*. More than this, it is significant that in these instances the Nazi scientists portrayed in these films are high-ranking officials with power and agency which they use to carry out these harmful experiments, as the Nazi regime was inherently hierarchical. Though historically many Nazi officials argued in the Nuremberg trials that they were only following orders and thus could not be considered guilty of the crimes of which they were accused, this 'superior orders defence' was unsuccessful. The conclusion that such high-ranking officials acted criminally during the Second World War is represented in the Nazi horror subgenre as these Colonels and Brigadeführers are depicted shaping and leading the experiments, largely without recourse to any superiors. Even when an even higher-ranking official such as Klausener is shown giving orders from behind the scenes, the superior in question is also a scientist. This reinforces the conflict between the Nazi scientist's role as potential saviour and their role as high-ranking soldier by showing that the Nazi scientist is not passively ordered to kill, but actively gives the orders. These depictions of the Nazi scientist therefore illuminate the complexity innate within the role by demonstrating its troubling and at times contradictory nature, the resulting horror of which finds expression in this 21st century subgenre.

Part of the horror felt in response to these characters is that these dual aspects in the Nazi soldier/scientist are uncanny. Freud argues that one example of the uncanny is when 'there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self'.[105] That these different sides of the Nazi scientist are so contradictory is part of this unsettling effect, for a doctor who so easily kills breaks with the discourse of trust associated with medical ethics. Indeed, Lifton describes Mengele as uncanny when he argues that doubling 'was the psychological vehicle for the Nazi doctor's Faustian bargain with the diabolical environment in exchange for his contribution to the killing'.[106] Lifton is expanding here on the moral duality of the Nazi doctor, arguing that the terrible actions of Mengele required him to split his very self between the role of doctor and murderer, and that the result was an unsettling one for those around him. I would argue that this doubling is evident in the Nazi horror subgenre, and is represented visually in the sequence in *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* in which Götz lurks in the facility, appearing in cells and at doors, until the panning camera reveals his face in two separate windows at once. Similarly, Beckert in *Frostbite* is uncanny when he shapeshifts, an effect exacerbated by the use of chiaroscuro lighting when he enters the

[105] Freud, 'The Uncanny', p. 356.
[106] Lifton, p. 418.

shadows in one form only to emerge from them in another. As Lifton argues, 'by means of doubling, Nazi doctors made a Faustian choice for evil'.[107] The figure of the alchemist Faust who makes a deal with the devil to pursue inhuman knowledge therefore embodies the split marked by the immoral decision to pursue knowledge for evil. On this reading Götz and Beckert have similarly come to be Faustian figures split in two by the dark path they take. Furthermore, Freud (drawing on the work of Otto Rank) argues that 'the "double" was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, an "energetic denial of the power of death"' but conversely becomes the 'harbinger of death'.[108] This resonates with the case of the Nazi scientist whose doubling is an attempt to preserve the self but is ultimately a source of terror and death.

There is also a tension between science and religion in the Nazi horror subgenre, a binary opposition which evokes doubling and division in characters. *Overlord* connects science and religion to an extent due to the situation of the laboratory beneath the church, suggesting the Nazis are sacrilegious, but in other instances the two are intertwined in even more complex relationships. For example, in *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* the Russian soldiers find themselves trapped in a cell with an American soldier who tells them that the Nazis are carrying out tests with zombies as a form of 'Lazarus project'. This is a term used frequently in popular culture as regards scientific experiments to bring humans back to life. Yet 'Lazarus project' refers to a New Testament character who is raised from the dead, so while *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* uses these phrases to ground its narrative in science, the same language is also biblical in nature. Furthermore, when Strasser releases the zombies he cries out the biblical phrase 'and then there was light'. These are words attributed to God, and he explicitly says that 'Mankind could rival God himself'. Later he exclaims, 'that chamber, that is a work of Promethean fire!', linking himself not just to Christianity but also to Greek mythology, seeing himself as a Promethean figure who challenges the gods. This is a theme seen throughout science-fiction and horror dating from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* in 1818, and is prominent in the Nazi horror subgenre. Dr Mueller is the scientist in *Iron Wolf*, and his rhetoric is also steeped in the religious, with him calling his Nazi werewolf creation 'a miracle' worthy of 'sacrifice'. When questioned about his actions he states, 'I'm not playing God, I'm trying to surpass him'. Conversely, the doctor in *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* disavows religion, and when the Lieutenant enters and gasps 'my God', the doctor replies 'I certainly hope not'.

[107] Ibid., p. 424.
[108] Freud, 'The Uncanny', p. 356-357.

Yet this rhetoric has the similar effect of juxtaposing science with religion, and whether the scientists embrace religion or scorn it, they all see themselves as the ones with ultimate control over life and death.

Religion and Class

This rhetoric around God and science could be traced to the fact that, as Matalon Lagnado and Dekel note, 'Mengele's passion for selecting Jews for the gas chambers of Auschwitz had earned him the title "Angel of Death." With a flick of the wrist, he would consign thousands to die'.[109] Thus Mengele had immediately begun not just to be mythicised, but to be perceived as a dark biblical figure, whose power to kill so many in the name of 'knowledge' and 'progress' complicated the binary oppositions between science and religion. Furthermore, as Matalon Lagnado and Dekel go on to observe, 'the Angel of Death is a figure who appears throughout the Old Testament. By chilling coincidence, the biblical lore even states he assumed the form of a physician, one, moreover, "of excellent repute"'.[110] The parallel between doctors and killers is therefore one with a history that stretches beyond the Second World War but that has come to be epitomised by Mengele, and continues to be embodied in the mad doctor trope and Nazi horror subgenre. The effect of these Nazi scientist characters is especially horrific as the juxtaposition of murder with religion exacerbates their abjection. Kristeva argues that 'abjection accompanies all religious structurings and reappears, to be worked out in a new guise, at the time of their collapse'.[111] The abject informs rites of defilement and pollution in paganism, and is excluded or taboo in monotheistic religions. Of the latter, she argues that abjection 'encounters, with Christian sin, a dialectic elaboration, as it becomes integrated in the Christian Word as a threatening otherness'.[112] Religion therefore operates as a way of distinguishing abjection, and so in using this religious rhetoric and drawing on the figure of the 'Angel of Death' the Nazi horror subgenre makes the Nazi scientist's otherness more distinct and intensifies their representation as abject violations.

The knowledge and power which leads the Nazi scientist to develop a God complex is shown to exacerbate the division between the scientist and foot soldier in terms of class. From the very first *Outpost* film the scientist Hunt disdains the mercenaries whom he considers as below him, while in turn the mercenaries distrust him due to this very

[109] Matalon Lagnado and Dekel, p. 9.
[110] Ibid., p. 76.
[111] Kristeva, p. 17.
[112] Ibid.

attitude. This is evident in their exchanges, as Hunt condescendingly snaps at the men 'do you mind, those of us with brain cells are trying to think', while the men shout at Hunt 'fuck your Nobel prize', their contrasting words and tones distilling the nature of their conflict. In the third *Outpost* film Strasser is also very aware of class in his dual role as Colonel and scientist, referring to the Russians as coming from peasant backgrounds and scorning their 'pig's blood'. Here Strasser's elitism also has racial undertones in line with the Nazi ideology. Moreover, the issue of class has persisted into the 21st century, intertwined in increasingly complex ways with ideological and socio-economic movements such as populism, fascism and neoliberalism; both populist right wing and neoliberal frameworks purport to be anti-elitist yet are so often headed by upper class elites. As Linnie Blake and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet suggest, the Gothic has long been tangled with such economic contexts, at times challenging and at others reinforcing the status quo, and so Nazi horror represents a recent entry into this tradition.[113] However, while these lines of dialogue in the *Outpost* series draw attention towards the complexities of politics and class, they do not carry these to their fullest, and while they suggest that elitist fascists are a source of anxiety they fall short of providing any commentary on the ambiguities and contradictions of neoliberalism and the films' 21st century socio-political context.

