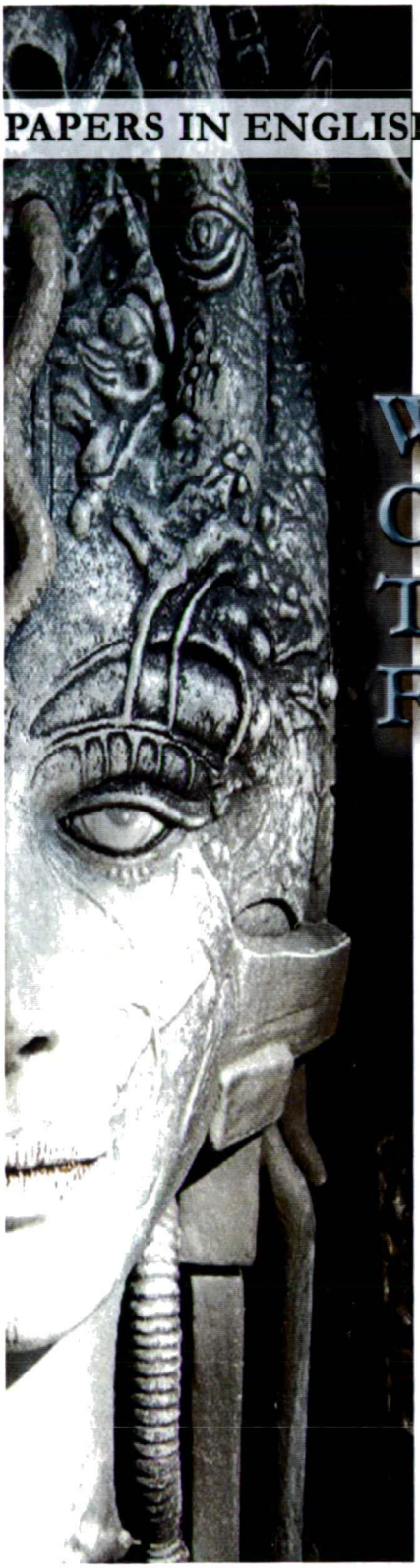

PAPERS IN ENGLISH & AMERICAN STUDIES XVII.

WHAT CONSTITUTES THE FANTASTIC?

Edited by
Sabine Coelsch-Foisner
Sarolta Marinovich-Resch
György E. Szőnyi
Anna Kérchy

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WHAT CONSTITUTES THE FANTASTIC?
Preface

Between 2004 and 2008 two generations of young scholars had the chance of debating and discussing their ideas concerning the fantastic, its genres and media, throughout historical periods, but always in connection with British and Anglo-American cultural representations. These PhD students were recruited from two cooperating English departments, that of Salzburg and Szeged, and have been coached by the co-editors of this volume. The four years of useful and stimulating collaboration was made possible by a generous grant of the Aktion Österreich-Ungarn Foundation and the present volume tries to document the results of our work at least partially, while at the same time pay tribute to our sponsor.

The topic and the scope of the work was suggested by Professor Sabine Coelsch-Foisner from the University of Salzburg, home of the research center, AliEN (Alternative Lives in Experimental Narratives), and has found congenial reception in Szeged, where the English Department has two research groups: REGCIS (Research Group for Cultural Iconology and Semiography) and the Gender Studies Research Group. The former concentrates on the theories of cultural representations and examines inter- and multimedial works in various historical periods while the latter has introduced important issues of gender studies into the examination of literatures and cultures in English. The concrete research topics of the PhD students (from Szeged and Salzburg alike), such as fantastic body transformations, possible and imaginary worlds of science fiction, the theoretical and generic issues of classical and postmodern vampire literature, fantasy worlds in comics and graphic novels, etc., did all very well connect with the scholarly interests of our research groups. The cooperative research work has paid special attention to the theoretical issues in connection with larger genres, too, such as romance, Gothic, horror, and magic realism. We have also found it important to stretch the scope of investigations through large cultural periods, from early modern times to postmodern representations. All in all, we can say that this cooperation has been useful and delightful not only for the participating young scholars, but also for the host institutions and their senior academic staff.

Since Professor Coelsch-Foisner's Introduction at the beginning of this volume gives ample theoretical guidance about the papers published here, nothing else is left for the co-editors but thanking her for her initiative and eager support; and express highest appreciation for Anna Kérchy, without whose tireless copy editing this publication could not have been made possible.

1 August, 2009

Sarolta Marinovich-Resch
György E. Szőnyi

Sabine Coelsch-Foisner

Introduction: Fantastic Genres – A History of Shifts and Hybrids

The question "What Constitutes the Fantastic?" ties in with the work of the Salzburg research group ALiEN (Alternative Lives in Experimental Narratives), which evolved out of the research project "Fantastic Body Transformations" established in 2004 and funded by the Austrian Science Fund. All contributors from Salzburg are affiliated with this research project. More specifically, the question "What Constitutes the Fantastic?" was raised in connection with two bilateral dissertation networks between the Universities of Salzburg and Szeged funded by the Aktion Austria-Hungary and entitled "The Fantastic: Genres and Media of Cultural Representation" (2004–2008), coordinated by Sarolta Marinovich-Resch, György E. Szőnyi and myself. This network involved over twenty young researchers, who regularly met at jointly organised workshops and explored generic properties of the fantastic both by reading literature, examining films, and discussing theories of the fantastic. The present volume brings together a selection of the papers given at these workshops. It documents our work, showing the paths we pursued and the texts with which we engaged within the framework of this joint doctoral programme rather than offering a chronological reading of key fantastic texts or following one particular approach.

Besides, the selection of primary works was mainly motivated by individual PhD-theses, some by now finished, and rather than prescribing any set texts, the workshops were debating fora open to test familiar as well as unconventional perspectives emerging in connection with the individual PhD theses, early modern drama and Romantic poetry constituting such excursions into areas not commonly discussed in connection with fantastic genres, but apt for studying the fantastic as a mode in its historical dimension and in the context of Western thought. In the course of our collaboration, the wide range of texts, coming from different literary traditions and including also film and (to some extent) visual art (admittedly a situation with which this group was faced rather than planning it), proved stimulating for addressing criteria of genre definition and perceiving qualities of the literary fantastic. Reflecting our engagement with current critical theories of the fantastic, the essays collected in this book are mainly case-studies, raising questions of genre and genre properties in relation with particular works or groups of works.

We hope that the reader will find the scope of texts and current discourses, including key concepts in theories of the fantastic such as liminality, unreliability, coincidence, transgression, magic and the marvellous, to name only a few, helpful for their own reading and for approaching the fantastic in classroom environments.

We should like to thank the Aktion Austria-Hungary for funding the workshops and scholarships granted to several PhD-students within the bilateral dissertation networks "What Constitutes the Fantastic?" and "The Fantastic: Genres and Media of Cultural Representation" as well as the publication of this volume, the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) for funding the Salzburg research project "Fantastic Body Transformations", the Rector of the University of Salzburg for supporting the work of the research group ALiEN, and the University of Szeged for supporting the printing of this book. Finally, I should like to thank my co-editors and co-co-

ordinators for making this network a most rewarding collaboration, especially Anna Kérchy for putting a great effort into the compilation of this volume, and all colleagues participating in the network for their curiosity and their enthusiasm – invaluable assets in such a project.

*****

The question "What constitutes the fantastic?" cannot be asked without addressing the historicity of the fantastic, i.e. its respective cultural, political and ideological contexts. As the participants in a series of six post-graduate workshops organised within the framework of these dissertation networks tried to outline specific fantastic features in particular works of the fantastic or groups of works from different periods and cultural contexts, they soon became aware of the difficulties in answering this question. Methodologically, we proceeded from comparing overtly fantastic, i.e. 'supernatural' or 'impossible' phenomena, such as ghosts and spectres, giant hounds, and monsters, alternative settings and events in history and (as yet) non-existent practices of body-modification to diagnosing narrative strategies and different medial realisations of the fantastic: lighting, colouring and camera-shots in film, music and gestures in melodrama.

A major insight gained from our reading of a wide range of texts was the obvious inadequacy of every effort to delineate consistent, or universal, genre properties – genre designations being the result of a particular approach in a particular social and political environment –, while it seemed equally problematic to dispense with such designations. Thus, while on the one hand, it may make sense to distinguish science fiction, alternative history and fantasy in respect of time concepts and notions of alterity, it may be useful to examine them together with regard to communicative strategies, characterisation and plot development. Utopia and dystopia, on the other hand, may be shown to reach into both science fiction and fantasy, but also into gothic, and magical realism may be either explored as a wholly distinct genre emerging in particular social contexts or as borrowing and reviving properties of pre-existing genres such as fantasy, gothic, and science fiction for particular political purposes. What this further suggests is the futility of considering one genre the mother of all other fantastic genres (gothic, romance, fantasy and science fiction have each been claimed to hold this status in respective critical contexts).

The dilemma of defining features of the fantastic and distinguishing from one another fantastic genres has been confronted in different ways by different critical camps. Recent debates about the fantastic have either emphasized genre (sub)divisions and concentrated on intrageneric ramifications, as a wealth of (excellent) companions to science fiction, gothic, magic(al) realism and alternative history demonstrate, or have tended to hold such classifications and designations at bay, as is suggested by Maggie Ann Bowers' dealing with both longer narratives and tales for the purpose of defining magical realism (2004),[1] by Lucy Armitt's rejection of traditional typologies and genre categories (2005, 193), by Colin Manlove's broad definition of 'fantasy' as "a fiction involving the supernatural or impossible" (1999, 3),[2] and Rosemary Jackson's definition of the fantastic as a literature of subversion (2003).

From such broad notions of the fantastic as transgression, as the realm of the supernatural, as alternative to reality, or as a staging of the impossible it is only a small step to the allegorical figures in early modern drama and the idea that plays and spectacles (the presentation of imaginary playworlds) 'pollute' both the actors and the playgoers, the former being likely to be-

1 See also Anna Kérchy's essay in this book, 28.

2 See also Markus Oppolzer's essay in this book, 5–6.

come 'monsters' as they create fictional identities.[3] Efforts to avoid genre designations bring to the fore profoundly philosophical questions in respect of creation and creativity in Western thought and religion from Plato via Romanticism to Postmodernity, prime instances being Coleridge's distinction between fancy and the imagination, i.e. allegoric and organic modes, in *Biographia Litteraria*, Chapter XIII (167), Iris Murdoch's study *The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artist* (1977), where she seeks to come to terms with man's innate proneness to fantasising in the light of Plato's philosophy, or Foucault's "Préface à la Transgression" (751–69), where the fantastic is considered to have stepped in where religion left a gap when on the decline: both transgression, connected with the fantastic, and transcendence, connected with religion, explore the limits of being.

Excursions into the realms of drama and poetry (to which the fantastic has not been commonly applied in critical debates), here undertaken by Ágnes Matuska and Larisa Kocic-Zambo, further suggest that current genre divisions are challenged when the concept of 'narrating' is extended to theatre, poetry, and the visual arts, such challenges being mainly in the field of subject position (the voice in poetry,[4] the role of acting in theatre) and ways of communicating the non-existent. Accordingly, questions of subject-formation and feeling, strategies of creating (and hiding) unreliability and instability, as well as cultural shifts in the quality and perception of the supernatural, the mysterious and magic were foregrounded in our discussions and hold a central interest in this book. It has proved particularly rewarding to concentrate on both continuities and discontinuities, i.e. to examine the shifts and transformations that occur when a written text is adapted to the screen and when genre markers are translated into a different medium (e.g. gothic into film), or when one genre (or theory) is imported from one cultural/social environment into a different one (as in the case of magic(al) realism).

Consequently, the essays collected in this volume reflect two objectives: to address the elusive and ever-shifting nature of the fantastic, while bearing in mind existing genre typologies and working with the critical vocabulary developed in these contexts. These objectives are also reflected in the arrangement of papers: while observing generic categories such as magic(al) realism, romance, gothic, fantasy, science fiction, and alternative history when grouping the essays, many of these concentrate on the shifting boundaries between individual genre designations and terminologies, pointing to new perspectives and subgenres, such as neofantastic, hysterical realism, or irrealism, allo-history or virtual history: hence the focus on European magic(al) realism and Latin American marvellous realism (Kérchy), on gothic and the detective novel (Oppolzer), gothic and German Expressionist film (Dragon), vampire fiction and feminist writing (Antoni), alternative history and uchronia (Szélpál), utopia and dystopia (Tóth). The history of the fantastic is a history of hybrids, shifting properties and re-formations of genre markers at the periphery of genres into new formats.

In the light of a history rich in shifts and hybrids, fantastic genres are best understood as nodes or clusters of particular properties, each capable of merging with properties prominent in other genres and forming new nodes in response to cultural and social changes.

Anna Kérchy's study of magic(al) realism, its history and cultural aplications shows how, within a relatively short period of time (from Franz Roh's first use of the term *magischer Realismus* in 1925 to describe German paintings of the *neue Sachlichkeit* to postcolonial writing at the turn

[3] Cf. Ágnes Matuska's essay on intermediality in Tudor drama in this book.

[4] For a discussion of the fantastic in relation to poetry, especially to the category of poetic consciousness see Sabine Coelsch-Foisner, *Revolution in Poetic Consciousness: An Existential Reading of Mid-Twentieth-Century British Women's Poetry* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2002), Vol. 3.

of the millennium), a concept – the sudden eruption of magic within the real, or the supernatural within the natural – has received different names and has been applied to different movements and currents. Tracing the development of the genre, or rather 'label', Kérchy suggests differentiating between the terms *magic realism*, *marvellous realism*, *magical realism* and *magic(al) (ir)-realism*, which constitute major phases, she argues. What is of particular interest in this paper is the striking diversity with which different cultures have employed the term(s) and modified its (their) meanings according to their respective traditions – German post-expressionist painting, 'American Realists and Magic Realists', the Latin American experimentalist novel – even extending the concept to tales for children.

The category of magic is also the key element in **Elisabeth Schober's** essay on romance. Starting from terminological uncertainties as to the nature of the unreal, Schober suggests that in the history of the genre the non-mimetic has taken many forms and, for the purpose of this essay, focuses on excessive incidents constituting one such form, as in the case of David Lodge's *Small World* (1984). By adopting Brian Inglis's distinction between trivial and meaningful coincidences, she demonstrates how the interweaving of such coincidences contributes to the overall design of romance, which she relates to its apparently providential implications and, in the case of Persse's quest for Angelica, to its Catholic undercurrent. Hence, if coincidence is a vital plot mechanism in romance, it is also a particular form of coincidence that accounts for its magic: the notion that the good will always win.

A genre historically connected with romance and extremely prolific and multifaceted is gothic, here discussed in relation to the detective novel, horror fiction, *fin-de-siècle* constructions of femininity, film and melodrama, Romantic poetry, and science fiction.

Tzvetan Todorov's seminal study *The Fantastic* (1975) provides the starting point for several essays in this book. **Markus Oppolzer** stresses its hermeneutical focus as a crucial contribution to the study of the fantastic and, re-considering the nexus between character position and reader position in gothic texts, explores the advantages of pragmatic and reader-response theories (and, consequently, the shortcomings of Todorov's strict structuralism) with regard to the technique of unreliable narration. To demonstrate his point, he concentrates on Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), which he reads as a progressive creation of the fantastic – a process in which 'the reader becomes complicit'. Todorov's principle of hesitation is thus fruitfully combined with studies of narrative unreliability.

The pragmatic quality of the term horror fiction, 'the only genre named for its effect on the reader' is crucial for **Korinna Csetényi**'s reading of Stephen King's *The Shining* (1977), which she approaches by exploring the central role of the hotel as a liminal locus at the intersection of past and present.

Salli J. Kline, guest speaker at the 2006 spring symposium in Szeged, draws on her book *The Degeneration of Women* (1992) when bringing together key notions of the *fin de siècle* concerning the female sex in the popular imagination, psychiatric practice and the literary imagination. Her focus is on the literary gothic, notably on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, which she reads both in terms of the late-nineteenth-century development of generic and aesthetic properties and against the background of cultural currents discriminating the female sex by insisting on the regressive forces of the New Woman and her dangerously licentious and criminally degenerate nature, as she was perceived. Centrally expressed in Cesare Lombroso's *La donna delinquente* (1893), these notions have a much longer history in England and on the European continent than has been commonly assumed, as Kline points out, demonstrating how central tenets of criminal anthropology were incorporated into late-Victorian debates about the moral decay of the British Empire characteristic of those staunchly conservative camps to which Bram Stoker belonged. Her

reading offers not only an illuminating re-interpretation of the female vampire in terms of then current techniques of 'anatomic-pathological investigation' and the belief in the mental, somatic and moral stigmata of criminal women, but yields profound insights into the culture-specific reception of ideas and their transformation in the literary imagination.

This path is continued in **Rita Antoni**'s reading of *femme fatale* vampires in literary history. Exploring the role of the vampire in constructing an image of femininity particularly dominant in the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, she concentrates on two recent vampire stories: Garry Kilworth's "The Silver Collar" (1989) and Angela Carter's "The Lady of the House of Love" (1979), exploring the latter's (unrealised) potential of feminist subversion. Contrasting these two stories, Antoni points out constraining roles for the feminine in patriarchal societies and tries to argue the importance of understanding the vampire as a projection of male fears and fantasies in its respective social context.

The question of what constitutes gothic film and whether there is such a category constitutes the starting point for **Zoltán Dragon**'s focus on features of early literary gothic as re-surfacing in films that essentially depart from the commonly acknowledged filmic genre of gothic horror. By concentrating on two recent films *Gothika* (2003) and *The Others* (2001), he demonstrates how central features of the literary gothic, such as the family secret, the importance of the past and the interaction of phantom and real body, are reemployed in the former in a man ner that distinguishes it from horror gothic, and how, in the latter film, the borders of life and death, inside and outside, past and present, visible and invisible, central in gothic fiction, are subverted in a cunning shift of perspective from the living to the dead. While such shifts and subversions disrupt both viewer and reader expectations, they may be considered constitutive of a genuine genre of the gothic film.

