The Mythology of the Self in *In Dreams*: A Study of the Mythology, the Fairy Tale and the Gothic Traditions In Neil Jordan's Film

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ABSTRACT

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This paper will help situate Neil Jordan's film *In Dreams* as a study of the mythology of the self. Through psychoanalytical theories, the film will be situated within mythology's conceptual threefold monomyth based on Joseph Campbell's philosophy. A study of fairy tale's important Jungian archetypes and symbols will create a link with the mythological heroic quest and the collective unconscious. This will establish and solidify the film's psychological exploration of the psyche. Finally, through the examination of consequential gothic paraphernalia, the apex of full self-realization will be gained. This paper shall demonstrate that *In Dreams* is a film about the process of individuation, of self integration and realization. It is a film about the search and the finding of the self, through the pressures of the ego, the superego and the id. It is a film about experiencing the unconscious consciously and about reaching psychological and psychical apotheosis.

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INTRODUCTION

Neil Jordan is Ireland's most acclaimed filmmaker, known world-wide for films such as the horror rendition of "Little Red Riding Hood" with *The Company of Wolves* (1984), his Oscar nominees *The Crying Game* (1992) and *The End of the Affair* (1999), and his big budget cult film *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) based on Anne Rice's gothic novel. Jordan has also been an important contributor to Irish cinema for over twenty-years, and Ireland's political and societal situations have an important place within the discourses of his films, as in his directorial debut *Angel* (1981-82, aka *Danny Boy*), *The Crying Game*, and *Michael Collins* (1996). Jordan's works involve a wide range of film genres, with as much interest shown in with the horror genre as in drama and he has worked on both personal and studio productions.

One of Jordan's most underrated works is the 1999 film *In Dreams*, starring Annette Bening, Aidan Quinn, Robert Downey Jr. and Stephen Rea. Although the film isn't Jordan's biggest disappointment (see Mario Falsetto's interview with the director on the subject of *High Spirits* [1988] in *Personal Visions*), it is the film that has suffered the most negative criticism in Jordan's career. However, this could be explained by the particular time of its release. Jordan had enjoyed great success in the previous years with the films mentioned above and mostly with *The Butcher Boy* (1997), which preceded *In Dreams*. Pat McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* had brought him more acclaim than any of his previous works because it was appreciated in Ireland as much as in America, unlike the film *The Crying Game* which brought him great success in America but mixed criticism in Ireland for his portrayal of the IRA. On the other hand, *The Butcher Boy* won great

reviews at home and abroad, and Jordan was given the Silver Bear Award for Best Director at the Berlin Film Festival.

Furthermore, *In Dreams* came out the same year as *The End of the Affair*, which was nominated for four Golden Globe awards, two Academy awards and ten BAFTA awards, winning best adapted screenplay at the BAFTA. Hence, it is not surprising that *In Dreams* was overlooked by the press and film critics, since it made its appearance between two of Jordan's most prestigious works.

In Dreams was completely destroyed by the few critics who have written about it. Although I don't count the film as Jordan's best, I do believe that it is worth closer study. Jordan is a highly diverse and complex filmmaker who sees his work not only as an artistic outlet, but also as a way to reach and affect the public. In many ways, he loves to please his viewers. So what is to be said of *In Dreams*, which has been so bitterly trashed by the critics with such acrimony?

In Dreams was a way for Jordan to work with the gothic thematic one more time. Jordan explains in Falsetto's interview in *Personal Visions* that with *Interview with the Vampire*, "I really wanted to get back into that gothic stuff again; I love it. It's like going into a dark mysterious wood."[1] *In Dreams* was another project that enabled Jordan to work with the gothic thematic that he enjoys so much and which he first experienced with in *The Company of Wolves*. Hence, while many critics and film theorists have elaborated on Jordan's work, few if any, have taken the task of studying one of his less acclaimed films.

[1] Falsetto, Mario. *Personal Visions: Conversations with Contemporary Film Directors*. Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 2000, p. 241.

The aim of this paper is to situate the film as an important work within Jordan's filmography by studying the concepts which convert this high budget commercial thriller into one of Jordan's more personal projects. I will take a closer look at the literary influences of mythology, the fairy tale and the gothic tradition within the film by examining the journey of the film's protagonist and her quest for identity. Through this analysis I shall situate the film as a study of the mythology of the self through its examination of the unconscious and the id pressures described in psychoanalysis. I will elaborate on the protagonist of the film, Claire, played by Annette Bening, who experiences a full integration of the self.

Claire's journey exists within the mythological concept of the monomyth. I will study Claire's journey as a contemporary female heroine who passes from departure to initiation to her return. I will show that her journey is similar to those of other more popular mythical figures of the twentieth-century, like Frodo Baggins in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* or Luke Skywalker in George Lucas's film trilogy of *Star Wars* (1977, 1980, 1983). Mostly, I shall concentrate on the symbolic imagery found in Jordan's film—especially in regards to the role of water—and will be supporting my findings mostly by reference to Joseph Campbell's work in order to explain Claire's birth into hero-hood. I shall explain how Claire's initiation as a heroic figure becomes the most crucial part of her journey to finding herself. I will be referring mostly to Jungian theories to further illustrate my thesis that Claire's quest lies in the awareness and integration of her ego-unconsciousness. Finally, I will elucidate the notion of her death and its link to a symbolic rebirth by referring to Campbell's concepts of the cosmogonic cycle and the heroic ascent into apotheosis.

Moving from mythology to the fairy tale, I shall link the two literary forms to one another by their common dominator of existing within societies' popular culture and/or our collective unconscious. I will shed light on the fairy tales' interest in the Biblical myth of Adam and Eve and its relation to the fairy tale heroine by demonstrating how *In Dreams*' symbolic imagery relates to the fall from innocence found in both the Biblical myth and cautionary folk tales. I will explain how Jordan creates a heroine who is both a daughter of Eve and a strong female who rebels against patriarchal subordination by embracing her feminine principle. Again, Jungian theories will be of great importance in this particular section, focusing mainly on a Jungian disciple, Marie-Louise von Franz, and her studies of fairy tales and on the symbolic use of colors in Jordan's film, which links it to the pagan notion of the Triple Goddess.

I will describe how Jordan manages to shape a postmodern fairy tale heroine through the inversion of traditional conventions by giving the heroine inner strength and power and by positioning the villain as existing outside reality. Jordan links his film to the tale of "Snow White" but through various reworkings manages to create a strong, active female character within this tale about female passivity. Finally, I will demonstrate how the film refers to the tale of "Snow White" by analysing the generic pattern of both tale and film, by referring to Steven Swann Jones' own study of "Snow White." I will examine the repeating threat-hostility-escape pattern of the two narratives and the transformation of the heroine's situation, status and environment which are also similar in both tales.

In the third section of this paper, I will focus on the gothic tradition which is one of Jordan's favourites. Once again I will draw a line between the other two literary forms

and link the gothic further into psychoanalytic theories. Claire's quest for her self becomes more personal and internalised. I will focus on the transgression of boundaries from space, to reality, to individuality. First, I will be looking at the importance of the settings within the gothic tradition and in Jordan's film. I will examine how the home moves from a symbol of the family unit to a strange and haunting place following Claire's mental and inner journey into herself. I will also look at the setting of the hospital and the old orchard and their link to madness and the unconscious, once again reflecting Claire's personal quest. Then I will look at the relationship between reality and fantasy and how Jordan manages to blur the lines of the physical and the psychological. Third, I will focus on the use of the double in Jordan's film, creating a deeper study within our protagonist's psychological and mental processes by creating Vivian as a part of her self. I will examine how Claire's double is first experienced as an agent of fear, but will soon become a source of power and will eventually experience a merging of personality. In other words, through the use of the double Claire attains a full realization of the self and the accomplishment of ego-unconsciousness.

The aim of this paper is to examine this overlooked film which, like so many other gothic works, has been landed as inferior. Through the study of the themes of identity we notice that *In Dreams* is a deeper study of human psychology than the viewer tends to assume at first glance. It remains a film about dreams and hence, about the unconscious. It is a film about what it means to be female and more importantly about what it means to be human. It is a film whose theme should speak to all of us on a universal level or at least on an unconscious level. I don't deny that it is a film that most people do not understand. It's a film about binary opposites and the beast within, strongly

embedded in psychoanalytical theories to which Freud and Jung could probably devote entire works. I hope that with this paper I will be able to clarify the important psychological and mythical meanings rooted in the film's dark recesses. I hope to shed new light and bring further interest and discussion on this largely ignored and under-appreciated work from a great director. After all, it is a film that makes the viewer think and leaves them questioning. In my opinion, that alone makes *In Dreams* worthy of interest.

IN DREAMS SYNOPSIS

The film opens on the flooding of a town. On the screen is written "In 1965 the town of Northfield was evacuated to create the Northfield Reservoir. Two billion gallons of water flooded the empty streets, obliterating all memory of the lives once lived there, leaving a drowned ghost town." The film's credits start after the deluge, when two divers are exploring the remains of the town of Northfield like a sunken ship, accompanied by the haunting music of Elliot Goldenthal (who has worked with Jordan on previous films.) We are then introduced to our main characters reciting lines from a "Snow White" play. We see a mother, Claire, with her daughter Rebecca (Katie Sagona), walking along the borders of the reservoir, the divers' ship seen at a distance.

Claire and Rebecca return home. When Claire's husband Paul (Aidan Quinn) arrives home from his job as an airline pilot, Claire's sketches on the table draw his attention. She admits that the drawings are from one of her recurring dreams about a missing girl. That same night, the couple becomes intimate but Claire has a vision of the little girl being abducted. She's traumatized by her dream, so Paul tries to help her by visiting the chief of police the next morning to explain his wife's dream. The chief of police is clearly not interested in Claire's visions and admits that the body of the girl has already been found.

Later on, Rebecca plays the role of the magic mirror in the school production of "Snow White" in the local woods. After the performance, Rebecca is missing and soon an extensive search is being led in the woods by the police. Meanwhile, we see the panicked Claire being forced into an ambulance, screaming about her visions, "Why didn't you tell

me it wasn't the past but the future?" She finally understands that her visions weren't about the missing girl but about her own daughter's kidnapping.

After a brief time interlude we see Claire waiting with the chief as the local police investigate the reservoir. Her daughter's dead body is found and Claire becomes delirious. She drives away in a daze, the chief of police chasing after her, but she deliberately drives off a cliff into a dam. In the deep waters she encounters her daughter's ghost, who tells her, "Mommy, I'm not afraid any longer Mommy." Claire also has a vision of a morbid lullaby written on a wall in a drowned room.

After Claire has her accident and wakes up in the hospital, her visions become more intense. She dreams of a boy chained to a bed while his room fills up with water. She sees an old orchard filled with apples and a shadowy figure singing, "don't sit under the apple tree with anybody else but me." In her waking hours, she is approached by a psychiatrist, Dr. Silverman (Stephen Rea), who wants to help her understand her dreams. Claire desperately seeks to get rid of her dreams as she is afraid that they may be driving her insane.

Paul decides to take her home but her dreams take an awful turn and start to manifest themselves while she is still awake. She is visited by the shadowy figure while she's making love with her husband. The shadow kisses her in her dream as she kisses her husband. It bites her lip, while in reality she bites the lip of her husband. She tries to make Paul understand that it was a nightmare but he rebukes, "don't give me nightmare, you were wide awake." Claire responds, "he knows I'm dreaming about him, he's in my head."

The next morning after Paul leaves for work, Claire goes into the attic. She prints red apples on the computer screen attempting to recall her previous dreams. She hears a little girl laughing and her dog Dobby barking. She runs outside to find the swing rocking with a red apple sitting on top of it. The small radio next to the swing starts playing "don't sit under the apple tree with anybody else but me." She starts chasing after her dog in the woods nearby and encounters the chief of police who tells her that "after what you've been through you'd be forgiven a little psychosis."

Giving up on her search for Dobby, she returns home to apple pies burning in the oven. The kitchen island is filled with red apples. She throws them into the sink and the garbage disposal. She suddenly has a vision and the image swirls and the sound distorts as it does when she has a dream. However, her vision is of herself doing exactly what she is doing. This infuriates her because she is unable to decipher whether she is dreaming or awake. The garbage disposal starts to spit out all of the apples that Claire has been feeding into it. Soon the sink vomits a torrent of dark and chunky apple juice. Afraid, Claire runs to the attic.

Once in the attic, the computer sings Claire the lullaby that she saw in her dream, "My daddy is a dollar I wrote it on a fence. My daddy is a dollar not worth a hundred cents." She pleads with the computer to get out of her brain. Paul arrives at the house soon after. His home has been vandalized. The walls are painted red with graffiti of apples, Rebecca's name and the lyrics of the lullaby in Claire's dream. Paul finds Claire lying on Rebecca's bed, her wrists cut and bleeding to death.

Claire wakes up in the hospital once again. She meets with Dr. Silverman once more. She tells him that the boy in the drowning room and the shadowy figure in her

dreams are one and the same. Paul leaves her at the hospital under the care of Dr. Silverman. He returns home only to find out that Dobby is missing. Meanwhile, Claire is visited by Dobby while in the hospital. She climbs through her window to get to him but he runs away. She decides to run after him, which leads her to a main road and straight into the oncoming traffic, creating a large pile up. This convinces Paul, with strong encouragement from Dr. Silverman, to have Claire committed.

Once in the mental hospital, Claire's dreams become more lucid and precise. She dreams that she is walking, cloaked in flowing red robes, towards an old abandoned hotel. There she encounters the wolf, a ravenous Dobby eating her dead husband's face. When she wakes up in the mental hospital, she is in a highly secure padded room. Her irrationality is extreme. She tries to convince the staff of her husband's danger, but to no avail. She is drugged and forced into a deep sleep. Meanwhile, Paul is murdered by the shadow at the hotel where he is trying to find Dobby.

Finally, Claire is given a regular room at the asylum which she shares with another female patient. Once in her room, Claire notices the old wallpaper peeling off the walls. She starts ripping the paper and notices some writing underneath it. She rips at the paper and finds out that it is the shadow's writing. She finds the lullaby and the shadow's name–Vivian Thompson. She learns that he was not only in the same hospital, but also stayed in the same room as Claire. Claire goes to sleep and dreams about a girl named Ruby and realizes that Vivian is still "out there hunting." Claire attempts to convince Dr. Silverman that Vivian is still a predator who needs to be stopped, but Dr. Silverman believes Claire's dreams are a form of schizophrenia.

After returning to the confines of her room and ripping off more of the wallpaper, Claire goes to sleep in the hopes of connecting with Vivian. Meanwhile, Dr. Silverman decides to go through the hospital's files. He discovers a file under the name of Vivian Thompson. The file contains the lyrics to the lullaby that has been plaguing Claire's dreams. Dr. Silverman also finds out that Vivian's story reflects Claire's dreams. He finally believes his patient, whispering his apologies in her absence. Meanwhile, Claire dreams of Vivian's life story, seeing it clearly for the first time.

A young Vivian is chained to his bed while the room is filling up with water. He frees himself and swims to the surface of the drowned town. He is rescued and brought to the insane asylum, screaming and struggling. He is in a ranting state and is given forced baths and shock therapy. Claire wakes up, a teenage Vivian staring down at her. It is clear that Claire has finally made a connection with Vivian since she exists finally in his reality. Their connection surpasses time and space with Vivian existing in the past and Claire existing in the present. Claire follows him through the airshaft and out of the hospital, escaping through the same means Vivian had used. A security officer offers them a lift, which leads them both to the reservoir. Once there, Claire meets the Vivian from the present who invites her to the old abandoned orchard called *The Good Apple* to see Ruby.

Meanwhile, the hospital has discovered that Claire is missing. Dr. Silverman finally understands Claire and sends for the police. He knows that Claire has gone after Vivian in order to save Ruby. He decides to go to the Carlton Hotel. Once there, Dr. Silverman and the police find the body of Paul and the raging Dobby. While this is happening, Claire tries to rescue Ruby while Vivian is in another room preparing food for

them. Claire tries to get Ruby to escape but the little girl is afraid and starts screaming. Vivian intervenes and knocks Claire unconscious. While Claire is unconscious she has another vision. She dreams of Vivian's mother punishing him by locking him in a trunk. When she awakens she is tied up and wearing "Bad Mommy's clothes" as Ruby tells her. She is wearing Vivian's mother's outfit. The new "family" goes to sleep when we see another dream. However, this time it is Vivian's dream. He sees Claire, in his mother's clothes, floating dead in the water. While this is happening, the police, accompanied by Dr. Silverman, are searching for Claire in a helicopter.

Finally, Ruby decides to untie Claire and the two try to escape. Claire lets Ruby out of the orchard knowing that Vivian would rather go after her than after Ruby. Claire tempts Vivian to come after her by pretending to be his mother. Still dressed in his mother's clothes, Claire imitates Vivian's mother's habits from what she had seen in her dream. Vivian is enraged and forgets about the escaping Ruby. He starts running after Claire, threatening her life with a scythe.

Claire escapes through the woods while the police find Ruby and the old orchard *The Good Apple*. Claire and Vivian run all the way to the reservoir bridge. The police helicopter finds them running across the dam, while Vivian catches up with Claire. They struggle and they fall over the bridge into the reservoir. We see the same image of Claire's dead body floating in the waters that Vivian had seen in his dream. The ghost of Rebecca appears to Claire; the two are finally reunited.

At last, Vivian is brought to trial where he is spared the death penalty as he is ruled legally insane. Vivian is happy with the ruling and with his accommodations within

the asylum. He soon falls asleep but he is troubled by Claire's ghost. He wakes to find her haunting him both in his sleep and in his waking moments and the final credits roll.