In addition to the dialogue, classical music is used throughout the *Outpost* series to reinforce the Nazis' elitism. This at times appears diegetically, as old records play Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 'Choral' Molto Vivace unprompted when the Nazis are near. As Kevin Donnelly argues, 'there are a number of "scary" pieces in classical music', and this jarring piece of music is introduced suddenly during moments of quiet.[114] Yet there is more to the soundtrack than jump scares, as in the case of Strasser imagining a slower section from Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 while watching the successful use of the serum on Fyodor. In this instance of internally focalised sound, the impact of using classical music is twofold. Firstly, classical music denotes 'high art' as valued by the upper classes, and so the Colonel's point of view being set to it is an indication of his (or what he perceives to be his) class, wealth and intellect. Secondly, as Thomas Turino argues:

> Germans were particularly proud of their musical heritage. The 'three Bs,' Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, at the centre of the cosmopolitan classical canon were

[113] Linnie Blake and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, 'Introduction: Neoliberal Gothic', in *Neoliberal Gothic: International Gothic in the Neoliberal Age*, ed. by Linnie Blake and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 1-18 (p. 3).
[114] Kevin Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television* (London: BFI, 2005), p. 97.

> German (defined, as the Nazis did, broadly) and were a source of the national and 'racial' pride that is so important to nationalist movements.[115]

Thus the use of classical music during these scenes of eugenics-based experiments also alludes to the value placed by the Nazis on what they claimed as their own arts and culture, and illuminates its disjunction with their destructive actions. By juxtaposing classical music, which has connotations of high art and culture, with a scene of bodily destruction, which is an act belonging to a wider effort to eradicate other cultures, the *Outpost* films reinforce and critique the Nazis' nationalist elitism as horrific.

Magnetism and Madness

With so much space given to Strasser's religious monologues and the use of soaring music accompanying close ups of his face, Strasser is positioned as a charismatic figure who the audience is both repulsed and intrigued by. This is a common theme, as in contrast to the disgusting monsters they create or later become, the Nazi scientist is often portrayed as handsome and charming. For instance, the casting of Michael Fassbender in *Blood Creek* plays to Fassbender's A-list credentials and contributes to his representation as an enigmatic and captivating character when first introduced. In the film he comes to a family's home in America under the guise of being a German scholar, and this is aided by his tailored suits and philosophical musings. Similarly, in *Frostbite* the Nazi vampire hides under the identity of Gerhard Beckert, who the audience first sees on the cover of a magazine in an attractive black and white portrait. Beckert comes across as charismatic and helpful, and at first, through misdirection, seems to be a heroic Van Helsing character. In both examples this is precisely the power of their disguises, as their victims do not understand the danger until far too late. All of these instances may also be traced to the historical precedent of Mengele, in that 'monstrous as he was, Mengele still managed throughout his life to charm and beguile youngsters'.[116] This is another dual aspect of Mengele and the Nazi scientist, then, that of their charming façade hiding a terrible secret. Skal even argues that 'the mad scientists of popular culture prior to World War II strikingly anticipate the real-life horror of Mengele, and his shadow looms over all since. The "Death Angel of Auschwitz" was frequently described as having Hollywood looks'.[117] That this figure often has a beautiful façade only to be revealed to be monstrous can also be seen as part of their abjection. Sabine Hake similarly identifies the 'dynamics of attraction and

[115] Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 200.
[116] Matalon Lagnado and Dekel, p. 9.
[117] Skal, p. 235.

revulsion' in response to the screen Nazi, suggesting that 'our attention must turn to the specific feelings, emotions, and affects produced by, and projected onto, the fascist spectacle', and I would argue that in Nazi horror the abject encapsulates this dynamic and these emotions.[118] The Nazi scientist's charismatic front is therefore both uncanny in its doubling and abject in that it comes to simultaneously fascinate and repulse us.

Part of the Nazi scientist's magnetism also emerges from their extreme dedication to their cause, which could arguably be considered their 'madness'. I have used the terms 'mad scientist' and 'mad doctor' freely throughout this chapter as they are common terms for these figures in the horror genre, but it is important to clarify what precisely is meant by madness in this instance, and what implications this has for their role as monster. Firstly, Kawin argues that it is important to consider those 'doctors and scientists whose special characteristic is their madness, especially those who experiment on and manipulate people in the interest of their often bizarre and usually obsessive concerns'.[119] Such a description suggests that madness not only encompasses outright insanity but also obsession, fascination with the bizarre, and indeed any pursuit of science beyond what is perceived to be 'normal'. 'Mad science' thus relates back to the concept of 'forbidden knowledge' which has provided the basis for this chapter, for it is science which goes against that which is considered natural and so, intertwined with this, that which is ideologically acceptable. In this respect, all of the Nazi scientists and doctors in this subgenre certainly fall under such a broad definition of madness.

It follows that there are two possible effects of portraying Nazi scientists as mad, for madness may either weaken or reinforce the connection between a scientist's acts and his Nazism. Firstly, the depiction of the mad Nazi scientist may be said to distance his actions from the Nazi party, as it is notable in *Frankenstein's Army* that the eponymous scientist has gone rogue. It is suggested that Frankenstein became too radical for the Nazis, leading him to continue his experiments covertly outside of the structures of power, with the resulting effect that he is positioned as even more monstrous than the Nazis. Indeed, his actions are less about the Nazis' agenda and more about his individual goals and desires. Even beyond *Frankenstein's Army* there is a pervasive sense that these are fringe and covert operations, as marked by their secretive and underground locations, that are not widely supported by the Nazi soldiers who protest when they are subject to tests, or

[118] Sabine Hake, *Screen Nazis: Cinema, History, and Democracy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), p. 4.
[119] Kawin, p. 153.

express concerns when it seems likely that they will be tested on in the future. Despite the emphasis on the mad individual and their covert operations, however, there remains the suggestion that these scientists have been enabled by the Nazis. In the majority of the Nazi horror films the scientists are supported by, or are, high-ranking officers. Not only does this reinforce the hierarchical nature of the party, but it suggests that such science was legitimised by the Nazis, a similar emphasis as that seen in the Nazi occult film in which Hitler and Himmler are oft referenced. This returns to the argument that Nazi horror combines literal representation of the past with the symbolism of horror's monsters, but also returns to Caruth's argument that within representations of trauma 'it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available'.[120] As in my analysis of the possibility to experience the Holocaust indirectly as a traumatic event due to its scale and incomprehensibility, so too can abuses by the State and biopolitical systems which enable abusers such as Mengele be considered to be traumatic because they are beyond comprehension. This is due not only to the scale of horror inflicted by Nazi scientists but the scale of an organisation which enabled so many and, as this chapter has considered throughout, this is a scope which extends globally and historically to become connected to any number of other abuses of science. It is this incomprehensible trauma which Nazi horror seeks to understand, and if not to resolve then to serve as warning against for the future. Such science is thus only as 'mad' as the Nazi party was; Mengele's actions were extreme but enabled and embraced, and that is a more horrifying prospect than that of one 'rotten apple'.

Gender and the Scientist: Monstrous Male Mothers and Nazi Nurses

Such madness may also have gendered implications as linked to both Nazism and the legend of Frankenstein which is so central to the Mengele figures in these films. Creed argues that 'Frankenstein narratives that feature a male scientist or doctor attempting to give birth to new life without the agency of woman' demonstrate that 'when man creates life he gives birth to monsters'.[121] By seeing themselves as God-like creators, the Nazi scientists from these horror films create monstrous beings, but in doing so 'the doctor or scientist who sets out to usurp the role of woman often becomes increasingly disturbed, his behaviour indicating a hysterical obsession, suggesting he is the true monster'.[122] This is precisely the descent into abjection depicted in the Nazi horror subgenre, with figures that

[120] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 4.
[121] Creed, p. 41.
[122] Ibid., p. 43.

may initially be portrayed as charismatic or handsome delivering increasingly phrenetic monologues which may be compared to hysteria, which has historically been portrayed as having negative and particularly female connotations and makes the Nazi scientist monstrous in his 'irrational' femininity. Such hysteria is also potentially sexual. For example, Strasser overseeing Fyodor's experiment in *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* strikingly resembles Creed's description of Frankenstein having 'a perverse kind of sexual excitement' as he 'pulls various levers and […] the music swells'.[123] These sexual undertones therefore connect Mengele and his kin with Frankenstein and a deviant sexuality which has long been filmic shorthand for immorality. This is then reflected in the spaces they work in as the laboratories not only draw on the horrors of Auschwitz, but mythicise them in the mould of James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) which 'created a sense of an uncanny place: the dark womb [...] The uterine spaces of the film are intensely uncanny because they give birth to death'.[124] The laboratories are indeed all underground, and so the womb-like spaces reinforce a representation of the Nazi scientist as monstrous male mother.