Being a prime category of the gothic, the monstrous has adopted a wide range of forms in the history of the genre. It is linked with both creation and uncreation, as **Elisabeth Skokan** suggests in her study of how melodramatic versions of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, notably Richard Brinsley Peake's *Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein* (1823), Henry M. Milner's *Frankenstein; or The Man and the Monster* (1826), and the anonymous burlesque *Frank-in-Steam; or, The Modern Promise to Pay* (1824), translated the creation of the monster and its superhuman abilities into melodramatic effects. Concentrating on notions of the fantastic as 'a resistance to fixity' **Katalin Kocsis** reads the monstrous Beast Folk in H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, as a metaphor for the fantastic, drawing together narrative unreliability and scientific experiment – a fusion already typical of *Frankenstein*.

Ágnes Matuska and **Larisa Kocic-Zambo** investigate manifestations of the monstrous in literary contexts only remotely connected with the fantastic, the former by exploring the role of the Vice in a play called *Jacke Jugeler* from 1553–58, suggesting its importance for the shift in theatrical traditions in the late sixteenth century, the latter by examining the liminal figure of Geraldine in Coleridge's poem "Christabel". Drawing on the discourses of feminine sensibility and amazonesque strong-mindedness, Kocic-Zambo reads the poem against the background of Todorov's concepts of the uncanny, the marvellous and the fantastic.

(Hard) science fiction produces its own kind of monsters, as **Zsófia Anna Tóth** demonstrates in her analysis of Kurt Wimmer's film *Equilibrium* (2002), which straddles the boundaries between utopia and dystopia, in that humans are administered a drug, 'Prozium', which transforms them into stable automata in a stable society governed by peace and harmony, not war. What really happens, however, is that human beings are drained of their humanity, as feelings and sensations are eliminated in this artificial society. **Sarah Herbe** traces the fantastic quality in hard science fiction, which has commonly been defined in opposition to fantasy, notably in

terms of a lack of the fantastic in favour of 'careful extrapolation' from the known. By concentrating on Brian Stableford's story "Snowball in Hell", she illustrates how the text strives to ground fantastic elements in what is scientifically possible and known. Among the strategies she examines as prototypically employed in this story about a little girl named Alice and carrying the genome of a pig are the nexus between the reader's actual world and the *novum*, the scientific attitude and discourse as well as a solution-oriented structure. By drawing our attention to long, in many cases accurate, descriptions and scientific explanations that can be checked by lay readers in current science books, she pinpoints two of the dilemmas of hard science fiction exemplifying the criteria commonly listed by theorists (who often are science fiction writers – and scientists – themselves), one being the risk of becoming obsolete too quickly, given the rapid accumulation of scientific knowledge, the other being the average reader's failure to establish the accuracy of the facts and methods presented in hard science fiction. As in Oppolzer's discussion of Todorov's concept of the fantastic, Herbe, too, argues for a pragmatic understanding of the fantastic in hard science fiction, given the readers' changing scientific environment.

A genre equally concerned with notions of truth in that it brings together historical facts and speculations about the future is alternative history or uchronia – a neologism coined in the 1990s in connection with a rethinking of the relation between fact and fiction. **Lívia Szélpál** explores central tenets of this genre merging science fiction and the historical novel by asking 'What if history had developed differently?' While exploring the leanings of alternative history towards fantasy scenarios and dystopia ('nightmare fiction'), her study of Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* (1962) with its self-begetting aspect leads over to **Dóra Szauter**'s reading of Umberto Eco's *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* (2006) with its insistent self-referencing and its paraded intermediality imitating wiki-technology. The interpenetration of world-structure and text-structure, here considered to form doorways to the fantastic, recalls the self-consciousness and metafictional play of postmodern romance, raised in Schober's article on David Lodge's *Small World*. The excess of coincidence, i.e. plotting, the juxtaposition of, and easy shifts between, material and virtual realities as well as daring textual experiment are once more suggestive of the metamorphic quality of fantastic genres and their pliability in the light of cultural and social changes. New technologies and environments do not only prompt new phenomena in fantastic literature – from the vampire to the web, from the monster to the cyborg, from the wailing ghost to the unfeeling automaton – but lead to a re-negotiation of the boundaries between its mimetic- and non-mimetic dimensions.

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Anna Kérchy

Faraway, So Close.
Towards a Definition of Magic(al) (Ir)Realism

Magic realism is a literary device or a way of seeing
in which there is space for the invisible forces that move the world:
dreams, legends, myths, emotion, passion, history. All these forces
find a place in the absurd, unexplainable aspects of magic realism...
It is the capacity to see and to write about all the dimensions of reality.
(Allende in Faris, 107)

A reality not of paper, but one that lives within us and determines
each instant of our countless daily deaths, and that nourishes
a source of insatiable creativity, full of sorrow and beauty[...]
(Marquez 1982, 6)

Nur was nicht ist ist möglich.
(Einstürzende Neubauten 1996)

Magic(al) Realism. The Term and Its History

Despite its increasing popularity in the past few decades, *magical realism* remains a term notoriously difficult to define. No critical consensus has been reached so far on its denoting a particular genre (Abrams, 153), a mode of writing (Zamora-Faris, 5), a representational strategy, an attitude towards reality (Leal, 121) or a modality of interpreting existence (Bényei 1997b, 15). Paradoxically, this confusing term is not only based on an oxymoron, intertwining two irreconcilable elements, but it also refuses to regard the two components as mutually exclusive binaries: the *real(ist)* and the *magical* infiltrate and supplement, de- and re-compose, defamiliarise and supernaturalise each other, 'amalgamating' into one. As Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris claim in their excellent anthology *Magical Realism. Theory, History, Community,* magic may be real, and the reality magical; there is no need to label them as such, nor to differentiate between them (3). Yet, it is still widely debated whether *magical realism* is a subgenre or a mutation of the *fantastic* primarily characterised in the classic Todorovian sense by a readerly hesitation resulting from an unresolvable clash between the real and the unreal (see Todorov, 25). The *magic(al)* in *magical realism* is alternatively associated with "fantastic and dreamlike elements," "material derived from myth and fairy tales," "fantastic, absurd or impossible" events (Abrams, 135, 175), "the unexpected and the inexplicable" (Drabble, 606), the "mysterious, extraordinary, and supernatural" (Bowers, 5), the "return of the banished supernatural, the uncanny and fabulous [...], the unexpected pertinence of the archetypal unconscious, [...] or the theocratic cosmos [...], and most especially the absurd" (Cowan, 5). The *magic(al)* can either be generated by virtue of the authorial intention through a conscious strategy related to the mode of production, or, on the contrary, it can result from the interpretive inventiveness related to the mode of reception. Still others regard it as an effect of the very narrative dynamics or attribute it to a combination of all these components of meaning-formation. The *magic(al)* draws upon revived, non-realistic Western literary traditions from the marvellous Greek pastoral and epic, to medieval

dream visions, to fairy-tale, romance and Gothic fiction, as well as non-Western cultural modes, like oral, performative, ritual practices (Zamora-Faris, 2). Moreover, the *magic(al)* interweaves with the recognizably realistic, the representation of ordinary events, so that – instead of intruding from the outside – it seems to be inherent within, "integrated [in an *unexplained yet unproblematic manner*] into the rationality and materiality of literary realism" as a "simple matter of the most complicated sort" (Zamora-Faris, 3).

On introducing the term into the Hungarian academic critical discourse, Tamás Bényei argues that *magic realism* (sic!) is an adequate name precisely because it is so obviously a misnomer, an impossible name. Thus, the strange modality of naming the mode resembles the way the texts of this specific mode imagine naming the world (1997, 151). Perhaps it is the reluctance to tame the indeterminate quality of the mode that makes critics confuse the terms *magic realism* and *magical realism*, without clearly differentiating between them – regardless of the fact that the two terms designate historically, culturally different stages in the term's career, and are by no means synonymous. Tellingly, Maggie Anne Bowers entitles her book-length study of the mode *Magic(al) Realism* (2004). Similarly the corpus of texts defined as *magic(al) realist* remains uncertain: Borges' name is cited by nearly all encyclopedic scholarly works (Abrams' and Drabble's among them) as a *par excellence* example for *magical realism*, although – as Bényei convincingly points out – Borges' writings differ from *magic(al) realist* texts in so far as they exclude the chaotic outer world to create an alternative universe of absolute cohesion, governed by the perfect logic of its internal laws (1997b, 160).

Throughout its history, *magic(al) realism* has been used to refer to painting, literary texts, films, photos and recently music; artistic pieces which transgressively destabilize the boundaries between opposites such as magic(al) and real(ism), physical exterior and psychic interior, cause and effect, sacred and profane, life and death, etc. so as to introduce alternative, new perspectives. No conclusion has been drawn on its being culturally specific (uniquely applicable to Latin American writing or solely inspired by European surrealism) or, on the contrary, highly multicultural, inviting identification with *otherness*. *Magic(al) realism* is both regarded as a catalyst of empowering voices for minorities and a replenishing for mainstream narrative tradition (Zamora-Faris, 2).

As for the drawbacks of the term, publishers tend to use *magic(al) realism* for marketing purposes as a label guaranteeing commercial success granted to narratives discussing exciting, alternative approaches to reality. Thus, writers are worried about the category's becoming a vague umbrella-term, even a tired *cliché*. Critics may doubt its potential as an analytical tool on grounds of its political, ethical investment being predominated and limited by its fantastic quality, or on the contrary, due to its over-politicised nature (Bowers, 1).

Bényei calls attention to the term's elusive nature resulting in a rather hectic career troubled by discontinuities and contradictions, which he proposes to re-read (1997a, 147). In the followings I wish to provide an overview of the historical evolution of *magic(al) realism* as a theoretical concept, with the aim of revealing within this 'hectic career' the continuities of the discontinuities.

Taking into consideration historical transformations, cultural variants, and different connotations, we should differentiate between the terms *magic realism*, *marvellous realism*, *magical realism* and *magic(al) (ir)realism*, which indicate the major phases of the concept's evolution both as an artistic means of expression and interpretation and as a theoretical, analytical tool.

Magic Realism (Magischer Realismus)

The term *magic realism* was originally coined by art critic Franz Roh in 1925 to herald the emerging direction of German post-expressionist painting of the *neue Sachlichkeit* (the *new objectivity*). Surprisingly – opposed to the contemporary associations implying a departure from realism – Roh praises the new works of *magischer Realismus* for returning from Expressionism's abstract style and "exaggerated preference for fantastic, extraterrestrial, remote objects" (16) to the figural representation of *real* objects. Its aim is to reveal that the magical, unlike the mystical, "does not descend to the represented world but rather hides and palpitates behind it" (15). Prominent artists of the period, Otto Dix *(Fig. 1)* and George Grosz portray the inextinguishable horrors of their own times instead of the remote horrors of hell. Paintings with telling titles like *Metropolis* and *Gray Day* feature whores, cripples, war veterans, and blind match-sellers. Georg Schrimpf represents Purity by depicting a simple shepherdess in the fields in place of the Holy Mother of God. These artists exchange the past's frenetic transcendentalism for a newly found pleasure in the fragmented and limited nature of terrestrial things. In Roh's view, the obsession of *magic realist* painting with *new objectivity* signifies a desire to learn, transform and exalt the objects as crystallizations of 'the wonder of matter'. Balancing between vague sensuality and highly structured schematics, their aim is to recreate the world in its most tangible reality, to offer the fundamental artistic feeling of existence, a calm yet ethically and politically self-conscious admiration of the magic of being. Instead of supernaturalizing the *ordinary*, literally transformed into the *fantastic*, post-expressionists defamiliarize the *real*, learning to see it as common *magical*. Extreme clarity and ultra-sharp focus are used to achieve a sense of unreality, to represent the secret, interior figure of the visible, external world. The term as an aesthetic category was brought to the US with the 1942 "American Realists and Magic Realists" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, featuring works by Peter Blume, Paul Cadmus, and Philip Evergood among others, and later with the 1943 exhibition of the "precisionist" Charles Sheeler and the "eerily realist" Edward Hopper also at MoMA.


Figure 1

The term gradually found its way from (the study of) painting into literature. *Magischer Realismus* in post–1945 German literary criticism referred to inter-war fiction that did not contain fantastic elements yet employed hypernatural clarity and precise, realistic descriptions to produce vague feelings of supernatural doom or divine awe (Hegerfeldt 2004, 2). The Italian Massimo Bontempelli first applied the term to literature with reference to texts representing the "mysterious and fantastic quality of reality" as early as 1926 (Bontempelli in Bowers, 13), but it was José Ortega y Gasset's translation of Roh's groundbreaking essay into Spanish in 1927 that marked a significant step in the evolution of the term, setting the stage for its literary appropriation in a Hispanic environment. In a belated revival, some twenty years later in 1948,

the Venezuelan Arturo Uslar-Pietri (re)introduced *magic(al) realism* to describe Latin American experimentalist novelists' focus on the magical and mysterious aspects of human living amongst the reality of life. However, the majority of critics praise the French-Russian Cuban Alejo Carpentier's fictional and theoretical writings for bringing *magic realism* to the continent, and for producing its specifically Latin American version, *marvellous realism*. His *marvellous realism* has indubitably influenced the Western canon's most popular *magic(al) realist* author, an iconic figure of the mode, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, whose fictional universe is populated by "characters ascending to heaven amidst bedsheets, mysteriously levitating while drinking cups of chocolate, and turning into snakes or puddles of pitch, in a world benighted with deluges lasting several years and yellow flowers falling from the sky" (Chanady, 126).

Marvellous Realism (Lo Real Maravilloso Americano)

In his "On the Marvelous Real in America" published in 1949 Carpentier explains his term *lo real maravilloso americano* (*American marvellous realism*) as a culturally specific, geographically predetermined term, a uniquely Latin American form of *magic realism*. Here the amplification of the perceived reality, the improbable juxtapositions and marvellous mixtures of the fantastic exist by virtue of Latin America's varied history and geoögraphy, its demographical and political diversity, and its heterogeneous native culture. (It is a native culture that conquistador Hernando Cortes calls from a hegemonic, colonialist, European perspective that still predominates "a culture no *human* tongue can explain [in] its grandeurs and peculiarities" (in Carpentier, 105, *Fig. 2*) Similarly, Weisberger and Echevarria differentiate between two strands of *magic(al) realism*: "the [European] epistemological in which the marvels stem from an observer's vision, and the [Latin American] ontological in which America is considered to be itself marvellous" (in Zamora-Faris, 165). On the one hand, the European, "scholarly" type of *magic(al) realism* is said to create a sense of mystery and magic, or construct an alternative universe through a narrative technique and often a political strategy (the mode serves post-colonial, cultural critical or feminist purposes). On the other hand, the Latin American "mythic, folkloric type" of *marvellous realism* relies on the culturally and racially mixed *mestizaje* native cultural heritage's superstitions, myths, customs and rituals – pointing beyond the limits of knowable European experience (see Bowers,

Figure 2

32–66). In Carpentier's view, the fantastic cannot be explored by subverting or transcending reality with abstract forms, artistic compositions and cold artificiality, but rather with a new vocabulary, a new perspective exploring the marvellous "inherent in the natural and human realities of time and place" (Zamora-Faris, 75). The phenomenon of *marvellous* presupposes *faith*, as it "arises from an unexpected alteration of reality (a miracle), from a privileged revelation of reality, an unaccustomed insight that is singularly favoured by the unexpected richness of reality or an amplification of the scale and categories of reality," and can be perceived and experienced with particular intensity "by virtue of an exaltation of the spirit that leads to a kind of extreme state" (Carpentier, 86). It is precisely the dependence of the *marvellous* on faith and true belief that differentiates it from the surrealists' thoroughly rational project to escape reason (see Wood, 13). Carpentier focuses on the magical instead of the real: his most famous 1949 novel *The Kingdom of this World*, set in Haiti during a slave rebellion in the 1800s, features shape-shifters, flying dead and voodoo magic. Therefore Roh's original emphasis on the defamiliarized (the mundane) is reversed to stress the significance of the supernaturalised (the magical), so that magic is no longer in the style but in the material.

Magical Realism (Realismo Magico)

The term *realismo magico* (*magical realism*) emerged with critic Angel Flores' 1955 essay entitled "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction." Interestingly, Flores never acknowledges either Roh's or Carpentier's influence, but instead regards *magical realism* as a "continuation of the romantic realist tradition of Spanish language literature and its European counterparts." He invents a new history of influences traced back to such diverse works as Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Kafka's "Metamorphosis" and de Chirico's cold industrial landscapes, and considers Borges the first true *magical realist* author (Bowers, 16–17). For Flores *magical realism* is a general trend of his contemporary (1930s–1950s') Latin American novelists and short-story writers. An "amalgamation of realism and fantasy" (Flores, 112) characterizes these imaginative writings which build on the "art of surprises" to transform the common and the everyday into the awesome, unreal and miraculous, and to throw the reader into a timeless flux, into the unconceivable, fraught with dramatic suspense. In Flores' *magical realism*, the magical unreal happens as a part of the reality that serves to "prevent the myth from flying off, like fairy tales, to supernatural realms." These stories generate a "confusion within clarity." They use a precise style, and a logically conceived, well-knit plot-line almost resembling a detective-story to narrate inexplicable, fantastic happenings – like Gregor Samsa's transformation into a cockroach – which readers and characters are to accept as "almost normal events," as "*faits accomplis*" not to be discussed or debated (Flores, 115–116).

Luis Leal in his 1967 essay "Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature" – published in the same year as Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* – attempts to narrow down Flores' extremely heterogeneous corpus of *magical realist* texts. Yet his definition of the term – strangely reminiscent of Derrida's self-deconstructing definition of deconstruction – hardly goes any further than determining what magical realism *is not*. In Leal's opinion, unlike surrealism *magical realism* does not use dream motifs to wound reality; unlike fantastic literature or science fiction it does not distort reality or create imagined worlds and it feels no need to justify the mysteries; unlike psychological literature it does not emphasize the psychological analysis of characters; unlike magic literature it does not evoke emotions; unlike avant-garde literature it is not escapist. Moreover it is not an aesthetic movement either, since it is not interested in creating complex

structures dominated by a refined style. In the end, Leal concludes that the *magical realist* writer "heightens his senses until he reaches an extreme state that allows him to intuit the imperceptible subtleties of the external world, the multifarious world in which we live" (Leal, 123). Despite its uncertainties, Carpentier's, Flores' and Leal's "Latin Americanist" view on magical realism is so pervasive that the mode is still the one most frequently associated with the names of Latin American authors such as Marquez, Borges, Carpentier, Miguel Asturias, Julio Cortazar, Carlos Fuentes, José Saramago, Isabel Allende, or Laura Esquivel.