MODERN MYTHOLOGY

> "We have not even to risk the adventure alone, for the heroes of all time have gone before us. The labyrinth is thoroughly known. We have only to follow the thread of the hero path, and where we had thought to find abomination, we shall find a god. And where we had thought to slay another, we shall only slay ourselves. Where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we will be with all the world." (Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, p.151)

Mythology is not so different from the fairy tale or even the gothic novel. In fact, many works could be considered as belonging to all three categories. For example, many of Shakespeare's masterpieces, such as *King Lear* (1605-06), *Macbeth* (1605-06) and *Titus Andronicus* (1592-94), fall within all three spheres that will be looked at in this work. Furthermore, mythological works, much like fairy tales and gothic fiction, have experienced the reworkings of their original texts. In a technological era like the 21st century, we don't expect the stories of Greek gods to still have an impact in our popular culture and in our system of beliefs and values. Nevertheless, some of the most popular films of the new century have been mythological films, such as the trilogies of *The Matrix* (*The Matrix* [1999], *The Matrix Reloaded* [2003] and *The Matrix Revolutions* [2003] by the Wachowski brothers), *Harry Potter* (*The Philosopher's Stone* [2001], *The Chamber of Secrets* [2002] and *The Prisoner of Azkaban* [due in the summer of 2004] by Chris Columbus and Alfonso Cuaròn) and *The Lord of the Rings* (*The Fellowship of the Ring* [2001], *The Two Towers* [2002] and *The Return of the King* [2003] by Peter Jackson) much like *Star Wars* (*Episode IV* [1977], *Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* [1980] and *Episode VI: The Return of the Jedi* [1983] by George Lucas) was over 25

years ago. As Bill Moyers has said in his acclaimed interview with Joseph Campbell: "...the new myths will serve the old stories."[2]

Turning our classical myths into modern myths is an easier task than it appears, for the message remains the same: "the journey of life is the search of the self."[3] This message will be revisited later in this section. In fact, the resurgence of mythology in literature in the last fifty years has reached new heights due to popular fiction, more specifically the comic book. Therefore, it is safe to say that the mythic film has never been as popular in the Hollywood industry, which has created more comic book films in the last five years than it has in its entire history (e.g. Bryan Singer's *X-Men* [2000], Sam Raimi's *Spiderman* [2002], Ang Lee's *The Hulk* [2003] just to name a few).

In addition, the advent of science-fiction has also brought a new variant to modern mythology, both for literature (e.g. Frank Herbert's *Dune* [1965], George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* [1949], Isaac Asimov's *Fantastic Voyage* [1966], etc.) and for the television (e.g. Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek*, Chris Carter's *X-Files*, Joss Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, etc.) As Butler professed:

> "As a vehicle for displaying the hero in all his aspects [...] science-fiction is perhaps the most successful medium in the Western world today. It is equally capable of tackling myth in its sacred and secular aspects; and it operates largely in the field which was once reserved for theology; that of speculation beyond the known world. Such speculation is, at least sometimes, encouraged in science-fiction, where the myths are those of the worlds of the possible."[4]

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[2] Flowers, Betty Sue Ed. *Joseph Campbell's The Power of Myth with Bill Moyers*. New York: Anchor Books, c1991, p. 23.
[3] Leeming, David Adams. *Mythology : The Voyage of the Hero* (Third Edition.) New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 6.
[4] Butler, Bill. *The Myth of the Hero*. London: Rider & Company, c1979; p. 18.

It is safe to say that our heroes have not changed since Homer and Hesiod, except that they have gone from wearing nothing but sheets and sandals to being clad in blue spandex (e.g. Superman, Spiderman, Wolverine, etc.) or skin-tight leather costumes (*X-Men*, *The Matrix*, *Dune*, etc.) However, their message and the reason for their existence remain the same. From religion to science, the modern myths have turned our theologian heroes into technological heroes—from gods or sons of gods (e.g. Prometheus, Hercules, Jesus Christ, etc.) into aliens (e.g. Superman, Luke Skywalker); from humans touched by the power of the gods and/or of an empire (e.g. Moses, Jason, Oedipus) into heroes transformed by science through experiments gone awry (e.g. The Hulk, Spiderman); from heroes controlling magical weapons (e.g. The Knights of the Round Table, Thor) into heroes being controlled by magical weapons or machines (Frodo Baggins [Elijah Wood] in *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Matrix*.) Clearly, the modern myth dictates humanity's changing concerns, beliefs and anxieties. We could even go so far as to say that theology, which used to be the source of mythology, became part of the problem in technocratic mythology. What remains certain is that the fundamental ideas behind Jesus Christ's quest are identical to Batman's because both are "an expression of the world myth."[5] In other words, myths survive the impediments of both time and space through the adaptation and the modernization of their substantial themes and/or archetypes since all myths are about the discovery of the self. They teach us about who we are.

Myth is the "direct expression of the 'unknown'"[6] or more precisely of our unconscious. Through the hero myth, we experience the personal unconscious that comes to represent a universal humanistic truth; hence, the myth becomes an archetype of the

[5] Leeming, David Adams. *Mythology*, p. 6.
[6] Ibid., p. 3.

human psyche, or what Jung has called the collective unconscious. According to Jung there are two layers to the unconscious; the personal and the collective, which can be best described in his own words.

> "A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the *personal unconscious*. Yet this personal unconscious appears to rest upon a deeper layer that does not derive from personal experience and achievement but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the *collective unconscious*. I have chosen the term 'collective' because this part of the unconscious is not individual, but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behavior that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. The collective unconscious, so far as we know, is self-identical in all Western men and thus constitutes a psychic foundation, superpersonal in its nature, that is present in every one of us."[7]

For instance, although films like *Star Wars*, *The Matrix* and even *The Lord of the Rings* are science-fiction and/or fantasy films, far from our everyday world—either in a galaxy far far away, in a millenium in the future or in a fictitious past—their symbolic message is identical. They reveal our own anxieties about technology and the possible domination of machines over humanity. This has become a substantial concern around the world in our technocratic era, particularly since the advent of nuclear power. (Campbell has mentioned that the fear of the machine is one of the major themes of one of our older myths as established in Goethe's *Faust* [1808]. The fear of science taking over nature is also the main theme in one the most fundamental works of gothic literature, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* [1818].)

As mentioned above, reaching the collective's unconscious—or the humanistic world myth—is achieved through the hero myth, chiefly through the heroic quest. It's

[7] Jung, Carl G. *The Integration of the Personality*. Trans. Stanley Dell, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., c1963, p. 53.

obvious that Neil Jordan's film *In Dreams* and the mythical trilogies mentioned above are poles apart. Jordan's mythological messages are subtler and maybe not as close to our collective unconscious as the themes exploited in *The Matrix* or *Star Wars*. Nevertheless, Claire, although perhaps more problematic and irresolute than Neo (Keanu Reeves) or Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill), is a mythological heroine. According to Campbell "the hero is symbolical of that divine creative and redemptive image which is hidden within us all, only waiting to be known and rendered into life,"[8] while the quest "is the journey from one world (ours) to another which every hero makes and from which he brings to us, readers of myths, anything from entertainment to salvation."[9]

Although the quest of Claire is the primordial aspect of her divinity as a mythological heroine, she is nevertheless constructed as a super-hero through the use of many mythical archetypes, which go beyond the confines of the Hollywood hero. The hero of the myth, whether he be a god or human, "carr[ies] the keys to the whole realm of the desired and the feared adventure of the discovery of the self."[10] This realm is the unconscious, and the hero's quest becomes an adventure, or a descent into the depths of the unconscious. The hero is the key to unlocking the unconscious's dark secrets through his super-human abilities. He makes us experience it. Hence, even if the hero is a mere mortal, he possesses something that no other human possesses: the potential to reach and experience the unconscious. He shows us the tools necessary for its manifestation in order to find our center—to find ourselves. This is why the hero must lose himself and

[8] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c. 1973; p. 39.
[9] Butler, Bill. *The Myth of the Hero*, p. 133.
[10] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 8.

then find the divine within himself in order to find his true self. This is what Jung has called the process of individuation. He explains:

> "By it I mean the psychological process that makes of a human being an 'individual' –a unique, indivisible unit or 'whole man'. In the past, it has been generally assumed that consciousness –or the sum total representations, ideas, emotions, perceptions, and other mental contents which the ego acknowledges– is equal to the psychological 'whole' of an individual. But nowadays the rapidly increasing knowledge of phenomena that can be explained only on the hypothesis of unconscious mental processes has made us doubt whether the ego and its contents are really identical with the 'whole'. If the unconscious processes exist at all, they must surely belong to the totality of the individual, even though they form no part of the conscious, because anything directly connected with the ego is conscious; consciousness is by definition the relationship between the ego and the various mental contents."[11]

In other words, the process of individuation happens when a person accepts living and experiencing life through the application of both the conscious and the unconscious. Although the two are always in conflict with one another, it is only through their coalition that a person will encounter their authentic individual self and attain individuation. As mentioned above, this is at the heart of the hero quest.

Campbell separates the hero's quest in three important phases: "a separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and a life-enhancing return." [12] This is also known as the departure, the initiation, and the return. Others like Leeming identify eight important steps, which still fall within Campbell's theory. First, the birth of the hero, second, the hero's childhood and third, the preparation for the quest, all of which fall within the concept of the departure. Then, there are the trials and/or quest of the hero. Fifth, is the hero's death and scapegoat, followed by the hero's journey within, which are

[11] Jung, Carl G. *The Integration of the Personality*, p. 3.
[12] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 35.

all part of the hero's initiation. Finally, there is the resurrection or rebirth of the hero followed by the apotheosis, which are part of the hero's return.

This idea of the mythological adventure of the hero is also known as the "monomyth." Campbell explains:

> "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."[13]

Interestingly, Claire's journey falls somewhat within these confines so well defined by Campbell. Although her story is sometimes far from the usual classical mythic quest, or even greatly different from our modern day hero's, she still possesses most, if not all, of the heroic attributes mentioned by Campbell.

The Birth of the Hero

> "The first step, detachment or withdrawal, consists in a radical transfer of emphasis from the external to the internal world, macro –to microcosm, a retreat from the desperation of the waste land to the peace of the everlasting realms that is within." (Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 17)

The first chapter of the hero's journey is his birth. Prophetic, miraculous beginnings as well as an unknown parentage and origin are parts of the birth myth. More often than not, nature is of great significance in the birth of the hero, either figuratively or metaphorically.

Claire's birth differs greatly from the classical design of the hero myth. However, Claire does fall within the confines of the contemporary myth, where the hero's birth, or

[13] Ibid., p. 30.

rather "expulsion, occurs in his teens or adulthood."[14] Her birth into adulthood also adds to her "unusual strength or cleverness at [...] birth,"[15] which is inherent to the hero myth. Mostly, this "adult birth" is predominant within the myths of the comic book heroes and marvelously exemplified in a film like Bryan Singer's *X-Men*, where the opening scenes are devoted to the death/rebirth of Erik Lensherr into Magneto (Ian McKellen) and Marie D'Ancanto into Rogue (Anna Paquin.) For it is not their biological births which are of importance here, but their births as mutants, as superheroes.

This is also the case for Claire. Her biological birth is of no importance in her hero-quest, but rather it is her symbolic rebirth through the cognition of her own unconscious which is the key in Jordan's film. Claire is born, or rather reborn, after her suicide attempt when she begins her adventure into the dream world. By hurling herself into the lake, Claire experiences a kind of death and she returns a changed woman, unlike the one presented to us in the film's prelude. This is demonstrated by the cutting of Claire's hair which further symbolizes the shedding of her previous individual self and the act of being reborn and starting over from a pseudo blank slate. It has been said that "the ultimate form of expulsion is death"[16] because the hero must shed who he is in order to find himself. In other words, "the hero has died as a modern man; but as eternal man—perfected, unspecific, universal man—he has been reborn."[17] So Claire has faced her death as modern woman, wife and especially mother and has been reborn as a result of

[14] Butler, Bill. *The Myth of the Hero*, p. 79.
[15] Ibid., p. 29.
[16] Ibid., p. 72.
[17] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 20.

her unconscious's manifestation of her own ego, for "the birth myth is the beginning of the voyage to full individuation."[18]

Claire, like many classical mythological heroes, is born out of the water ("the commonest symbol of the unconscious"[19] and the womb,) miraculously saved and daughter of an unknown origin. Most theorists and students of myths agree that "water signifies no more and no less than *symbolic expression of birth.*"[20] In fact, Otto Rank has explained the symbolic imagery of a woman's dream where she hurls herself in "the dark water of a lake." He writes: "Dreams of this sort are birth-dreams, and their interpretation is accomplished by reversing the fact as communicated in the manifest dream; namely, instead of hurling oneself into the water, it means emerging from the water, i.e., to be born."[21]

Jordan portrays Claire's "death" wonderfully by crosscutting the two metaphorical water rebirths and linking Claire's descent into the water's depths with her daughter Rebecca's ascent from the dark waters. Jordan hints at this rebirth throughout the first half of the film with lines like Claire's first words on coming out of her coma "Why did you bring me back?" Another example is when Paul brings Claire home and says that Mary (Prudence Wright Holmes) will be staying with them. When Claire has no recollection of Mary, Paul says: "Mary, the housekeeper…your past life Claire." When Claire admits that her daughter's death feels like it "happened to someone else" and that

[18] Leeming, David Adams. *Mythology*, p. 40.
[19] Jung, Carl G. *The Integration of the Personality*, p. 67.
[20] Rank, Otto. *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero: A Psychological Interpretation of Mythology*. Trans. Drs. F. Robbins & Ely Jelliffe Smith. Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph Series no. 18; New York: The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1914; p. 69.
[21] Ibid., p.71.

she feels "like I'm some ghost looking down at myself," both remarks are exemplified by a haunting, lingering high angle shot.

The relation of birth with nature is important in the hero's myth. Nature is good and evil, constructive and destructive, which relates to the hero's own dual nature (a topic that will be explored in more detail later in this paper), as well as to mythology itself, for it is "based on the idea of duality."[22] Moreover, water is a womb symbol, the universal great mother being nature itself. Classical myths' link with nature (e.g. Moses and Siegfried) might be more pronounced than that of the moderns might, since most of the earliest myths were representative of a parental hostility (more particularly paternal jealousy) towards the newborn hero. But this isn't the case for our contemporary heroine, Claire. Instead, her link with nature comes to represent her descent into her unconscious (as shall be demonstrated later) and her supernatural birth, since the weight of the hero's birth is embedded in fantastic and divine powers. Leeming writes "the hero appears in the flow of life; he is reborn of the river, of the void, and he is adopted by all of us."[23] Hence, the hero is an orphan of supernatural powers best symbolized with his arrival into our world, through a natural-linked miraculous birth (i.e. Claire being born out of a river) which underlines his superhuman powers—for even his birth is heroic and beyond any biological or humanistic features.

From Jesus Christ to Batman, orphans are by far the most common heroes in both classical and modern myths. Frodo Baggins, Luke Skywalker and Harry Potter are all orphans. So are Neo and Claire's parentage unknown and/or non-existent since their

[22] Flowers, Setty Sue ed. *Joseph Campbell's The Power of Myth*, p. 66.
[23] Leeming, David Adams. *Mythology*, p. 40.

biological births are irrelevant. Instead, it is their symbolic rebirths through the intervention of technology (in *The Matrix*) and dreams (in *In Dreams*) that is of consequence here, which in turn makes them as much orphans as any of the heroes mentioned above. Therefore, Claire's orphaned heritage as well her link to nature turn her into humanity's special gift, "adopted by all of us," and turned into a champion through her divinity and her supernatural powers.

The preparation for the quest is also an important part of the hero's childhood or beginnings. The most common element of the preparation is the hero's exile, the tests of his abilities and the acquisition of a weapon. Butler writes that the hero is often "expelled or exposed shortly after birth,"[24] which is the case for Claire. This occurs after her symbolic rebirth, where Claire becomes an "exile from another world."[25] She returns home, changed from her experience and is looked upon by others as alien and as the ghost of the woman she used to be. Since she has attained a new level of consciousness, beyond the one experienced by the people surrounding her, she is excluded from their world and the one she had previously inhabited. Her motivation and goals now revolve around the possibility of reaching that level of consciousness once more.

Claire exists solely between worlds. In the "normal" world or the outer world of civilization, she is frowned upon and viewed as dangerous to herself to the point that she needs a "babysitter." She is also seen as being in serious need of guidance and requires following by a psychiatrist. The "other" world or the inner world, where the ego and the unconscious meet and where Claire briefly achieved individuation, is the one she is

[24] Butler, Bill. *The Myth of the Hero*, p. 29.
[25] Ibid., p. 29.

desperately seeking to grasp once more. However, since "the individuation process is invariably started off by the patient's becoming conscious of the shadow"[26] or of the evil that lurks deep within, Claire's need to experience her spiritual and individual potentiality again makes her dangerous, even psychotic. Jung explains the individuation process in relation to neurosis as such:

> "But the clearest and most significant manifestation of the child motif in the therapy of neuroses is in the maturation process of personality induced by the analysis of the unconscious, which I have termed the process of individuation. Here we are confronted with preconscious processes which, in the form of more or less well-formed fantasies, gradually pass over into the conscious mind, or become conscious as dreams, or, lastly, are made conscious through the method of active imagination. This material is rich in archetypal motifs, among them frequently that of the child."[27]

Jung continues by affirming that the child motif or the "imaginary" child motif "is common among women with mental disorders"[28] which is also the case for Claire. Claire tries to understand her dreams, or her unconscious, and even attempts to imprint the dreams on her conscious mind by printing the apples on her computer screen. Shortly thereafter, Claire achieves this melding of the unconscious and the conscious when she vandalizes her house because her visions have come to her while she was still awake and because she has unconsciously tapped into her daughter's killer's own consciousness (e.g. the writing of his lullaby). It is also interesting to point out that Claire uses the color red in both cases, which, according to Jung, is modern times' principal color used to express the unconscious.[29] Claire is experiencing her unconscious consciously, dreaming while awake. This is again effectively achieved by Jordan who uses the same visual and

[26] Segal, Robert A. ed. *Jung on Mythology*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c1998, p. 87.
[27] Ibid., p. 125.
[28] Ibid., p.125.
[29] Jung, Carl G. *The Integration of the Personality*, p. 48.

audio techniques to introduce the dream sequences throughout the film. In this particular scene, which starts with Claire at the sink shoving the apples into the compactor, the imagery swirls and the music distorts like usual it usually does when Claire accesses her unconscious. However, this time the image comes back to it's original take, as if she is dreaming of what she is actually doing at that moment, rendering this idea of a conscious dream.

This is the test that Claire must endure in order to prove she is worthy of being a mythological heroine. Both her character and her strength will be tested to see if she can succumb to the beast within, or what Jung refers to as the *shadow*. She must embrace her divine powers and accept her fate as humanity's exile. She must leave the outer world completely, including her husband, and welcome the essential weapon, which will lead her to the reaches of the underworld. This weapon is insanity, for "madness is a great way to experience the unconscious"[30] [italics mine]. Only by embracing her own shadow, her own madness, will Claire descend to the underworld, reach the beast within (portrayed by Vivian [Robert Downey Jr.]) and reach her journey's aim.