However, while the male medical scientist features in Nazi horror most prominently, mention should also be made of the figure of the Nazi nurse which appears in *Outpost: Black Sun*, *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* and *Frankenstein's Army*. Firstly, these nurses can be linked to Mengele and the mythicising of Nazi science due to records of how 'Mengele was frequently accompanied during […] inspections by a beautiful young German guard, Irma Grese'.[125] Grese gained a reputation for sadism in her role at Auschwitz, and so has also become connected to Mengele as an accomplice. Echoes of a beautiful and sadistic female accomplice may be seen in *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz*, in which a woman assists Strasser with his experiments, particularly by wielding the syringe of formula. Similarly, the nurse in *Frankenstein's Army* is a zombie but remains an aesthetically pleasing assistant. Unlike her entirely grotesque male counterparts, the nurse is styled like the title character of the *Bride of Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1935) with a largely unblemished face and her hair wrapped in bandages so that it forms a tall beehive. However, unlike the Bride in Whale's film, who according to Elizabeth Young is ultimately disruptive and disobedient as

[123] Ibid., p. 52.
[124] Ibid., p. 53.
[125] Matalon Lagnado and Dekel, p. 78.

regards gender relations, the Bride in *Frankenstein's Army* is entirely passive.[126] She is subordinate both as sexual object and nurse. The nurse of the *Outpost* series is also double in that she is nurse and zombie creation, for she is pushed into the transformation chamber herself, the effects of which are seen in *Outpost: Black Sun*. However, the zombie nurse here is disfigured and grotesque, a crone, and so may be representative of another historical figure and event. Matalon Lagnado and Dekel recount the cruelty inflicted on one inmate who after experiments 'looked like a shrivelled old woman. Her slender limbs were now swollen and disfigured, while her stomach was bloated from the numerous surgeries that had been performed on her'.[127] While this is a very specific incident, the imagery does resonate with the depiction of the Nazi nurse, who walks bowed over with withered limbs and disfigured face. This conforms to how Nazi nurses in these films are used to reinforce the gender norms of women as being subordinate, and are either subject to being sexualised or made grotesque in order to depict them as lesser.

These female characters therefore remain marginal, and the creation of the Nazi monster through science remains 'unnatural', which might be linked to Creed's argument that 'realising that his "father" did not create him whole, nor even nurture him properly, the monster decides that Frankenstein should pay for his cruelty and neglect'. [128] For Creed, the gendered implications of the Frankenstein narrative entail that the creation destroys the creator, and so it is notable that this does not come to be for any of the Frankenstein-like figures in the Nazi horror subgenre. Instead, in *Frankenstein's Army*, *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* and *Horrors of War* the Nazi scientist is ultimately killed by an Allied soldier. It is therefore the soldier who serves the function of making the scientists regret their actions, for as Kawin says of the mad scientist, 'they eat the fruit of the tree that gives knowledge, that could make them like God, and if they learn to their sorrow the difference between good and evil, they also learn not to play God'.[129] This is the case with Strasser's death, as Dolokhov proclaims 'men like you can play God all you like, but it will always be a peasant who digs your grave', sinking his fingers into Strasser's eyes in a symbolic end to the Nazi's grand vision. Yet this section began by considering that many of Mengele's victims could not accept the news of his death, finding it too inconclusive and ambiguous to

[126] Elizabeth Young, 'Here Comes the Bride: Wedding Gender and Race in *Bride of Frankenstein*', in *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, ed. by Barry Keith Grant, 2nd edn (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), pp. 359-388.
[127] Matalon Lagnado and Dekel, p. 80.
[128] Creed, p. 53.
[129] Kawin, p. 154.

be certain that he was gone, and this is also true of the ending of the Nazi scientist. Strasser's death is part of a prequel, so the audience knows that other Nazi scientists and monsters live on, while in *Frankenstein's Army* it is suggested that Frankenstein's head and the evil science within have been preserved and kept by the Russians. Despite often meeting their demise at the hands of Allied soldiers, the Nazi horror subgenre suggests above all that the Nazi scientist will be back.

Conclusion

At the core of this thesis is the argument that the presence of the Nazi monster unites the Nazi horror subgenre, and I would maintain that in this chapter it is evident that it is the horrific scientists who 'gather, concentrate and express horror as if they were focusing it'.[130] However, it has been important to begin my analysis with a consideration of the broad theme of scientific knowledge in the Nazi horror subgenre, in order to consider how this theme has been focused through the figure of the Nazi scientist and the spectre of Josef Mengele. Indeed, these have been the different focuses of scholars such as Colavito and Skal respectively, though it is significant that Colavito explicitly engages with Skal's work when he considers the question 'Does War Make Horror Movies?'. In this appendix to his monograph Colavito considers Skal's argument that the horror genre is inherently shaped by experiences of war, only to find it an unsatisfactory conclusion, contending that '*individual* films may reflect earlier conflicts, but there is no *collective* sense that horror cycles are based on war' [emphasis in original text].[131] In this thesis I am not considering the horror genre as broadly as either Colavito or Skal. However, I am considering whether experiences of war contribute to the Nazi horror subgenre, and this scope sits somewhere between Colavito's conclusion that individual films may be inflected by war, but that cycles (by which he is referring to all the horror films produced during broad periods of time) are more aptly understood in relation to scientific advances. By drawing together the work of Colavito and Skal in this way, I can ultimately conclude that a substantial component of the Nazi horror subgenre is the threat of scientific knowledge as used and abused during times of war.

It has also been important to bring together the psychoanalytic concepts of the uncanny and the abject to understand how and why this threat of Nazi science has

[130] Ibid., p. 50.
[131] Colavito, p. 416.

recurred. The science used in the Nazi horror subgenre is always a 'forbidden' form, such as the use of science to create weapons of mass destruction, build the machinery of genocide, or experiment on non-consenting victims. These uses of science are forbidden because they are perceived and framed as horrific and unethical. Forbidden knowledge thus relates to Freud's concept of the uncanny, as it is that which should have remained secret but has come to light.[132] The forbidden acts of Nazi science and its culprits have come to light twice, firstly in the real, historical sense, and secondly through their dystopian exaggeration in the Nazi horror subgenre, the latter with especially uncanny effect as the results of Nazi science are imagined as undead creatures which emerge from shadowy laboratories. Furthermore, Colavito argues that there are two different forms of knowledge: 'forbidden knowledge, which causes horror, and protective knowledge, whose loss or corruption creates chaos and pain'.[133] This distinction as applied to the Nazi horror subgenre relates once more to Kristeva and the particular abjection of science which should be used to further protective knowledge, to save us, but instead corrupts it, and causes death. The repressed and rejected acts of Nazi science return again and again through the closely related experiences of the uncanny and the abject, continuing to both psychologically unsettle and physiologically repulse the audience of the Nazi horror film.

Indeed, the uncanny-abject effect of Nazi science is one born of trauma, and the acts carried out by the Nazis have over time come to be connected to other traumatic events. These other traumas represented in the Nazi horror subgenre include the Allies' use of the atomic bomb, other instances of human experimentation or covert operations such as the Soviet 'Poison Laboratory', through to the continuing research in the 21st century into weaponising soldiers' bodies. Furthermore, the Nazi horror subgenre has been as much influenced by these events as their previous cycles of representation, such as the 1960s and 1970s B-movies with their anxieties about nuclear weaponry, the sadiconazista films and their depictions of human experimentation, or the numerous iterations of Frankenstein and the fear of the evil scientist. Moreover, both these events and cycles of representation are geographically diverse, becoming part of a globalised amalgamation reflecting the widespread impact of forbidden science, of which Nazi science has become emblematic. It is interesting to note here that Blake prefaces her introduction on trauma and the horror genre with a quotation from Caruth, which states that 'in a catastrophic age… trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures: not as a simple

[132] Freud, 'The Uncanny', p. 345.
[133] Colavito, p. 7.

understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves'.[134] While Blake is keen to emphasise the nationally distinctive traumas presented by the horror genre, this quotation from Caruth resonates especially with Nazi horror. It suggests that even though each film may be the product of its specific context, there is a multiplicity to the recurrence of Nazi science-inspired horror which enables its audience to understand an array of cultural traumas.