Magic(al) Realism

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a revitalized interest in the category of *magic(al) realism* – referred to alternatively as *magic realism* and *magical realism. Postmodernist* and *postcolonial* theory and criticism recognized fictional reformulations of their views on narrativity and subjectivity in these (self-)disruptive texts: they (1) transgress ontological, political, geographical or generic boundaries, (2) invite readers to recognize the socially constructed nature of reality, (3) encourage them to accept non-normative, alternative (both realistic and magical) perspectives, and (4) write against hegemonic regimes, homogenizing definitions and universalized truths (see Bowers, 6). Yet, on the other hand, as Bernard Cowan claims, the *magic(al) realist* attempt to rediscover the irreal's (re)creative powers at the kernel of the real shocked the conventional literary theory that argued for an increasing significance of the political and the philosophical versus the artistic imaginary, deemed to "belong to a more primitive era of human expression" (Cowan, 5). Paradoxically, the mode simultaneously enjoyed an ever-increasing popularity and faced nearly insurmountable difficulties in its canonization as a critical term due to the very same reason: its being associated with postcolonialism and postmodernism.

Moving away from Carpentier's "Americanist" understanding of *magic(al) realism*, the *postcolonialist interpretation* propagated by Stephen Slemon claimed that the trademark fusion of magical and realist components originated in "the postcolonial situation *per se*, which is likewise characterized by the co-existence of irreconcilable opposites, i.e. a dominant rational-scientific 'Western' and a marginalized mythical 'native' worldview" (Hegerfeldt 2002, 63). As such it is meant to readdress cultural hierarchies, prevailing systems of thinking and ways of being, and to deny or supplement the traditional European realism with non-realistic, indigenous myths, legends and cultural practices. According to Slemon, the "sustained opposition" in *magic(al) realism* between the discursive systems of two irreconcilable fictional worlds resembles the colonial subject's suspension between two incompatible cultural systems (409–410). Thus, *magic(al) realism* is equally associated with Latin-American Gabriel Garcia Marquez, British–Indian Salman Rushdie, British-Nigerian Ben Okri, Afro-American Toni Morrison, Chinese-American Maxine Hong Kingston, mixed blood Native American Leslie Marmon Silko among others cross-cultural authors. Many argued that *magic(al) realism,* mainly imported from Latin America and widely associated with postcolonial authors, is responsible for transforming third-world suffering into entertainment, for commodifying an exoticized, tamed primitivism in an orientalist way, in order to project the "colonizer's ever more distant, desirable and/or despised self [...] onto colonized others" (Faris 2002, 101). Spanish American writers, Fuguet and Gomez went as far as to call English-speaking literary critics the descendants of Columbus, who popularize *magic(al) realism* as if they were "distributing to the international reading public other bits of colored glass for their pleasure and enjoyment" (in Faris 2002, 105). Ironically, Amaryll Chanady argues on the contrary that a "selective cannibalism" characterises the Latin American authors

and theoreticians of *magical realism* who incorporated the desirable elements from French surrealism into their narrative strategies of identity construction (138). (Tellingly Carpentier and Uslar-Pietri were diplomats in Paris in the 1920s and '30s, strongly influenced by European artistic movements (Bowers, 14) prior to their becoming the mode's initiators and 'importers' to their own countries.) Still others believed that *magic(al) realism* was a "decolonizing style" allowing for the emergence of new voices within the mainstream, and therefore providing a "discourse for a kind of international literary diaspora, a fictional cosmopolitanism of wide application" (Faris 2002, 101).

The initial considerable success and mainstreaming of *magic(al) realism* has been explained by its being a feasible response to the *postmodern era*'s "epidemic sense" of displacement and discursive destabilization strangely re-experienced nowhere more seriously than in the centers rather than the peripheries (see Cowan, 5). It becomes gradually clear that the "Western" postmodernist playfulness and relativization does not reduce but complements and augments the subversive potentials of the imported ex-centric *voice of the other*. The marginalized modes of thought are applied, in a postmodernist vein, as rhetorical and political strategies to further destabilize systems of meaning-formation and to produce exciting metatexts on the inevitability and excitement of misreading regarded as a unifying "anthropological constant," suggesting that "cultures cannot be neatly divided into rational vs. irrational, scientific vs. magical," (Hegerfeldt 2002, 64) dominant vs. suppressed. Tellingly, the characteristic magical realist techniques enumerated by critics are identical with strategies used in postmodern art. Anne Hegerfeldt mentions among these the destabilization of conventions of literary realism, cultural norms, semantic constraints and means of knowledge-production with the aim of questioning truth claims of positivist history, logical thought, and linear narrative alike (2002, 73). Wendy B. Faris argues that these fictions question received ideas about time, space, identity, and social order, and believes that Scheherezade's tales and post-Joycean texts resemble in so far as their language takes on magical properties to produce cunning metafictions and to fight the unforgettable truth of our mortality. In her view, postmodern storytellers are indeed in need of (verbal) magic to battle a depersonalized death, to fight their inherited "literary memory, if not the actual experience, of death camps and totalitarian regimes, as well as the proverbial death of fiction itself" (Faris 1995, 164).

As Bowers stresses, *magic(al) realism,* since its first appearance in English language in the early 1970s, has spanned to many locations across the globe reaching Canada (Robert Kroetsch, Jack Hodgins), the Caribbean, West- and South Africa (Ben Okri, Amos Tutuola, André Brink), India (Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie), the US (Toni Morrison, Ana Castilo, Leslie Marmon Silko), England (Graham Swift, Jeanette Winterson, Angela Carter), Australia (Peter Carey) and New Zealand (Witi Ihimaera). Moreover, it never ceases to prevail in mainland Europe continuing the tradition of surrealism and the heritage of 'uncategorizable' novels as Mikhail Bulgakov's 1941 *The Master and Margarita* on Satan's visit to the 1930s' atheist Moscow, Günter Grass' 1959 *The Tin Drum* on a German-Polish boy deciding never to grow up during the turmoils of the second world war, Michel Tournier's 1970 *The Erl King* on an innocent-monster Nazi recruiter and self-sacrificial saviour obsessed with a magical causality, Italo Calvino's 1957 *The Baron in the Trees* about a noble young man exchanging the decorum of earthly existence to a life in the trees, Franz Kafka's 1915 "The metamorphosis" on an accountant awakening one day to find himself transformed into a repugnant beetle, or Patrick Süskind's 1985 *The Perfume* on a 18th century murderer with an exquisite sense of scent willing to create a perfect fragrance through an *enfleurage* of beautiful corpses.

Accordingly, the term gradually entered the international critical discourse – popularized by the groundbreaking anthology edited by Zamora and Faris – and it came to refer to all narrative fiction in which "the supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it *is* an ordinary matter, and everyday occurrence – admitted, accepted and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Magic is no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing." As "a simple matter of the most complicated sort" (Zamora-Faris, 3) it signifies either a magical happening told in a matter-of-fact tone as an inherent component of reality or an ordinary event perceived 'supernaturalised' as a part of the magical sphere of the wondrous unbelievable. Simply saying, *magic(al) realist* fiction presents extraordinary events as ordinary, or ordinary events as extraordinary, it equally defamiliarises and supernaturalises, while its fantastic '(il)logic' is not questioned but accepted as unproblematic by all the fictional characters. Beyond the marvellous invading the usual, it highlights the mysterious, miraculous wonders of everyday life, and adds a magical dimension to the real by supplementation, excess, or destabilization, summoning readers to re-vision, to see with fresh eyes, as if from the unbiased perspective of an alien or a child. *Magic(al) realism*'s alternative view is influenced by non-Western cultural systems that privilege mystery over empiricism, empathy over technology, tradition over innovation, myths, communal rituals, and superstitions over enlightened rationality, monovocal science, and pragmatism (Zamora-Faris, 3), just as it is inspired by Greco-Latin mythology, European fairy-tales, folklore, surrealism, or 'other voices' infecting the classic Western realist novelistic tradition in guises such as the fantastic, fantasy, science-fiction, romance or gothic literature. *Magic(al) realism* is an extremely heterogeneous category because it combines all these sources and voices in an unresolved tension through the strategies of patchworking, rewriting and recycling, constituting hallmarks of the mode. In a postmodernist manner, it explores, transgresses, blurs boundaries (of cultures, regions, genres, genders, ways of being, modes of thinking alike). It allows for the coexistence of irreconcilable, impossible worlds. It balances on borderlines, locating itself on liminal territories, in-between West and non-West, real and imaginary, mind and body, life and death, male and female, self and other, universality and specific locatedness. According to the contemporary critical consensus, as regards its style, *magic(al) realism* is distinguished by a richness of sensory details, a lively simulated orality, a proliferation of figurativity and the semioticisation of the fictional world via a self-enhancing magical imagery. It plays with distorted, cyclical or deadened (per)versions of time, kaleidoscopic perspectives, often a magical causality confusing cause and effect, as well as mirrorings, uncanny repetitions and open endings. Its trademark magical transgressions imply hybridity, excess, metamorphosis and a subversive carnivalesque spirit.

Contemporary *magic(al) realism* is no longer a characteristic *per definitionem* of a certain era, nor a privilege of the mythologised region of Latin-America, nor a monopoly of unheard, peripheral minorities, of "'half-made' societies in which the impossibly old struggles against the appallingly new" (Rushdie in Cowan, 7), just as it is not necessarily a compulsory concomitant of postmodern literature (Bényei 1997, 16).

Magic(al) realism can no longer be monopolized by adult literature either. In a most confusing manner the re-evaluated canon may contain pieces of children's fiction. Bowers includes in her list of *magic(al) realist* texts Michael Bond's *A Bear Called Paddington* (on an anthropomorphic teddy bear), Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (on a clever little witch), Edith Nesbit's *Five Children and It* (on a wish-fulfilling sand fairy), and E.B. White's *Stuart Little* (on a mouse brought up as the youngest offspring of the Stuart family). She neglects the fact that *tales*, due to their very genre, invite a distinct attitude to the divide between reality and fiction, by urging readers to a sustained suspension of disbelief and an unproblematic acceptance of the fictional universe where magic

is the norm. Thus, tales theoretically lack the dynamic (metafictionalized) antagonism between the real and the magical, characteristic of *magic(al) realist* texts.

The heterogeneity of the redefined *magic(al) realist* canon is nicely illustrated by Tamás Bényei's selection of novels analysed in his seminal book-length study on *magic(al) realism*, where Günter Grass, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, José Saramago, Salman Rushdie, Toni Morrison, Graham Swift, and Angela Carter are discussed side by side (see Bényei 1997).

Alternative, Non-literary Recyclings of Magic(al) Realism Today

To demonstrate this heterogeneity, I shall provide a brief overview of the emergence of *magic(al) realism* in various fields of contemporary art beyond literature. The mode has inevitably affected the visual arts by virtue of filmic adaptations of literary texts like *The Tin Drum*, *The Master and Margarita*, *The Name of the Rose*, *Perfume*, *Chocolate* or *Big Fish*. *Magic(al) realist* films share the characteristic of questioning the trustworthiness of our perception of reality despite their specific historical, cultural locatedness. In Wim Wenders's 1987 *Wings of Desire* angels descend to Berlin to observe local inhabitants' thoughts in order "to assemble, testify, and preserve reality" as experienced by humans, until angel Cassiel's learning to *fall* in love entirely changes his perspective (manifested in the films' shots) from neutral, 'angelic,' objective black and white to an emotionally charged subjective human view. In Terry Gilliam's 1991 *The Fisherking* a homeless New Yorker, a former medieval history professor traumatised by the murder of his wife explores a fully alternative, delusional reality on his mission to find the Holy Grail, a last symbolic token of forgiveness and grace embodied by a worthless, dusty trophy in an aging millionaire's urban castle. He invites a nihilistic disc jockey responsible for the wife's death to explore his vision of a saint or a schizophrenic until he succeeds in re-evaluating his concept of truth. In Emir Kusturica's 1995 *Underground* a group of Yugoslavians spend decades in an underground shelter believing the Second World War has not ended yet and when they finally emerge they kill a Nazi-uniformed lead actor on a film-set mistaking him for real. They may mistake artistic performance for reality, yet the chaos remains a determining factor of their history, so that reconciliation between Serbs and Croatians is only possible in a final dream scene of a surrealistic wedding. J. P. Jeunet and Marc Caro's *The Fabulous Fate of Amélie Poulin* re-introduces a forgotten infantile perspective able to recognise the unperceived wonders and mysteries of life, reminding us to keep our senses alert, since, as one character comments, "life is like the Tour de France, blink at the wrong moment and you miss it" (see Steinberg, 10). As Tamara Sellman's film-reviews in *Margin. An Online Survey of Literary Magical Realism* illustrate, *filmic magic(al) realism* is an extremely heterogeneous and vague category which is ever more frequently applied in the field of 'the seventh art.' Yet far from being institutionalized as a term in film theory, it is practically used to refer to any story individually judged to be grounded in reality while including semi-plausible magical elements (see Sellman 2006).

Beyond the cinema, various other fields of visual art have used *magic(al) realism* as a means of postmodernist artistic self-expression relying on the mode in their style and content alike. Numerous prominent works adopt hypermodern, technologically sophisticated methods. "Young British Artist" Damien Hirst's 1999 iconic work entitled "The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living" presents a 14-foot tiger shark cut-up, preserved in formaldehyde in a glass vitrine series. Australian Ron Mueck's hyperrealistic sculptures reproduce the human body in its most minute details while playing with scale and the non-representable, 'ob-scene' aspect of corporeality in statues like the five-meter-high "Boy" *(Fig. 3)*, or

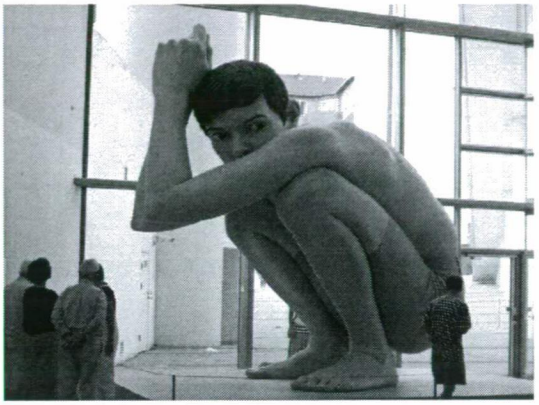

Figure 3

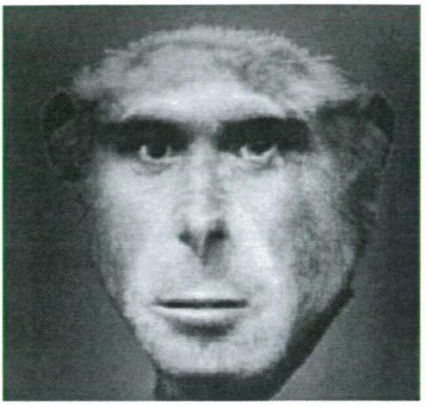

Figure 4

a woman in labour, or the artist's dead father. American photographer Nancy Burson from the late 1980s has used digital morphing technology to create facial composites merging features of different races, genders and species, and mingling normatively beautiful and abnormally monstrous features, in order to capture the very process of metamorphosis in a shot *(Fig. 4)*. All of these works aim at ironically challenging the commonsense assumption of *seeing* being identical with *believing*. They wish to transgress frames, destabilize culturally conditioned interpretive strategies, aesthetic norms and normative images, to unsettle ideologically ready-made truths, and revision our conventional 'ways of seeing,' of constructing and believing *reality*, aiming to encourage self-reflexivity. Others recycle old styles. British painter John Currin's weird faux-Flemish nudes use a "realist drag" that aims at upending (instead of suspending) disbelief, and welcoming the return of the repressed through unsettling mannerist strategies like distorted perspectives, distended proportions and deceptive lights (see Paul-Seward) which seem to exploit the stylistic potential of a *magic(al) realist* 'view from elsewhere.' American "lowbrow" fine-artist Mark Ryden returns to a fairy-tale imagery familiar from *Alice in Wonderland*-like Victorian fantasies strangely enhancing the abjectification of innocence through combining his childish figures with an overabundance of alchemical, Catholic, Buddhist symbols, carnivalesque Americana and Renaissance landscape, enthralling and repulsive beings. He reveals "a world full of awe and wonder" as witnessed from an uninhibited infantile perspective seeing everything as miraculous and mysterious, at once oversaturated with and deprived of meaning *(Fig. 5)*. No wonder Ryden's artistic statement on his webpage begins with the *magic(al) realist* lines: "Well, I have to admit I don't really paint my paintings; a Magic Monkey does. He comes to my studio late at night, when it's very quiet. Mysterious things happen late at night when most people are asleep. I help the magic monkey, but he does most of the work" (Ryden 1998, 1).

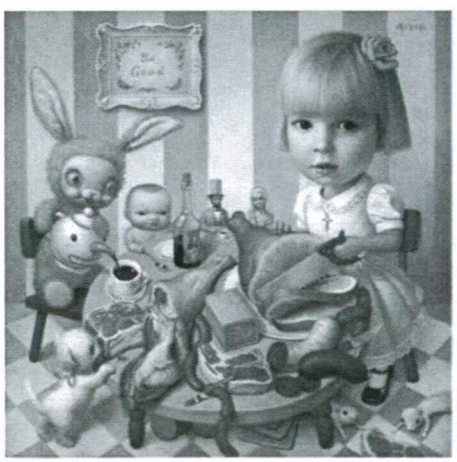

Figure 5

An acoustic version of *magic(al) realism* is also described sporadically on internet web sites with reference to an emerging musical genre combining modern with traditional instruments, and fusing defamiliarised daily noises (of raindrops, whistling kettles and the like) to create a deeply emotive yet surreal listening experience ("Magic realism" 2007).