The Hero's Quest

> "At the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light." (Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, p. 46)

Before continuing, it is necessary to explain what the Jungian terms shadow and animus are, as well as defining their roles within Jordan's film. The shadow is "the inferior and less commendable part of a person, [it is] the peculiar strangeness or

[30] Flowers, Betty Sue ed. *Joseph Campbell's The Power of Myth*, p. 110.

alienation"[31] found in someone. Claire's shadow is her insanity. When she first sees her dark mirror she is frightened and tries desperately to deny that it is part of who she is. However, when she finally embraces that part of herself, not only does she achieve individuation but she also becomes an active participant in her own visions, which previously had mislead her into being a passive agent controlled by her own dreams. When she escapes from the hospital through her visions of Vivian, Claire not only accepts and acknowledges that side of herself but actually uses it to her own advantage by experiencing it completely—or almost completely since unlike Vivian she does not kill a nurse or the police officer. This concept of the shadow will be explained further in the second chapter of this work.

The animus or anima isn't much different than the shadow. It is the dark twin of the hero, born out of the unconscious and usually a repressed persona. It is different from the shadow in that the animus is personified within another character. This would be best described in Jung's own words:

> "They [the anima and animus] seem to be functions or instincts which appear in a personal form when aroused from their dormant condition. But contrary to the functions attached to consciousness, they are always strangers in the conscious world. Because they permeate the atmosphere with a feeling of uncanny foreboding, or even with the fear of mental derangement, they are unwelcome intruders. In studying their psychic constituents –that is, the imaginative material manifested through them– we find any number of archaic and 'historical' connections, contents, archetypal images that we call mythological themes. [...] they obviously live or function in the deeper layers of the unconscious mind, in the phylogenetic substructures of the modern mind, the so-called *collective unconscious*."[32]

[31] Jung, Carl G. *The Integration of the Personality*, p. 20.
[32] Ibid., p. 24.

Claire's animus (called anima in the man) is Vivian. He represents her dark double. This subject will be explored thoroughly in the third chapter of this work. Furthermore, in a woman the animus has a masculine character, while the shadow is definitely feminine. This is also representative of Jordan's film, for Vivian is a male double to a female character. Not to mention that Claire's shadow, her dementia, is often referred to by psychoanalysis as a feminine condition.

This takes us back to the second step and the most crucial part of the monomyth: the initiation or the adventure. If we take the adventure's diagram epitomized by Campbell at its face value it can be most tersely expressed in these words:

> "The mythological hero, setting forth from his commonday hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark [...], or be slain by the opponent and descent in death[...]. Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, [...]. When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward."[33]

Claire's acknowledgement of her own shadow, her own madness and her own evilness are part of her departure from the external world. For her initiation, Claire must embrace that dark part of herself and experience it completely. She must learn to become Vivian (her *animus*) in order to defeat him and attain her goal. Claire's journey into the threshold is reminiscent of the classical myth, most particularly the myths of Theseus and of Inanna.

[33] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 245-246.

In the first myth, Theseus, known as "the greatest Athenian hero,"[34] must face many tests in order to prove himself. Amongst them are the encounter of Periphetes, Sinis, Phaea, Sciron, Cercyon, Procrustes, Medea, the fifty sons of Pallas, the wild bull of Marathon, and many more. However, his most important or most beloved quest is his descent into the labyrinth where he must face the evil Minotaur who devours several young virgins every year. This quest could be compared to Claire's descent into the dream world or the inner depths of her being to conquer the evil that lies within (embodied by Vivian.)

The later myth of Inanna, who is also known under the name of Ishtar, a goddess worshipped throughout Mesopotamia for thousands of years, is one of the very few classical myths embodied by a female hero and the closest one to Claire's journey. Inanna, also designated the "queen of heaven," is a "multifaceted and [the] most enduring of all the powerful Sumerian goddesses."[35] Inanna, goddess of light, love and life, is a martial and fertility goddess, mostly viewed as a source of judgment. Inanna's quest is her descent to the underworld in search of her beloved. While there, she must fight her sister Ereshkigal who is the "queen of the nether world [and] goddess of darkness and gloom and death."[36] Inanna is killed but is returned to life three days after her demise.

Inanna's story isn't far from Claire's own quest. They both descend to the underworld in search of a beloved—Inanna for her lover and Claire for her daughter. While there, they encounter their evil counterparts, their animus. Inanna, goddess of light

[34] Grant, Michael & John Hazel eds. *Who's Who in Classical Mythology*. London & New York: Routledge, c2002, p. 322.
[35] Ochshorn, Judith. "Ishtar and Her Cult," in *The Book of the Goddess*. Carl Olson ed. New York: Crossroads, 1983, p. 59.
[36] Leeming, David Adams. *Mythology*, 1998, p. 185.

must defeat her exact opposite, her evil sister Ereshkigal, goddess of darkness. Claire must defeat her own dark double Vivian. Though both perish at the hands of their evil duplicate, they both return from death in an awkward way. Inanna "reascend to the earth, [...] accompanied by the shades of the dead and by the bogies and harpies who have their home [in the nether world]. Surrounded by this ghostly, ghastly crowd, she wanders through Sumer from city to city."[37] Claire returns as a spiritual entity to haunt her daughter's murderer and drive him further into insanity.

As we've seen previously, what happens during the early years of the hero's life as preparation for his adventure is his first experience with the unconscious. However, what happens is that "the unconscious no sooner touches us than we are it, in that we become unconscious of ourselves."[38] This is why Claire questions who she is after her suicide attempt, to the point of denying her unconscious self—her insanity, her shadow. As Campbell states "it's a terrifying experience to have your consciousness transformed"[39] and Claire's first step in her own adventure is to face her fears and accept the beast within. This is when she stops denying her dementia, which leads her to stop her revolt against the hospital's authorities. This keeps her from being sedated every time she awakens.

Claire's descent into the region of darkness happens soon after her symbolic rebirth. Soon after her return she is very cautious and even afraid of her own unconscious, which had been repressed for so long. She must face her two greatest fears—death and madness—in order to return triumphant and achieve full individuation.

[37] Ibid., p. 186.
[38] Flowers, Betty Sue ed. *Joseph Campbell's The Power of Myth*, p. 18.
[39] Ibid., p. 18.

From her suspension from death, she has glimpsed her own shadow, her own insanity. As Jung suggests, "insanity is merely the manifestation of a hidden, yet generally existent, condition"[40] buried deep within the unconscious or one of the unconscious's personas. In *In Dreams* this is found in the animus, which will be studied thoroughly in the third chapter of this work. In other words, Claire must learn to recognize and redeem the various parts of her self, combining both her conscious ego and her unconscious animus. This means she must accept the good and the bad, the light and the dark that resides within her soul. A comment by Alan Watts will help to clarify this point:

> "...the descent into the depths is almost invariably one of the great tasks of 'the hero with a thousand faces,' of the Christ in his many forms. Hades and Hell may here be understood as the Valley of the Shadow, the experience of impotence and despair in which 'I' die and Christ comes to life. The descent is likewise a figure of the descent of consciousness into the unconscious, of the necessity of knowing one's very depths. For so long as the unconscious remains unexplored it is possible to retain the naïve feeling of the insularity and separateness of the conscious ego. Its actions are still taken to be free and spontaneous movements of the 'will,' and it can congratulate itself upon having motivations which are purely 'good,' unaware of the 'dark' and hidden forces of conditioning which actually guide them."[41]

This part of the hero's quest is the most difficult. It is filled with obstacles, monsters, battles, violence and pain because this is a journey into the inner self, a journey to the unconscious, which is nothing more than "chaotic and unsystematic."[42] This part of the hero myth comprises the majority of Jordan's film, from shortly after Claire's symbolic rebirth (starting in the psychiatric hospital) until her final confrontation with

[40] Jung, Carl G. *The Integration of the Personality*, p. 8.
[41] Watts, Alan. *Myth and Ritual in Christianity*. London & New York: Thames & Hudson, 1954, p. 168.
[42] Jung, Carl G. *The Integration of the Personality*, p. 5.

Vivian (her death). The way Claire experiences and confronts the unconscious is through the manifestations of dreams because through dreaming "you learn about yourselves."[43]

What is interesting about dreams is that their importance in mythology, folklore, gothic and psychoanalysis is equally innate within the specific "genre." Since all four of these belief systems are interested in the unconscious, it is only normal that dreams possess an important place in their studies, for dreams are the most direct and "most frequent manifestation of the unconscious."[44] Campbell explained it best when he said: "Myths and dreams come from the same place. They come from the realizations of some kind that have then to find expression in symbolic form."[45]

Claire's dreams go beyond regular dreamtime for they eventually fuse with reality. Hence, they become an unconscious way of experiencing reality for Claire. Jordan uses many symbolic images to introduce Claire's moments of "Clairvoyance" by using the color red, as mentioned before, the symbolic color of the unconscious. One of the most thorough dream sequences in the film is when Claire discovers her husband's body in the abandoned Victorian hotel (this is Claire's eighth dream.) The dream sequence starts on a medium shot of Claire walking in her flowing red robes in front of a lake. Through the use of filters, Jordan focuses our eye on Claire's dress, making the red so rich and vivid that it is almost surreal. Moreover, Jordan uses the color red throughout all of the dream sequences either in costumes or through props (e.g. the apples.)

The first dream that is presented to the viewer, is when Claire is making love to her husband. She is wrapped in a red silk kimono and she sees Vivian leading a little girl

[43] Flowers, Betty Sue ed. *Joseph Campbell's The Power of Myth*, p. 47.
[44] Jung, Carl G. *The Integration of the Personality*, p. 5.
[45] Flowers, Betty Sue ed. *Joseph Campbell's The Power of Myth*, p. 41.

towards the abandoned orchard *The Good Apple.* In this dream sequence, which is introduced with the flowing red silk kimono, the three shots of the dream are of Vivian's bloody bandaged hand touching red apples in a tree, red apples on the grass and the hem of Vivian's red pants as he's walking through the apple covered ground. Once again Jordan uses filters, making the red pierce through the black and white imagery of the rest of the dream scenery.

This is the case for all ten of Claire's dreams. They are all initiated and inhabited by the color red or the symbolic imagery of water which, as we have seen previously, is also symbol of the unconscious. The red BMW Claire drives into the lake establishes the third and fourth dreams which are water dreams of her daughter and of Vivian as a boy. The second and fifth dreams are ones of apples. The sixth dream is of Vivian, with his red hair, kissing Claire. The seventh dream is set off by the apples in the sink while in the ninth and tenth dreams Claire is covered in her hospital's red blanket and she first dreams of Ruby and than of Red (Vivian.) Jordan's use of color in this respect acts just as the visual and audio distortions cues used to portray Claire's dreams. The red functions as a way to bring the unconscious to the surface and further exploit this basic fundamental idea of dreaming while awake, which is at the heart of Jordan's film.

The Return of the Hero

> "Out of the given life comes a new life. It may not be the hero's life, but it's a new life, a new way of being or becoming." (Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, p. 166)

Finally, the hero's quest ends with his return. Many myths could be read in favor of the hero where his fate seems to be in odds with his victory. However, this isn't the case for every mythical hero. "There are [...] examples of opponents whose strength is

such that the hero has absolutely no chance of winning, where his defeat is obvious from the very beginning."[46] Why then should he be considered a hero? Because, having considered the odds, he still has the valour to fight no matter how futile his battle may be; "he demonstrates that courage which is close to being divine."[47] For example, Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings'* hero, Frodo Baggins, although he inadvertently manages to triumph over evil and to save Middle Earth, must undergo a personal loss which seems almost more dreadful than death itself (i.e. being cast out of his home—he must leave the Shire behind forever even though it was the reason for his fighting in the first place and the thing for which he risked everything.) This is also Claire's fate although, to some degree, it could be argued that her journey's end is somewhat more prosperous and cheerful than Frodo's. Although she does not get her daughter's murderer, she does in fact find her beloved in the realm of the underworld. She encounters her daughter's spirit at the bottom of the lake. She finds a peace and serenity within the confines of the dark waters in her own death and through the ascension into the spiritual world that would have been unavailable in the physical world. If Claire had survived her fall, she would have ended up childless and a widow. However, with her death she is reunited with her loved ones. Most important of all is the supernatural power that Claire gains through her death. With her ascension into the spiritual realm, she has become the stronger being and is now capable of exercising her once passive power as the means of Vivian's demise. Claire's revenge against Vivian becomes more severe than the death penalty. She will drive him insane, giving him a dose of his own destructive power, turning him into the passive recipient she once were by forcing her visions on him this time around.

[46] Butler, Bill. *The Myth of the Hero*, p. 24.
[47] Ibid., p. 24.

Claire's death is the first step in her return because it "holds promise of a new life."[48] Leeming explains why the death of the hero is such a forceful and critical part of the hero's quest. He writes:

> "[Death] brings us to the immediate meaning of myth. The hero faces death and dies for us. In so doing he holds out a promise of new life through his sacrifice. He thus also teaches us something of the positive nature of death as the catalyst for a new birth through the spirit. As always, the hero is the symbol of the man in search of himself. At this stage in his voyage the hero is man in later part of life when death becomes increasingly our measuring rod. The hero stands physically annihilated at the edge of the Kingdom of Death. The time of life's prime has passed; the process of individuation moves away from the deeds of the body back to those of the spirit. The hero stands with humankind face to face with the unknown. The voyage into that unknown is initiated by death. The voyage itself is the subject."[49]

The unknown that Leeming is referring to here is the spiritual sphere of the individual; a degree of the spiritual self that can only be experienced through death for it is linked to the myth of the apotheosis where the hero "must be returned to the creator"[50] and attain some form of divinity himself. As we've seen above, Claire experiences death and rebirth. As mentioned previously, she experienced a death and a rebirth at the beginning of her tale through a symbolic baptism and in the process has transformed her consciousness. It's only fair to say that Claire's death and rebirth at the end of her tale would act as a symbolic resurrection, which comes to represent her self-realization in her process to individuation and the achievement of apotheosis. Considering she has experienced her true self in the physical world, the only thing left for her is to move past the physical sphere and experience her true spiritual self, beyond human restrictions. In other words, when Claire loses her life and her physical body, she loses her ego-

[48] Leeming, David Adams. *Mythology*, p. 180.
[49] Ibid., p. 181.
[50] Ibid., p. 257.

consciousness and in the process she succumbs to and gains full realization of the ego-unconscious. Although such a thing is impossible according to psychoanalysis, it becomes possible in Jordan's film through death and most particularly with apotheosis. Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* best describes this segment of the hero myth, he writes:

> "Like the Buddha himself, this godlike being is a pattern of the divine state to which the human hero attains who has gone beyond the last terrors of ignorance. 'When the envelopment of consciousness has been annihilated, then he becomes free of all fear, beyond the reach of change.' This is the release potential within us all, and which anyone can attain – through herohood; for, as we read: [...] 'All beings are without self'."[51]

Or Leeming explains it as such:

> "The hero of the apotheosis is the individual at his threshold. As he is carried off to heaven, he is acting out the final event in the great process of losing the self to find the self. The hero is the symbol here of the individual who has achieved the mythical consciousness, in which the divine within is active in relation to all things and events. To realize the self in its total reality is to repossess the soul –the world soul of the collective unconscious."[52]

Hence, by losing her physical self, Claire reaches a new degree of individuation beyond any she has experienced before and becomes stronger and more powerful than she ever was. Where before her powers could only point her towards her monsters (embodied in Vivian,) now she can use them to conquer the fiends. Through her physical death, Claire sheds all her fears and limitations which are part of the ego-consciousness and which stand in the way of attaining her own divinity.

[51] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 150-151.
[52] Leeming, David Adams. *Mythology*, p. 257.

Interestingly, there's always "something strange about the hero's death"[53] and it is often linked to the supernatural. This is also the case for Claire who happens to die and be resurrected in the dark waters of a lake twice during the film. Both times her fall into the water awakens a new aspect of her self. The first time, the fall stirs her unconscious self while the second time puts her in touch with her own divinity by achieving "mythical consciousness." Claire's return differs from familiar classical myths where most heroes return to society with teachings of their adventure by "bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess, back to the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may rebound to the renewing of the community."[54] Instead, Claire chose not to return (e.g. Buddha) and embraced her own mortality by following her daughter's spirit to the beyond. Nevertheless, since Jordan has managed to paint Claire as a mythological heroine, we, as viewers, can't help but suspect a return from our heroine especially since she was reborn from the water once before.

Furthermore, most heroes' deaths are accompanied by the legend "that he is either sleeping or hidden and that he will return."[55] In fact, Claire's return is best described by Campbell's words: "If the hero in his triumph wins the blessing of the goddess or the god and is then explicitly commissioned to return to the world with some elixir for the restoration of society, the final stage of his adventure is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron."[56] This explains Claire's heightened supernatural powers and the importance of coming back as a service to her community to advocate a law which society's own law enforcement failed to uphold. She returns as society's guardian angel

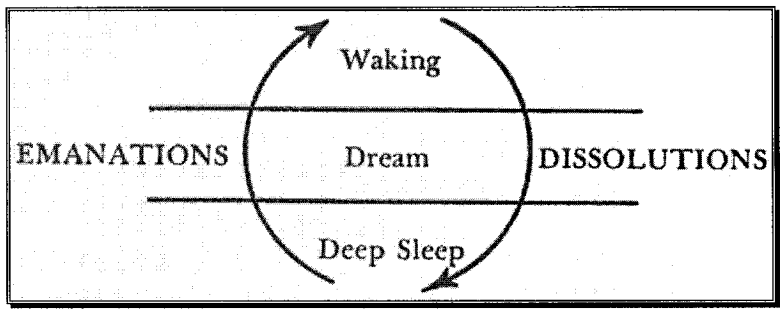
[53] Butler, Bill. *The Myth of the Hero*, p. 30.
[54] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 193.
[55] Butler, Bill. *The Myth of the Hero*, p. 30.
[56] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 196-197.

by becoming a vengeful spirit to Vivian. This is often the case of the hero Campbell refers to as the master of the two worlds. According to Campbell, this hero possess the "freedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the causal deep and back—not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other, yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other."[57] This is the hero who has chosen to remain within the spiritual realm but who returns solely to preach life's quintessential axioms because "the Law lives in him with his unreserved consent."[58]

In conclusion, Claire's journey falls within the confines of the cosmogonic cycle essential to the hero's quest. This cycle is known as "the circulation of consciousness through the three planes of being."[59] The first plane is the "waking experience." Claire experiences this in the first chapters after her rebirth and it is in some form her "childhood," when she experiences the unconscious for the first time. This is when she's fearful of her experience and is rather uncertain what to make of it. The second plane is the "dream experience." This is when Claire acknowledges her shadow, forcing herself into sleep in order to reach her animus. Finally the third plane is that of "deep sleep." Claire achieves this plane through her physical death, where everything is experienced unconsciously, where she masters divinity. Campbell's diagram of the cosmogonic cycle will help illustrate my point.