Lastly, such an understanding of Nazi horror as recurring in response to trauma can lead us to a deeper understanding of its purpose in recurring. For example, Blake suggests that horror films undertake a type of cultural work in exposing trauma which is otherwise being denied by the ways in which dominant ideologies are 'prematurely binding (and hence concealing, denying)' traumatic wounds.[135] For Blake, films in the horror genre have the power to unpick such bindings and confront trauma which is otherwise being repressed, and this offers the possibility of working through the anxiety engendered by trauma. These are important arguments to extend to the Nazi horror subgenre, and seem to be reinforced by my consideration of the trauma of Nazi science. The Nazi scientist as featured in these horror films is not a meaningless vehicle of exploitation or entertainment, nor does it constitute a reprisal of a familiar villain to be safely defeated once again, most notably because it is not often defeated. Instead, when considered together the sheer volume of films, with their open endings, suggest that history repeats itself, abjectly, uncannily and bleakly. These scientists and doctors thus carry dystopic warnings, carrying fears to their fullest with the potential to unpick the bindings of previous traumas and perhaps prevent new ones, a fitting rhetoric for such a figure.

[134] Caruth, 'Trauma and Experience', in *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*, ed. by Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), pp. 192-198 (p. 197).
[135] Blake, p. 6.

CONCLUSION

When I embarked on this thesis, I did not anticipate just how timely research on the 'Nazi monster' would be, for unfortunately the word 'Nazi' has been brought to the very fore of contemporary discussions. That it has, though, has led towards an answer to one of the central questions posed by this thesis, as I began with the aim of discovering whether Nazi horror related to trauma stemming from the Second World War, more recent events, or neither. This aim has been achieved firstly by reconsidering and establishing better what constitutes the Nazi horror subgenre, noting not only those 20th century films which have received somewhat more critical attention, but focusing on the subgenre's resurgence since 2000 which has included many lesser known films. Indeed, it has suggested that Nazi horror can be considered a subgenre precisely because it is a corpus of films from a broad historical period, geographical scope and range of industrial contexts. In doing so it has placed the monster at the centre of its discussion, identifying three different, yet interlinked, types of Nazi monster which are present in the Nazi horror film: the occultist, the 'movie monster' and the scientist. Each chapter has interrogated these monsters in detail in order to understand their nuances, and so concludes that each monster results in different emphases, but the thesis also draws these monsters together in order to trace overarching similarities. In order to understand these differences and similarities I have not only carried out close textual analysis and considered elements of the films' production and reception, but I have also employed a psychoanalytic methodology which has been central to my readings of the films' underlying meaning. Though based in well-established psychoanalytic concepts, this is one of the thesis's original contributions to knowledge, as the particular combination of the uncanny, abjection and Trauma Studies has allowed me to interrogate the psychosomatic effect of the Nazi monster on the individual as well as how the subgenre relates to wider socio-political contexts. This thesis has thus answered the previously unresolved question of why the Nazi monster persists in the 21st century, concluding that it is connected to numerous traumas in complex ways.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One considered how and why interest in the Nazis' occultism has persisted for so long, emerging as it does in 21st century depictions of Nazi cults, god-men, demons and necromancers. In doing so I drew on the work of Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, and it is significant that he prefaces a second edition of *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology* in 2004 by locating it in a time 'when the cultic

far right has increased its range and impact further by focusing resentment against big government and the growth of regulatory bureaucracy, affirmative action and the race relations industry, and massive increases in third-world immigration'.[1] This statement thus resonates especially with those Nazi occult horror films featuring or alluding to cults such as *Fantacide* (Shane Mather, 2007), *Ratline* (Eric Stanze, 2011) and *Soldiers of the Damned* (Mark Nuttall, 2015). Indeed, *Fantacide* focuses on one such 21st century cultic far right group who continue to embrace all that Nazism stood for such as anti-Semitism and homophobia. That they do so through the worship and pursuit of relics which have been connected to the Nazis' time in power suggests the persistence in culture of narratives of racially loaded myths. In *Fantacide* this is connected to Christianity as the Spear of Destiny is sought. In *Soldiers of the Damned* an unnamed relic is connected to Aryan god-people, and this mythology is imbued with meaning and power in the narrative through its association with Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler, a similar tale as that in *Ratline* in which a relic named the Blood Flag is one created by Hitler himself. These relics are fetishised by the Nazis and others because they symbolise racist ideals, but in these fictional narratives they also hold the incomprehensible and unstoppable power to realise those racist visions.

The origins of demons and necromancy are similarly linked to the Nazis' racial motivations in complex ways in films such as *Hellboy* (Guillermo del Toro, 2004), *The Devil's Rock* (Paul Campion, 2011), *Blood Creek* (Joel Schumacher, 2009) and the recent *Puppet Master* films. The demons of *Hellboy* and *The Devil's Rock* are situated so as to demonstrate the tensions within Nazi ideology, an ideology which both seeks to wield the occult yet also understands occult figures such as demons to be racially impure. Further complexity arises in Nazi horror due to the frequent depictions of the occult as a force which may be used by the Allies for 'good' or the Nazis for 'bad', a line which is often blurred. This is because the occult is shown to pre-date the Nazis, to be wielded by them during the Second World War, and often to re-emerge in the 21st century. While this frequently leads to the Nazis' downfall, the possibility remains for the occult to be abused once again. The Nazis' pursuit of occult powers is thus at once about the past and present, and this has always been the case. Monica Black and Eric Kurlander argue that at the turn of the 20th century many Germans:

> pursued new faiths that might help to reconcile past, present, and imagined future […] In some cases these preoccupations reflected a sustained belief in otherworldly

[1] Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), p. viii.

> or supernatural forces. This longing for new myths, for new religions and spiritual experience and insight, helps us to understand the roots, character, and legacies of the Third Reich.[2]

The occult as wielded by the Nazis is at once a specific reference to their use of such myths, yet also a demonstration of how this fetishisation can recur in periods of political strife. Thus, although the films featuring the Nazis' interest in the occult create a world of myth and fantasy which may seem far removed from that of the audience, Chapter One concludes that references to a very real Nazi past and politically fraught present are central to the films' horror.

The supernatural Nazi occult is closely linked to the hybridisation of Nazism with 'movie monsters' such as zombies, vampires and werewolves as explored in Chapter Two, but analysis indicates that representations of the occult and these movie monsters have differing focusses. For example, the Nazi necromancer raises the dead, but the emphasis of the threat is on the necromancer himself, or the imbuing of inanimate objects with life; neither the *Puppet Master* series nor *Blood Creek* give much narrative space to the raising of undead humans. This primarily takes place in the Nazi zombie film, the largest of the Nazi horror sub-subgenres. The popularity of the Nazi zombie is arguably due to its being connected to a 'global explosion of zombie mania' in which the everyman zombie has been depicted in all manner of ways in all manner of places.[3] This phenomenon has also drawn much critical attention and resulted in a number of avenues with which to consider the mutability of the zombie and what it comes to mean when Nazified. What emerges is that the zombie is not an empty vessel simply transposed into a Nazi costume and war-time setting, but rather that the resulting hybridised monster takes on additional meaning. The result is a transgressive one, as the Nazi zombie is at once grotesque zombie, uncanny ghost and motivated human, at times draugar and at times robot, demonstrating not just transgression of form but of function and meaning. The result of this transgression is that, contrary to many zombie films, the zombie as represented in Nazi horror retains its previous character even in death and so takes on a 'double' monstrosity. Moreover, rather than reinforce the Nazi zombie as entirely Other, as some critics have suggested, these characteristics invite comparisons between the Nazi zombie and the Allied soldiers who

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[2] Monica Black and Eric Kurlander, 'Introduction', in *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult': Histories, Realities, Legacies*, ed. by Monica Black and Eric Kurlander (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015), pp. 1-19 (p. 7).

