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What Big Teeth She Has

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Abstract

Myra Hindley is one of the most notorious female murderers in the world. This poem explores the ways in which Hindley has been, and continues to be mythologised by society. It examines the mythical women that have been compared to her, and attempts to demonstrate how dangerous it is to compare real people to fictional characters. The poem discusses how the press depicts murderers and the affect this has on the world. Using examples such as Dracula, the poem also reflects on how facts lose truth over time, and how many stories about real people have become mythologised whether this was intentional or not.

Keywords: Myra Hindley; Moors Murders; mythology; murder; crime; dehumanisation; sexism; victim

Clytemnestra

The plotting Queen,
 an adopter of the masculine role of adulterer.
 Transgressive like the sadomasochistic tendencies,
 like the relationships
 she engaged in incarcerated.
 The weapon drips.
 The bath water is turning red.
 Clytemnestra stands
 over Agamemnon's body
 with pride,
 happily
 like her
 trophy photographs.

Medea

A sorceress, and
worshipper of Hecate, the Goddess of witchcraft.
A destroyer of family,
like the 1960s social change,
like the breakdown of tradition,
like the brutality.
They cry from inside
to escape their mother
when she fully defied
any maternal instinct
with infanticide.
Their pleas grow silent.

Medusa

The terrible woman,
sinister, unfeminine.
Phallic serpents instead of long hair,
and viridescent skin.
Scaled, and horrifying to behold.
Medusa's stony gaze,
like hers in the iconic mug shot:
hostile, and unyielding in monochrome.
There is no grey area.
As if to understand,
as if to attempt to understand,
is to condone.

The Devil

's Wife
The Devil
's Disciples
Marlowe's chief lord,
and regent of perpetual night.

Shape shifting to become a serpent
of Eden,
of one of many in Medusa's twisted crown.
Rejecting the word of God,
like her, an apostate,
like her, turning values upside down.
She came to believe,
as he did before her,
that Christianity is as Nietzsche deems:
a fatal and seductive lie.
The Devil is a dweller of the underworld and hell,
and "at last, Myra is where she belongs..."

Myra

A personification of the myths.
Violator of gender norms,
of human norms.
A Frankenstein's monster
amalgamation of fiction.
That holy shape becomes a devil best.
A Siren for children,
a wolf in grandmother's clothes.
What a broad build she has,
what brassy blonde hair.
She is paradoxically
propelled to supernatural status,
whilst plummeted to a human subspecies.
Neither and either.
Nothing and both.
But she was not a witch,
nor a queen,
nor a mother.

The one more hated
because she is a she?

Is he, whilst imprisoned,
the one more free?
Is he cloaked in his insanity?

Protesting her degree of culpability:
I grew fat on a diet of his Hitler, de Sade,
Dostoyevsky.
I was a blind disciple
of King rat,
of the two headed boy.
I did that, but I did not do *that*.
I am infatuated in my youth,
I am his mirror,
with eyes so dilated I have become his pupil.

Branded a Clytemnestra, Medea, Medusa, and the Devil.
These are transcendental figures
not of Earth
used to describe earthly events.
These are labels which do not bother to explain,
but drip with infamy.
Sensationalised heavily.

As murderers are male in history,
by default, usually
this meant the rarity of this instance
generated a pure, new hatred,
of women who are murderers,
misogynistic, and scapegoating.
But, could it be that
behind every "great" man is a

There are those exemplary
of factual notoriety
turned myth:

Vlad Țepeș

Or Dracula,
The Impaler.

Elizabeth Bathory

Or The Blood Countess.
Their victims uncounted for,
yet both feature heavily
in pop culture, in folk lore.
Stripped of their humanity,
and sculpted instead as caricatures.

Fanciful imaginations,
word of mouth,
and fables handed down
means their lives are fictionalised.
The stories altered over centuries,
and incorrectly memorised.

Nicknames given too:
Yorkshire Ripper,
Night Stalker,
Werewolf of Wysteria.
Milwaukee Cannibal,
Killer Clown,
Dr Death.
The Moors Murderers.
Catchy.
Alliterative.
And yet, these eerie
and inhuman titles
are aliases which
globally popularise them,
further them from mankind,
create celebrity status,
and leave us blind.

Are articles, and literatures which alter truth
on subjects such as these
harmful?
Obscene?
Insightful?
Necessary?
When so called true crime,
often fabricated, poorly written,
sees an era of intense popularity
do readers realise
what they read?

Black and white.
Angels and devils.
Lambs and lions.
Salvation and damnation.
How can it not be?
How can it be?
The language used for situations like these
is that of oppositional binaries.
The pedestalled
and the condemned.
The unthinkable,
and the infinitely natural.

Juxtaposed in photographs
on tabloid front pages
were, and sometimes still are,
the devils and the angels.
Many texts use archetypes
though not all victims were shown
in the wholly angelic light.
Seen as less pure
in some way.

Perhaps for the link
of homosexuality
to monstrosity.
The assumption of
sexual awareness
constructed a murdered teenager
to a willing adult
despite the abhorrent unfairness.

In her case,
with her face and name so ingrained into society,
the answers,
the details
will remain unknown.
Gone before her divulgence,
gone before it was demonstrated
she had a ribbon of empathy
for the lives affected.

In the traumatising tape recording,
black and white proof,
and the power of persuasion
an extent of complicity is clear,
despite her pleading not guilty.
Feigning needing help,
acting as the lure,
gaining trust.
Myra.
Sister. Daughter. Murderer. Liar.
But still human.

A body never found
means the book is never closed.
For the public, whether grieving,
compassionate,

or made sightless by loathing
the history is forbidden from
dissipating
into oblivion.

Instead it is remembered
down to minute detail,
accurate or
not.

Regurgitate the churnalism,
she can be your villain,
your flashing eyed Medusa
for eternity.
Repeat dehumanisation,
repeat the invented hierarchy of victims.
Repeat,
repeat,
repeat,
until her name feels heavy in your mouth
when you say it out loud.

What a broad build she has!
What brassy blonde hair,
all the better to
place the emphasis on her appearance,
demonise the working class,
romanticise the landscape.
Fear monger,
mythologise,
make the weak comparisons, and
distance,
distance,
distance.

The dehumanisation of a murderer

is understandable.
But in turn, it
dehumanises their victims.
When roughly every six months
a person was torn from existence
it must be remembered that
to lessen the reality
of *her* personhood
is to lessen the reality
of her crimes.

There is no life
unworthy of life.
There is no black,
there is no white.