[57] Ibid., p. 229.
[58] Ibid., p. 237.
[59] Ibid., p. 265.

Figure 1: Campbell's Cosmogonic Cycle Diagram



What's interesting about the cosmogonic cycle is that it is an unending circle where waking follows deep sleep. In some way Jordan's film could be seen as a revolving mythical tale since Vivian's journey moves away from Claire's. While Claire passes from waking to disillusionment to deep sleep and back to emanation; Vivian's cycle moves from deep sleep (because he is first introduced as a spiritual being, existing solely through dreams, which is why his physicality isn't revealed to us until later in the film), to emanation and waking (by slowly materializing into a physical being through Claire's dreams of his childhood and through their meeting at *The Good Apple*) and finally to the dream state of dissolution (when he is being haunted by Claire's ghost, which will undoubtedly drive him further into insanity.) Moreover, this schematic construction of the cosmogonic cycle in Jordan's film is further concretized through the leitmotif of the twofold of the hero and the monster.

THE FAIRY TALE

The fairy tale is a literary deviation of mythology. Although some might argue that fairy tales appeared before myth, it is rather difficult to situate the origin of both literary styles. One thing that is certain is that both date back to several millenniums before Christ and both are linked to the collective unconscious. What's interesting about fairy tales is their relationship to children; or rather what many theorists call the misconception that they are part of the literature for children. Although the majority of fairy tales are now aimed at the nursery, due especially to Disney, they initially started out otherwise. In fact, "until about the seventeenth century, fairy tales were not reserved for children, but were told among grown-ups in the lower layers of the population."[60]

Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen stated numerous times that his books were not intended for children and reckoned it was "only a manner of speaking [that] I was referred to as 'the children's writer'."[61] After all, fairy tales are written by adults and read by adults either for themselves or for their children. Therefore, it is only logical to admit that some of the material (if not all, depending on the author) was aimed towards adults.

Moreover, it's difficult for many adults to admit that the fairy tales that they read as children still play an important role in their lives and that they are still attracted to their meanings. Much as mythology has changed throughout the centuries, making it harder for non-scholars to spot modern myths as revisions of old ones, so has the fairy tale adopted a new façade which can be equally difficult to ascertain. Like myths, fairy tales are

[60] Franz, Marie-Louise von. *Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales*. Dallas, Texas: Spring Publications, 1983; p. 11

[61] Tatar, Maria. *Off with their Heads!* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992; p. 45.

closely related to the unconscious through the symbolic and metaphoric. Thus, if these tales speak to our unconscious selves at an early age, it is only fair to say that they still influence our lives today, even if only subconsciously.

The best way to understand this is by looking at the significance of the fairy tale within popular culture. It demonstrates how the fairy tale is so strongly embedded in our collective unconscious. For example, take the Greek myth of Morpheus, son of Hypnos (or Sleep), the god of dreams, "who made human shapes appear to dreamers."[62] This tale was later transformed into E.T.A. Hoffman's fairy tale '*The Sandman*' (1817). At night the Sandman visits children who won't sleep and throws sand in their eyes causing their eyes to turn bloody and jump out of their heads. (Interestingly, this is the tale Freud discussed in his well-known article on "The Uncanny," therefore, situating the fairy tale within the gothic genre.) Many other fairy tales include the figure of the Sandman, otherwise known as the bogeyman. Neil Gaiman reshaped the myth of Morpheus and the fairy tale of the Sandman in his cult comic book *The Sandman*, whose main goth-like character, not surprisingly called Morpheus, is in charge of the dream world. Of course, this is an exceptional example where mythology, fairy tale, the gothic and the popular literary form of the comic book clearly delineate the relationship of these supposedly highly disparate literary genres.

However, *The Sandman* is not the only pertinent example. Take the interesting comic book cover from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* seen below. The world of Buffy is a mythical world straight out of Joss Whedon's (writer and creator of *Buffy*) imagination and both the television series and the literature, including the novels and the comic books,

[62] Grant, Michael. *Who's Who in Classical Mythology*. London & New York: Routledge, c2002; p. 225.

are a remarkable blend of modern and classical mythology. It is safe to say that Buffy is reconstructed as "Alice in Wonderland" in this particular issue both for the story and in the cover art where even the monster is a reproduction of the Jabberwock from "Through the Looking Glass" (illustrated by John Tenniel, 1871.)

Figure 2: Cover Art to Dark Horse's *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* #58

Figure 3: Jabberwock Art from *Through the Looking Glass.*

Moreover, fairy tale contents and influences are enormously evident within the Slayer World. In one particular episode of season four, called *Hush*, Buffy must defeat "fairy tale monsters" called The Gentlemen who stole the voices of everybody in Sunnydale in order to steal seven beating hearts. Since no one can scream, they are almost impossible to catch or defeat, especially since the only way to kill them is with a scream. Executive Producer/Writer Douglas Petrie described The Gentlemen as "the

creepiest villains we've ever done. I think [they] are straight out of the Brothers Grimm."[63]

Other examples might not be as obvious as *The Sandman* or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, but we can see many fairy tale influences within contemporary cinema. There are in fact many reworkings of our most popular fairy tales such as Andy Tennant's *Ever After* (1998) for "Cinderella," Michael Cohn's *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (1997) for "Snow White," Matthew Bright's *Freeway* (1996) for "Little Red Riding Hood," even "Hansel and Gretel" parodied on *The Simpsons*. Furthermore, there are a large number of films that may not be fairy tale films but still possess much of their meaningful content and archetypes. Films like Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1992), Lars von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* (2001), Sofia Coppola's *Virgin Suicides* (2000) and the Wachowski Brothers' *The Matrix* (1999) all make references to popular fairy tales. For example, *The Matrix* is a science-fiction version of "Alice in Wonderland." Neo (Keanu Reeves) is asked by Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) to follow the white rabbit. The rabbit—which ends up being the tattoo on a girl's shoulders—lead him to Trinity, who in turn will guide him to this other world. Neo falls into the new and alien world with the facilitation of the red pill, just as Alice's own predicaments are drug induced.

Many films targeted towards prepubescent and teenage girls have a pinch of "Cinderella's" generic patterns, such as John Huston's *Annie* (1982), Dennie Gordon's *What a Girl Wants* (2003), Garry Marshall's *Princess Diaries* (2001) and any other makeover film like Robert Iscove's *She's All That* (1999) to name but a few. However, it is not only teenage girls who get their fair dose of fairy tales, since most romantic

[63] *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Season Four DVD, Disc 3, Featurette on "Hush."

comedies that are aimed at women in their twenties and thirties contain some fairy tale components. For example Andy Tennant's *Sweet Home Alabama* (2002) has a mixture of the Bolognian tale "The Crumb in the Beard," Grimm's "Beauty and the Beast" and "King Thrusbeard," where Melanie (Reese Witherspoon) must get her lessons in humility and understand that pride is her greatest fault, before she can regain the love of her husband (who himself has transformed from beast to Prince.)

Likewise, strong mythological literature like J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, which were recently made into films, contain fairy tale elements aimed at both children and adults alike. As Tolkien himself stated: "most good 'fairy-stories' are about the *adventures* of men in the Perilous Realm or upon its shadowy marches,"[64] which brings us back to the concept of the quest and its relationship to the unconscious.

The similarities between mythology and the fairy tale are overwhelming. In fact, Jungian psychology—which was the first to take fairy tales seriously—often put the two literary disciplines in the same boat, for both have a distinct link to the dreams of men and to the collective unconscious. As well, it's safe to say that they both contain archetypal motifs and abstract characters. Otto Rank wrote that fairy tales belong to the "myth group"[65] while Tolkien explained that the fairy tale is the evident and obvious successor of myths, legends and epics. More importantly, the fairy tale, like mythology, deals with learning about the self and the integration of personality, of achieving an ego-

[64] Tolkien, J.R.R. "On Fairy-Stories," in *Essays presented to Charles Williams*. Ed. C.S. Lewis . Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1966; p. 42.
[65] Rank, Otto. *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*. New York: The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1914; p. 83.

unconsciousness through the convergence of the ego, the id, and the superego. Where mythology was closer to the divine and religion per se, the fairy tale brings the undercurrent of collective fears and anxieties to a more personal human dilemma.

It would be rather unfair to position mythology as stories about gods and fairy tales as fables about ordinary people, because both characters of legends and folktales are archetypal figures. However, fairy tale figures are much more clear and simple in their depiction. As Marie-Louise von Franz explains, "fairy tales actually tell us about figures of the unconscious."[66] The characters encountered in fairy tales are personifications of fears, anxieties, and desires. This is where the monsters of the fairy tale come to represent the pressures of the id on children which Bettelheim so strongly professed:

> "Until we have achieved full personality integration, our id (our instinctual pressures, our animal nature) lives in uneasy peace with our ego (our rationality). The fairy tale tells how when the animal instincts are strongly aroused, rational controls lose the power to restrain."[67]

Most importantly, the fairy tale teaches the child to cope with his dark side, with his id pressures, and helps him learn that it must be "an integral part of [his] personality [as much] as the ego."[68] Once again this refers back to the first section of this paper. However, unlike mythological heroes who have a shadow and/or an anima (or animus), the fairy tale figures *are* the shadow or the anima (or animus). This explains why the fairy tale characters are always either white or black, good or evil. There are no in-betweens, except perhaps for Claire (in *In Dreams*) as will be further developed later in this paper. And although Claire is—as we've seen—a mythological heroine, she also falls

[66] Franz, M-L von. *Problems of the Feminine in Fairy Tales*. Switzerland: Spring Publications, 1972; p. 6.
[67] Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Vintage Books, c1989; p. 81.
[68] Ibid., p. 85.

within the mold of the fairy tale heroine, through the reworkings of many important fairy tale motifs. The same could be said of Vivian, who exemplifies the atypical, yet familiar, villain of fairy tales.

Neil Jordan has often incorporated fairy tale elements within his films, especially his most gothic works like *The Company of Wolves* (1985, based on Angela Carter's short story) *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) and *In Dreams*. As a matter of fact, even a film like *The Crying Game* (1992) could be seen as a modern fairy tale, where incidentally the hero is both the recipient and the teller of the folk tale of "the scorpion and the frog." However, *The Company of Wolves* aside, *In Dreams* is Jordan's strongest film when it comes to its relationship with fairy tales. Jordan introduces many fairy tale archetypes and concepts, which situate Claire's quest into a mythology of the self. Her quest for identity is defined by her feminine principle. In other words, the way she is constructed as a fairy tale heroine delineates her own pros and cons into her self-realization and reflection.

Where Mythology Bleeds into the Fairy Tale: Claire as Daughter of Eve, Untamable Shrew, and Mother Aspect

> "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, Thy head, thy sovereign;... And craves no other tribute at thy hands. But love, fair looks, and true obedience—..." (William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, V.2.144-45)

The fairy tale is of Pagan origin, an oral tradition passed down from generation to generation in an unconscious attempt to construct a vinculum between Christianity and Paganism. The fairy tale, like many important literary forms, has been greatly influenced by the Biblical myth of Adam and Eve and more particularly by humanity's fall from innocence. As Northrop Frye states:

> "The story of Adam and Eve in Eden has thus a canonical position for poets in our tradition whether they believe in its historicity or not. The reason for the greater profundity of canonical myth is not solely tradition, but the result of the greater degree of metaphorical identification that is possible is myth. In literary criticism the myth is normally the metaphorical key to the displacements of romance, hence the importance of the quest-myth of the Bible in what follows. But because of the tendency to expurgate and moralize in canonical myth, the less inhibited area of legend and folk tale often contains an equally great concentration of mythical meaning."[69]

In fairy tales in particular, it is the mythical meaning engendered by the figure of Eve—humanity's greatest transgressor—which is so resonant in its narratives. This motif will later influence romanticism (a close cousin to gothic) as much as gothic literature. The romantics perceived the fall as a positive one, also known as *felix culpa*—the fortunate fall—where only through the act of the fall could humanity truly understand what it had and what is ultimately to be achieved once more.

On the other hand, fairy tales interpret the fall as a lesson from which there is much to be learned, turning the Biblical fall from grace into a cautionary or exemplary tale. And although most were aimed at or about children or prepubescent youths, many other tales were designed for an adult audience. Even today, there are many interesting authors of adult fairy tales such as Gregory Maguire (*Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked witch of the West* [1995], *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister* [1999], *Lost* [2001]); Margaret Atwood (*Bluebeard's Egg* [1983], *The Robber Bride* [1993], *The Handmaid's Tale* [1985], etc...); Tanith Lee (*White as Snow* [2000]); or the brilliant late Angela Carter (*The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* [1979], *Black Venus* [1985], *American Ghosts and Old World Wonders* [1993], etc....)

[69] Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c1973; p. 188.

Jordan reinforces this image of the Biblical fall in the film through the use of the powerful symbolic imagery of the apple. In fact, it is through the elaborate use of symbols that Jordan links the fairy tale with Claire's heroic quest for self-realization.

With the imagery of the apple, Jordan connects Claire's journey to the myth of the Biblical fall, thus presenting Claire as a daughter of Eve like Bluebeard's wife. Furthermore, Claire's descent to the underworld is emphasized by this symbolic imagery, creating a parallel between Claire and Eve and between Vivian and the serpent who snares his innocent victims through the temptation of the forbidden fruit. Moreover, the apple is connected with consciousness throughout the film (as explained in the first section of this work.) While the apple symbolizes the fruit of knowledge in the Biblical myth of the fall, so does it signify Claire's own source of insight, eventually leading her to the evil persecutor of the tale.

More importantly, this symbolic imagery links the film with another fable, the fairy tale of "Snow White." In fact, it is safe to say that *In Dreams* is an unusual adaptation of "Snow White," or rather, a postmodern rendition of the popular tale. This explains the prominence of the apple imagery within the confines of the film. Although the poisoned apple doesn't make an appearance in every version of the "Snow White" tales (sometimes it's a poisoned pin, comb, meat, dress, golden ring, raisin, etc.,) it is nonetheless the most celebrated adaptation concretized by the Brothers Grimm and later popularized by Disney's film version of the tale. Sibylle Birkhaüser-Oeri described the symbolic interpretation of the apple in "Snow White." She writes:

> "The queen's last trick is the poisoned apple. In mythology this fruit has generally been regarded as a symbol of love. For example it is associated with Venus, the goddess of love. But in the Biblical story, eating the apple

brings with it recognition of the moral antitheses within God. So the apple is connected not only with love but with coming to consciousness too."[70]

This statement demonstrates the correlation between the apple and the unconscious that is found in *In Dreams* (as mentioned above) because the apple is a recurrent image that either initializes or is part of many of the film's dream sequences (as described in the first section of this paper.) However, the film's similarities to the "Snow White" tales go beyond this simple symbolic imagery of the apple, and so does the idea of the Biblical fall.

The fact that Claire is constructed as a persecuted heroine connects her to Eve. Obviously, it's easier to impose the fairy tale with a Biblical fall context on children cautionary tales, since children's association with innocence is more evident than it is with adults. However, women have also been nominated as contenders of transgression. Maria Tatar writes "like children, women—by nature volatile and unruly—were positioned as targets of disciplinary intervention that would mold them for subservient roles."[71] Therefore, unless the fairy tale heroine learns to acknowledge man's superiority in the hierarchy of gender, she's doomed to pay for Eve's sin simply because she *is* female.

Claire calls to mind many important fairy tale heroines besides Snow White, such as Alice of "Alice in Wonderland," Beauty of "Sleeping Beauty" and the young wife in "Bluebeard." Interestingly, it's Bluebeard's wife who is seen as the transgressor of the tale, through her disobedience and her curiosity, despite the fact that her husband is a

[70] Birkhaüser-Oeri, Sibylle. *The Mother: The Archetypal Image in Fairy Tales*. Ed. Marie-Louise von Franz. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books, 1988; p. 37.
[71] Tatar, Maria. *Off with their Heads!*, p. 96.

serial killer. This is also the case for Claire. She is once and again ignored, ridiculed, imprisoned, and even abused because of her "otherness." Her gift, or rather her power, is misunderstood and feared by all three patriarchal subdivisions; the legislative (police), the institutional/organizational (the doctors), and the familial (her own husband). Her power is thus denigrated into passivity and repositioned by male authority as a female disorder—deeming her gift as being a form of dementia. Through her lack of cooperation in this forced rehabilitation into female subordination, she, like Eve, is transformed into the supreme transgressor.

This is what Tatar refers to as fairy tale's crucial Shakespearian formula of "The Taming of the Shrew" that "by making fun of a woman's fall from notorious willfulness to abject subservience, is doubly invested in a move that degrades women."[72] This is exactly what the patriarchal order is attempting to do to Claire. Although the term "making fun of" might not literally be representative of *In Dreams*, it is clear that Claire's power is not taken seriously by the male characters in the film. The sole exception to this is Vivian. However, as will be examined later, Vivian is not representative of a male archetype in this tale.

Claire does not give up as easily as Katherina in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. In fact, by using this gift that is so feared by the males of the tale, Claire remains independent and refuses to give up her power for knowledge. In consequence, these men view her as a monstrous feminine figure who wields an unnatural power and hence one who must be contained because her witchcraft is nothing more than lunacy. Nonetheless, it is through this magic that she finds empowerment, obtains her goals and acquires

[72] Ibid., p. 106.

knowledge. Here is where Claire's tale differs from ordinary fairy tales, since magic is usually given to the dark figure of the evil witch. Although white magic does exist within the realm of the fairy story, it's usually not handled by the heroine herself, but rather by a benevolent spirit, often a dead parent or a fairy godmother. On the other hand, Claire, much like *The Wizard of Oz*'s Dorothy, has the magic within herself. But unlike Dorothy, Claire's power lies within the confines of her own body, not within red slippers. Claire's magic lies within her unconscious, through the integration and experience of her whole self; her ego, her id, and her superego. Also this means that unlike Snow White or Bluebeard's wife, Claire doesn't need to be saved by the opposite sex. She possesses the powers of redemption within herself, by embracing her feminine principle.