[3] Laura Hubner, Marcus Leaning and Paul Manning, 'Introduction', in *The Zombie Renaissance in Popular Culture*, ed. by Laura Hubner, Marcus Leaning and Paul Manning (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), pp. 3-14 (p. 3).

must face it. This is because the Nazi monster retains some of its human qualities, while the various protagonists must respond with violence (and are often soldiers themselves), drawing parallels between the two and connoting an anxiety about the Allies' role in conflicts from the Second World War to the 21st century.

It was important to consider the other variations of the Nazified 'movie monster', as although Nazi werewolves and vampires are less prevalent than the Nazi zombie and even less critical attention has been paid to them, investigation demonstrates that they are similarly meaningful. Firstly, it is significant that it was not a simple task to delineate the Nazi zombie from its counterparts in the werewolf and vampire, for these monsters sometimes appear in the same film or even amalgamate in the form of wolf-like zombies. Moreover, where these monsters are usually distinct and evoke respective primary meanings and effects, due to their hybridity the Nazi vampire and werewolf evoke a mixture of physiological horror and psychological terror just as the Nazi zombie does. However, the ways in which each type of monster conforms to or diverges from previous representations relates to the specific mythology which is drawn upon. For example, where the werewolf may often be considered in terms of the release of a repressed animalistic tendency, the Nazi werewolf is represented as a purposefully created and harnessed creature and so grapples in more contradictory ways with the duality of the self. The Nazi vampire, on the other hand, particularly subverts the idea of eroticism commonly associated with the vampire. Where the vampire is often conceived of as elegant and aristocratic, which might usually resonate with the construction of the Nazi hierarchy, the Nazi vampire is as violent and grotesque as other Nazi monsters and so offers an alternative comment on the brutality of Nazi power structures. In both instances the Nazi vampire and werewolf engage with the long history of these mythological monsters and connect them to a parallel history of human brutality, within which Nazism is situated. Thus, while the Nazi vampire, werewolf or vampire may be recognised by the simple designation of a swastika on a befanged or befurred creature, Chapter Two establishes that the links between these types of monsters are used for the deeper purpose of exploring the Nazi as at once emblematic of, yet only part of, a history of human brutality and criminality – a similar message to that explored through the Nazi occult, located in a different monster.

The same depth of meaning underlies representations of Nazism combined with science, a combination which is the focus of Chapter Three and which also extends beyond the engraving of a swastika on a piece of machinery or a Nazi armband worn over a

doctor's coat. Nazi science has proved another useful area of enquiry when considering Nazi zombies, vampires and werewolves as in many Nazi horror films these creatures are shown to be created by scientists. Moreover, Nazi science links back to the Nazi occult as they are two distinct, yet not necessarily opposing, explanations for a supernatural Nazi monster. As with the occult, Nazism and science are linked in the Nazi horror subgenre by a long history steeped in the Nazis' racist ideology, and a central fear of the Nazis (or other dangerous groups) accessing 'forbidden' knowledge. These connections were explored in Chapter Three through a consideration of three intertwined strands. Firstly, within the broad field of science, Nazi horror demonstrates a specific anxiety surrounding the development and implementation of machinery and weaponry on an industrial scale. Images of machines and technology are prevalent in many of the films, offering a specific history of the use of weaponry by the State. When considered through the lens of psychoanalysis such images demonstrate uncanny phenomena such as machines coming to life in the *Outpost* trilogy (2008-2013), or abject displays when the body is combined with machinery as in *Frankenstein's Army* (Richard Raaphorst, 2013). Both of these instances represent a trauma which can be traced throughout different times and places where machinery has been used in a way that threatens rather than enhances human life. This dystopic representation of Nazi technology reaches its darkest potential when connected to the machinery of genocide, a connection which is implicit throughout the subgenre.

The dystopic abuse of technology and power, particularly by the State during times of conflict, is also at stake in those Nazi horror films which focus on biological technology rather than the mechanical. In particular, films such as *Outpost: Rise of the Spetsnaz* (Kevin Parker, 2013), *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* (Uwe Boll, 2011) and *War of the Dead* (Marko Mäkilaakso, 2011) draw on images of human testing and the language of eugenics. As these films demonstrate, eugenics has come to be epitomised by the Nazis, but the abuse of medical science extends far beyond Nazi Germany into other countries and periods. The concerns surrounding human testing are at once on the societal level at which such policies are implemented, but also the personal level at which this is experienced by individuals who must go through pain and suffering. The latter is often framed as a form of torture which resonates with both the quasi-scientific facade the Nazis used to veil their acts of extreme cruelty as well as the images of torture which are so prevalent and culturally loaded in the 21st century. At the heart of this representation, then, is a grappling with trauma shared across different contexts and which stems from the breaking of socially held ethical codes and a lack of regard for consent. This trauma has been epitomised by the

mythicised figure of Josef Mengele who is either explicitly or implicitly present in so many of these narratives through the depiction of the Nazi scientist. Such a figure is a complex and at times contradictory one, connected in varying ways to class, religion, gender and madness. Of the latter, it was important to consider whether the Mengele-figure acts as an errant and 'mad' scientist, or is an integral part of the state apparatus, with the conclusion that it is the fascist Nazi ideology which enables such a figure to exist. This last chapter thus considers another monster and another setting, for where the Nazi occultist is most often found terrorising the home front and the Nazi movie monster traversing the battlefield, the Nazi scientist is located in the laboratory or even the Head Quarters. Anxieties about a number of issues can be expressed through these variations of Nazi horror, from which this thesis can conclude that fundamental concerns about histories of oppression within power systems which either enable or enforce monstrosity are exemplified by, but far from confined to, the actions of Nazi monsters.

The Compulsion to Retell and Repeat

Ultimately, to bring these three chapters together and to consider the entire body of Nazi horror films, the whole relates to its inherent abjectness as much as any singular monster. The Nazi monster is found in so many transgressive shapes, forms and places because, as Julia Kristeva argues of abjection, 'the space that engrosses the deject, the excluded, is never *one*, nor *homogeneous*, nor *totalizable*, but essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic'.[4] It continuously challenges boundaries in a way which is both horrifying and fascinating. This contradictory and unsettling feeling which the Nazi monster evokes accounts for its continuous re-emergence, speaking to the way in which the abject 'lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire'.[5] Similarly, Kristeva argues that 'from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master'.[6] The abject crimes of the Second World War and the abject bodies of these supernatural monsters continue to combine in various, but always troubling and transgressive, reincarnations. Furthermore, this form of repetition also relates to the abject's constant relationship with Sigmund Freud's theorisation of the uncanny.[7] The way in which the abject beseeches and worries is closely related to the way

[4] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 8.
[5] Ibid., p. 1.
[6] Ibid., p. 2.
[7] Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' (1919), in *Art and Literature*, ed. by Albert Dickson, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1985), pp. 335-376.

in which the uncanny unsettles and fascinates. The relentless recurrence of Nazi monsters is a form of haunting, for as Nicholas Royle argues, 'the uncanny is ghostly. It is concerned with the strange, weird and mysterious'.[8] Not only are these monsters supernatural and disturbing on their own, then, but as a group signify the way in which the uncanny is 'indissociably bound up with a sense of repetition or "coming back" – the return of the repressed, the constant or eternal recurrence of the same thing, a compulsion to repeat'.[9] These films continue to be made because 'the uncanny seems to be bound up with a compulsion to tell, a compulsive storytelling'.[10]

It is precisely this compulsive retelling which relates the uncanny and abject to Trauma Studies, and so the Nazi horror subgenre as a whole relates to trauma in two ways: it is revealing of both the nature of the underlying traumas themselves, as well as the way in which this trauma is then navigated by Nazi horror films. This thesis has employed Cathy Caruth's definition of trauma in which 'there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event'.[11] Nazi horror has seen the return of the Second World War several decades on in the 21st century, either as films set in the Second World War which are produced and received in the 21st century, or as films which depict within their narratives the return of the Nazi in 21st century settings. Further repetition can be found in the form of monsters (such as the zombie), or themes (such as human experimentation) and images (such as Nazi symbols) which are indicative of repeated thoughts stemming from the traumatic events of the Second World War. What is significant within Nazi horror, though, is that the repetition of human conflict, fascist ideologies and state abuses, amongst other horrifying acts, is not only a symptom of the trauma of the Second World War but also part of the trauma itself. These films suggest that a constant return is a feature of war and of fascism, and so the fear of the return of those horrors experienced in the Second World War is a justified rather than irrational anxiety predicated on cycles of conflict and right wing ideology which have recurred throughout different times and places.