(Sub)versions of Magic(al) Realism: Neofantastic, Hysterical Realism, Neosurrealism, Irrealism

Recently various (sub)versions of *magic(al) realism* emerged in the literary critical arena, mostly claiming to define themselves against the conventional features of the *fantastic*, yet often overlapping with some of these major markers. *Neofantastic,* coined by Jaime Alazraki, denotes narratives characterised by an unproblematic juxtaposition of laws of nature and the supernatural, an unwillingness to provide explanations by rational reasoning, or by attributing magic to the protagonist-narrator's imagination, hallucination or madness, and a total dissolution of readerly disbelief (in Chanady, 139–140). James Wood's slightly derogatory term *hysterical realism* refers to a "recherché postmodernism" criticised for pursuing "vitality at all costs" through treating everyday events and specific social phenomena in an extravagant, often absurdist, philosophically charged, overwritten manner in a sensationalist, dispassionate literary "perpetual motion machine". *Neosurrealism* proposes to merge surrealism with pop-art and fantasy to revive the incomprehensible imagery, the irrational space and form combinations of dreams and subconscious visions (see Miklos 2007). One of the most interesting 'twin-terms of *magic(al) realism*' is *irrealism.* The online journal *The Café Irreal. International Imagination* – devoted to the fictional and theoretical reformulations of the term – defines the *irreal* as a unique form of storytelling and representation where the impossible, unpredictable, and unexplained physics underlying the story produce an unresolved tension, a palpable anxiety. The irreal events resist both primitive and technologically advanced explanations (neither a curse/spell nor a scientific innovation), and refuse to be framed by symbolical or satirical interpretations. There is no reason, no motivation for the irreal events, and no protagonist – like a wizard, a scientist, a god, a practical joker – making them happen. *The Café Irreal*'s editor G. D. Evans enumerates among *irrealism*'s typical devices (1) "the revolt of the means against ends" (adopted from Sartre's definition of the fantastic!) meaning that an object or an institution refuses to serve its proper purpose, (2) a dream-like creation of totality of the irreal where all parts are functional and integral to the illusion, (3) an authorial distance leaving space for the reader's imagination, (4) an intentional undermining of the conventions of realism as verisimilitude, psychological plausibility of characters, empirical notions of cause and effect, (5) free flights of fancy based in reality, (6) playing with the possibility that the narrator is presenting a psychopathological, 'untrue' reality, (7) a confrontation with the Unknowable, devices which all serve to "directly communicate the irreconcilability between human aspiration and human reality" (Evans, 11). Although I have not encountered the neologism *magical (ir)realism* so far, I would argue for its particular pertinence in describing the ambiguities of a mode primarily determined by a willingly accepted tension between the (supernaturalized or defamiliarized) ordinary real and the (regularized) magical irreal. This is a characteristic tension I would like to discuss in detail in the following in its specific relation to the *fantastic.*

Magic(al) Realism and the Fantastic

No critical consensus has been reached so far whether *magic(al) realism* is a sophisticated subgenre or, on the contrary, a degeneration of the *fantastic*. The classic, canonized theories fail to mention *magic(al) realism*. Todorov's structural approach to the genre in his seminal 1975 *The Fantastic* fully disregards the mode, while Rosemary Jackson's analysis on fantasy as the literature of subversion comes closest to it when defining *fantastic realism* as the dialogue between fantastic and realistic narrative modes, where the monological vision of realism is disrupted by Gothic, fantasy, romance, melodrama, or sensationalism (Jackson, 124). Yet Jackson's emphasis is placed on the mixture of genres rather than on the combination of radically different perspectives presumed to predominate *magic(al) realism*. The most obvious feature of the *magic(al) realist* mode is the insistence on ambiguity and the destabilization of conventional dichotomic distinctions through an unproblematic fusion of the magical and real. It is precisely this blurring which renders the relation of *magic(al) realism* to the *fantastic* rather problematic.

Amaryll Chanady (1985) takes recourse to the classic Todorovian definition of the *fantastic* to describe *magic(al) realism* as a mode characterised by a "resolved antinomy" sharply contrasting the trademark "unresolved antimony" of the *fantastic*. In Todorov's view, *fantastic literature* primarily sustains the reader's uncertainty on whether the magical happenings have rational explanations or supernatural causes. It is distinguished by an irritating 'in-between-ness,' an oscillation between pragmatism and superstition, a readerly hesitation between uncanny (laws of natural universe at work) and marvellous (alteration of laws). It simultaneously invites, resists and challenges explanations since the unappeased fear or disbelief of the protagonist/narrator/reader in the face of the inexplicable engenders the constant "rationalizing activity of a subject searching [in vain] for cognitive mastery of the unknown and reconciliation of the experience with scientific paradigms" (Chanady, 132). As Chanady stresses, by virtue of this epistemological preoccupation, the *fantastic* is marked by a restrictive rationalist character (132) which contradicts the decisive lack of hesitation (apart from the postmodernist hesitation about hesitation) within the *magic(al) realist* fictional universe, where questions overabound without answers being sought. On the contrary, underlining the difficulty of a critical consensus, Wendy B. Faris argues that *magic(al) realism* is encompassed by Todorov's *fantastic* in so far as the reader may hesitate between two contradictory understandings of events (1995, 171). Yet most of the critics believe – agreeing with Chanady – that *magic(al) realism* clearly differs from the *fantastic* since it regards magic as an indubitable part of a complex, inherently "illogical," self-contradictory and unpredictable reality. Here, magic becomes "an attitude towards reality," "a branch of pragmatism" (Zamora-Faris, 6). Incompatible elements are juxtaposed in an unproblematic manner in order to reinforce the playful, parodic and political, cultural critical aspect of magic infiltrating reality, or of the real appearing as magically irreal.

During any attempt to (re)define *magic(al) realism* the most vital dilemma – related to the problematic differentiation between the *fantastic* and the *magic(al) real* – lies in the most simple question: "What counts as magic?" As the historical evolution of the term clearly demonstrates *magic(al)* can refer to an 'authentic' super-natural, mysterious-miraculous-marvellous happening, an unusual excess of or an uncanny deviation from the usual, as well as to an ordinary phenomenon portrayed or perceived from an extraordinary perspective, through a magical causality.[1]

[1] As I intend to concentrate more on the reception than on the evaluation of magic, I will not discuss the significant dinstinction between benevolent magic (*theurgia*) and sinful, black magic (*goetia*) here. On these see Szőnyi, 35.

The problem emerges with the realisation that the distinction between magic(al) and real is solely a function of the readerly judgment dependent on varying beliefs shaped by individual prehistory and communal interpretive strategies or horizons of expectations. In other words, different cultural contexts have different understandings of what constitutes reality. In Latin America superstitions, family legends, native myths complement narratives of daily existence (see Marquez 1982). Afro-American artworks encompass the oral tradition of slave narratives and occasionally even traces of 'trans-linguistic' jazz and blues music capable of undoing symbolic words (see Morrison, Kérchy 2006). On the other hand, whether *magic(al) realism* is considered a sub-genre or a deviation of the *fantastic* largely depends on the reader's decision as to the mode's characteristic antimony as resolved or unresolved. On the other hand, it can be a function of the narrative filters embedded by the author or generated by a text simultaneously striving for a Barthesian *effet de réel* (verisimilitude) and a Coleridgean *willing suspension of disbelief* in the sense that magical (and) realistic markers repeatedly suggest that the circumscribed fictional world traces an imaginary yet possible alternative universe. Additional 'frames' furthering the readerly uncertainty often play with the supposed mental instability of the protagonist, the narrator, or the reader. Oscar in Grass' *The Tin Drum* writes of his strange life from within the madhouse, Morrison's ghost-child, Beloved, in the end disappears as a nightmare from a post-traumatic stress, in Süskind's *The Perfume* the narratorial role is enacted by an unreliable psychopath, while – in a more playful manner – Carter's confidence-trickster 'bird-woman' in *Nights at the Circus* constructs her mock-memoire as a forgetful, coquettish, self-distorting tall-tale. Thus, one is necessarily faced with the dilemma: is magic really a part of the textual reality then, or is it simply a product of the narrator's twisted psyche, or an illusion of the willingly believing reader? As McHale claims, the *fantastic* fiction's hesitation between this world and another is replaced in *magic(al) realism* by a naturalised confrontation between different ontological levels within the structure of the same textual reality, so that the emphasis is placed on the magic *of* fiction rather than the magic *in* it (in Faris 1995, 173).

However, the "resolved ambiguity" is certainly permitted in the *postmodernist* sense of *magic(al) realist* writing Bényei describes as the purposeful relativization of hierarchies, the challenging of hegemonic systems, ordered spaces and subjectivities, and the proliferation of magical rhetorical performances producing self-destabilising, metatextual frames to the stories (Bényei 1997, 53–149), and questioning the textuality of history and the historicity of textuality, the fictionality of truth and the truthfulness of fiction. Accordingly, in a postmodernist manner, *magic(al) realist* narratives perform a self-conscious epistemological, ontological, political, cultural disruption. Their readers are encouraged to destabilize accepted 'realistic' conventions (trust in Truth, mimetic representation, perception based on the Cartesian transparency of meaning). Therefore, they are invited to perform ideology-criticism, to scrutinize the Foucauldian *ideological technologies of truth-production* which would reinforce the prevailing hegemonic distribution of power. Thus, they write against the key-signifiers of totalitarian regimes, repressive systems, and 'self-homogenizing' cultures. They stress the potential for conceiving empowering, alternative (non-sacrificial, communal, relational) identity positions, narratives, and (his)stories for the marginalized *others*, while renegotiating *marginality* on the whole and fostering cultural diversity. No wonder, *magic(al) realism* in this postmodernist vein is often associated with the *carnivalesque*, *polyphony*, *hybridity*, *heterogeneity*, *relativity*, *solidarity*, *subversion*, or *transgression* – unsettling terms, which nevertheless risk becoming new key-signifiers of a canonical category. (Similarly, Szőnyi and Kiss in their preface to *The Iconography of the Fantastic* define the fantastic along the lines of "the pleasure of thrill", "the liberation of subversive energies", hibridity, marginal discourses and "a contin-

uous testing" of the ideologically determined limits of the dominant symbolic order. (Szőnyi and Kiss 11, 22))

Accordingly, *magic(al) realist* narratives often resemble what Linda Hutcheon calls *historiographic metafictions* in so far as they are characterised by a "theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs" (Hutcheon, 5). They reconstruct and reinvent silenced or alternative his(her)stories to demonstrate that "eternal mythic truths" are just as much essential components of our collective memory as historical events (Faris 1995, 170). They reveal that truths, histories and myths are all culturally constructed and thus can be easily de/reconstructed.

Still, the question of *politics* remains a problematic issue in relation to *magic(al) realism*, just as in the case of the *fantastic*. Some critics accuse the mode of being over-political, calling attention to a set of telling historical 'coincidences.' Firstly, pictorial *magic realism* (as a term and trend) was introduced during the Weimar Republic; later the literary version of *magic realism* surfaced in Mussolini's fascist Italy; then, on the whole, the *magic(al) realist* mode has been predominantly applied by the politically subordinated (postcolonial authors, womenwriters, ethnic minorities) as a strategy of resistance. Against the belief that the mode lacks a political manifesto (unlike the surrealists) because its magical aspect turns the mode evasive, restraining any political possibilities, *magic(al) realist* authors here used magic precisely in the service of social criticism to suggest, as Rushdie claims, that 'reality' is not built on objective facts, but "on prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge" (in Bowers, 77). The reality they undo and remake via revisionary fictional pieces does have real, political consequences, since, as Bowers notes, even if revolution is performed in the form of fiction, it is still an act of heresy. Salman Rushdie was punished with *fatwa* by Ayatollah Khomeini for writing *Satanic Verses*, which can be read as a parody of Mohammed's life. Isabel Allende was banished to exile from Chile during the Pinochet regime for writing truthfully within the fictional frame of *The House of Spirits* about the ideological manipulation of reality by the right-wing dictatorship. Maxine Hong Kingston purposefully exploited the mythic dimension as a safeguard in the *The Woman Warrior: Memoir of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* to reject referential reading, and prevent immigration officers from discovering how Chinese families created and memorised false family-trees in order to be allowed to land (see Bowers, 74–80). The openly political aspect of *magic(al) realism* is still widely exploited by contemporary artists whose memorable visions of alternative histories shock and fascinate. Gottfried Helnwein's photographic re-imaginings of deviations of the Holocaust show Nazi officers (personifying intolerant totalitarianism) surrounding the Virgin Mother and the child (symbolising all-embracing love). The remarkably numerous *magic(al) realist* Nobel Laureates (Pamuk, Grass, Saramago, Morrison, Paz, Marquez) in their ceremonial lectures praise the ethical, political, social critical potentials and responsibilities of the mode. They stress that representations certainly do affect our lived presences and bear a potential to challenge them in the revolutionary ways of the imaginary. As one may read in Nobelprize.org the awarded *magic(al) realist* writers aim at "discovering new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures" (Pamuk), at "portraying the forgotten face of history" (Grass), "with parables sustained by imagination, compassion and irony continually enabl[ing] us once again to apprehend an elusory reality" (Saramago) "giving life to essential aspects of [...] reality" or shifting attention to workings of power (Morrison), and "writing with wide horizons, characterized by sensuous intelligence and humanistic integrity" (Paz, see *Nobelprize.org*). Thus, they wish to realize a society based on humanistic solidarity, "a new and sweeping utopia of life, where no one will be able to decide for others how they die, where love will prove true and happiness be possible, and where the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth" (Marquez 1982, 11).

Conclusion

Magic(al) realism enjoys an increased viability in our era (dis)organised by ever-spreading spectacular *simulacra* which foster a general epistemological crisis, a questioning of our conditions of reconstructing and understanding reality. I believe that *magic(al) realism* proves to be akin to the *fantastic* described by Attila Kiss as "an intensification of that compensatory mechanism which is constitutive of all signification [...] a *quest*, an attempt to reach a totality which has been lost or which always appears to be beyond our reach" (Kiss, 33). Besides calling attention to *magic(al) realism*'s risk of mythologizing or exoticizing particular histories and geographies, numerous critics argue for the particular contemporary relevance of *magic(al) realism* with reference to the gradual destabilisation of our means of knowing the world. Michael Wood argues that the steady voice of realism is no longer sufficient to describe an irredeemably unsteady world (12). Ordinary *realism* is doomed to fail as an inadequate means of representing 'certain realities' due to an evasiveness (conventionally attributed to *magic(al) (ir)realism*) resulting from its reliance "on the plausible presentation of a drastically falsified world," where plots are "written by dictators and submissive history books," making realist writers "copy mere masks" (Wood, 10). Wood hails *magic(al) realism*'s cultural memory "faithful to the stories people tell," a "narrated reality" as more reliable than conventional realism that cannot help enacting censorship. Similarly, Hegerfeldt claims that narrative, magical, metaphorical modes of thought, incompatible with the dominant scientific worldview, are anthropological constants increasingly shaping our realities, since rationalism and science alone cannot adequately account for our complex human experience of life (2002, 65). Significantly, Marquez's 1982 Nobel award lecture mentions Latin American zoological wonders discovered by early nad've travellers alongside the hundred-thousand victims disappearing in acts of governmental repression calling them both parts of "uncommon reality." Marquez's aim is to argue that reality is always surprising, fantastic or magical in a way, lived as a daily miracle or "determining each instant of our uncountable daily death" (Marquez 1982, 6, see Wood, 12). Bernard Cowan compares quantum mechanics to *magic(al) realism* in so far as it provides the most accurate equations the human race has devised, it is poorly understood by even the most ingenious minds, and its imaginative descriptions trace a new mode of understanding reality where imagination shall gain a vital role (Cowan, 7). Accordingly, reality might be an illusion forged of our subjective experiences of the world surrounding us, yet it fascinates exactly because the relative unreliability of our perception consistently stimulates our imagination. As Wood argues "false appearances and true miracles together constitute an invitation to see how unsettled the world is, and how many worlds there are" (14).

This is a recognition particularly significant in our 'post September 11 era,' when *magic(al) realism* offers us the imaginative multi-focal view, the "restlessness and curiosity" (Wood, 14), the open-heartedness and solidarity we need more than ever to face "a real we always believe to know better than we do" (Wood, 14). As Hegerfeldt suggests, at a time when "life has become indeed stranger than fiction [...] the only way to capture the experience of living in the contemporary world is to turn reality into an out-and-out fiction" (2002, 78). In fact, this echoes Slavoj Žižek's pertinent claim put forward in *Welcome to the Desert of the Real! Five Essays on September 11 and Related Matters* (2002). The Real on account of its traumatic, excessive character is inapt to be integrated into what we experience as reality, and therefore turns into an unrealistic semblance, a spectacular apparition, a fictionalized image. According to the Žižekian logic, in an accumulation of paradoxes, the postmodernist *passion for the semblance* ends up in a violent return to the *passion for the Real* that culminates on its turn in a theatrical spectacle, reality "transfunctionalized" as fantasy, since we are able to sustain the hard kernel of the Real only if we

fictionalize it (Žižek, 9–19). The ethical and existential significance of the *magic(al) realist* mode thus resides in the fact that it problematizes the very irrational imaginings which organize, decompose and help us survive the realities we and others (un)make.

This line of argumentation, the contemporary dilemma of the inescapable *magicalization of the real* and the illogic of *magic(al) realism*, is nicely illustrated by a story Toni Morrison told in her 1993 Nobel lecture, a symbolical tale I shall quote here. A village's prophet, a blind, old woman is visited by rebellious youngsters incredulous of her wisdom. Willing to test her clairvoyance they ask her the question riding on her disabling difference, summoning her to tell what she cannot see: whether the bird they are holding is living or dead. The blind woman's answer "I don't know, [...] but what I do know is that it is in your hands. It is in your hands" implies that the point is not the discovery of the Truth, but the responsibility related to our decisions, our fantasies, our language-use, our relation to fellow human beings. As Morrison explains, the bird in the children's hands embodies a bundle of life that can be killed or caressed, and thus symbolizes language that can be censored and oppressive or playful, subversively poetic and open to dialogue. *Magic(al) realism* invites us to caress and (let) fly, to let our imagination roam free, tolerate new ideas, revision our stances, and fill silences by (re)weaving stories. For, as Morrison says, death may be the meaning of life, but language gives the measure of our lives. "So make up a new story" (see Morrison 1993).