An interesting way to study Claire's feminine power, both as a daughter of Eve and as a postmodern fairy tale heroine, is through the intermittence of the mythic and fairy tale symbolic use of colors. Different colors are used as character identity and as a way of delineating the different stages of the heroic journey into the search of the self. Claire's power relates to the color red in mythology, as discussed in the first section of this work. It also conflates the film with "Snow White" once again. The good Queen of "Snow White" wishes one day for "a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the window frame."[73] Soon after giving birth to a child who fulfills her deepest desires, she dies. It's through the combination of these three colors that Snow White becomes the "fairest of them all" and earns the Evil Queen's jealousy towards her. The use of these three colors within the tale is as of great symbolic importance as the apple and the mirror. Birkhaüser-Oeri explains:

[73] Brothers Grimm, "Snow White," in *The Classic Fairy Tales*. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999; p. 83.

> "Snow White represents emotions in their original pure form, unadulterated with selfish or secondary aims. Her characteristic white color can also be taken as the spirit, the color of the supernatural or heavenly. It suggests an unworldliness. As an initial stage it signifies emotions which are still naïve and genuine because they have not yet run into the ambiguity of life. [...] The black suggests something dark, evil, and the red blood symbolizes warmth, life, emotion, in other words active sympathy, in contrast to the cool color of the snow. That aspect of herself is first introduced to her from outside and in negative form."[74]

As shown in the first section of this work, the importance of the color red and its link with the unconscious is crucial in Jordan's film. Jordan goes out of his way to employ these three colors, but through the permutation of their conventional specifications. Snow White is symbolically linked with white, the Evil Queen with black and the threat between them as red for it is the red aspect of Snow White, symbolizing her awakening sexuality, which inspires the jealousy in the Queen, and it is the red side of the apple that brings death to Snow White. Red becomes a sort of neutral force between the two women of the tale.

However, in Jordan's film red is Claire's color. She is constantly associated with the color through her clothing and, more importantly, through her personality. Claire is not the innocent naïve virginal little girl of "Snow White." Instead, the white in the film is represented by Rebecca and later by Ruby. Claire embraces her dark side, becoming the personification of the struggle between good and evil. She is both black and white and therefore she becomes the red of the tale, through the unification of both negative and positive side of the self. This is what gives her the power to free herself and her daughter. It is what brings a feminist twist to Jordan's version. Where the white of Snow White

[74] Birkhaüser-Oeri, Sibylle. *The Mother*, p. 33-34.

forced her into passivity, the red of Claire transforms her into a strong active female who needs no prince to save her.

Claire becomes the representation of the woman in touch with her shadow, the perfect balance between good and evil, light and dark, black and white. Hence, Claire's binary nature earns her the dual quality of the neutrality of red, representative of love and war, life and death, warmth and violence. This explains the repetitive use of the color in Claire's presence, especially from the asylum escape on, where the shadow has been fully integrated within her personality. This also links the film within Delaney, Lupton and Toth's idea of the Triple Goddess, where the white stands for the maiden, the red for the mother and the black for the crone.[75]

Rebecca (and later Ruby) is the maiden aspect of the Triple Goddess. In Paganism, she represents the waxing moon. Therefore, she personifies "the continuation of all life, the repeating of endless cycles of birth and rebirth, both of the body and of the spirit."[76] She is known in many forms and variations throughout the world, as Greek Goddesses Hestia, Artemis and Athene, or Roman Goddesses Diana and Juventas; yet, she is best known as Kore-Persephone. She is the young maiden who confronts and guides the spirits of the dead and prepares them for rebirth. This image further links Rebecca's role in Jordan's film. It is of no surprise that Rebecca is the first thing Claire sees after her fall into the reservoir (first with her suicide attempt and then when she struggles with Vivian,) guiding her "dead" mother and preparing her for her rebirth. The

[75] Delany, Janice, Mary Jane Lupton, and Emily Toth. "The Bleeding Tower: Menstrual Themes in Fairy Tales," in *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988; pp. 132.
[76] Conway, D.J. *Maiden, Mother, Crone: The Myth & Reality of the Triple Goddess*. St-Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1999; p. 21.

maiden is also known to join life and death together, just as in *In Dreams* where Rebecca unites life (the mother/Claire) with death (the crone/Vivian). This aspect of her character ties in with Birkhaüser-Oeri's idea of the white representing a form of unworldliness because Rebecca's function within the tale is especially vital after her death. She leads her mother first towards death (Vivian) and than towards rebirth through supernatural means.

On the other hand, the crone is the waning moon and she represents all ends to a cycle. She was known through various titles like: old woman, wise one, the Dark Mother, hag, etc. She was represented through Goddesses like the Celtic Morgan the Fate, the Greek Atropos from the trinity of Fates or as the Hindu Kali. She has the power to create death and is the most feared of all faces of the Threefold Goddess. Delaney, Lupton and Toth write:

> "The old witch in Grimm's tales has the appearance of the menopausal woman of old: protruding nose and chin, facial hair, bowed back, coarsened voice. She specializes in malicious curses on the young and frequently has in her care a pubertal maiden. More than once in the stories, she is associated with child cannibalism. Black is her color, the color of death, decay, and the crone aspect of the Great Goddess."[77]

Vivian is the crone aspect in the story through his androgyny, his capture and captivity of young maidens, and his hunger for human lives. The crone represents death, transformation, and initiates a return. Vivian's role in Jordan's film is similar, for he is the dealer of death for Rebecca, Paul and Claire.

The symbolism of the mother aspect is best described by the wiccan author D.J. Conway, who writes:

[77] Delany, Janice, Mary Jane Lupton, and Emily Toth. "The Bleeding Tower;" pp. 132.

> "The mother aspect of the goddess is synonymous with the adulthood stage of humans. She is the full moon...the mother is the fullness of life, the Creatress, the Wheel-Turner for the seasons, the divine receptacle of all knowledge. Sometimes She was called Earth Mother, sometimes Sky Mother. She is divine Teacher at the calm center of the spiritual labyrinth, the One who initiates seekers into the deeper Mysteries. She does not run before us like the Maiden, but walks beside us, hand in hand, whispering revelations and prophecies."[78]

The mother aspect represents the creative aspect of the Goddess, whether it is a goal, a project, a spiritual journey or a family. It is certain that Claire's symbolic representation of the Mother is linked to her spiritual journey and her quest for identity. Her color is red, like the mother aspect of the Goddess. It is red because of her "child-rearing function [...] and menstrual function," as well as her dual personality of the "natural mother and the stepmother. The true mother is good and loving but dies prematurely, frequently at the birth of a longed-for daughter. The stepmother is wicked and seeks to harm the child or shut her away from the world."[79] This concept isn't far removed from what we see in Jordan's film for the good mother does die with her child's death. Only after Rebecca's death does Claire accept her id pressures (her shadow) as being part of her personality. She doesn't become a victim of dark powers. Instead, she learns how to use them to her own advantage. Hence, her story reflects the necessary development of a healthy inner maturation and reflects what Bettelheim believes to be the necessary steps to the child's inner development. This is when she becomes the "stepmother" to Ruby. Although she isn't represented as an evil stepmother, since her goal is to save Ruby, it's clear that evil is an integrated part of her spiritual journey and part of what situates her outside of the white or the black.

[78] Conway, D.J. *Maiden, Mother, Crone*, p. 48.
[79] Delany, Janice. "The Bleeding Tower," pp. 133.

Also, as mentioned previously, the relationship of the Triple Goddess with the three phases of the moon and its link to the three characters of *In Dreams* is closely linked to the moons mythical connection to the triadic notion of the quest and the search of the self. Mircea Eliade "notes that while the sun is always the same, always itself, never in any sense 'becoming,' the moon, on the other hand, is a body which waxes, wanes and disappears, a body whose existence is subject to the universal law of becoming, of birth and rebirth."[80] Hence, there is another connection to the birth-initiation-return triad and the cosmogonic cycle of waking-dream-deep sleep since the moon's phases (birth-fullness-disappearance) found in the Triple Goddess reverberates not only those two threesomes, but also comes to symbolize psyche's divisions of the self in the ego-superego-id.

In Dreams as a Postmodern "Snow White": Claire As Snow White and Vivian as the Evil Queen

> "Mirror, Mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of us all?" (Claire, first line of *In Dreams*, 0:03:56.)

It is clear that *In Dreams* is a postmodern take on Grimm's tale of "Snow White" as it mirrors a new gender politic for both Claire and Vivian. Obviously, since this is a modern reconstruction of the old tale, there are many new twists to be acknowledged within the narrative. Nevertheless, the meaning of the tale remains the same. Cristina Bacchilega explains how a postmodern tale works, she states:

> "Postmodern re-visions of 'Snow White' acknowledge the power that such a metaphor has had. Rather than simply renewing and updating that power, however, they name and question its ideological nature. If the fairy tale symbolically seeks to represent some unquestionable natural state of being, postmodern fairy tales seek to expose this state's generic and

[80] Weigle, Marta. *Spiders and Spinsters: Women and Mythology*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982; p. 155.

> gendered 'lie' or artifice. [...] These retellings make the implicit link between narrative and gender (re)production in 'Snow White' apparent, and narrative and psychological claims to truth can be questioned. [...] the process of re-vision exposes and challenges the authority of the mirror."[81]

This is what Jordan does with Grimm's tale. Although the basis to his story is rooted within the generic pattern of "Snow White," Jordan reworks the tale's themes, often violating the traditional meanings it contains. Mainly, this is done through gender construction. By studying Claire and Vivian more closely, we realize that Jordan introduces a Snow White and an Evil Queen far removed from Grimm's tale.

As we've seen with the aspects of the Great Goddess, the characters of the maiden, the mother and the crone are easily identifiable. However, there is another way to examine the revisions of the tale of "Snow White" within the film that goes beyond the role of motherhood or maturity. In fact, Claire could be seen as a reconstruction of Snow White herself. (Let's not forget that Rebecca, who plays the role of the mirror in the school play of "Snow White," tells her mother that she "is the fairest of them all.")

Vivian is constructed as the Evil Queen, while the magic mirror that stands between him and Claire is symbolically rendered through dreams and their gift of vision and is personified through Claire's daughters, Rebecca and Ruby. They personify the mirror because some of the dreams are about them and, more importantly, because they stand between the persecutor and the persecuted. Birkhäuser-Oeri has described "Snow White" best when writing about the power of the mirror. She writes:

> "Snow White is actually a portrayal of a process of emotional development by which one is continually made painfully aware of the inner antitheses. Let us consider details. The evil queen has a mirror which

[81] Bacchilega, Cristina. *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997; p. 35-36.

> tells her the truth, and which later always helps her to know whether and where Snow White is living. She asks, 'Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest one of all?' and then receives an answer. The mirror is of course an instrument of her vanity on the one hand, but this mirror is more: it is the queen's source of information about other people, a sort of higher intelligence. By means of the mirror she is all-seeing, omniscient."[82]

Much like the Evil Queen, Vivian possesses power over Claire because he can control this mirror to the point where he can even force visions upon the unsuspecting "innocent persecuted heroine." Moreover, it's this supernatural power which turns him into an "all-seeing, omniscient" character to be feared by the "feeble" female protagonist. Also, the instrument of the mirror reinforces the Queen's inability to "grow up," illustrated by her frozen development within the mirror stage, which is nothing more than the pre-Oedipal stage. On the other hand, Vivian is fixed in the Oedipal stage. While he may seem to be more mature than the Evil Queen, he still represents the individual who is incapable of developing into full maturation. More importantly, it's a well known fact that "Snow White" is a tale of "female development and [...] jealousy"[83] and that the mirror between them comes to represent the mimetic relationship of these two female characters. This theme will be analyzed thoroughly in section three of this paper. Furthermore, since Rebecca and Ruby represent the mirror they become a way for Vivian to control Claire. It is Claire's visions and her maternal care for the girls that lead her to her confrontation with Vivian. However, Claire goes willingly to her persecutor for the final battle, unlike Snow White who hides and remains unaware of her own battle against the Evil Queen.

[82] Birkhaüser-Oeri, Sibylle. *The Mother*, p. 34.
[83] Bacchilega, Cristina. *Postmodern Fairy Tales*, p. 31.

In Dreams breaks the conventional gender role or, as Bacchilega says, it "tries to make us aware of how mirroring limits the options of both female and male characters in 'Snow White,'"[84] hence, it seeks to escape the frame of "proper" gender compliance within society. Where Snow White's reflection becomes the masculine expectancy of the ideal feminine, Claire rebels against the mold which is forced upon her, breaks through the male fantasy of female passivity and gains great power through this refusal. However, like any reward-and-punishment tale (as Grimm's "Mother Holle," "Hans my Hedgehog," and "Golden Bird,") Claire must pay for her defiance against patriarchy and loses her idealized femininity by being perceived by the opposite sex (with all three patriarchal subdivisions mentioned previously) as irrational and incompetent.

As Bacchilega rightfully declares, "Snow White rarely has a voice of her own, and when she does speak, she merely accepts things as they are."[85] She is the perfect representation of female obedience and submissiveness. In the Chilean version of the tale ("Blanca Rosa and the Forty Thieves"), Snow White/Blanca Rosa:

> "Becomes 'distraught' at seeing herself 'alone with this man she had never met, and totally nude.' Since she 'would not be calmed and insisted on leaving,' the prince responds simply by driving the needle back into her head, thus quieting her down and getting a chance to think 'what he could possibly do with the lovely maiden'."[86]

Snow White is the personification of female docility and passivity *at extremis*, exemplified in "Blanca Rosa" where she is depicted as an inanimate object—a doll—who can be turned off or on by the dominant male of the tale. Interestingly, Claire starts out a lot like Blanca Rosa. Vivian forces the visions into Claire's mind submitting her into an

[84] Ibid., p. 42.
[85] Ibid., p. 35.
[86] Ibid., p. 35.

inanimate state, suspended in limbo between the external world and the inner world of dreams. Initially she is coerced into inertia and idleness because she doesn't understand her own unconscious, or her own inner powers. But unlike Blanca Rosa or Snow White, she breaks the mirror of male desire and becomes her own woman, not the reflection of what a woman should be according to patriarchal beliefs. She becomes the active, strong woman who will catch her daughter's murderer and free her stepdaughter Ruby.

Moreover, Claire isn't the only character who violates conventions. Vivian comes to represent the Evil Queen in the tale through various aspects of gender bending. Vivian's gender remains ambivalent, represented androgynously throughout the entire film. At the beginning of the tale, his sexual identity is left hidden. When he is declared male, his connection with femininity is still strongly insinuated especially through the use of cross-dressing (e.g. escaping the mental hospital, seducing the security officer and killing Claire's husband in Claire's kimono,) physical appearance (long hair and painted nails,) and through his affinity with "dolls."

Furthermore, Vivian's fascination with women is made obvious by his abduction of little girls, his obsession with Claire and his loathing for his mother. It is clear that it is the opposite sex which has shaped Vivian's life and Jordan easily depicts the absence of Vivian's father through his lullaby "my father was a dollar" which calls to mind a workaholic father, a father of little value, or a prostitute mother—either way the song refers to an absent father figure. Moreover, through the numerous flashbacks into Vivian's childhood, Jordan continues to show the absence of a male role model. This further explains Vivian's fixation on the Oedipal complex and why his maturation into selfhood is impossible.

Hence, this absent male archetype has affected Vivian's development to the point where Vivian is possessed by his anima, which is based on the image of his mother. He abducts young girls, but unlike the usual child abductor, Vivian's fascination with little girls isn't embedded in pedophilia. Instead, he is violent with the girls, much like his mother was violent with him and continues this vicious pattern towards a child of the opposite sex. His fancy for the child is an expression of pedophobia and retaliation against his mother's violent behaviour. At the same time, Vivian's choice of abductees is deeply rooted in the male fantasy that femininity rhymes with passivity. Vivian himself says to Claire that he had to kill Rebecca because she was responsive, because he couldn't just shut her off like a doll, like Blanca Rosa. This also explains why Ruby is the only abducted girl who survives; she remains docile and compliant towards Vivian and accepts becoming a doll with whom Vivian can play house.

The complexity of Vivian's obsession with Claire is extraordinary. On the one hand, she embodies the perfect mother, the good mother of the fairy tale, the one he wishes he could have had. This is the positive mother archetype that, as a boy, he wants to marry and play house with. On the other hand, Claire is a mother, by consequence making her the evil (step)mother of the fairy tale, the one he experienced in his childhood. She represents the fearful dark aspects of the mother archetype, on which his anima is based and which he wishes to destroy. The relationship between Claire and Vivian's mother is intensified at the story's ending when Claire parades in Vivian's mother's clothing. This is when Vivian's murderous disposition takes over and when he finally succeeds in destroying his mother by accidentally killing Claire. Through an intricate Oedipal complex, Vivian's jealous anima manages to kill his ultimate adversary;

his mother. This is where Bacchilega's statement echoes truer than most that "Snow White" is "the story of a mother who cannot grow up and a daughter who must."[87] The Evil Queen/Vivian is stuck in the Oedipal stage through the dominance of her/his violent anima while Snow White/Claire must learn to grow beyond male beliefs of the feminine archetype and grow to full maturation through the integration of her personality.