That this prolific compulsion to retell and repeat is one which crosses national and cultural borders has been the subject of much analysis in this thesis, for it at once suggests

[8] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 1.
[9] Ibid., p. 2.
[10] Ibid., p. 12.
[11] Cathy Caruth, 'Introduction', in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 3-12 (p. 4).

that there is a shared, transnational sense of trauma in addition to specific, cultural traumas which come to light. Firstly, this relates to one of the most literal fears which the Nazi monster represents and one of the most important cycles of trauma which the Nazi horror subgenre negotiates, for as Patrik Hermansson, David Lawrence, Joe Mulhall and Simon Murdoch suggest, the recent rise of the far right is a contradictory 'global anti-globalist movement' with European roots.[12] Accordingly, *Dead Snow* (Tommy Wirkola, 2009) emerges from the context of the Norway of the Progress Party, *Frostbite* (Anders Banke, 2006) from that of the Sweden Democrats, *Overlord* (Julius Avery, 2018) from Trump's America, and *Fantacide* from the British National Party's UK. Secondly, the trajectory of the far right from the 1990s onwards has been intertwined with the rise of neoliberal models of economic and social organisation. At times the far right has risen to protest to the 'successes' of the neoliberal agenda such as globalism, at other times in protest to the failures of neoliberalism as experienced in the economic crash in 2008. The ambiguity and uncertainty wrought by neoliberalism has long found expression in horror's monsters, and this is amalgamated in particular ways in Nazi horror. It materialises as Nazi occult horror taking place against a backdrop of economic decline as in *Ratline* and *Blood Creek*. A similar decline of central state services leads to the mercenaries of *Outpost* (Steve Barker, 2008) striking out on their own with bleak results, while the contagious zombies of *War of the Dead* combine the fear of the contagious tide of fascism with the all-encompassing hold of neoliberalism creating a mass of workers. In the many instances where Nazi monsters have been created by science, anxieties surrounding biopolitics can be found, with the manipulation of the human body according to the posthumanist agenda holding the potential to be both fascist and neoliberal in these films. By considering the current political climate as bearing striking resemblance to the period of political and economic uncertainty which saw the rise of National Socialism, it is thus possible to understand better the return of anxieties concerning fascism in the 21st century that this thesis has considered as emerging and being expressed in the Nazi horror subgenre.

This transnational quality similarly relates to experiences of the Second World War, in addition to national experiences which have resulted in other anxieties such as those surrounding cycles of conflict and abuses of science. For example, the Nazi occult films *Blood Creek* and *Unholy* (Daryl Goldberg, 2007) suggest that there is a lingering trauma stemming from the effect of war on the US home front, and both connect these to more

[12] Patrik Hermansson, David Lawrence, Joe Mulhall and Simon Murdoch, *The International Alt-Right: Fascism for the 21st Century?* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020), p. 24.

recent American conflicts such as Vietnam and the Iraq war. Not only does this suggest that war is cyclical, but it connects the Second World War to conflicts which have been unpopular and subject to protest, a connection which also arises in *Werewolves of the Third Reich* (Andrew Jones, 2017) and supports Tanine Allison's observation that the Second World War is not necessarily represented as the 'good fight' as is so often asserted.[13] A distrust in the State also inflects depictions of Nazi science, which can again be linked to the US due to the radiation experiments carried out in America against the backdrop of the Nuremberg trials, but also to covert Russian scientific experiments as in *Frankenstein's Army*. The latter is also notable due to its transnational production in that director Richard Raaphorst has connections to the Netherlands, some filming was carried out in the Czech Republic, and each of these countries have complex histories regarding the Second World War. Similarly, the *Outpost* series portrays numerous nationalities throughout the trilogy whilst also expressing specific anxieties produced in British culture, while the first *Dead Snow* film is the result of its specific Norwegian context and the sequel then extends this to a more global narrative and audience. The 21st century Nazi horror subgenre is as widespread as it is, then, due to the far-reaching effect of the Second World War and the many traumas that may be connected to it.

Meaningful Nazisploitation

Within these varying national representations, one of the most complicated traumas to be traced is that of engagement with the Holocaust. Where the 'sadiconazista' Nazisploitation films of the 1960s to 1980s centred around depictions of torture and sexual assault in concentration camps, such explicit references to the Holocaust or anti-Semitism are rarer in recent incarnations. Instead, implicit references to the Holocaust abound in the Nazi horror subgenre, present in each connection to Nazi eugenics, and echoing in images of piles of bodies. In the latter, the Eastern European setting of the trilogy also evokes memories of the Bosnian war that collide with those of the Second World War, creating the sense that horror and genocide exceed a singular time or place. That such references are implicit may also be connected to Aaron Kerner's argument that 'the popular imagination weighs heavily on the tradition of representing the Holocaust, and it's the conservative doctrine of verisimilitude that rules the day'.[14] For 21st century Nazi horror to evoke the same explicit

[13] Tanine Allison, *Destructive Sublime: World War II in American Film and Media* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2018), p. 5.
[14] Aaron Kerner, *Film and the Holocaust: New Perspectives on Dramas, Documentaries, and Experimental Films* (New York and London: Continuum, 2011), p. 1.

themes as previous Nazisploitation is to risk backlash, and this thesis suggests that this was precisely the resulting reception of *BloodRayne: The Third Reich* due to it including images of trains bound for a concentration camp. However, it is this risk of backlash that the Nazi occult horror films *Fantacide* and *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* (Sonny Laguna and Tommy Wiklund, 2019) address, using references to the Holocaust as part of their anti-censorious but varyingly problematic messages. An exception can also be found in *Dead Snow* due to a scene in which protagonist Martin is bitten and fears being infected, to which his friend Roy responds that Martin is part-Jewish so the Nazis would not want to recruit him anyway. Such macabre humour in relation to the Nazis' anti-Semitism suggests an intent to shock similar to *Fantacide*, but the discussion of horror-comedy in this thesis suggests that humour may also offer a way of confronting such memories.

That many of the films with especially ambiguous or problematic approaches to Nazism are those that are low budget is also of note, for this thesis has considered throughout that the ability of those Nazi horror films most closely aligned with 'exploitation' filmmaking to engage with trauma may be adversely impacted by their poor production values. This is not to say that Nazi horror films emerging from different industrial contexts are entirely dissimilar, but it is often the case that those films with more means at their disposal explore the ambiguity of Nazi horror with resulting nuance whilst exploitation filmmaking explores the same ambiguity with resulting contradictions. Yet this also lends weight to the argument that there is a trauma underlying the subgenre, however it is dealt with, for Siegfried Kracauer suggests that 'persistent reiteration of […] motifs marks them as outward projections of inner urges. And they obviously carry most symptomatic weight when they occur in both popular and unpopular films, in grade B pictures as well as in superproductions'.[15] Thus, whether conscious or unconscious, whether they are films which shock and confront or grim, nihilistic films filled with implicit images of the Holocaust, 21st century Nazi horror does not, or cannot, evade the worst horrors of the Second World War, and instead demonstrates a persistent tension surrounding Holocaust representation.

It is significant that *Fantacide*, in approaching the Holocaust explicitly, also connects Nazism to the hatred and desired elimination of others according to race, gender and sexuality. Similarly, *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* uses the premise of an auction of

[15] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, ed. by Leonardo Quaresima (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 8.