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. Otto Dix. "Skat Players. Card Playing War Cripples". 1920. Oil on canvas with photo-montage and collage (110 x 87 cm) Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie. Source: *Art Resource Public Domain*: <http://www.artres.com/c/htm/CSearchZ.aspx?o=&Total=82&FP=40291179&E=22SIJMB2LLJJC&SID=JMGEJNDM6O6O6&Pic=47&SubE=2UNTWA9VIH7Z>.

Fig. 2. "The landing of Hernando Cortes in Mesico in 1519. Cortes has just landed and steps onto dry land. The natives greet him, with one of them kneeling before him. A miniature in colours within a foliated bordeer on two sides. A portrait of Cortes in a medallion. From an account of the Spanish invasion of Mexico." ID: Add.37177. Location: British Library, London, Great Britain. Photo Credit: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY. Image Reference: ART208088: Source: *Art Resource Public Domain*: <http://www.artres.com/c/htm/CSearchZ.aspx?o=&Total=30&FP=40297305&E=22SIJMB2LLQQ3&SID=JMGEJNDM6OS1Z&Pic=6&SubE=29B7A2K95UD>.

Fig. 3. Ron Mueck. "Boy". 1999. Exhibited at Millenium Dome and Venice Biennale Source: *EveryStockPhoto. Creative Commons.* <http://www.everystockphoto.com/photo.php?imageId=2277711>.

Fig. 4. Nancy Burson. "Untitled". 1998. Source: <www.nancyburson.com/early_fr.html>. The photograph is copyright by Nancy Burson and is reproduced by the kind permission of the artist.

Fig. 5. Mark Ryden. "Rosie's Tea-party". 2000. *FlickR Public Photo Domain.* Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/akitzmil/162078202/in/pool-markryden/>.

Elisabeth Schober

Plotting Improbability: Coincidence as a Signpost of Romance

Although most critics of romance agree that the genre tends towards the non-mimetic and grant it a certain opposition to verisimilitude, there is neither a consensus on the nature and quality of this characteristic nor on its importance for the genre. Whereas Fredric Jameson assigns a "considerable, if not indeed constitutive" function to magic and calls romance a "magical narrative" (141), late twentieth-century criticism of romance is generally very vague as regards its affiliation to the unreal.[1] Hanna Jacobmeyer, for instance, talks about a "Schimmer des Magischen"[2] inherent in romance and Heidi Hansson states that the genre transgresses the borders of realism (81). Diane Elam maintains that romance challenges realist presentation and "... is neither realistic nor fantastic" (14, 23). These ontological and terminological uncertainties are due to the diversity of manifestations of the unreal in romance and the fact that many texts only hint at a world beyond reality while simultaneously presenting a realistic fictional universe. In this paper I shall concentrate on David Lodge's *Small World* (1984), a British postmodern romance that plays with the grey area between the real and the unreal, and will show that the improbability of excessive coincidence marks the text as a romance.

In the first paragraph of *Small World* the reader is immediately drawn into a scene of a typical campus novel, in which the "[s]olidity of specification" directly contributes "to the reality effect"[3] of the novel. The setting and characters are described in detail and are grounded in "realistic, though not necessarily truthful, detail" (Coelsch-Foisner, 345).[4] Had not Lodge prefixed several paratexts that suggest the contrary, e.g. an "Author's Note", in which he states that "*Small World* resembles what is sometimes called the real world, without corresponding exactly to it" and the famous quotation from Nathaniel Hawthorne's Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, saying that a writer of romance wishes to claim "a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material" (*SW*, np), one could have expected a novel written in the tradition of realism. However, already in the opening scene the reference to the high probability that the very same quotation from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* might be crossing the minds of more than one of the conference participants (*SW*, 3), hints at what is to be the major intrusion into the seemingly realistic fictional universe of Persse McGarrigle's quest for love and academic success: the improbability of coincidence.

In literary criticism probability has always been one of the parameters for distinguishing mimetic from non-mimetic literature. Already Aristotle claimed that "it is the function of a poet

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[1] For the purpose of this paper, I will refer to any deviation from "consensus reality" (see Hume, xi) in literature as 'unreality', by far the most general term in this respect, used by J.R.R. Tolkien to denote an "unlikeness to the Primary World" (Tolkien, 69).

[2] Jacobmeyer, 52: "glimmer of magic", my translation.

[3] Lodge 1984, 68. Subsequently abbreviated to *SW*.

[4] See Lodge's "Author's Note": "Rummidge is not Birmingham, though it owes something to popular prejudices about that city. There really is an underground chapel at Heathrow and a James Joyce Pub in Zurich, but no universities in Limerick or Darlington; nor, as far as I know, was there ever a British Council representative resident in Genoa. ..."

to relate not things that have happened, but things that may happen, i.e. that are possible in accordance with probability or necessity" (97). According to Henry Fielding an author has to stay not only "within the limits of possibility, but of probability too",[5] since he does not have the advantage of a historian, who can resort to witnesses and documentation for the authentification even of improbable events. The historian will thus "sometimes fall into the marvellous, but never into the incredible" (*TJ*, 325). However, if he repeatedly deserts probability, he turns into a writer of romance (*TJ*, 326). Fielding's own use of surprising elements and happy coincidences reduces the degree of realism in *Tom Jones* considerably and brings the novel in close proximity to the "monstrous romances" (*TJ*, 395) from which Fielding tried so hard to distance himself. Ian Watt claims that although all the sudden twists of fate in *Tom Jones* "do not violate verisimilitude so obviously as the supernatural interventions that are common in Homer or Virgil, it is surely evident that they nevertheless tend to compromise the narrative's general air of literal authenticity by suggesting the manipulated sequences of literature rather than the ordinary processes of life" (253). Werner Wolf claims that probability manifests itself primarily in a congruence of the structural principles of a narrative with the formal concepts of experience. Thereby, a text evokes concepts which are compatible with the horizon of experience of the reader as well as with existing contextual conditions of probability (141). In order to appear probable, a fictional world needs to be consistent and free of contradiction. A text is consistent whenever it shows causal and teleological connections between the events and weaves them as relevant elements into a uniform story (Wolf, 144–5).

In the case of coincidence, a device which is related to surprise and often also to wish-fulfilment, there is no apparent causal connection between this "notable concurrence of events or circumstances".[6] Depending on how frequent coincidences occur, various explanations can be offered. Occasional coincidence can be accepted as an event that happens in real life. Recurring coincidence, however, can for instance be attributed to the supernatural interference of fate or serendipity, to the unpredictability of a universe governed by chance, or to the arbitrariness of authorial design. Though remaining within the limits of the possible, *Small World* continually breaks the rules of probability through its frequent use of coincidence. Northrop Frye maintains that the author of displaced or realistic fiction tries to avoid coincidence, "[t]hat is, he tries to conceal his design, pretending that things are happening out of inherent probability" (46–7). In *The Art of Fiction* Lodge describes coincidences simply as symmetries we encounter in real life (150) and thus gives them an air of naturalness. He admits, however, that "excessive reliance [on coincidence] can jeopardize the verisimilitude of a narrative" (150). He is right in saying that the "highly implausible" coincidences in *Small World* do not "defy common sense" (152); however, it is their "intertextual justification" (152) rather than their adherence to common sense that makes the audience suspend their disbelief: romance readers are accustomed to elements that overstep the limits of the everyday world (Beer, 2).[7]

It is the device taken to the extreme, which grants to coincidence the crucial function of marking *Small World* as a romance. The following definition of romance gives evidence that it is a constituent feature of the genre for Lodge: "Real romance is a pre-novelistic kind of narrative. It's full of adventure and *coincidence* and surprises and marvels, and has lots of characters who are lost or enchanted or wandering about looking for each other, or for the Grail, or some-

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[5] Fielding, 326. Subsequently abbreviated to *TJ*.

[6] "Coincidence", *OED 2 on CD-ROM* (Oxford: OUP, 1992).

[7] This element is also true for popular romance, as can be seen, for example, in the reaction of Lady Spenborough to the unexpected encounter of Serena Spendborough's early love in Georgette Heyer's *Bath Tangle* (1955, 99): "It is exactly like a romance!".

thing like that. Of course, they're often in love too..." (*SW*, 258, *emphasis mine*). Lodge chooses the genre of romance as a paradigm by which the reader is to interpret the story as well as the plot of *Small World*. He creates a work of fabulation, which "suspend[s] realistic illusion in some significant degree in the interests of a freedom in plotting characteristic of romance" (Lodge 1972, 19). Love is conceived as the ultimate aim of life and drives the plot forward. It has the power to enchant the characters and makes them resort to implausible actions. The pattern of the quest is inextricably connected to the theme of love and adds a teleological and unifying aspect to the episodic nature of the romance plot. Persse McGarrigle's object of desire is Angelica, whose "charms boil down to a simple formula: lack of availability, resolution, and a capacity for surprise" (Coelsch-Foisner, 342). Since, according to Lodge himself, "the conventions of realistic fiction prevent the narrative writer from telling the first story that comes into his head" (1972, 32), he includes coincidence among the defining features of romance and connects it to surprise and the marvellous, thus adding the element of the unreal and constituting the lapse of the reality principle typical of romance.[8]

Before analysing in detail the presentation of coincidence in *Small World*, I shall briefly present theories of coincidence, considered as a phenomenon in real life as well as in literature. In every-day life people tend to attribute coincidences to chance or to supernatural causes such as destiny, fate, or serendipity. Brian Richardson claims that ascribing coincidence to fortune and supernatural design suggests a connection with individual desires, whereas the attribution to chance is "impersonal, arbitrary, and subject to statistical quantification" (24). Research on the phenomenon has tried to take away some of the miraculous aura connected to it. Brian Inglis reports that

> ... the replacement of the supernatural by what were assumed to be laws of nature led to the development of eighteenth-century rationalism, and later of nineteenth-century positivism, proclaiming the supremacy of the doctrine that every effect must have a cause. Where no acceptable reason for a coincidence could be found, chance could be invoked; chance, which had acquired its own respectable standing through probability theory. (2)

Persi Diaconis and Frederick Mosteller are among those who see coincidences as chance events that can be determined by probability theory and define the phenomenon as "a surprising concurrence of events conceived as meaningfully related, with no apparent causal connection."[9] Less scientific explanations assign coincidences to pseudo-scientific theories like numerology and astrology, or else to psychological factors "like selective memory or sensitivities, that make people think particular events are unusual whether they are or not" (Diaconis and Mosteller in Inglis, 97). The two most influential explanations for coincidence presented by Brian Inglis are Paul Kammerer's law of series, developed in *Das Gesetz der Serie* (1919), and C.G. Jung's principle of synchronicity, introduced in "Synchronizität als ein Prinzip akausaler Zusammenhänge" (1952). Kammerer claims that coincidence is not to be explained by chance or causality but by the principle of seriality, a natural phenomenon of the repetition of same or similar events in time and space, where the individual events cannot be attributed to the same cause.[10] Jung

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[8] Lodge 1972, 22: in the problematic novel "the reality principle is never allowed to lapse entirely".

[9] See Persi Diaconis and Frederick Mosteller, Sciences Times section of the *New York Times*, 27 Feb 1990, quoted in Inglis, 97.

[10] See Kammerer, 36, 94: Die Serie ist "eine gesetzmäßige Wiederholung gleicher oder ähnlicher Dinge und Ereignisse – eine Wiederholung (Häufung) in der Zeit oder im Raume, deren Einzelfälle, soweit es nur sorgsame Untersuchung zu offenbaren vermag, nicht durch dieselbe, gemeinsam fortwirkende Ursache verknüpft sein können;" "mit der Ansehung eines Zusammentreffens als 'Zufall' [ist] gar nichts erklärt, im Gegenteile das Zusammentreffen [ist] außerhalb des Bereiches der Erklärlichkeit gerückt".

claims that meaningfully connected coincidences, where chance as an explanation would amount to an enormous improbability equal to impossibility, are based on an influence of the archetypes of the unconscious and can be explained not through causality but through synchronicity, a concurrence of events in time (24–9).

These two principles serve as the basis for Inglis's typology, which consists of a categorization into trivial and meaningful coincidences respectively. Trivial coincidences such as 'small-world' coincidences, or the phenomena of 'copycat' (concurrence of names) and 'clustering' (sequences of the same type of experiences), Inglis maintains, excite curiosity but do not have a meaningful personal significance (he uses the word 'meaningful' in the sense of 'having an effect or a consequence for a person') (11–23). Meaningful phenomena, on the other hand, most frequently attract attention because "they satisfy a personal need" and give an "impression of design" (Inglis, 33). Incidents of this category are also called 'intervention-coincidences' and include, for instance, the acts of a so-called 'guardian angel', the occurrence of love at first sight, or the retrieval of lost property. Although the distinction between trivial and meaningful coincidences is helpful, assigning specific phenomena to the two categories is quite problematic: any chance encounter with people you are in some way related with or who have the same name as you may be meaningful and change your life (although listed as 'trivial' by Inglis), just as not everything you have lost will be significant if you get it back (even though Inglis would categorize it as 'meaningful').

As regards the use of coincidence in literature, Marie-Laure Ryan classifies coincidences as happenings, i.e. unpredictable events, that are caused by natural forces, failures of execution (the loss of control of a character), or "accidental convergences of distinct processes" (such as the coincidental reunion with a long lost family member; Ryan's example is the encounter of the wolf in the forest), which change the course of the narrative and "steer it away from the path projected by the preceding state" (129).[11] In her poetics of coincidence in fiction Hilary P. Dannenberg defines the device as "a constellation of two or more apparently random events in space and time with an uncanny or striking connection" (405). She classifies coincidence plots into the traditional coincidence plot, "which involves the bringing together of characters with different degrees of previous relationship (of family, love, friendship, or even enmity)",[12] and "*analogical coincidence*", defined as "a striking *correspondence* between fictional entities or events", where usually not the characters but the reader recognizes "an uncanny analogical relationship within the narrative world" (407). It is debatable, however, whether her two categories should be subsumed at all under the term 'coincidence'. Rather, it seems that the former establishes a connection between events on the diegetic level, whereas the latter points to analogies that can hardly ever be classed as coincidence, since their cause is neither chance nor supernatural interference, but plot construction on the part of the author, perceptible only from the extradiegetic level.

In *Small World* there are at least thirty implausible incidents that often entail a series of similarly incredible events. These improbable occurrences set up or emphasize relations among the

[11] Actions, in contrast to happenings, are events motivated by "the setting of a goal and the elaboration of a plan." Goals emerge wherever a private world departs from the actual world – for instance, in order to fulfil a desire, to satisfy an obligation, or to solve an enigma –, whereas plans involve not only a "goal-fulfilling state" but also a causal sequence of states and events leading to it from the present state. The narrative interest is kept up by a series of conflict-solving moves, i.e. actions "with a high-priority goal and a high risk of failure" (130).

[12] For cases where the expected connection within the narrative world does not occur she uses the terms "*negative coincidence*" or "nonconvergence".

characters, who are otherwise merely connected by the fact that they are members of academia and meet the protagonist Persse McGarrigle at some point in the novel when travelling around the world from one conference to the other.[13] By means of adapting Inglis's classification, we can categorize the events around Persse into those that qualify as 'trivial coincidences', because they do not have a serious effect on the action, and into those that meet the criteria of 'meaningful coincidental encounters' or 'meaningful negative coincidences', which have an important influence on the development of the plot and primarily bring Persse closer to Angelica or, just as frequently, prevent him from reaching her.

The trivial coincidences mainly reinforce the theme of chance: "It's a small world." (*SW*, 295) says Akira Sakazaki as he realizes that Persse knows Ronald Frobisher, the author of the novels he is translating into Japanese. Earlier in the novel Persse and Ronald Frobisher come to understand that much of the unhappiness of both of them was caused by Robin Dempsey, who appeared to Frobisher as if "he was Frankenstein, or some kind of wizard" (*SW*, 183). Philip Swallow reacts "as if [he had] seen a ghost" (SW, 78), when he sees his wife wearing exactly the same dressing gown as his lover did years ago, precisely just after he has told Morris Zapp about the affair. There are also analogies that remain unknown to the characters, such as the fact that both Philip Swallow and Rodney Wainwright had an affair with their student Sandra Dix and were subsequently blackmailed by her, although they live on the other side of the globe.[14] These correspondences give the reader a feeling of omniscience and superiority over the characters and broach the issue that there are also analogies in real life that never become known to anybody.

The many meaningful coincidences in *Small World* are explained as supernatural phenomena and support the novel's atmosphere of a world dominated by fate or a benign guiding principle. In the first major case in the book, Persse and Prof. Zapp, after having got to know each other at the Rummidge conference, find out that the husband of Persse's aunt and Morris Zapp's old landlord are the same person:

> Morris Zapp stopped in the middle of the pavement. "That's a remarkable coincidence," he said. "What's your aunty's name?"
> "Mrs O'Shea, Mrs Nuala O'Shea," said Persse. "Her husband is Dr Milo O'Shea."
> Morris Zapp performed a little jig of excitement. "It's him, it's him!" he cried, in a rough imitation of an Irish brogue. "It's himself, my old landlord! Mother of God, won't he be surprised to see the pair of us." (*SW*, 32–3)

Prof. Zapp accredits this connection to chance and, by evoking divine intervention, creates a euphoric atmosphere that is comically curbed only moments later when Dr O'Shea is actually not as happy to see Persse as he is about meeting Morris Zapp. The positive aura of Prof. Zapp, however, seems to draw Persse again towards him when Persse bumps into him in Amsterdam, an event about which neither the narrator nor the characters seem to be greatly astonished. As a result of their encounter, Persse finds out that Prof. von Turpitz has stolen his theory about

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[13] Those characters Persse McGarrigle does not meet mainly have the function of influencing the development of other characters: e.g. Hilary Swallow is in an unhappy marriage with Philipp Swallow and makes him come back to her in the end, Akbil Borak re-unites Philipp Swallow and Joy Simpson, Sandra Dix blackmails both Philipp Swallow and Rodney Wainwright, and Carlo kidnaps Morris Zapp.