Generic Persecution Pattern

Jordan's film isn't simply connected to the "Snow White" tale because of its treatment and modifications of certain themes and symbols. In fact, a structural analysis of the film will expose its mimetic relationship to the Grimm's generic structure of the tale. Let's examine Steven Swann Jones' structural analysis of the Grimm's version. He writes:

> "In 'Snow White,' the cycle of hostilities directed against the heroine involves three steps: first, a threat is directed against the heroine; second, that the threat is realized in some form of hostility; and finally, a rescue or escape from the hostility is effected. This cycle is generally repeated twice in the narrative of 'Snow White': first, when she is initially threatened, expelled, and then adopted; and second, when she is attacked, killed, and finally resuscitated and married. Versions of 'Snow White' follow this persecution pattern faithfully, presenting us generally with two instances or separate occasions of hostility directed against the heroine."[88]

What's interesting about Swann's theory is that despite the hundreds of versions of the tale, despite all of the variants found world wide, the cornerstone of the tale revolves around this "twofold repetition of a persecuted cycle," moving from threat, to hostility, to escape and back again. As we've seen with Jordan's film, the "Snow White" formula has been reworked through various processes, to the point where many viewers

[87] Ibid., p. 31.
[88] Jones, Steven Swann. "The Structure of 'Snow White'," in *Fairy Tales and Society*. Ed. Ruth B.Bottigheimer. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986; p. 172.

would overlook the film as a portrayal of a postmodern rendition of the popular tale. However, despite all the discrepancies between the film and the tale, it remains that the film's structure fits within Swann's structural conception and is based on this dual cycle of threat-hostility-escape.

The first cycle in the tale, according to the most common version as told by the Grimm's Brothers, reveals the threat of the jealous stepmother who first learns of the heroine's beauty. The hostility revolves around the expulsion of Snow White to the woods and the Queen's order to have her killed. The escape centers on Snow White's flight from the huntsman and her adoption by the dwarfs. In Jordan's film Claire goes through a similar generic pattern. The first threat resides within her connection with the child abductor through her dreams. She foresees her daughter's abduction but is incapable of stopping the outcome, thinking that her dreams represent the present and not the future; hence, her only daughter is abducted. The hostility is created by the death of her daughter, while the escape of the protagonist is achieved through Claire's leap into the reservoir; a suicidal act in which Claire attempts to escape her predicament through death. In a way, her action results in her adoption into the hidden and secluded world of the hospital.

The second cycle in "Snow White" starts out with a second threat upon the innocent persecuted heroine. The Queen finds out that her stepdaughter isn't dead. This drives the Queen to kill Snow White. This is the moment that "the heroine dies at the hands of the persecutor"[89] through the use of the poisoned apple. Finally, the heroine escapes through resuscitation after the prince acquires her body. The piece of poisoned

[89] Jones, Steven Swann. "The Structure of 'Snow White'," p. 175.

apple is dislodged from her throat, she revives and they marry. In Jordan's film, Claire's predicament once again follows the cycle found in the tale. The renewed threat is the knowledge that her daughter's kidnapper is still at large and most importantly that he's still kidnapping young girls, specifically Ruby. The hostility pattern in the second cycle is identical to "Snow White;" Claire dies at the hands of her tormenter, although she does this by saving Ruby. Finally, Claire's concluding escape is done through a different familial union; through the reunion with her daughter. This is followed by her resuscitation into the haunting spirit for the purpose of getting her just desserts and punishing her evil persecutor.

What's significant in both escape scenarios of the tale and the film is that the heroines manage to free themselves from the conflicts encountered through a metamorphosis of "her situation, status, and environment."[90] In the first escape scenario in *In Dreams*, Claire suffers the loss of her daughter and thus shifts situations from being a mother to a being a childless woman. Her status change comes from her fall from sanity to insanity. Her environmental adjustment involves her move from home to the asylum. In the second escape motif, Claire's situation shifts from fear of her shadow to its incorporation into her self, her status changes from life to death, while her environment moves from outer world to inner world. Jordan uses many interesting ways to separate these two generic patterns. The first scenario is situated mainly within the home, representing the family as the main recipient of threat, hostility and escape. This environment is also linked to rationality and reality. However, the second setting is within the mental hospital and at *The Good Apple*, both of which calls to mind madness,

[90] Jones, Steven Swann. "The Structure of 'Snow White'," p. 173.

irrationality and the out of this world (as will be further explored in the next section.) In a way, the first environment is representative of the fairy tale (Claire's world), whilst the second is definitely prescribed within the uncanny and the gothic world (Vivian's world). The distinct separation between the first and second persecuted pattern is directly linked to the idea of the quest.

The generic structure of the film brings to full circle the notion first established in the opening chapter of this work, where the birth-quest-return formula of mythology is repeated in the threat-hostility-escape theorem of the fairy tale. The repetition of the generic persecution pattern reinforces the idea of duality, which as we see, is reflected not only in the characters of Claire and Vivian but also within the film's narrative structure. Henceforth, it would be safe to say that the birth-quest-return formula is also doubled. Moreover, this generic pattern reinforces the idea of the heroic quest, because it is through Claire's own maturation that the film is able to progress to the next stage. The film's own narrative form is a mirror to Claire's own inner development. Swann warrants that "the sequence of episodes is structured to correspond to the basic trials and transitions of the maturing young woman [and] coincide with what may be considered three of the most crucial transitions in the heroine's life—puberty, marriage, and childbirth."[91]

This is where Jordan's postmodern version of the tale differs from the more popular Grimm's version. Claire's journey into womanhood is the inverted reflection of Snow White's. Claire moves from mother, to single woman, to maturation (growth through the acceptance of her shadow within her self.) In other words, where Snow

[91] Jones, Steven Swann. "The Structure of 'Snow White'," p. 177.

White's maturation progresses "from asexual to sexual individual, from an unattached and unmarried woman to a married one, and finally from a childless woman to a child-rearing mother;"[92] Claire, antithetically, moves from child-rearing mother to childless woman (through the loss of her child), from married woman to an unattached one (through the loss of her husband), from sexual being to an asexual child (through the act of playing house with Vivian.) Hence, Jordan's vision of the tale intensifies the notion of maturation through the process of self-realization through Claire's understanding of her own self as modern woman, not as mother or wife. This differs markedly from the antiquated fairy tale notion that the heroine must find her prince if she is ever to be whole since she can never be whole without a man to complete her (or as Snow White sings in Disney's version "Some day my Prince will come".) It is safe to say that Jordan's rendition of the tale, much like his version of "Little red Riding Hood" in *The Company of Wolves*, exists as a strong feminist discourse of which Angela Carter would have been proud.

[92] Jones, Steven Swann. "The Structure of 'Snow White'," p. 179.

THE GOTHIC

The gothic is born out of mythology and the fairy tale. In fact, the gothic novel draws on the many myths, fairy tales, and legends of old, giving them new twists through the application of psychoanalysis. The symbolic and metaphoric focus of mythology has gradually moved from the collective towards the individual. We have seen that the fairy tale introduced the new concept of psychoanalysis, especially in the latest and most popular versions of the tales by Charles Perrault, The Grimm Brothers and Hans Christian Andersen. With the gothic novel, psychoanalysis became such an important foundation to the literature that many theorists mentioned that Freud's writings are essentially gothic in origin, while others maintain that gothic is at the root of psychoanalysis due to the fact that it originated before psychoanalytic theories and that it studies the psyche, the human mind, and the unconscious.

Although all three literary forms represent a certain mythology of the self, with the advent of the gothic novel this interest moved from the cultural to the personal, from the societal to the familial, from the exterior to the interior. Obviously, the gothic is a relatively new literary form, especially in comparison to the other two forms examined earlier in this work. More importantly, gothic has introduced a new methodology to the study of the dark side of the self, especially of the female self. Although fairy tales were greatly interested in the shadow, the stories remained so out of this world and so focused on their didactic roles that many refused to acknowledge the impact and influence they had on our psyche. Gothic, on the other hand, combined the horror story with the novel, fusing reality with the fantastic in order to create the terror story. Transgressing the boundaries of the conventional novel and turning the fantastic into a natural part of life

became an important ingredient of gothic paraphernalia. Fantasy and the everyday world were blurred in order to examine "the unseen [and] to articulate the unutterable."[93] Hence, gothic became obsessed by the unnatural. It's important to clarify that the gothic novel is not interested in portraying a vision of reality but rather in blurring the boundaries between reality and fantasy. It is fascinated by the transgression of margins, such as physical and spiritual, sanity and madness, familiar and uncanny, self and other, fear and pleasure, domination and submission, good and evil, male and female, reason and passion, nature and culture, past and present, time and space, heaven and hell, society or family and individuality and/or any other binary opposites.

This attraction to transgression did not bring high praise for this new literary form and, like the fairy tale, it fell victim to negative criticism and was mainly overlooked until very recently. Gothic novels were seen as the "black sheep of the [novel] family."[94] They were seen as being "irrational, improper and immoral wastes of time."[95] Mostly, the gothic novel was disdained and frowned upon as being "low Art," "trash," a second rate literary form, a "feminine form, outside the mainstream of literature. Its authors have been criticized as dealing in trivialities or as being too emotional."[96]

As with fairy tales, literary criticism didn't take any particular interest in the gothic until the twentieth-century when the increasing interest in psychoanalytic theories brought them to more prominence. Soon enough gothicism experienced a revival, appearing in popular culture with renewed vigor. Mass-market gothic paperbacks were

[93] Day, William Patrick. *In the Circles of Fear and Desires: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 15.
[94] Williams, Anne. *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 6.
[95] Botting, Fred. *Gothic: The New Critical Idiom*. London & New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 45.
[96] Fleenor, Juliann E. *The Female Gothic*. Montreal: Eden Press, 1983, p.8.

being sold in pharmacies and grocery stores; new gothic art, fashion and even music emerged. Gothic heroes like Batman and The Sandman became important pop culture icons. Gothic art and themes are still of great importance in comic books which might not normally be connected to gothicism, as in this excerpt of a recent X-Men number, shown here as figure 4, which resembles the art cover of many gothic paperbacks ("How did I get Here?: A Prelude to the Draco," in *Uncanny X-Men*, no.428, Chuck Austen writer, Sean Phillips penciler, July 2003.)

Figure 4: Interior Art from *Uncanny X-Men* #428.

The gothic form also made way into television, with a strong resurgence in the 1990's with series like Shaun Cassidy's *American Gothic* (1995-1996, CBS), Chris Carter's *The X-Files* (1993-2002, FOX), Bryce Zabel's *Dark Skies* (1996-1997, NBC), Joss Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003, FOX) and *Angel* (1999-now, FOX), and Constance M. Burge's *Charmed* (1998-Now, WB) just to name a few. And although gothic has always been an important part of film history, it has never been of

greater consequence than since the 1980's with the significant demand for horror films and thrillers.

More importantly, gothic has appeared within many film genres with which it is not customarily associated. Gothicism can now be found in dramas, melodramas, women's film, science-fiction, comedies and psychological thrillers amongst others. Films like Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1992), Lars von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* (2000), David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) and even Sophia Coppola's *Virgin Suicides* (2000) all express gothic themes.

Gothic was born out of times of despair and revolutionary anxieties. It is no coincidence that the most important periods in gothic literature always come at the end of a century. The fears and anxieties surrounding the French Revolution in the 1790's gave birth to gothicism. Although gothic works do exist before this period, it is with the advent of the Revolution that gothic was born as a separate literary form. Just as Richard Davenport-Hines mentions:

> "New vocabulary and images were needed to represent the destructive horrors of an angry, vengeful mob. Gothic is peculiarly suited to moments when human experience reaches the limits of intelligibility, and the French disorders after 1789 were just such an occasion. The excesses of the mob seem exemplified by the excesses of gothic: both involve the uncontrol of unruly passions. English horror at the French Revolution was almost universal and stretched to the highest pitch."[97]

The late eighteenth-century brought us the works of Ann Radcliffe, especially *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797), and Matthew Lewis and his controversial novel *The Monk* (1796). However, the 1890's Victorian *fin de siècle* proved

[97] Davenport-Hines, Richard. *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin.* New York: North Point Press/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998, p. 154.

to be a time in which degeneration was equally dreaded. The nineteenth-century fashioned the most renowned gothic and romantic novels in history including R.L. Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). There is certainly a link between these *fin de siècles* and the apocalyptic narratives of the gothic, which made its way once more into the popular culture of the 1990's. Whether these modern anxieties were aimed at the idea of a Third World War, the Apocalypse or simply the Y2K Bug, as Max Nordau explained in *Degeneration*, it remains true that with the decline of an era comes fears and anxieties surrounding the approach of a new one.[98] The discourse of degeneration is notably prominent in gothic texts and has made its way into the gothic film. Obviously it doesn't take a *fin de siècle* for gothic to be in high demand.

In fact, the onset of the Depression, the Second World War and even the Cold War strife created many gothic films or rather films with gothic themes like film noirs, the 40's Women's film, and more precisely the films of Alfred Hitchcock. However, what's different about the interest in gothic during the *fin de siècle* is that the fears and anxieties aren't always brought by cultural upheavals but rather by a fear of the unknown, of the change that's to come, of the familiar becoming hazy. Moreover, it's a form of anxiety which is far less obvious and is more likely to creep up unconsciously into our popular culture, as well as into art and literature. Additionally, it's a gothic form that is more personal and internalized. The family and the individual become the nucleus of terror, where the monstrous self and the id pressures are desperately clawing at the conscious self, urging to be unveiled. This is also the case in *In Dreams*, since Claire's

[98] Nordau, Max. *Degeneration*. (Ninth Edition.) New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1902, p. 5-6.

journey is a personal one. Her struggles are against obstacles of the self and her quest is to learn to cope with her inner monsters.

Haunting Spaces: Between the Exterior and the Interior

It should be clarified that, as mentioned earlier, gothic is first and foremost based on binary opposites and particularly on the blurring of boundaries. One of the most crucial of these boundaries is between the exterior and the interior. Space and atmosphere are so crucial in gothic literature that they are often treated as characters within the narrative, as in Charles Perrault's *Bluebeard* (1697), Daphne duMaurier's *Rebecca* (1938), or Stephen King's *The Shining* (1977), etc. Moreover, since many gothic novels (especially the female gothic, known as the novel written for women by women) are interested in studying the lives of women and the family in their everyday environment, it is only normal that the majority of these books are situated within the home. The home in gothic literature is of such great consequence that we find it in various disguises, whether it is a medieval castle (usually found in the eighteenth-century gothic fiction), an old house (which became more prominent in the nineteenth-century) or any space which calls to mind the family, the mother or the feminine (like "Mother" the ship in Ridley Scott's *Alien* [1979].)

In order to better understand the meaning of the home in gothic literature, we must go back to Freud's theory of the uncanny. Freud uses the word *unheimlich* to describe the uncanny. The origin of the word comes from *heimlich*, which refers to the home. It means "homely, familiar, intimate, friendly, not strange, tame and belonging to

the house"[99] while its opposite, *unheimlich*, refers to the unfamiliar, or rather to the familiar that has become strange. Hence, the theory of the uncanny is predominantly found within the confines of the home because of its relationship to the familiar. Gothic then transgresses the boundaries between the known and the unknown, transforming the home into a mysterious and foreign space.

In addition, the home is a crucial symbolic and metaphoric aspect of this literary genre and manages to influence the protagonist's inner journey and quest for identity. The home has two meanings—that of the architectural structure, and that of the family line. In other words, the home becomes a figurative representation of the family itself. Hence, uncovering hidden or locked doors, secret passages or skeletons in closets comes to symbolize the unveiling of dark family secrets. Anne Williams suggests, "A house makes secrets in merely being itself, for its function is to enclose spaces."[100] For example, in Edgar Allan Poe's tale *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), the house is poisoned by the past sins of the father and the Usher family line. The mansion stands solely by the equally toxic and maddened will of Roderick Usher. It finally crumbles at the end of the tale, when brother (Roderick) and sister (Madeline) die in each other's arms.

Likewise, the spatial treatment in *In Dreams* is as intricate as in Poe's tale and an entire work could be devoted to its study. There are in reality only three important settings within the film's narrative, cleverly linked to Claire's own personal inner journey

[99] Sigmund, Freud. "The Uncanny." (1919) in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, Vol. 17, trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1967; pp. 222.
[100] Williams, Anne. *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 44.

and to the mythical philosophy of the monomyth. The initial portion of Claire's journey is situated within the home. Here Jordan creates the pinnacle of the modern patriarchal family, establishing the home as the heart of the family. Although Jordan doesn't try to represent a fairy tale image of the family (since the marital problems of Claire and Paul are clearly delineated), he still manages to construct the home as the family's gathering place. This is done through the use of framing and image composition. Jordan paints a picture of a close-knit family by never showing a character alone in the house.

For the majority of the time we have at least two characters within the same frame, whether it is in the dining room with all three family members or with Claire and Paul in their bedroom. There are a few instances when the family occupies separate rooms, but Jordan skillfully frames the characters together despite their spatial separation as when the couple watches over their sleeping daughter. In the foreground, we have the sleeping Rebecca covering the entire lower half of the frame. The midground shows Paul leaning against the doorframe on the left side of the frame, while on the right side we have Claire crawling into bed in the background. This deep focus cinematography is used as a way to connect the characters as a symbolic representation of "the family." Another example is the exterior shot of the house at night, looking at the lighted interior of the dwelling. Paul is seen downstairs, slowly climbing the steps. In the foreground we see Dobby (the family dog) on the front porch outside. In the background we see Paul with the red kimono, climbing the stairs. The camera cranes up to reveal Claire sitting at the bedroom windowpane, while Paul is entering the room in the background. Another example is when Paul is by the front door in the foreground putting on his coat as the family is preparing for the "Snow White" recital. In the background we see Claire

helping Rebecca with her costume in the living room. In all of the other scenes filmed in the house—that is, before Claire's suicide attempt—two or more of the characters inhabit the same space. The only exception is when Claire is alone in the attic, but this is brief and there is still a spatial link to another character. Instead of a visual link, in this instance there is an audio connection as Paul and Claire talk to each other as he climbs the stairs to join her.

The spatial techniques used by Jordan through the symbolic portrayal of the home help define the characters as being a close, conventional family unit. It helps create a safe way for the viewer to identify with the characters and a way to introduce the base of the narrative as being grounded within the family drama. It also help illustrate and clarify Claire's future behavior, making us understand why Claire is so desperately trying to save and salvage her family.

Interestingly, we return to the house after Claire's suicide attempt and rebirth and after Rebecca's murder. Here Jordan's film techniques differ greatly from the ones he employed previously. The house is darker, shots are often haunting, and the camera movements are more visible as when Jordan pans sideways and down to Claire lying on the bed after seeing Rebecca's room for the first time. At other times, the camera is distanced from the characters and Rebecca's room has become a ghostly shrine hidden behind locked doors. Just as Claire suggests that she feels like a ghost in her own home, the image of the home has changed dramatically due to the loss of Rebecca because the family unit has been shattered. It's as if the house itself has become a ghost, or more appropriately has become uncanny.