Nazi puppets to inflict violence on victims drawn together from different sections of society, using each hotel room at the auction as a vignette in which a different victim is murdered to demonstrate that the Nazis' destruction was all-encompassing, and demonstrating that racism, sexism and homophobia are recurrent themes in the Nazi horror subgenre. Indeed, both *Fantacide* and *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* depict members of the LGBTQ community being targeted, resonating with both the Nazis' persecution of those they deemed 'undesirable' and a current climate in which the fight for LGBTQ rights continues. *Fantacide* in particular also focuses in great detail on violence committed against women, but the issue of gender arises throughout this thesis in which the protagonists are predominantly men, often depicted as hyper-masculine and brutal which results in bodily and sexual violence, while women are often positioned as victims of this violence. At other times, however, women are made monstrous, whether they are the demon of *The Devil's Rock* or the zombie nurses of the *Outpost* series and *Frankenstein's Army*. Here the generic hybridity of Nazi horror has entailed a space which is doubly interested in gender roles, at times criticising and at others reinforcing a heteronormative, patriarchal society. The issue of race arises implicitly in *Overlord* in which protagonist Boyce's Haitian background is situated in unspoken opposition to the Nazis' racism, and explicitly in *Werewolves of the Third Reich* which acknowledges the segregation of Allied forces and connects this to the open wound of race in 21st century America. The Nazi horror subgenre thus addresses myriad concerns around the persecution of different sections of society, sometimes grappling with such issues only to reinforce them, at others seemingly addressing them so as to resolve past trauma and warn against future crimes, all through the multi-faceted Nazi monster.

The Nazi Monster as 'Ultimate Threat'?

Having identified a monster that is connected to these various threats, this thesis has considered the argument that the Nazi monster is so prevalent because it is conceived of as the 'ultimate' threat. Such an argument is one supported by Julian Petley, who suggests that the Nazi monster is 'short-hand', representing 'everything that is vile and depraved', against which all other monsters pale.[16] By connecting the Nazi monster to myriad concerns this thesis seems to reinforce these arguments. Yet the concept of the Nazi monster as ultimate threat is used by critics to suggest that the Nazi has become less, rather than

[16] Julian Petley, 'Nazi Horrors: History, Myth, Sexploitation', in *Horror Zone: The Cultural Experience of Contemporary Horror Cinema*, ed. by Ian Conrich (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 205-226 (p. 205).

more, meaningful, as indicated by Cynthia J. Miller's interviews with Nazi horror directors for whom 'Nazis are kitsch – Saturday matinee villains – archetypes'.[17] Even if this has been many directors' perception of the Nazi monster, this thesis concludes that Nazi horror does not simply reference, but instead engages with, each of these different traumas. This consideration of the Nazi as ultimate threat is closely linked to the argument that the Nazi monster is used so often as it is 'safe', reminding its audience that Nazi horror has been defeated. This is a debate which extends upon David J. Skal's consideration of whether experiences of war 'were trivialized as horror entertainment' or 'invoked to summon real demons'.[18] Such an argument may also be carried further when connected to the rise of the far right to suggest that the 'traditional' Nazi, with the immediacy of its symbolism and its tangible form, is more concrete and identifiable than the ambiguous contemporary threat of the digital Alt-Right or the dangers of neoliberalism, and that the return and defeat of the Nazi is comforting. In regards to these possibilities, my examination of 21st century Nazi horror suggests that the Nazi monster is far from reassuring as not only is the Nazi monster linked to these contemporary concerns rather than contrasted with them, but it is very rarely defeated, surviving the conclusion of the film and threatening to cause future horror.

There are also those such as Kerner who argue that it is important to have sympathetic and human Nazi characters on our screens, so as to enable the audience to understand how the events of the Second World War came to be.[19] Such an argument is also one which seeks to reinforce the 'banality' of the Nazis' actions, the sense that it became part of their everyday rather than being perceived as extreme and monstrous, which the representation of a supernatural Nazi threat might undermine. However, this thesis argues that not only is a call for sympathetic Nazis contestable, but by bringing together depictions of Nazi occultists, creatures, and scientists it becomes evident that their monstrosity is not designed to distance the audience from the actions of the Nazis. Instead, it is reinforced time and again that while supernatural monstrosity is evoked, human monstrosity is the true source of horror in the Nazi horror film. Not only this, but the protagonists are not simply 'good' in opposition to 'bad' antagonists, suggesting that

[17] Cynthia J. Miller, 'The Rise and Fall – and Rise – of the Nazi Zombie in Film', in *Race, Oppression and the Zombie: Essays on Cross-Cultural Appropriations of the Caribbean Tradition*, ed. by Christopher M. Moreman and Cory James Rushton (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2011), pp. 139-148 (p. 144).
[18] David J. Skal, 'Horrors of War', in *The Horror Film*, ed. by Stephen Prince (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2004), pp. 70-81 (p. 80).
[19] Kerner, 'On the Cinematic Nazi', in *Holocaust Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Images, Memory, and the Ethics of Representation*, ed. by Gerd Bayer and Oleksandr Kobrynskyy (New York and Chichester, UK: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 203-220.

while these films may not take the route of a sympathetic Nazi to help us understand why historic horrors have occurred and may occur again, they rather focus on oppressive power systems under which anyone can become monstrous, a different but similarly effective warning. The concept of a warning is thus linked to the final question this thesis has addressed, which is the purpose of representing Nazi horror in the 21st century. I have considered not just how representations of the Nazi have been affected by trauma, but how experiences of trauma have been affected by representations of Nazi horror. The result varies, within the body of films and sometimes within each film. At worst it contributes to such trauma through its own problematic message, at best it offers a way to work through such trauma, unpicking what Linnie Blake might consider prematurely bound wounds.[20]

Ultimately, then, this thesis has made an original contribution to debates within horror and Gothic Studies on a number of levels. First, the very identification of a Nazi horror subgenre has contributed to ongoing discussions surrounding genre theory, particularly as relevant to horror and the centrality of the monster. Second, it has brought together different psychoanalytic components in a new way, defending a psychoanalytic methodology as a vital means with which to consider the horror genre, and by extension its roots in the Gothic, in order to understand its monsters as psychosomatic expressions of trauma. Third, through the application of these theoretical and methodological underpinnings it has provided new and specific insights into each Nazi monster, its effect, and the historic traumas it relates to, including the Second World War itself in addition to cycles of conflict, fascism and State abuses throughout the 20th century. In this it has built upon a wide range of scholars who have considered Nazis, monsters and those few who have considered Nazi monsters. Indeed, it has largely countered this latter category, for those scholars have often found the Nazi monster to be lacking in meaning. Moreover, this thesis has linked these past traumas to contemporary socio-political and economic circumstances such as the rise of the far and Alt-Right; neoliberalism; shifting perceptions of gender, race and class; 21st century conflicts such as the Iraq war; and advances in nuclear technology and biotechnology. Whilst many of these are specific to the 21st century, what is notable is that these are continuous, pervasive and transnational anxieties predicated either on cyclical contexts or new developments of pre-existing socio-political conditions. It is for this reason that this thesis can understand not only why the Nazi horror

[20] Linnie Blake, *The Wounds of Nations: Horror Cinema, Historical Trauma and National Identity* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 2008).

subgenre has such a long history, but particularly why it has seen a marked rise within the 21st century. For while these may not be new fears, such anxieties are ever intensifying with each new revelation about abuses committed by the State, each economic shift and each new conflict. Lastly, through analysis of the subgenre's diversity and pervasiveness and its bleak underlying message this thesis has moved towards an understanding of how and why Nazi horror grapples with this trauma, concluding that it is complex and ambiguous, holding both dangerous and positive potential, but always offering insight into the context from which it emerges.