[14] Philip Swallow lives in Rummidge, England, and Rodney Wainwright comes from Cooktown, Australia. This analogy is extended in the scene at the Jerusalem conference, where both characters seem to be at a very low point in their lives and Wainwright is saved from professional ruin by the excitement over Swallow's assumed Legionnaire's disease.

the influence of our knowledge of T.S. Eliot on reading Shakespeare's work and that Angelica (or rather her twin-sister Lily, as he later learns) works as a strip-dancer in the Amsterdam red-light district. Here, the initial establishment of a positive relationship between Persse and Prof. Zapp through a trivial coincidence sets in motion a whole chain of significant chance encounters and makes sure – in the manner of the Victorian novel – that "wrongdoing will always be exposed in the end" (Lodge 1992, 150).

Persse builds up a similarly positive relationship with Cheryl Summerbee, an airline employee at Heathrow airport, which is actually initiated by Prof. Zapp. Persse first meets her when she is just about to mail Prof. Zapp's hat to him: "Cheryl stopped in mid-stride, one foot poised above the pavement. [...] 'Well,' she said. 'There's a coincidence.' She took that hat from her bag and, holding it by the flaps, placed it with a certain ceremony on his head. 'A perfect fit,' she smiled. 'Like Cinderella's slipper'" (*SW*, 123–4). Her reference to the "Cinderella" story already points towards the magic force that will bring Persse repeatedly back to Cheryl and will make him realize in the end that he is actually meant for her and not for Angelica. The fairy-tale allusion also hints at another coincidence that Lodge himself describes as "one of the more outrageous examples" (1992, 152) of the book: when Angelica answers Persse's message in the chapel at Heathrow airport with a quotation from *The Fairie Queene*, it is precisely Cheryl Summerbee, whom Angelica has recently converted from a reader of "Bills and Moon [sic!] romances" (*SW*, 115) to an aficionado of *Orlando Furioso*, who lends him her own copy of the poem. "'God Bless you, Cheryl!' [Persse] said fervently. 'For being in the right place at the right time with the right book. ...'" (*SW*, 259) Equally god-given seems to be Persse's faculty of recognizing his cousin Bernadette in the Heathrow chapel, whom he had last met more than ten years ago. After his later encounter with the father of her illegitimate child and the source of all evil, he coincidentally finds a leaflet with Bernadette's phone number at the MLA conference in New York and can call her – not for "some spicy pillow talk" (*SW*, 337) in her role as 'Marlene' of *Girls Unlimited*, but to share with her the good news that she will get financial support from Prof. Sidney Maxwell.

Contrary to her intentions, Cheryl Summerbee's seemingly providential manipulations of seat allocations do not lead to such a fortunate outcome in the case of Prof. Zapp. The fact that he gets to know Flavia Morgana on his flight to Milan first draws him into the awkward situation of having to turn down the invitation to a sex orgy with Flavia and her husband Ernesto and finally causes him to get kidnapped by a friend of the couple, who had got to know that Morris's ex-wife Desirée Byrd just received a lot of money for selling the film rights to her novel. Here a totally natural cause for the first encounter is followed by a sequence of negative occurrences that eventually help Morris Zapp to begin a new and happy life with Thelma Ringbaum.

All these series of events are crowned by the many 'small-world' phenomena (Inglis, 16) that advance and prevent Persse's quest for Angelica. Already their first encounter suggests a supernatural intervention: when Angelica enters the conference room in Rummidge, "the knots of chatting conferees seemed to loosen and part, as if by some magical impulsion, opening up an avenue between Persse and the doorway." (*SW*, 8) His destiny to follow her around the world, however, is associated with his fate of failure from very early on in the novel. When trying to buy condoms for what he assumes to be an invitation to Angelica's bedroom he actually gets baby food and takes "the frustration of his design to be providential, an expression of divine displeasure at his sinful intentions." (*SW*, 48) Since he thrusts aside his initial impulse to follow the sign "Confessions at any time" (*SW*, 48), the notice of a cinema showing adult films seems to him "[a]s if the devil had planted it there ..." (*SW*, 48). He enrols as a member of the cinema

under the name of Philip Swallow, whereupon the man at the counter gives him a svelte smile for the ensuing fake coincidence that they already have a Mr Philip Swallow on the books. As a culmination of the preceding events Persse does not even get the promised sexual satisfaction, but has to realize that Angelica has played a trick on both him and Robin Dempsey and has already left Rummidge. Throughout his adventures he is helped along and given hints as to Angelica's whereabouts by Morris Zapp (Amsterdam), Cheryl Summerbee (Heathrow), Michel Tardieu (Lausanne), Sibyl Maiden (Honolulu), and Motokazu Umeda (Tokyo), but not surprisingly always a bit too late for him to reach his goal. All these meaningful chance encounters and missed reunions help Persse on his path to understanding the world and himself and were actually initiated by the fact that he got the job at Limerick University only because he was mistaken for Peter McGarrigle, the very man who is now allowed to marry Angelica.

Dannenberg claims that in fictional accounts that try to "naturalize coincidence [...] fictional systems of explanation are used to convince the reader that the fictional world is an autonomous one by simulating cognitive patterns, above all causality, familiar from the real world" (423). Quite the reverse happens in *Small World*, which is pervaded by the impression of divine intervention or providential design, since we are led to believe that no harmful consequences can emanate from Persse's naiveté, although he is severely tested and complains to Morris Zapp: "I've spent all my savings and had my American Express card withdrawn for non-payment of arrears. I had to work my passage from Hong Kong to Aden, and hitchhiked across the desert and nearly died of thirst." (*SW*, 308) Everything seems to be predestined and in line with Aristotle's claim that "the most amazing even among random events are those which appear to have happened as it were on purpose".[15] This is because Persse travels in the realms of romance, where nothing can seriously harm the hero and good and bad spirits accompany him along his way. At the same time, *Small World* shows features of 'catholic fiction'. Persse is an Irish Catholic, who is torn between the rules of his religious upbringing and the realities he confronts outside the country (e.g. concerning contraception and prostitution),[16] and God is present as a force one can invoke and implore for help and as a benevolent manipulator of the plot.

As regards the position of the coincidences in the plot, Dannenberg differentiates the traditional kinship reunion plot, where the recognition scene (*anagnorisis*) occurs at a climactic point in the plot, from the reunion of former acquaintances, which "is more frequently used to structure individual narrative episodes or to catalyze the development of the plot, as opposed to providing a denouemental or culminatory plot structure" (405). In the episodic form of *Small World* coincidence likewise functions "to integrate the novel's teeming cast of characters, parallel events, and locations" (Dannenberg, 420). In a continual change from building up suspense to releasing it in surprise, the novel chases the reader along with Persse on his journey around the world. In connection with surprise, which serves to keep up the interest in the reader, Lodge's characters metatheoretically bring to mind Barthes's 'pleasure of the text', which consists in the "constant titillation and deferred satisfaction of the reader's curiosity and desire" (*SW*, 322) and the concept of *ostranenie*.[17]

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[15] Aristotle (98) gives the example of the statue of Mitys at Argos, which falls down and kills his murderer.

[16] These are some of the features that characterize Lodge's 'Catholic fiction' according to Thomas Kühn (56ff).

[17] "'Ostranenie,' said Morris. 'Defamiliarization. It was what they thought literature was all about. '*Habit devours objects, clothes, furniture, one's wife and the fear of war ... Art exists to help us recover the sensation of life.*' Viktor Shklovsky.'" (*SW*, 77) Shklovsky's own example (12) is that of a story narrated from the point of view of a horse, which results in the description of familiar things as if seen for the first time.

This state of defamiliarization constitutes another key variable in the presentation of coincidence: the depiction of the cognitive processes and emotional states of the characters during the recognition scene is obviously dominated by a situation of surprise "that derives from the lack of apparent causal connection".[18] Looking back on the presented examples we can detect that the characters often react with a moment of pause: they are thunderstruck and stop moving instantly. Others express their astonishment by staring at the manifestation of the incredible coincidence.[19] Most often and most strongly afflicted with sudden amazement at the twists of fate is Persse, who feels sick or faint (*SW*, 187) and, unable to resume what he was about to do, is caught in a state of shock. He is almost run over by a car (*SW*, 202) and his heart-beat and breathing stop (*SW*, 256, 260). In the depiction of the characters's reaction there are no comments by the narrator that would invite an ironic interpretation of the events or that would reduce the impression of supernatural interference in the plot construction by explicit statements of the narrator about the device, softening "the incredibility of 'romance' coincidence" as in Fielding's *Tom Jones* (McKeon, 407). Lodge presents the reaction to the most implausible divine or providential intervention in the characters' lives with psychological verisimilitude. He reveals the mental and physical conditions of the characters in shock mostly in scenes of dialogue or direct presentation of thoughts and feelings and thereby slows down his otherwise so fast-moving narrative.

Needless to say that Lodge employs coincidence also as a device of the comic – "for the sake of the fun it generates" (1992, 152) – and integrates what Inglis calls the "*ne plus ultra* of coincidence", namely a "combination of the comic and the preposterous" (1). Only the few coincidences that are induced by the characters themselves have a negative effect on them[20] so that the sheer implausibility of the many happy coincidences does not only invite wonder but also laughter. Michel Tardieu laughs about meeting Persse in Lausanne and Peter McGarrigle is amused about their concurrence of names. The MLA conference in New York functions as a finale similar to that found in a Restoration comedy, where all uncertainties are cleared up, all identities are revealed, and all strands of the plot come to a happy ending – with everybody in the room "embracing, laughing, crying, shouting" (*SW*, 335). All threads of the plot come to a closure except the most important one: Persse McGarrigle is only granted a few steps towards the understanding of love and life and has to continue his quest for love in his search for Cheryl Summerbee.

In conclusion we can say that although Lodge claims that coincidence is a phenomenon that surprises us in real life and is not often used in fiction because it seems too obvious a device (1992, 150), he really presents us with the unreal rather than the real, in the form of an enormous exaggeration of this plot mechanism. The unreality incorporated in the narrative serves as an indicator of a literary tradition and allows him to play with the episodic nature of the genre of romance while excessively relying on surprise effects in order to engage the reader's interest. The coincidence plot is of course a device that is not exclusively used in romance. According

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[18] See Thomas Vargish, *The Providential Aesthetic in Victorian Fiction* (Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 1985), 7, 9, quoted in Dannenberg 2004, 402.

[19] For example: Philip Swallow "had not altered the direction of his gaze, or even blinked" (*SW*, 213) when recognizing Joy Simpson, whom he had believed to be dead.

[20] See, for example, Cheryl Summerbee's 'art' of seat allocation, due to which Morris Zapp gets kidnapped, and Philip Swallow's efforts to reunite with Joy Simpson, for which he is punished by the unintentional encounter with Miss Sibyl Maiden in Delphi and with his son Matthew in Masada (Israel), and with the coincidental reading of an article about Legionnaire's disease in the *Time* magazine, which makes him reproduce the symptoms, cause great tumult at the Jerusalem conference and send away Joy. But since he "was born lucky" (*SW*, 316), all ends well and he gets together with his wife Hilary again.

to Dannenberg this fact "undermines the claims of other generic theories that have simply polarized the novel and the romance" (431). She refers here to William Congreve's differentiation between "miraculous contingencies" and accidents that are "not so distant from our belief" (474), Clara Reeve's opposition of unlikeliness and probability, and Ian Watt's distinction between novel and romance: "The novel's plot is also distinguished from most previous fiction by its use of past experience as the cause of present action: a causal connection operating through time replaces the reliance of earlier narratives on disguises and coincidences, and this tends to give the novel a much more cohesive structure" (Watt, 22). Coincidence is certainly not automatically a sign for romance; on the other hand, verisimilitude of presentation, though mainly employed in realistic narratives, can also be used "as a decoy to entice the reader into some improbable or incredible situation" (Wellek and Warren, 213).

Lodge's conception of realism as "the art of creating an illusion of reality" (1977, 25) suggests that with the improbability of coincidence in *Small World* he must have aimed at a non-realistic, not an unrealistic, text.[21] His use of non-mimetic events as supplementary to mimetic ideas is symptomatic of an expression of "the postmodern scepticism about any attempt at a (true and complete) reproduction of reality" (Jacobmeyer, 42–3, *translation mine*). As Hansson claims, "[r]ealism, authority, logical order, conclusive answers are all effects of a rational approach to the world, which is perhaps questioned most clearly in the incorporation of magical and unexplainable elements in chivalric and postmodern romances" (80). All his characters are led by feelings of love, hate, jealousy, and ambition instead of rationality. Through the enormous exaggeration of fate's intervention in *Small World* the element of causality in the plot[22] is suspended: no natural cause can explain the abundant accumulation of coincidences that are referred to by Jung as 'unthinkable'.[23] The device is supported by the many supernatural explanations for the trivial and meaningful coincidences in the text as well as by the matching reactions of the characters. There is an air of awe-inspiring divine intervention that suggests that the good will always win. And it is this atmosphere that bestows upon the text its magical quality.

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[21] Lodge claims that the word 'realism' has two corresponding negatives: unrealistic and non-realistic: "If we say that a certain text is 'unrealistic' we normally mean that it has tried to be realistic and failed, and if we say that a text is non-realistic we usually mean that the writer has deliberately chosen to write in the mode of, say, fantasy rather than realism." 1977, 23.

[22] See Forster, 87: "A plot is also [like a story] a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality."

[23] See also Jung, 97: "Sinngemäße Koinzidenzen sind als reine Zufälle denkbar. Je mehr sie sich aber häufen und je größer und genauer die Entsprechung ist, desto mehr sinkt ihre Wahrscheinlichkeit, und desto höher steigt ihre Undenkbarkeit...".

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Markus Oppolzer

Todorov's Hesitation; or, In the Reader We Trust

All book-length studies of the fantastic – or fantasy fiction in its broadest sense – have to tackle an unresolved crux: how is one to delineate a genre or mode that comes to be made up of several (sub)genres and modes notoriously hard to define in themselves? Lucy Armitt's recent *Fantasy Fiction: An Introduction* (2005) highlights the heterogeneous mass of texts that critics in this field have to face: "What *is* fantasy writing? Utopia, allegory, fable, myth, science fiction, the ghost story, space opera, travelogue, the Gothic, cyberpunk, magic realism; the list is not exhaustive, but it covers most of the modes of fiction discussed in this book as 'fantasy'" (1). Armitt deliberately dispenses with a systematic approach to this impressive canon and celebrates diversity over critical narrow-mindedness:

> By its very nature, fantasy writing takes risks, stretches imagination to its breaking point, and effects hyperbole at every turn of the page. In contrast, all too often the criticism written on fantasy has fallen short, categorizing, classifying, compartmentalising literature into division and subdivision, and arguing over whether the boxes into which these texts are crammed should be labelled 'marvellous' or 'fabulous,' 'sword and sorcery' or 'space opera,' 'myth' or 'fairie.' This is not criticism, it is travesty, and the works outlined in brief in this chapter are included for the positive role they have played in negating that death wish. (193)

Not surprisingly she prefers Tzvetan Todorov (despite his strong structuralist leanings), Rosemary Jackson, Christine Brooke-Rose, J.R.R. Tolkien, Bruno Bettelheim, Slavoj Žižek, Irving Massey and Donna J. Haraway over Vladimir Propp and similar structuralist efforts. Even if one allows for a variety of approaches, the basic question remains: "can texts as diverse as [these ...] all shelter under the same literary umbrella, fantasy?" (8) Armitt's promise, that "the aim in this book is to establish a specific type of writing that exists as fantasy in a more rigorously defined sense" (3) than Freud's comparison of the creative writer to a child at play, is never quite realized. Her definition of fantasy texts remains tentative – in essence, a pair of characteristics given at the outset of the book: "First, [...] they deal in the unknowableness of life. [... by which she seems to mean that] fantasy sets up worlds that genuinely exist *beyond* the horizon, [...] Second, a fantasy narrative threatens infinity [... as it] conveys 'a world not necessarily known through the senses, or lived experience'" (8).

In *The Fantasy Literature of England* (1999), Colin Manlove is faced with the same unmanageable plethora of primary texts. Contrary to Armitt's avoidance of classification, he proposes five types of fantasy (secondary world, metaphysical, emotive, comic, subversive) and one category (children's fantasy), which borrows from the five types. This commitment to a systematic approach poses its own challenge. While Manlove naturally defends his categories by stressing that the "six sub-groups of English fantasy are quite distinct, even though they overlap with one another" (6), he is forced to acknowledge that "we are not dealing with uniform or homogeneous types" (7). Therefore he applies the logician's "rule of the 'fuzzy set'" (8) to fantasy in order to explain gradual differences in how representative certain texts are of the type they belong to: "one or two works are central and others less so, to the point where the orbital pull fades

out" (7). When Manlove subsumes these modes of fantasy under one umbrella definition he necessarily has to remain vague:

> To speak coherently of English fantasy we need a definition, a ring fence; but it must be a wide one, a rule of thumb rather than a thumbscrew. The definition of fantasy in this book is 'a fiction involving the supernatural or impossible', which fits with the English preoccupation with the supernatural. 'Supernatural' implies the presence of some form of magic or the numinous, from ghosts and fairies to gods and devils; 'impossible' means what simply could not be, [...] for the purposes of this book 'impossible' will be subsumed under 'supernatural'. There are of course questions regarding who decides what is supernatural, and how much of it is present, when many disagree on its limits: but often it is the text itself which signals what is supernatural or not within its own world. (Manlove, 3)

Over thirty years ago, W.R. Irwin complained in *The Game of the Impossible: A Rhetoric of Fantasy* (1976), that all recent studies of the fantastic had failed to provide a satisfying theory:

> For all its recurrence in recent literary history, fantasy as a subgenre of prose fiction is not clearly understood. Few critics have granted it sustained attention, and among them, as well as among common readers, there is little agreement on its characteristics. Everyone is confident that he can recognize fantasy, [... b]ut the principles behind identification are usually obscure and unfixed. Some definitions are exclusive and say in effect that fantasy is only such narrative as embodies extrapolations from science or pseudoscience, or deals with pragmatic societies of the past or the future, or with the supernatural, especially magic. Others make the opposite error and include in fantasy any narrative projection of orders of fictive reality beyond the familiar. Some make "fantastic" a synonym for "untrue"; for some it means only "exotic," "implausible," or "deviant," or "escapist." (5)

Irwin addresses a serious problem that is still with us today. If one proposes a canon of fantasy that encompasses all texts featuring some kind of transgression of our present scientific world order, there can never be a systematic theory of the fantastic. Armitt and Manlove's feature-based approaches seem to suggest that texts are fantastic because there are demons, wizards, ghosts, fairies, spaceships, alien cultures, and other imaginary elements in them. This results in an unwieldy accumulation of unrelated and unrelatable phenomena. Manlove claims that the "text itself [...] signals what is supernatural or not within its own world" (3), but he does not say how and, more importantly, to whom. Yet, these are the two most important questions when dealing with this type of literature: who decides what is fantastic and thus qualifies as a transgression of the familiar? And secondly, which textual elements suggest such a reading? Irwin's approach addresses the second question, but not the first and most important one: how do textual signals and the readers' individual interpretations interact and collaborate to produce an effect that we call 'the fantastic'? If we understand the term in such a way, we have to abandon any notion that the fantastic has a material essence.