Claire is now left alone several times in the house that has become a place of terror for her because it reminds her of what she has lost. When Claire is accompanied by her husband the shots are often misleading, like the sideways pan mentioned above and the use of the mirror. When Paul is in the bathroom and Claire is in the bedroom, once again Jordan manages to frame both characters as if they occupy the same space but this time it is not done through deep focus or deep space cinematography but through a noteworthy mirror play, hinting that their closeness is slowly becoming an illusion. This change also explains why Claire vandalizes her home; her new hatred is due to the home's symbolic representation of the lost family unit.

It is also important to mention that Jordan uses much gothic paraphernalia in this film, going so far as to create the image of the mad woman in the attic—a direct allusion to Charlotte Brönte's *Jane Eyre*—for it is in her home's attic that Claire's madness is triggered. This is also the locale in which her quest for personal identity begins, as she searches the darkened and dusty recesses of her own mind, accessing her own unconscious for the first time. This also links the psychoanalytic "notion of the psyche as house,"[101] where the home becomes an external representation of Claire's inner turmoil, once again transgressing the boundaries between outside and inside. Williams explains:

> "This structure has a private and a public aspect; its walls, towers, ramparts suggest external identity, the 'corridors of power,' consciousness; whereas its dungeons, attics, secret rooms, and dark hidden passages connote the culturally female, the sexual, the maternal, the unconscious. It is a public identity enfolding (and organizing) the private, the law enclosing, controlling, dark 'female' otherness."[102]

[101] Williams, Anne. *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 44.
[102] Williams, Anne. *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 44.

It is in this attic that Claire experiences her first encounter with her dark self, her shadow, both in the connection with her double self (Vivian) and by tapping into her own madness.

The second part of Claire's personal journey—also known as the hero's quest—is situated in the psychiatric hospital. As we've seen in the first section of this work, this is the moment when Claire must unveil and learn to cope with her own shadow, madness and evilness. As in most myths, Claire must go through this juncture in her personal development in a highly obtrusive environment. Her mental struggles are once again rendered physical in her surroundings. Just as Inanna's journey brought her to the underworld, or Theseus's quest to the belly of the labyrinth in Crete, Claire's own confinements recall the great Greek myths.

Jordan depicts the sanatorium hauntingly. He shoots different areas of the hospital (the infirmary, the padded-room, the common-room, etc.) without ever linking them to one another, making it impossible for the viewer to imagine the space beyond the frame. He manages to create a labyrinth and does so without the use of the corridors and mobile camera work that were used to create the same effect in Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980). Instead, Jordan creates labyrinthine imagery using the idea of the unknown beyond the visible, the inkling of not knowing what lies past the next corner. This technique fabricates an artificial space, existing outside reality. It also links the space to the idea of madness because it exists outside time and space. It refers back to what William Patrick Day has said about the gothic atmosphere; "the metamorphosis of the self is extended

into the transformations of time and space."[103] Therefore, the hospital is a site of transgression of reality and fantasy, of past and present, and is associated with madness, terror and helplessness because it is an externalization of Claire's inner cosmos.

In this particular part of the film, the spatial attributes relate the most to Claire's own inner struggles. At the beginning of her madness, she is always a victim of confinement, trapped in the padded room at the end of an eerie corridor. Jordan's hand-held camera technique reinforces Claire's claustrophobic surroundings (in the padded room) as well as her own mental instability.

At the hospital, Claire is still struggling with the idea of her dark self, desperately trying to deny that side of her personality. She rebels against doctors and nurses, violently trying to escape this haunting landscape of the female mind in torment (the mental institution), resisting the sudden metamorphosis of her unconscious. She is in a way imprisoned in the labyrinth, like *The Monk's* Antonia, "she is cut off from all aid and society, dead to the world."[104]

Claire is given a regular room at the hospital only after she begins to recognize her fate and learns to embrace her unconscious. This room is also an important aspect of gothic trappings, relating this time more to the family line, or more particularly to history itself. The room is the propeller of the narrative, as much as the locked door is in *Bluebeard*. The room itself will lead Claire out of the labyrinth and into the arms of the Minotaur. Hidden underneath yellowed wallpaper is Vivian's name and lullaby. By uncovering the message, Claire is able to tap into her own powers and forms a link with

[103] Day, William Patrick. *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 28.
[104] Botting, Fred. *Gothic: The New Critical Idiom*. London & New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 81.

Vivian's ghost (past self). She is able to access her own unconscious more easily through the unveiling of the walls. (Once again Jordan refers to another popular gothic work here with the yellow wallpaper and its link to confinement and madness which is taken from Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Yellow Wallpaper* [1892], which contains many similarities to *In Dreams*.) Williams writes:

> "Most important, this structure is marked, haunted by 'history'—the events of its own development. The ghosts—whether real or imaginary—derive from the past passions, past deeds, past crimes of the family identified with this structure. The psychic as well as the physical space of the castle bears its marks."[105]

The room in itself, or rather its history, creates a psychic link between Vivian and Claire. Claire accesses Vivian's phantom and, likewise, Claire's ghost visits Vivian and Ruby (as will be revealed later in the film.) Jordan further explores the idea of the labyrinth in this particular part of the narrative. It is by far the most mobile part of the film. Most scenes thus far have been stationary (that is, spatially stationary.) Despite the fact that the rest of the film is filled with camera movements, these were mostly used aesthetically rather than narratively. They were never used as a way to create a concrete time and space continuum, as is done in this portion of the film.

It is the only time that Jordan links the different spaces of the hospital together, finally creating a path through the enclosed, claustrophobic spaces. Like Theseus who had the help of Ariadne's piece of thread to guide him through the labyrinth, Claire possesses a psychic thread to Vivian. While Theseus' thread was used to exit the labyrinth, Claire's is used to reach its center. Jordan not only manages to create a spatial

[105] Williams, Anne. *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 45.

link in the mental institute which had been nonexistent thus far, but also creates a temporal link through the blending of past events with present occurrences. Therefore, any form of transgression is inevitable. Day suggests:

> "[In] the Gothic world [...] time and space are not absolutes through which characters can perceive a common reality and act in more or less secure relationship to the world. Rather, they become, like identity, relative functions of perceptions. The protagonists find that conventional measures of time and space break down into aspects of their own experiences."[106]

Obviously this temporal link could not have been so beautifully rendered without the use of space, which helps to connect both protagonist and antagonist, highlighting their duality. Jordan also challenges the confines of space and time through the application of the supernatural and the fantastic, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Finally, the last important setting that visually defines Claire's inner conflicts and journey is the old orchard house, *The Good Apple*. The important thing about this setting is its condition and the fact that it's abandoned and in ruins. Ruins in general and/or any "process of decay"[107]—whether it be human, animal, vegetal, architectural or material—have been a gothic trademark as early on as Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764). Day mentions that this certain fascination with the ruinous, death and decay "indicate the limitless power of nature over human creation,"[108] and it "involves an admiration for

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[106] Day, William Patrick. *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985, 28.
[107] Bayer-Berenbaum, Linda. *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art*. London & Toronto: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982, p. 19.
[108] Day, William Patrick. *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 26.

power at the expense of beauty."[109] Whatever a certain architectural ruin might represent in certain gothic novels, it remains obvious that it is linked to an attraction to deformity and the grotesque, more particularly to an appeal to death, which is directly linked to Freud's theory of *thanatos*. Linda Bayer-Berenbaum gives account for, "when you dissect the purely ugly, we find that its parts are ugly, but when we dissect the grotesque, we may find that its parts are pleasing."[110] This clearly suggests that ruins and its affiliates are directly connected to the sublime, because they are embedded in duality and excess.

Moreover, the material wreckage in gothic fiction is an externalization of the internal ruins of the protagonist, which explains gothic's fascination with mental disorders. "Insanity is a form of mental deterioration,"[111] and *The Good Apple*, being Vivian's home, comes to represent his inner state and exposes his mental decay and gothic mind. Also the use of the apples in this setting, as discussed previously, manages to link the locale with the unconscious, transgressing the boundaries of reality and fantasy. When Claire enters this setting physically for the first time, it exists in limbo, between the real and the fantastic, between the conscious and unconscious, between the physical and the spiritual. Furthermore, the viewer understands that death is near when Claire enters Vivian's abode (although for which character is still uncertain), because of its strong link with death. Claire enters Vivian's home at the advent of her final heroic

[109] Day, William Patrick. *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 27.
[110] Bayer-Berenbaum, Linda. *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art*. London & Toronto: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982, p. 29.
[111] Bayer-Berenbaum, Linda. *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art*. London & Toronto: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982, p. 39.

juncture, her return is eminent; hence, her death—whether it be symbolic or literal—is inevitable and the ruinous atmosphere supports this notion.

Another setting that is used in Jordan's film is natural space. Although this is not as crucial as the three settings studied above, it remains that Jordan uses the natural space as a transitional technique between the three primary spaces. Moreover, these natural spaces are usually bodies of water or close to bodies of water and the water becomes a symbol of the progression of Claire's journey and search of her self. Whatever these sceneries and different atmospheres might be, it remains clear that they're rooted within a symbolic structure, where Claire's instability throughout her personal quest for identity is matched by the instability of the outside world, since "the gothic novel uses its atmosphere for ends which are fundamentally psychological."[112]

The Uncanny: Between Fantasy and Reality

Another key motif of gothic fiction is the use of the supernatural. This concept is once again very much embedded within the mythology of the self. Schneider said that the fantastic dramatizes "'the anxiety of existence', whilst Caillois described it as a form which was stranded between a serene mysticism and a purely humanistic psychology."[113] Moreover, the concept of the fantastic is also what separates the gothic film from the contemporary horror film. The gothic is an extension of the ghost story, where the supernatural is used as a tool of externalization of inner processes. The horror film is more focused on the external, rather than the internal, its focus being more on the destruction and mutilation of the human body. Linda Badley wrote that:

[112] Hume, Robert D. "Gothic Versus Romantic," *PMLA* 84 (1969); p. 286.
[113] Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion.* London & New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 5.

> "Horror became a hysterical text or a theatre of cruelty specializing in representations of the human anatomy *in extremis*—in disarray or deconstruction, in metamorphosis, invaded or engulfing, in sexual difference, monstrous otherness, or Dionysian ecstasy: the body fantastic."[114]

Of course many horror films can have gothic subtexts or can be considered gothic films. But it is a great misconception to think that all horror films are gothic films. Many people confuse gothic and horror, often believing the terms to be synonymous. However, if we take slasher films as an example, while they are clearly horror films, they certainly are not part of the gothic genre as evidenced by their strict interest with external horror. In contrast, David Cronenberg's horror films (like *Shivers* (1974), *Rabid* (1976), *The Brood* (1979), etc.,) although clearly focusing on the human body, also move beyond the insular markings of slasher films. The physicality found within Cronenberg's films comes to represent the interior and insidious horror of the self. The body in Cronenberg's work becomes an outlet for externalization as much as the settings do in Jordan's *In Dreams*. Whereas Cronenberg's gothic is horror ridden, Jordan's is terror-gothic. In its simplest explanation "terror opens the mind to the apprehension of the sublime, while (according to Mrs. Radcliffe) the repugnance involved in horror closes it."[115]

Although pages could be devoted to explaining the differences between the terror-gothic and the horror-gothic, the focus here is on situating Jordan's film in relation to the subject. *In Dreams* is considered a terror-gothic because of its interest in the psychological. Invasions and intrusions of the human body, the fascination with the theater of physical cruelty, the exhibition of death and of bodies being ripped apart, the

[114] Badley, Linda. *Film, Horror, and The Body Fantastic.* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995, p. 12.
[115] Hume, Robert D. "Gothic Versus Romantic," *PMLA* 84 (1969); p. 285.

aesthetic of blood splatters, and the spectacle of human beings in pain are of no interest here. Rather, the violations are internal ones, manifested as visions, dreams and hallucinations. This makes the viewer react to suspense instead of disgust.

The major distinction of terror-gothic fiction is that it depends more on the supernatural and the fantastic than horror-gothic tends to do. Clearly, Jordan's film is delineated as such because of its position within the fantastic genre. Rosemary Jackson in her book *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* sited fantasy as having nothing:

> "...To do with inventing another non-human world: it is not transcendental. It has to do with inverting elements of this world, re-combining its constitutive features in new relations to produce something strange, unfamiliar and apparently 'new,' absolutely 'other' and different."[116]

The relationship between the fantastic and the uncanny in this context is unmistakable. As Hélène Cixous stated, the uncanny exits only in relation to the familiar. It is important to point out that Cixous' approach is shared by many theorists and psychoanalysts, and is rooted in Freud and Todorov's own deductions.

Fred Botting writes on the importance of the inner world or even the unconscious mind and its externalization within the gothic discourse:

> "Gothic became part of an internalized world of guilt, anxiety, despair, a world of individual transgression interrogating the uncertain bounds of imaginative freedom and human knowledge. [...] External forms were signs of psychological disturbance, of increasingly uncertain subjective states dominated by fantasy, hallucinations and madness. The internalization of Gothic forms reflected wider anxieties which, centring on the individual, concerned the nature of reality and society and its relation to individual freedom and imagination."[117]

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[116] Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion.* London & New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 8.

[117] Botting, Fred. *Gothic: The New Critical Idiom.* London & New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 10-11.

This explains why Claire's visions, which represent a transgression of boundaries between reality and fantasy, are a negative experience. Claire falls victim to and becomes subjugated by her own dreams, and is unable to control them. This externalization of the unconscious—usually celebrated in the fairy tale—is transformed into danger and even psychosis in the gothic tradition. In other words, bringing a bit of magic in reality is enchanting in the fairy tale but uncanny in the gothic novel. Hence, externalizing unconscious drives through fantasy doesn't bring freedom of self-realization in the gothic tradition; on the contrary, it traps you and aims to shatter the already fragmented self.

The uncanny is also closely related to the idea of *heimlich* as knowledge, or with the theme of seeing. The modern fantasy represents the strangeness and otherness of this world mostly through the means of vision. More particularly, it's the problems of vision that are important to the fantastic, since the effect is to transform the familiar into the unfamiliar. Jackson writes:

> "The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'. The movement from the first to the second of these functions, from expression as manifestation to expression as expulsion, is one of the recurrent features of fantastic narrative, as it tells of the impossible attempt to realize desire, to make visible the invisible and to discover absence."[118]

This is where Jordan manages to move from reality to fantasy freely in his film, with the assistance of Claire's visions. As we saw in chapter one of this paper, Jordan uses many visual and audio techniques to facilitate the move from reality to fantasy, but he also gradually abandons his system so that the viewer's own perception of reality and fantasy is as hazy as Claire's. Jordan plays so much with the supernatural conventions

[118] Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion.* London & New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 4.

that it seems that Claire's own journey is a dream, existing outside time, space, and reality. This is especially prominent in the scene where Claire finally taps into her own powers and creates a psychic link to Vivian's past self. The way in which Claire experiences this vision remains ambiguous. We see her going to sleep, after saying to her roommate, "sleep is the only way to reach him (Vivian). And what ever happens promise me one thing. Don't wake me up." After a brief interlude with Dr. Silverman we see Claire struggling in her sleep, dreaming about Vivian. We see his entire story for the first time, intermingled with Claire's fraught sleep.

Claire wakes because the ceiling grate falls on top of her. We see Vivian as a teenager looking down at her. This is where fantasy and reality converge in the extreme. It remains unclear whether Claire really did wake from her dream because the clear separation between past and present is abolished. This is shown not only through the interconnectedness of Claire and Vivian's movements and actions, but also through the use of props and subtle techniques. When Claire gets up from her bed, there is a chair adjoined to a dresser, with a small table atop it, piled up to the entrance of the airshaft. However, when Claire went to sleep these items weren't positioned in this way, suggesting that the young Vivian arranged the clutter of furnishings in Claire's room. Also the room is entirely deprived of any signs of wallpaper, suggesting that Claire inhabits the hospital room from the past.

Another interesting example of fantasy and reality melding into one another is when Claire closes her eyes when she is crawling in the ventilation duct. Although the action is very subtle, it nevertheless suggests her connection to the vision of Vivian. Jordan follows the take with a subjective view of Vivian attacking the nurse. Jordan's

brilliant use of subjective shots during this scene also evokes the notion of transgression between both time and reality. Jackson writes:

> "In a culture which equates the 'real' with the 'visible' and gives the eye dominance over other sense organs, the un-real is that which is in-visible. That which is not seen, or which threatens to be un-seeable, can only have a subversive function in relation to an epistemological and metaphysical system which makes 'I see' synonymous with 'I understand.' Knowledge, comprehension, reason, are established through the power of the look, through the 'eye' and the 'I' of the human subject whose relation to objects is structured through his field of vision."[119]

Claire exist within the confines of the "un-real" throughout the entirety of the film, especially when her visions are manifesting in her waking states because her gift remains "in-visible" to the rest of the world (because it is an inner power). This is the reason why she's such a threat to everything that is real and /or lucid; she is the epitome of the uncanny, she makes everything unfamiliar. The power of vision has a strong connection to sublimation and knowledge, which Jentsch calls "the intellectual uncertainty."[120] This further exemplifies Claire's uncanniness because her knowledge is directly linked to her ability to see the un-seeable (dreams, hallucinations and even unconscious impulses.)

Furthermore, Jordan portrays Claire as being uncertain of her own knowledge. Jentsch mentioned that "in telling a story, one of the most successful devices for easily creating uncanny effects is to leave the reader in uncertainty."[121] Not only is this created in *In Dreams* through the recurrent theme of madness, but also through various film techniques. This is done by omitting the fantasy visual and audio devices used at the

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[119] Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy*. London & New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 45.
[120] Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." (1919) in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, Vol. 17, trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1967; pp. 221.
[121] Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." (1919) in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, Vol. 17, trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1967; pp. 227.

beginning of the film (the image swirls and there's an audio distortion) and with the use of crosscutting between reality and fantasy. Consequently, the only bona fide truth that the viewer can hold on to is Claire. Everything else is muddled and it remains uncertain whether things are embedded in the confines of reality or un-reality. Even our only anchor, Claire herself, is not that different, since she too is hazy due to the fact that she exists between self and other.