Further Possible Routes

As a result of the new contributions to knowledge this thesis makes, there are many avenues through which to take the research forward. For example, concerns about the supernatural Nazi monster being a mere caricature and the purpose of its representation have arisen in relation to Nazi horror in other mediums, particularly video games, and so this thesis holds potential implications for further study of the transmedial Nazi monster. Indeed, treatment of video games such as *BloodRayne* (2002) and the long running *Wolfenstein* series (1981-2017) has often considered the Nazi monster to be meaningless. For instance, Margit Grieb argues that *Wolfenstein* 'simulates a Nazi setting with accessories that contain historical references [and] these elements are defused, if not neutralized, through exaggeration, irony, and artificiality'.[21] So shallow is this setting, arguably, that Activision were able to strip it away entirely for their 2009 release of *Wolfenstein* in order to avoid any censorship when selling in Germany. A mini-game within *Call of Duty: World at War* (2008) pits players against Nazi zombies. Nathan Hunt considers the video game zombie to be prevalent as it is easily Othered and amounts to no more than an 'almost infinite supply of mindless and inhuman monsters', and 'as a result of the minimal narratives of video games' feels 'much less *meaningful* than their film counterparts'.[22] Hunt does not acknowledge the *Call of Duty* Nazi zombie mini-game specifically, but does refer to the modding community who cater to such pleasures by creating skins 'which transform these games from their period, war settings to battles with

[21] Margit Grieb, 'Fragging Fascism', in *After the Digital Divide? German Aesthetic Theory in the Age of New Media*, ed. by Lutz Koepnick and Erin McGlothlin (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), pp. 186-204 (p. 194).
[22] Nathan Hunt, 'A Utilitarian Antagonist: The Zombie in Popular Video Games', in *The Zombie Renaissance in Popular Culture*, ed. by Laura Hubner, Marcus Leaning and Paul Manning (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), pp. 107-123 (p. 109); p. 112.

zombie hordes'.[23] This suggests, like Grieb, that the makers of Nazi zombie video games use the Second World War as set-dressing without interacting with any underlying themes. Jeff Hayton takes an even more negative view of the Nazi monster as portrayed in video games when he argues that 'video games shift the historic evil of the Third Reich from genocide to the supernatural' which has the effect of perpetuating 'tenuous historical connections, which reduce Nazi transgression to the magical rather than the real' with serious repercussions for how we understand the Holocaust.[24] However, this thesis has offered a methodology and evidence through which such Nazi horror texts can be understood to be more complex, avoiding such moral objections to 'inaccurate' representations. Though analysis must be media specific, it thus seems possible that the approach of this thesis could be extended to Nazi horror video games in order to reconsider these arguments.

As to television, Lorna Jowett and Stacey Abbott note that 'horror has played a significant role in schedules since the tv boom in the 1950s', and amongst this televisual horror there have been individual scenes featuring Nazism in *True Blood* ('Beautifully Broken', HBO, 20 June 2010) and *Hemlock Grove* ('The Price', Netflix, 19 April 2013), and individual episodes in *Angel* ('Why We Fight', The WB, 18 February 2004) and *Fringe* ('The Bishop Revival', Fox, 28 January 2010).[25] Even more notable, though, is the recent surge of more substantial Nazi subplots in the last decade, including in *American Horror Story: Asylum* (FX, 2012-2013), *Supernatural* (S8-12, The CW, 2013-2016), *The Strain* (FX, 2014-2017) and *Teen Wolf* (S6, MTV, 2016-2017). It is notable that the Nazi monster on the small screen takes the form of Nazi werewolves and vampires as in films such as *Iron Wolf* (David Brückner, 2013) or *BloodRayne: The Third Reich*, but in some instances also poses as a teacher in *Teen Wolf* or a businessman in *The Strain*, hidden in plain sight as in *Apt Pupil* (Bryan Singer, 1998). These monsters may therefore be considered in relation to the Nazi monsters found in 21st century horror films, but also as connected to the 'Nazi next door movies'.[26] This is perhaps because, as Helen Wheatley argues, Gothic television shows an 'awareness of the domestic space as a site loaded with gothic possibilities', and so Nazi

[23] Ibid., p. 115.
[24] Jeff Hayton, 'Beyond Good and Evil: Nazis and the Supernatural in Video Games', in *Revisiting the 'Nazi Occult': Histories, Realities, Legacies*, ed. by Monica Black and Eric Kurlander (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015), pp. 248-269 (p. 250).
[25] Lorna Jowett and Stacey Abbott, *TV Horror: Investigating the Dark Side of the Small Screen* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2013), p. 3.
[26] Caroline Joan Picart and David A. Frank, *Frames of Evil: The Holocaust as Horror in American Film* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006), p. 98.

televisual horror brings the Nazi closer to home.[27] Of course, it should be noted that most of the Nazi monster horror films were created to go straight-to-DVD, and more recently with an awareness that they may be streamed through platforms such as Netflix or Shudder, and so these are also often viewed in a domestic context. However, it seems that different mediums have resulted in slightly different monsters. Thus, although this thesis centres around the cinematic Nazi monster, and Matt Hills asserts that 'horror "naturally" (i.e. culturally) belongs […] to film and fiction', going forth it would be useful to consider the Nazi monster in each of its forms in order to discover all of its nuances.[28]

Even within film I believe this thesis points towards further avenues of exploration, such as a consideration of other genres. For instance, although Nazi science is often connected to the supernatural or occult in the films I have discussed, it also links to another strand of the Nazi horror film in which the monster is more 'real'. The German films *Anatomie* (Stefan Ruzowitzky, 2000) and *Anatomie II* (Stefan Ruzowitzky, 2003) both feature Nazi-inspired science in a modern-day hospital, while a series of mysterious murders in the French film *The Crimson Rivers* (Mathieu Kassovitz, 2000) leads detectives to a secret community developed through eugenics. Such films could be described as Nazi-inspired crime-horror. There are also horror-thriller films such as *Green Room* (Jeremy Saulnier, 2015) and *Hate Crime* (James Cullen Bressack, 2012) which feature graphic violence and centre around the depiction of neo-Nazis. These entries could then be closely linked to images of the Nazi and torture in violent horror-thriller *Frontier(s)* (Xavier Gens, 2007), suggesting that there may be a category of Nazi 'torture porn' which would build further upon Kerner's understanding of implicit Holocaust representation in films such as *Hostel* (Eli Roth, 2005).[29] It is thus possible to follow this thesis by considering what effect these depictions of the Nazi monster provoke when compared to their supernatural counterparts, and consider the possibility that they are more closely linked to contemporary neo-Nazism and its related societal and political violence. Similarly, the conclusions which have been drawn about Nazi horror have been in relation to the Second World War genre more widely due to Allison's work, as well as 'military horror' as coined by Steffen Hantke, but reconsidering these larger bodies of films in light of Nazi horror may

[27] Helen Wheatley, *Gothic Television* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 18.
[28] Matt Hills, *The Pleasures of Horror* (London and New York: Continuum, 2005), p. 145.
[29] Kerner, *Torture Porn in the Wake of 9/11: Horror, Exploitation, and the Cinema of Sensation* (London and New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015).

also prove useful.[30] Following in this vein, though much of this thesis has been specific to the trauma of Nazism, its methodology may be extended to consider other monsters emerging from other wars. As such, much of the work in Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdain Van Riper's edited collection *Horrors of War: The Undead on the Battlefield* might be extended upon, for though this thesis identifies the Second World War as emblematic of many anxieties, representations of other conflicts can offer variations on this, including experiences of trauma in Eastern countries which do not seem to have produced Nazi horror.[31]

Lastly, and perhaps most obviously, having established the 21st century Nazi horror subgenre this thesis offers possibilities to look to both the past and the future of Nazi horror films. While more work has been carried out on the 20th century Nazi monster, the focus has not often been on repressed anxieties and societal and political trauma, and it is possible to reconsider the context of the 1960s to 1980s which produced previous Nazi zombies and Nazisploitation. Equally, as this conclusion began by reiterating the significance of the Nazi monster returning within the current climate in which Nazism has arguably come to the fore of public discourse, so this makes for an uncertain future for the subgenre. Though I would ultimately argue that concerns surrounding Nazism have never gone away, the debate about the threat of Nazism in the present has indeed become explicit, begging the question: will there be less need for Nazism to be explored through the horror genre when it is on every news channel? Though we can only speculate, this seems unlikely, not only because horror has always been a space in which to explore the uncomfortable truths of the imminent present, but also because the horrors and fears explored within Nazi horror are not solely those of fascism in politics but the myriad concerns that come with it which need to be explored, such as state control, scientific developments and human evil during times of conflict. Nazi horror may well continue to recur, because so too will human horror and societal violence, and that is what this subgenre is about at its root.

[30] Steffen Hantke, 'The Military Horror Film: Speculations on a Hybrid Genre', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 43.4 (2010), 701-719 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2010.00766.x>.
[31] Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdain Van Riper, eds, *Horrors of War: The Undead on the Battlefield* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).

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