If one takes a look at the Greek etymology of the word 'fantastic' – from φως (light), φαίνειν (to shine, to show, to appear), φανερός (visible, clear, obvious) to composite words such as φαινόμενον ([remarkable] appearance), φαντάζειν (to bring to light, to present to the eye, to display, to make visible), φαντασία (a making visible, imagination, look, image, appearance), and φάντασμα (an apparition, appearance, vision, spectre) – it becomes clear that, conceptually, it has always existed at the borderline of perception, deception, and (re)conception (the projection of a working theory onto the perceived and its constant revision). Its locus is the mind's eye and its main literary effect a very active reader participation in the ongoing negotiations of the text as to what is 'real'.

Tzvetan Todorov's ingenious contribution to the study of the fantastic – not genre fantasy! – is precisely this insight that the fantastic is not phenomenological but hermeneutical: "The fantastic is defined as a special *perception* of uncanny events" (91; *original emphasis*). Of course, Todorov was not the first to link narrative strategies and the readers' response. Questions of rhetoric and the creation of certain effects in the reader have been part and parcel of most theories of the sublime from Longinus onwards. In *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704), John Dennis writes "of things which are terrible, [that] those are the most terrible which are the most wonderful [meaning fantastic]; because that seeing them both threatening and powerful, and not being able to fathom the greatness and extent of their power, we know not how far and how soon they may hurt us" (in Ashfield and de Bolla, 38). Sir Richard Blackmore acknowledges the marvellous in a similar fashion:

> All things excite admiration that either transcend the sphere of finite activity, or that break the usual series of natural causes and events. [...] [T]hey interrupt the ordinary course of things, and deviate from the established custom of laws of nature. Some of these irregular productions are monstrous and frightful, and strike the imagination with disgust and terror, [...] All unusual occurrences, especially the excursions and transgressions of nature in her operations, move the imagination with great force, agitate the spirits, and raise in the soul strong emotions. (in Ashfield and de Bolla, 40–1)

Edmund Burke observes that the sublime only works through a lack of contextual knowledge: "It is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions. Knowledge and acquaintance make the most striking causes affect but little" (57). In this denial of full knowledge and a subversion of interpretative strategies the fantastic and the sublime resemble each other. Todorov clearly sees the problems of equating the fantastic with the supernatural: "The supernatural does not characterize works closely enough, its extension is much too great" (34). In other words: it is not the ghost as such that makes a story fantastic but the characters' and the readers' willingness to read the ghost as an uncanny, that is supernatural and threatening, phenomenon.

If one considers a number of famous ghosts such as the Headless Horseman in Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820), Casper the Friendly Ghost, Patrick Swayze's character Sam Wheat in *Ghost* (1990), DC Comics's *The Spectre*, a dead policeman turned superhero, Bruce Willis's character Dr. Malcolm Crowe in *The Sixth Sense* (1999), Hamlet's father, or Headless Nick in the *Harry Potter* books, it becomes clear that, on a phenomenological level, they are all proper ghosts, but it is the way we read them, in very specific socio-cultural and generic contexts, that makes all the difference. Todorov suggests the same thing: "To classify all vampires together, for instance, implies that the vampire always signifies the same thing, whatever the context in which it appears" (101).

There are whole genres or modes, such as satire or fable, where the interpretation is structurally predetermined, no matter how fantastic the texts may be. Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" (1712) or Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) are full of fantastic creatures and situations, but the recognition of the texts as satire suggests a whole range of interpretative strategies to the experienced reader. All genre labels, especially those of pop culture, provide their own quintessential reading instructions: we know exactly what to expect and we certainly will not be disappointed. Thus, the space ships in science fiction or the wizards in genre fantasy have nothing of the fantastic or unexpected about them: they are part and parcel of their pop-generic contexts. Most pop-genre novels lack the transgressive nature of the fantastic, a quality that features prominently in Rosemary Jackson's *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981):

> ... fantasy literature [...] opens up, for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality, on to that which lies outside the law [including literary conventions], that which is outside dominant value systems. The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent.' (2003, 4)

The fantastic, as it manifests itself in Gothic fiction and magic realism, questions the ordered arrangement and teleology of other genres. Tracing the fantastic back to Menippean satire, Jackson finds all its special qualities in this particular subversive forerunner:

> Lacking finality, it interrogated authoritative truths and replaced them with something less certain. [...] Spatial, temporal, and philosophical ordering systems all dissolve; unified notions of character are broken; language and syntax become incoherent. Through its 'misrule', it permits 'ultimate questions' about social order, or metaphysical riddles as to life's purpose. Unable to give affirmation to a closed, unified, or omniscient vision, the *menippea* violates social property. (2003, 15)

This corresponds directly to Todorov's affirmation that the transgression has to take place on all levels of the communicative situation: "If the literary work truly forms a structure, we must find on every level consequences of that ambiguous perception by the reader which characterizes the fantastic" (76). It is the combined power of all these artfully arranged indeterminacies and transgressions that makes the reader hesitate and lets the fantastic take effect: "the fantastic plays upon difficulties of interpreting events/things as objects or as images, thus disorienting the reader's categorization of the 'real'" (Jackson, 20). The fantastic is highly dependent on the 'real': "Fantasy re-combines and inverts the real, but it does not escape it: it exists in a parasitical or symbiotic relation to the real" (Jackson, 20; see also 25). In contrast to "single, reductive 'truths'", the fantastic is "polysemic": by "[p]resenting that which cannot be, but *is*, fantasy exposes a culture's definitions of that which can be: it traces the limits of its epistemological and ontological frame" (Jackson, 23). It is the reader who becomes intricately involved in this process of renegotiation.

Although genre, for Todorov, is a "structure, a configuration of literary properties", it cannot be too rigidly applied to the individual fantastic text as it would ruin the effect; genre rather has to be understood as an "inventory of options" (141). One of these options is genre hybridity, a wilful transgression of reader expectations. The oxymoron at the heart of 'magic realism' is programmatic in this respect, and novels such as Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984) rightfully belong to the canon of the fantastic. This generic hybridity is frequently mirrored in narrative and textual heterogeneity. The built-in deviations are as much evident on the macrostructural level as in the microstructure. Narrative devices serve a single effect: "The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" (Todorov, 25). It takes a lot of skilful arrangement of the seemingly haphazard elements of the fantastic to sustain this singular hesitation throughout a whole text without providing a logical or supernatural explanation.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902) ingeniously demonstrates how the fantastic can be progressively created through structural means, and how the reader becomes complicit in this process. Todorov understands one thing very clearly: the Gothic and detective fiction are twin genres. Both are structurally and thematically very similar, yet differ in two major respects. First, detective fiction is ultimately teleological as it stresses the rational explanation of very disturbing or seemingly supernatural events and ends with the detective's ingenious master-narrative of what has happened. The Gothic's narrative drive, however, is continuously stifled by the intrusion of other narrations. These are very frequent in detective fiction, too, such as eye-witness reports or incriminating documents, but they all help to solve the great

mystery, even if they are false themselves. Yet, the episodes and fragments of Gothic fiction often contribute to an ever greater confusion. The characters try hard to be proper detectives, although they are often in no position to sit down comfortably and think the whole thing through. Traditionally both genres limit themselves to one (or just a few) confined space(s) and a small set of related people – family, friends, and lovers. The difference lies in the focalization, which is my second point. The Gothic is always narrated from the victim or villain's subjective point of view, which is often the same thing. It lacks the outsider, the third person's 'objective' perspective.

In *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902) Arthur Conan Doyle provides us with a wonderful case study of how the two genres interrelate. On the macrostructural level he introduces three sets of characters that read the same events in three different ways: the Baskervilles believe their own family history to be uncanny – a supernatural tale of horror. For Dr. Watson and Dr. Mortimer the legend of the hound is fantastic in Todorov's sense, as the two scientists are hesitating between a rational and a supernatural explanation. Sherlock Holmes, however, despises the supernatural and reads the signs in a scientific and realist fashion, which is prototypical of detective fiction and which allows him to solve the case in the end. When Todorov says that the fantastic obliges "the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described" (33), he might as well have said that the fantastic is a hesitation between horror and detective fiction.

On a microstructural level, the three sets of characters are associated with specific textual traditions that are representative of their particular discourses. The Baskervilles belong to the oral tradition of folk-tales, myths and legends. These literary forms are beyond the reach of science, deriving their power over people's minds precisely from their super-natural, archaic and often a-historical properties. The Baskervilles believe in the nightmare that a "hound of hell" (Doyle, 13) will haunt the family forever. In the manuscript version of the legend, which Dr. Mortimer, the Baskervilles' family practitioner, shows Sherlock Holmes to win his interest, their particular take on the story is clearly evident: the monster is presented as "a great, black beast, shaped like a hound, yet larger than any hound that ever mortal eye has rested upon" (Doyle, 13). From this moment onwards, many of the central scenes in the novel revolve around the different readings of the same occurrences. When Dr. Watson asks Holmes, "Do you find it [the legend] interesting?", Holmes answers: "To a collector of fairy-tales" (14). Referring to the hound, Dr. Mortimer declares that "[t]here is a realm in which the most acute and most experienced of detectives is helpless". Holmes asks him: "You mean that the thing is supernatural?" Mortimer replies that "there have come to [his] ears several incidents which are hard to reconcile with the settled order of Nature. [...] several people had seen a creature upon the moor which corresponds with this Baskerville demon, and which could not possibly be any animal known to science. They all agreed it was a huge creature, luminous, ghastly, and spectral" (22). When Holmes challenges Mortimer by asking, "And you, a trained man of science, believe it to be supernatural?", he answers: "I do not know what to believe" (23).

Dr. Mortimer is a perfect illustration of Todorov's theory, as he hesitates between a rational and a supernatural explanation. After relating the story from one end of the interpretative spectrum, we get exactly the same thing from the other. Dr. Mortimer sums up the "public facts" (Doyle, 17) that the official police investigation yielded – a factual and very plain report worthy of Holmes himself, only to confess that he withheld information from the coroner's inquiry. As a "man of science" he "shrinks from placing himself in the public position of seeming to endorse a popular superstition" (17), yet there is no doubt that he himself saw the "footprints of a gigantic hound" (20). Contrary to Holmes, Dr Watson immediately finds himself in league

with the poor doctor: "I confess that at these words a shudder passed through me. There was a thrill in the doctor's voice which showed that he was himself deeply moved by that which he told us" (20). The two doctors represent the second set of characters, and Sherlock Holmes – in a league of his own – the third.

Up to this point the novel is fully in the detective mode. Dr. Mortimer has presented the three readings of the story – the uncanny, the fantastic, and the rational in equal measure, yet, there is no doubt which one Sherlock Holmes will pursue. For the first two, one needs a certain amount of emotional involvement, which the greatest detective of all times clearly lacks: "All emotions [...] were abhorrent to his cold, precise, but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen ..." (3). With such a reputation Sherlock Holmes is pure poison for the fantastic. To sustain the full spectrum of readings and keep the readers guessing, Doyle has to refashion the structure of the novel. Holmes sends Dr. Watson alone to Baskerville Hall, where the good doctor immediately succumbs to the uncanny atmosphere of the place: "... there rose in the distance a grey, melancholy hill, with a strange jagged summit, dim and vague in the distance, like some fantastic landscape in a dream" (54).

Though the whole novel is presented from Dr Watson's point of view, the first few chapters, narrated under the direct influence of Holmes, are fairly objective and self-effacing. Only now, with Holmes gone for the middle section of the novel, one detects a noticeable change as Watson gives in to his emotional side and presents an almost uncanny reading of events. Holmes was very precise about the kind of texts he wants: "I wish you simply to report facts in the fullest possible manner to me" (51). It is no coincidence that Watson is assigned specific text types – the diary, the journal, the daily report, which are ideally suited for a fantastic reading of events with a strong leaning towards the supernatural. They allow some reflection, yet at the same time the emotional involvement is still very strong and the writer misses the broader picture. Watson's gradual shift from a fantastic to an uncanny reading of events becomes evident in his first report: "The longer one stays here the more does the spirit of the moor sink into one's soul, its vastness, and also its grim charm. When you are once out upon its bosom you have left all traces of modern England behind you, ..." (75). Later on, he puts down in his diary: "I am conscious myself of a weight at my heart and a feeling of impending danger – ever-present, which is the more terrible because I am unable to define it" (100).

When Holmes suddenly appears on the scene three quarters into the novel, his unbeatable logic progressively dispels the fantastic. Holmes comments: "Our researches have evidently been running on parallel lines, and when we unite our results I expect we shall have a fairly full knowledge of the case" (124). Holmes's terminology is the important issue here: where Watson stumbles across the moor, Holmes talks of research. Speculations, legends and rumours suddenly become results and lead to a fairly complete knowledge. The supernatural and existential threat to the Baskervilles becomes a mere case that can be solved within no time. Dr. Watson's reaction is typical: "Well, I am glad from my heart that you are here, for indeed the responsibility and the mystery were both becoming too much for my nerves. But how in the name of wonder did you come here, and what have you been doing?" (124) To which Holmes replies: "Had I been with Sir Henry and you it is evident that my point of view would have been the same as yours" (124). This is as much a comment on the methodology of detective work as on the narrative situation in fantasy and detective fiction. For the truly fantastic, there has to be the hesitant first-person narrator who does not know what is going on, which is exactly Dr. Watson's part in the middle section of the novel. Detective fiction, however, needs the outside third-person bird's eye point of view to be able to piece together a coherent narrative. In the

words of Sherlock Holmes: "I shall soon be in the position of being able to put into a single connected narrative one of the most singular and sensational crimes of modern times" (145). And in the words of Todorov: "in the detective story, the emphasis is placed on the solution to the mystery; in the texts linked to the uncanny (as in the fantastic narrative), the emphasis is on the reactions which this mystery provokes" (50). The very essence of the fantastic is the "impossibility of verification of events" (Jackson, 37), the "gap between sign and meaning" (Jackson, 38).

Though this detailed reading of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* has served to prove Todorov's theory, it has also moved beyond it in one important instance, and that is narrative strategy. Let us return to Todorov's definition of the fantastic to illustrate an important oversight on his part:

> First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is so to speak entrusted to a character, and at the same time the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work – in the case of naïve reading, the actual reader identifies himself with the character. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text. He will reject allegorical as well as "poetic" interpretations. These three requirements do not have an equal value. The first and the third actually constitute the genre; the second may not be fulfilled. (33)

The weak point in Todorov's argument is precisely this value judgement, this disregard for the characters and thus the narrative strategies closely bound up with them. As an almost empirical literary scientist, a fact that he stresses at the beginning of the book (see 4), he is naturally opposed to the idea that the individual reader may come up with his or her own personal interpretation. The very idea of an 'individual reader' seems to be alien to Todorov's understanding, as his structuralist view presupposes that the correct reading is built into the text. Reluctantly he acknowledges that "the reader [...] is entitled not to concern himself with the allegorical meaning suggested by the author, and to discover an entirely different meaning in the text if he chooses to do so" (65). Yet, he finds the idea quite disturbing:

> We must insist on the fact that we cannot speak of allegory unless we find explicit indications of it within the text. Otherwise, *we shift to what is no more than a reader's interpretation*; and at this point every literary text would be allegorical, *for it is the characteristic factor of literature to be endlessly interpreted and reinterpreted by its readers.* (73–4; *emphasis mine*)

This is precisely the point where Todorov's theory becomes obscure, if not problematic. Unwilling to reveal how exactly the author manages to build the fantastic into a narrative so that its main effect on the reader – hesitation – remains active throughout the text, Todorov simply presents it as a fact: "The ambiguity is sustained to the very end of the adventure: reality or dream? truth or illusion?" (25) Disappointingly enough, his study never manages to go beyond this overtly simplistic point. At the same time he distrusts the reader – though vitally important to his theory – as he or she is prone to come up with interpretations that do not correspond to the writer's intentions. Yet, we never learn how these are encoded in the text and may be deciphered.

The fantastic is indeed a tightrope walk with countless opportunities to slip into other interpretative modes, as Todorov asserts throughout his study. What is sadly missing from his theory are the road signs, the beacons, the textual markers, in short, all these instances of reader guidance that keep us on track. As individual readers we may not see the path as clearly as others, we may stray and need help, we may get lost or need more time, we may stop and be fascinated

by details and intricate descriptions; but there is a narrative path nevertheless and we can talk about it intrasubjectively. If we, as literary critics of the fantastic, attempt to describe the elements which constitute this path, we need to rely on narratology to solve the difficult question of how the fantastic is encoded in the text and can be deciphered by the reader. The narrative strategies of the fantastic can easily be compared to those of unreliability, as both use special techniques to create a certain effect in the reader. In Gothic fiction, for example, the fantastic is often produced by the unreliability of the narrators in the first place and manifests itself as a cumulative effect.