The Double: Between the Self and the Other

According to Freud, the most important concept of the uncanny is the use of the double. Gothic literature is exceptionally captivated by this theme. Jean Paul (*Titan*, 1802), E.T.A. Hoffman (*Story of the Lost Reflection*, 1815, and *The Devil's Elixir*, 1816), Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*, 1818), James Hogg (*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, 1824), Edgar Allan Poe (*William Wilson*, 1839), Fyodor Dostoevsky (*The Double*, 1846, and *The Brothers Karamazov*, 1879-80), Charlotte Brönte (*Jane Eyre*, 1847), Emily Brönte (*Wuthering Heights*, 1847), Charles Dickens (*David Copperfield*, 1850), Herman Melville (*Moby Dick*, 1851), R.L. Stevenson (*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, 1886), Oscar Wilde (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1890), Bram Stoker (*Dracula*, 1897), Joseph Conrad (*The Heart of Darkness*, 1902), Franz Kafka (*The Judgment*, 1913), Virginia Woolf (*Mrs. Dalloway*, 1925), Daphne duMaurier (*Rebecca*, 1938)—and the list goes on—all made use of this theme one way or another. Otto Rank described this key leitmotif as deriving:

> "Not so much from the author's conscious fondness for describing preternatural situations (Hoffman), or separate parts of their personalities

(Jean Paul), as from their unconscious impulse to lend imagery to a universal human problem—that of the relation of the self to the self."[122]

Once again this technique is used to further exploit the hero's quest into the mind. It is used to better understand the workings of the psyche, the unconscious and the inner struggles of the protagonist. It is also a way for the protagonist to learn to accept the good as much as the bad part of the self. There have been many studies on the concept of the double and many theories pertaining to the existence of several sorts of doubles existing within literary works. For example, Robert Rogers situates six important functions of doubling, some psychological, others essentially formal. However, this analysis will focus on Rank and Freud's own psychoanalytic confines, which Rogers uses as primary focal point in his study. Henceforth, two doubling techniques will be studied here; the less prominent use of the external double, and the rejection and integration of the internal double.

First of all, we shall look at the doubling effect through the use of physical appearance. This is the theme to which there is the weakest link in Jordan's film. Although Vivian's androgynous gender, with his long hair, painted nails and flowing coats/cloaks, links him to femininity, the physical resemblance between Claire and Vivian is practically nonexistent. Their duality lies in a more complex methodology. They are linked more from within than from without.

However, there is a small usage of the physical double in Jordan's film. This doppelgänger type is found in Rebecca and Ruby. Their name alone has a material similarity, with the same initials and even the same inflection. But more important is the

[122] Rank, Otto. *The Double; A Psychoanalytic Study*. trans. & ed. By Harry Tucker Jr. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971c, p.xiv.

girls' physical resemblance to one another. Both girls appear to be approximately the same age (although neither of their exact ages are ever mentioned within the film) and they both have long blonde hair and large blue eyes (both traits are often used as symbols of innocence and purity.) Obviously this is done deliberately on Jordan's part, making it easier for the viewer to understand why Claire's willing to risk her own life to save a perfect stranger. But because this stranger is going through the same predicament Rebecca went through, and mostly because they both look alike, Ruby becomes for Claire her only link to motherhood and to her own daughter.

As opposed to Jordan's minimal use of doubling through physical appearance, the concept of doubling through mental processes is explored in a much more complex and thorough manner in the film. Freud has linked this idea of doubling through mental processes to "telepathy," justifying his findings by explaining:

> "That one [of the characters] possesses knowledge, feelings and experience in common with the other. Or it is marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own."[123]

While Keppler situates the internal double as such:

> "The first self is the one who tends to be in the foreground of the reader's attention, usually the one whose viewpoint the reader shares; he is the relatively naïve self, naïve at least in tending to suppose that he is the whole self, for he seldom has any conscious knowledge, until it is forced upon him, of any other self involved in his make-up. The second self is the intruder from the background of shadows, and however prominent he may become he always tends to remain half-shadowed; he is much more likely to have knowledge of his foreground counterpart than the latter of him, but

[123] Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." (1919) in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, Vol. 17, trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1967; pp. 234.

the exact extent and source of his knowledge, like the exact nature of his motivation, are always left in comparative obscurity."[124]

Claire's relationship with her double at the beginning of the film is a negative one and, much like Keppler suggests, her double is someone to be ignored and even repressed and denied. Instead of accepting Vivian as being a part of her self, she pushes him away, preferring that he remain alien to her. This is when Claire experiences the interchanging double. Many times Claire attempts to assign blame to her double, as if he's in total control of her own will. It becomes a safe way for her to deny responsibility for her own actions and a way for her to clearly separate her dark (inner) self from her good (exterior) self. Lines like "He made me do it" become part of her vocabulary. When she wakes at the hospital with her husband at her bedside, her psychiatrist (Dr. Silverman) enters the room saying "you were singing" and she responds "No. Somebody was singing through me." Later, after her second suicide attempt, Claire is in Dr. Silverman's office. He shows her a picture of the graffiti she put on the walls of her home. Here are a few lines of their conversation:

Dr. Silverman: Did you write this Claire?
Claire: Umh! Yeah I wrote that. But somebody else made me do it (laughs.)
Dr. Silverman: And who cut your wrists?
Claire: (laughs) I did (laughs)
Dr. Silverman: And did that someone else make you do it?
Claire: No that was all my own work.
[...]
Dr. Silverman: What does this verse mean Claire?
Claire: Umh! I don't know.
Dr. Silverman: Is it from your childhood?

[124] Keppler, C.F. *The Literature of the Second Self.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1972, p. 3.

Claire: No, it's not from my childhood (laughs.) It's from somebody else's childhood.

[They talk about her two recurrent dreams]

Claire: I have a feeling that they're [the dreams] all coming from the same place.

Dr. Silverman: From you?

Claire: No! No! From him!

Claire uses this schizophrenic delusion as a safe way to experience her unconscious drives and desires. C.F.Keppler explains:

> "Often the conscious mind tries to deny its unconscious through the mechanism of 'projection,' attributing its own unconscious content (a murderous impulse, for example) to a real person in the world outside; at times it even creates an external hallucination in the image of this content."[125]

This is exactly how Claire tries to cope with the awakening of her unconscious self. Her encounter with her shadow self is so frightening for her that she is unable to function in her everyday life. Hence, she experiences a disintegration of personality through conscious separation with her shadow and animus. She separates herself completely from her dark side to the point where her liability for her own actions remains questionable. This remains an easy way to deal with her self, by separating the good (herself) and the bad (Vivian), and making it easier for her to focus her hatred externally rather than internally.

However, Claire understands that her behavior is irrational. For example, when she says "No. Somebody was singing through me," she adds "It doesn't make sense! I don't make sense!" When she bites her husband and says, "He knows I'm dreaming

[125] Keppler, C.F. *The Literature of the Second Self.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1972, p. 5.

about him. He's in my head," Paul tells her "that's crazy," and she responds, "I know!" Her conversation with Dr. Silverman is filled with pauses, smirks and laughs, which indicate that she finds her own words to be absurd and unfounded. All of these instances highlight Claire's own understanding of her irrationality.

Her schizophrenia translates itself into what Rank has called "the destruction of the ego."[126] And ironically enough, "the fragmentation of the self [only] destroys the identity it was meant to preserve."[127] This is why Claire goes through another doubling effect and moves to an accepting stage where she accepts that her dark self exists and is an intricate part of her personality. Where at first she tried to expel her dark nature, she now embraces it internally. Rogers said that the theme of the double is in reality "a tug-of-war between superego and id."[128] The tug-of-war between the two is not abolished. To the contrary, Claire is still frightened and threatened by Vivian. Nevertheless, Claire finally comes to acknowledge his role in her personal growth and her natural self. Fred Botting described the role of the double superbly by situating the importance of the hero's quest in this particular literary form. He writes:

> "Alienated from society and themselves, Romantic-Gothic heroes undergo the effects of this disillusion, doubting the nature of the powers that consume them, uncertain whether they originate internally or from external forces. Without an adequate social framework to sustain a sense of identity, the wanderer encounters the new form of the Gothic ghost, the double or shadow of himself. An uncanny figure of horror, the double

[126] Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." (1919) in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, Vol. 17, trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1967; pp. 235.
[127] Day, William Patrick. *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 26.
[128] Rogers, Robert. *A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970, p. 2.

presents a limit that cannot be overcome, the representation of an internal and irreparable division in the individual psyche."[129]

Hence, although Claire's feelings of anxiety towards Vivian might not have changed, she finally understands that her plight will not be solved through the dissection of her own psyche. Instead, she tries to understand her psychical self through identification with her animus. She no longer tries to separate herself from *it*, but instead follows *its* lead and even duplicates *its* actions; following young Vivian in the labyrinth of the mental hospital. Interestingly, this is the first time in the film where we see Vivian's face free of shadows or shot length. Previously, whenever we saw Vivian in Claire's dreams, his movements would be swift and the shot length would be too quick for the viewer to get a clear look at his features. Hence, the viewer acknowledges and faces Vivian at the same time that Claire does. Just as "the self is found in the other, [...] the other is in fact a face of the self."[130] Therefore, it would be safe to say that Claire and Vivian meeting face to face for the first time represents Claire's owning up of her true self; an ego and id coalition.

Moreover, given the way that the gothic tradition treats the theme of the double, it remains obvious that this merger of the two will only bring an inevitable end. Day explained: "For the gothic fantasy, the self might simply divide and fragment until it disappeared or the two sides of the self would lock in combat until they destroyed each other."[131] There are only two outcomes for the evil double in gothic fiction: fragmentation or destruction. Claire has chosen not to disappear by contacting Vivian's

[129] Botting, Fred. *Gothic: The New Critical Idiom*. London & New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 93.
[130] Day, William Patrick. *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 22.
[131] Day, William Patrick. *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 23.

ghost (past self) through her dreams and connecting through time, space and reality infringements. Since she has renounced fragmentation, destruction remains her only plausible closure.

Interestingly, both outcomes lie within the confines of chaos for the integrity of the self, since the rivalry between the doubles translates into our heroine being locked in combat with herself. This is the reason why Claire's death is inevitable, because "the destruction of one entails, either figuratively or literally, the destruction of the other as well."[132] This also explains why a part of Claire still remains after her death, because a part of her is still alive in Vivian. It also highlights the opposite idea that it is Vivian's conscious, or rather rational mind, which has been destroyed leaving him a shattered man plagued by madness.

[132] Keppler, C.F. *The Literature of the Second Self.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1972, p. 28.

CONCLUSION

Hopefully, throughout this paper I have managed to show the importance of looking at every film within an auteur/director's repertoire, even the ones which seem to exist outside his more distinguished works. My goal was to situate *In Dreams* as a film anchored within Jordan's more personal works and as worthy of study and recognition. I felt it was important to analyze the film further in order to illustrate and understand its deeper psychological and mythical meanings.

Jordan creates a strong contemporary female heroine whose personal quest lies in the application and transgression of mythical conventions. Through psychoanalytical theories, Jordan tackles a modern tale through ancient literary forms strongly embedded within our collective unconscious and which grabs us by focusing on a universal theme: the quest for identity.

In Dreams is a film of pantheistic nature. It portrays a modern heroine who is reborn, who experiences life unconsciously or "in dreams" and who dies only to be reborn again; one whose quest forces us to experience the dark underside of the unconscious. In the course of her journey we understand that it is not her expedition's end that is of importance, but the journey itself. Claire's triumph isn't achieved through her reunion with her daughter or her vengeance on Vivian; rather it is achieved through attaining an ego-unconsciousness. By embracing her shadow and accepting her animus, by facing her fears and anxieties, Claire attains a state of being worthy of divinity. She realizes full individuation by experiencing life and death through her consciousness and her unconsciousness, becoming in essence a meta-conscious spirit (e.g. apotheosis.) For

after all "man is that alien presence with whom the forces of egoism must come to terms, through whom the ego is to be crucified and resurrected, and in whose image society is to be reformed."[133] Jordan's film is the perfect example of Campbell's belief that the hero's journey is the search for the self through dark territories of the unconscious.

Through the reworkings of various tales such as the Biblical fall, the Shakespearean formula of *The Taming of the Shrew*, the aspects of the Triple Goddess and the popular fable of "Snow White," Jordan constructs a female heroine who transgresses more than patriarchal law. Claire surpasses all boundaries: gender, psychological, physical, spiritual and more importantly psychical. Her quest for identity is a universal search issuing from the depths of the collective unconscious and it speaks to the religious (Biblical fall), the intellectual (Shakespeare), the mystical (Triple Goddess) and the child (fairy tale) in all of us.

Through strong symbolic imagery Jordan taps into our unconscious and creates a highly complex psychoanalytical study of the search for the self. Claire's quest for identity lies in her transgressive nature and through the embracement of her feminine principle. Jordan deconstructs the female lead by embodying her within three distinct yet similar characters that come to represent the meta-conscious being. Through various self-encounters, Claire must come to full individual awareness. Her journey leads her from a state of denial to one of catoptricophobia or fear of her double and finally to assent full self-realization. In the process, she acquires an ego-unconsciousness and reaches apotheosis. Her quest is separated into the three characters that come to personify the three divisions of the psyche: the ego, the superego and the id pressures. Through the

[133] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 391.

postmodern take of the "Snow White" tale and the symbolic representation of the Triple Goddess, Rebecca is transformed into the ego (i.e. with the color white and the maiden aspect of the Triple Goddess), Claire, the neutral agent, is the superego (i.e. the color red and the mother aspect), while Vivian is the unknown and monstrous id pressures (i.e. the black and the crone.) Jordan plays on our knowledge of popular culture and the fairy tale to present a modern heroine, superior to the passive Snow White, who lives outside sexist confines. Thus, Jordan transforms the damsel in distress into an active female heroine who needs no prince to achieve fulfillment and who learns to live consciously her unconsciousness. Claire bites into the apple knowing perfectly well where it will lead her. She bites willingly, gaining a greater access to her powers instead of being rendered unconscious (e.g. Snow White.) She learns to fuse the conscious with the unconscious, hence finding Vivian and reaching her ultimate goal.

Jordan goes beyond a postmodern take or the symbolic imagery of the tale to link his film to "Snow White." He goes further by shaping his film in the same generic pattern as the tale, constructing it through a repetition of the threat-hostility-escape pattern which is a fairy tale echo of the mythological process of individuation of birth-quest-return, and the reflection of the cosmogonic cycle of waking-dream-deep sleep. The latter threefold cycle also comes to mirror the three psyche divisions mentioned above, becoming ego-superego-id, or more precisely Rebecca-Claire-Vivian.

The importance of the number three is primordial in the fairy tale, as indicated by Bettelheim: "The number three in fairy tales often seems to refer to what in

psychoanalysis is viewed as the three aspects of the mind: id, ego, and superego."[134] The number three is constantly repeated in Jordan's film through generic and symbolic representation; the Triple Goddess, the symbolic tricolor, the three phases of the moon, the psyche division, the cosmogonic cycle, the mythological and fairy tale quest, the three main characters, its Biblical reference, and the oedipal complex. Bettelheim suggests that the number three is a holy number and an oedipal allusion. He writes:

> "It is the threesome of snake, Eve, and Adam, which, according to the Bible, makes for carnal knowledge. [...Also] The number three stands in the unconscious for sex [...], as it symbolizes the oedipal situation with its deep involvement of three persons with one another—relations which, as the story of 'Snow White' among many others shows, are more than tinged with sexuality."[135]

It is through this trichotomy that self is attained in Jordan's film. The process of individuation is further exploited through the application of the gothic form, linking the psychoanalytical theories further still into Claire's mythical journey. The triadic division of the first two chapters branches off into the full exploration of the two most controversial phases (i.e. the superego and the id) whose fusion leads to the third phase (i.e. *ego*-unconscious). Here Jordan focuses on the duplicity and the similarity of superego and id; mother and crone; red and black; dream and deep sleep. The third phase is left aside as the propeller and the goal of Claire's journey.

Claire's personal quest is echoed in her surroundings, the power of her dreams and the recognition of her dark side (i.e. in Vivian). Where the first two literary forms analyzed in this film were based on symmetry and structure, it is clear that Jordan

[134] Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989; p. 102.
[135] Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989; p. 219.

enjoyed playing with gothic's fluid form. He used gothic's transgressive nature as a tool to break free of both narrative and cinematic conventions. Spatial and temporal manipulations reach a new dimension. Mario Falsetto stated that Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* "argues that space and time are necessary conditions for any type of movement."[136] Jordan goes as far as shifting through conscious and unconscious; past and present; reality and dream in the same sequence (i.e. the escape of Vivian and Claire from the mental hospital.) The particular movement Jordan is concerned with here is Claire's psychological progress which Jordan portrays beautifully through spatial and temporal infringements. And just like the Star Gate sequence becomes Bowman's final phase into "his mythical, life-renewing mission,"[137] so does the escape sequence becomes Claire's process into full individuation, transforming her as well into a mythical character.

Finally, Claire's encounter with her double becomes the visual representation of the merging of personality, the union of the self and the apex of psyche's spectrum (i.e. since psychoanalysts have always deemed ego-unconsciousness inaccessible.) The interesting way in which Jordan manipulates the notion of the double is shadier than most, once again meshing the good and evil. Claire's encounter with Vivian becomes more than a simple fight of good against evil (e.g. *Star Wars*, *The Matrix* or *The Lord of the Rings*.) It is an assertion that one cannot live without the other. As William Blake boldly stated, "without contraries is no progression."[138] The same could be said of Claire,

[136] Falsetto, Mario. *Stanley Kubrick: A Narrative and Stylistic Analysis*. (New and Expanded Second Edition.) Westport, Connecticut & London: Praeger, 2001; p. 43.
[137] Ibid., p. 46.
[138] Blake, William. "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," in *Selected Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; p. 74.

for without embracing her contrariety, her self-realization couldn't be grasped and her mythical journey couldn't come to a close.

In Jordan's film the process of individuation is the perfect marriage of heaven and hell, the perfect romantic tenet that strength lies in weakness and that sublimity exists between beauty and horror. It proclaims that we must cherish our fall—or *felix culpa*—for it brings us an awareness of infinity, of man's capacity to surpass himself and maybe even one day of being able to attain exaltation. Jordan creates a heroine of pantheistic nature through the acceptance of all her human facets, the good as well as the bad. Her psychological and personal quest leads her to this ego-unconscious that only existed before within dreams. Jordan manages with *In Dreams* to prove a psychoanalytic concept that before this was only imagined.

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