In the chapter on poetry and allegory Todorov says that if "we move to another level, the one where the implicit reader questions not the nature of the events, but that of the very text which describes them, we find the existence of the fantastic threatened once again" (58). This is, of course, only true if we diagnose the narrator as completely unreliable and his narration as a pack of lies. Then the fantastic elements, if there are any, lose all relevance and readers exclusively focus on the discrepancies between the narration and what they can read between the lines, the events as they 'actually' happened. Yet, what if the unreliable narrator and the ideal reader of the fantastic are one and the same? How reliable are the scientists Dr. Watson and Dr. Mortimer who entertain the possibility that a beast from hell is killing off the Baskervilles? What if the reader's hesitation is produced and mirrored by the narrator's (un)reliability, which makes the narrated events all the more dubious as mysteries abound on all levels of the narration? Todorov himself says that "[i]f the literary work truly forms a structure, we must find on every level consequences of that ambiguous perception by the reader which characterizes the fantastic" (76).

Rosemary Jackson is aware of the close link between the fantastic and unreliability in general: "The fantastic problematizes vision (is it possible to trust the seeing eye?) and language (is it possible to trust the recording, speaking 'I'?)" (30). She criticizes Todorov for neglecting epistemological shifts within the past 200 years and their repercussions on fantastic literature:

> This problem (and problematization) of the perception/vision/knowledge of the protagonist and narrator and reader of the fantastic text is not considered by Todorov in any historical perspective, yet it is part of an increasing attention to questions of knowing and seeing which preoccupies much Romantic and post-Romantic thought. (Jackson 2003, 31)

In fact, these concerns have always been part and parcel of the fantastic. If we understand the fantastic, then, as an elaborate process on the reader's part to disentangle himself or herself from a web of perception, deception and (re)conception, a narratological perspective is necessary to clarify how the reader interprets fantastic texts. Based on Ansgar Nünning (2005) and Heinz Antor (2001), a simple theoretical framework shall serve to present some short case studies.

When Todorov observes that "the *fantastic* refers to an ambiguous perception shared by the reader and one of the characters" (46), one should not forget that, in most cases, a complex play with reader expectations and interpretative strategies takes place that is frequently achieved through a polyphonic approach to narration. That is why the vital role of the reader is stressed over and over again in theories of unreliability:

> All the tools of transgression [...] are eminently prone to produce such an effect of decentring, of fragmentation and of disorientation, and they incite the reader to try and recentre the world by re-establishing conceptual and interpretative consistency. They are thus to be seen as agents of a strategy of reader-activation which, as remains to be shown, does not present ready-made alter-

> native concepts and frameworks but uses the epistemological and epistemic suffering it engenders in the reader to make him look for a way out himself. (Antor, 372)

The only way to save the fantastic in a post-Enlightenment context is by placing it right next to a rational reading of events that, for a long time, is not capable of resolving the mysteries or fails to do so altogether. Early Gothic fiction serves as a template in this respect for countless later narratives that include the fantastic as a constitutive element.

Frankenstein's deliberate attempt to read and present the monster as a fantastic being – a demon on a rampage of revenge and bloodshed – is undercut by his own scientific explanation of its creation and the monster's very rational self-narration. This failure of the fantastic is a vital plot-point and structurally built into the fabric of the novel. Yet, polyphonic narration can also serve the fantastic. In James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), we are first presented with "The Editor's Narrative", a third-person, seemingly objective account of how Robert Wringhim, the justified sinner and younger half-brother to George, the young laird of Dalcastle, upsets – through his manic presence – civilized society and probably has to be blamed for the deaths of the two lairds, one caused by murder and the other by grief. In "Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Sinner: Written by Himself", the second part of the novel, we witness Robert's first-person account of what happened. Throughout his narration the reader's hesitation is sustained through the prototypical unreliability of its main protagonist. Key characteristics are a first-person, strongly personalized narrator (often a loner or even sociopath), a substantial meta-narrative level, an obsession or fixation, an urge to justify his actions (or manipulate the readers), high emotional involvement, blatant contradictions, a profound uncertainty about his ontological status and his capability to make sense of the world.

In *The Justified Sinner* we never find out if the devil is committing horrible crimes assuming Robert's person to utterly ruin him, if Robert is a schizophrenic who does not know what his other self is doing, or if he just pretends not to know. Irrespective of what is really the case, all we have are his existentialist doubts and fears. At first, Gil-Martin, his new best friend and potentially the devil in disguise, is uncannily similar to him:

> What was my astonishment on perceiving that he was the same being as myself! The clothes were the same to the smallest item. The form was the same; the apparent age; the colour of the hair; the eyes; and, as far as recollection could serve me from viewing my own features in a glass, the features too were the very same. I conceived at first that I saw a vision, and that my guardian angel had appeared to me at this important era of my life; but this singular being read my thoughts in my looks, anticipating the very words that I was going to utter. (116–17)

Gradually the borders between the two beings begin to dissolve. Robert frantically clings to the last remnants of his sanity:

> I was a being incomprehensible to myself. Either I had a second self, who transacted business in my likeness, or else my body was at times possessed by a spirit over which it had no control, and of whose actions my own soul was wholly unconscious. This was an anomaly not to be accounted for by any philosophy of mine, and I was many times, in contemplating it, excited to terrors and mental torments hardly describable. To be in a state of consciousness and unconsciousness, at the same time, in the same body and same spirit, was impossible. I was under the greatest anxiety, dreading some change would take place momently in my nature; for of dates I could make nothing: one-half, or two-thirds of my time, seemed to me totally lost. (182)

The two beings become "incorporated together – identified with one another" (Hogg, 183), "amalgamated, as it were, and consociated in one" (189). It does not matter that we doubt the

narration as such and that, in all likelihood, Robert is insane. In the absence of a detective we, as the readers, have to take on that task. Till the very end we struggle to make sense and piece together all the evidence. The fantastic quality of Gil-Martin and the weirdness of the occurrences is generated by the narrator's unreliability.

There is a direct link between this novel and late twentieth-century masterpieces in unreliable narration, such as Patrick McGrath's *The Grotesque* (1989) and *Spider* (1990), in which the narrator's perception is also severely distorted:

> It was the cloak of spectral unreality I loved, the cloak it spread over the familiar forms of the world. All was strange in a fog, buildings grew vague, human beings groped and became lost, the landmarks, the compass points, by which they navigated melted into nothingness and the world was transfigured into a country of the blind. But if the sighted became blind, then the blind – and for some odd reason I have always regarded myself as one of the blind – the blind became sighted, and I remember feeling at home in a fog, happily at ease in the murk and gloom that so confused my neighbours. I moved quickly and confidently through fog-blanketed streets, unvisited by the terrors that lurked everywhere in the visible material world; I stayed out as late as I could in the fog. (67)

Hesitation is not sustained throughout the novel as the reader sooner or later finds out that he has to develop a reading that runs counter to the first-person narrator's interpretation or even manipulation of events. Eventually the supernatural occurrences and body transformations can easily be explained by the obvious insanity of the narrator. Here is just one example:

> I look at my fingers – they seem so far away from me, at first I think I see a crab of some type lying there on the open page, a yellow crab with horny pincers, a creature unrelated to me. I follow it up my arm to my shoulder, I need to do this to confirm that the thing is a part of me, or at any rate connected to this composite, this loosely assembled and unravelling weave of gristle, husk and bone. (175)

This novel presents the interesting case where the first-person narrator remains hesitant between a natural and supernatural explanation, whereas the reader progressively understands what is going on and manages to read the novel counter to the narrator's intentions.

Though I have not been able to demonstrate in any detail how narratological theories can be made fruitful for a study of the fantastic, I have sketched a possible reading which is based on Todorov's basic principles, but incorporates key concepts from the study of unreliability. The fantastic can only exist as an intricate interplay between a sequence of textual signals and the reader's constant revisions of his or her working theories and interpretative strategies. Its precarious existence relies on the narrative skills of the author, but much more so on the experienced reader.

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Korinna Csetényi

Dilemmas of the Horror Genre in Stephen King's *The Shining*

A man sees further looking out of the dark upon the light than a man does in the light and looking upon the light. (Faulkner, 413)

Why do we read horror fiction? Why do we invest time and money into scaring ourselves, when life offers us plenty of horrors on a daily basis: how are these different from the ones enclosed within the covers of a book? Is it possible to account for the peculiar attraction of horror fiction? This paper aims at answering some of these questions, using Stephen King's *The Shining*, a classic text in the horror canon.

Horror fiction is not an easy genre to define. As Gary Wolf remarks, it is "the only genre named for its effect on the reader" (Badley, 3). Rosemary Jackson calls it a "mode" (35) instead of a genre, while other critics connect it to formulaic conventions such as the presence of monsters, serial killers, characters with paranormal powers and repetitive plot structures. In Linda J. Holland-Toll's view, horror fiction includes texts whose overall concern is to generate fear, horror and revulsion in the reader by virtue of supernatural creatures, powers or other inexplicable phenomena, sensational plots and exaggerated emotions. These texts discuss allegorically everyday horrors that cause "dis/ease" in the reader, a term that Holland-Toll introduces to denote a sense of unease, a disturbing effect generated by horror texts (253). Another important element which Todorov lists as a major characteristic of the fantastic is the sense of the unreal intruding into the everyday world.[1]

The novel under discussion contains all of these elements, so it can clearly be placed within the category of the horror genre. What makes it an even more frightening and anxiety-ridden text is that the figure of the monster, the Other, is not clearly separated from us as human beings. Instead of an inhuman vampire or a zombie (with which the reader has no connection), the protagonist is Jack Torrance, a young father, a struggling writer, who seems to be a kind of 'guy next door'. It is important to stress that he does not start out as a horrific being; he is a likeable character in the beginning. As the reader learns more and more about his tortured past, we respond with sympathy to the hardships he suffered. Only when his transformation begins under the evil influence of the hotel, do we distance ourselves from him. But what remains within us is the feeling that this is a human monster, not a supernatural one. The close kinship we experience with this monster makes the story more effective than a tale of otherworldly horror, in which we would never identify ourselves with many-tentacled, befanged monstrosities.

In *The Shining* a supernatural essence seems to invade Jack Torrance's body, rendering him into a monster, albeit a human one. He retains his human form, but the mind controlling it clearly belongs to a superior intelligence. What is especially frightening in connection with this figure is that he is a father, so he should have a protective role instead of a threatening one. The

[1] "In a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, a world without devils, sylphides, or vampires, there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world." See Todorov, 25.

transformation from the familiar into the unfamiliar (from parent into murderer) is described by Freud as an instance of the uncanny. Something which was safely homely (*Heimlich*) turns into its 'unhomely' opposite while remaining the same.

Since the monstrous is positioned within the human body, it becomes more difficult to isolate the figure of the Other. On the surface he appears to be human, but inside a demonic power reigns. This proximity with the reader renders the demarcation process (Badley, 30) problematic. Lovecraftian monsters are easily identifiable, but the process of setting the boundaries between us and the human monster requires more alertness.

King combines two sources of horror when detailing Jack's decline: the unreal, supernatural horror of the hotel, and the everyday horrors (alcoholism, abuse) of his past. These two result in a fatal combination, setting him on the path of destruction.

Besides analyzing the constitutive elements which make up these horror stories it is perhaps more important to tackle the question *why* we have this urge to produce and consume them. "[T]here seems to be inside us a constant, ever-present yearning for the fantastic, for the darkly mysterious, for the choked terror of the dark", Carlos Clarens states (Punter, 204). But why are we attracted to them?

Critical opinions diverge on this issue: first, there is the conservative standpoint (represented by King, among others), which regards these texts as ultimately life-affirming, law-abiding entities, which function as safety valves in society, helping to maintain social order. According to Jackson, fantasies neutralize "an urge towards transgression" (72). By vicariously experiencing anti-social emotions, we exorcise these feelings and thereby experience a cathartic release from these repressed urges. This theory builds on the repression model of psychoanalysis and claims that it is better to feed the "hungry alligators" (King 1981, 177) lurking in the subconscious once in a while than risk the upsurge of repressed desires. King insists that "the potential lyncher is in almost all of us" (1981, 176). This may overstate the case, but individuals certainly differ on how well they are able to cope with repressed desires. Feelings of violence, resentment and aggression are often directed at family members. In fact, one possible way to approach *The Shining* is to see it as a novel dealing with questions relating to child and spousal abuse.

Horror texts also reinforce certain taboos and rules which we deem necessary for the sake of the maintenance of society. By toying with the ideas of breaking taboos or violating rules in our imaginations, in fictional worlds, we acquire a better understanding of what those taboos are and what purposes they serve. As Fred Botting points out, by upsetting the social boundaries the transgression ultimately serves the purpose of reinforcing their value and necessity. Horror texts warn us of the horrible consequences of transgressions (Botting, 7). These works also enable us to overcome our fears of frightening objects by confronting them within the safe confines of a literary text.

Other critics emphasize a second viewpoint: they point to the subversive role of horror fiction. Among them, Holland-Toll claims that the most effective horror fiction is that which resists closure and resolution, which leaves a lingering sense of "dis/ease" in the reader, who is later haunted by the text (10). Such books probe the hidden reality beneath the smiling surface, searching for the "skull beneath the skin" (12). What they find usually fails to confirm our good feelings about ourselves, our community and our society. They lift the veil, or rather, tear the veil away so that we can examine what is beneath. Often we are confronted with a peculiar version of one of America's dominant myths, which could be called 'the American Nightmare'. Horror texts show – often indelicately – that things are not what they appear to be. They form part of a cultural self-analysis, questioning assumptions which we usually take for granted, man's essential humanity for example, and affirming nothing in exchange.

Holland-Toll compares the effect of such texts to a carnival mirror which offers a dark, warped image of ourselves, which is nevertheless true. This confrontation is not pleasant and this might be the reason why so many people turn away from horror fiction. In Leslie Fiedler's opinion, however, this is a distinguishing characteristic not just of horror fiction, but of literature in general: "The writer's duty is [...] to deny the easy affirmations by which most men live, and to expose the blackness of life most men try deliberately to ignore. [...] it is the function of art not to console or sustain, much less to entertain, but to *disturb* by telling a truth which is always unwelcome" (432).

The Shining is an example of an ambiguous horror text which hovers between these two extreme positions, since it ruthlessly destroys some of our most cherished values (such as the love of a parent for a child), yet strikes a compromise by providing a relatively happy ending instead of the bleak *dénouement* the reader expects.

The novel is traditionally considered a haunted house story or a tale of evil possession. However, it could also be viewed as a domestic tragedy that centres upon the problems of alcoholism and abuse. Deborah Notkin has stated, "it may well be the only ghost story ever written where the ghosts could be entirely excised and the story not significantly changed" (Underwood 1982, 134). This paper concentrates on the ghosts and the various supernatural phenomena of the story, asking the questions what do they add to the novel and to what extent do they contribute to the plot development.

As director Stanley Kubrick remarked: "ghost stories appeal to our craving for immortality. If you can be afraid of a ghost, then you have to believe that a ghost may exist. And if a ghost exists, then oblivion might not be the end" (Jenkins, 71). Ghosts are closely connected to our fears of mortality. While alien monsters shock us with their utter inhumanity and our inability to find a place for them in our world, when we confront a ghost, we eventually contemplate our own end/future. We perceive the ultimate humaneness of these figures; in fact, a frequently recurring plot element of horror films is when the ghost turns to a human being for help, appealing to our sense of connectedness/continuity with them.

In *The Shining*, Jack Torrance, ex-alcoholic, failed teacher and writer, becomes the winter caretaker of the luxurious Overlook Hotel in the mountains of Colorado (the hotel is closed down for the winter season). This job provides him with his last chance to "get his act together", so he knows he must not fail. His wife, Wendy, and his five-year-old son, Danny, accompany him. Danny has a special gift (or curse?), the so-called shining. This second sight is a psychic ability which allows him to read the future, to relive past events and to read other people's minds. Though it seems to be a positive force (the word itself suggests "light", either as cognizance and enlightenment, or as the warmth provided by fire), the shining is a burden for the small child who cannot readily interpret all the messages transmitted to him. Furthermore, this special talent renders Danny desirable in the hotel's eyes. The hotel's black cook, Dick Hallorann, who also shines, introduces Danny to his special talent.

As they pass the long, lonely months in the isolated hotel, Jack gradually descends into madness, becoming increasingly manipulated by the power of the hotel, the ultimate goal of which is to destroy Danny and absorb his shining into its evil nature. Jack, acting increasingly like a puppet in the hotel's hands, becomes a raging madman and attempts to kill his family. Engrossed in his supernatural experiences, however, he neglects his earthly responsibilities as a caretaker, and the decrepit hotel boiler blows up before he can do any real harm to Danny. The hotel, with Jack inside, is destroyed in a symbolically cleansing fire, while Danny and Wendy, together with Hallorann all escape.

The plot may sound simplistic when pared down significantly, but King provides the reader with careful character analysis, using numerous interior monologues to acquaint the reader with the Torrance family. King believes that for a good horror novel it is essential that readers care about the characters; we have to feel afraid for them. He claims that in horror fiction "you don't get scared of monsters; you get scared for people" (Underwood 1988, 113). He achieves this goal by drawing detailed portraits of all the family members, concentrating also on the troubled relationship Jack and Wendy had with their own parents. Though Jack loses his mind during the course of the book, we still sympathize with him. We conceive of his death as a tragic loss, because under different circumstances he might have turned out a better father, husband and writer.

King clearly intended the hotel as a modernization of the Gothic castle/haunted house, but we can find other reasons why a hotel is a fitting dwelling place for ghosts. They seem to be stuck in a kind of limbo, neither alive, nor dead, neither here, nor there. A great number of deaths occurred in the Overlook, and most of the victims were social outcasts: suicides, mafia hit men, people living on the periphery of society, neither inside, nor outside. A hotel could also be interpreted as a space in-between, neither a starting point, nor destination; people stop there only temporarily; it is not a location with a stable number of inhabitants.

The hotel's summer caretaker, Watson, claims that every hotel has its ghosts and Jack half believes this. Taking Jack around the basement where the gigantic boiler is located, Watson mentions the case of a maid who fainted in room 217 because she saw the dead body of a former guest who had committed suicide (the maid also had the ability to shine). But more important than the legendary ghosts of the Overlook is the ghost of a memory which is conjured up in Jack's mind. Watson shows him the pilot light on the boiler and when Jack marvels at this "channeled destructive force" (16) his mind jumps back to a moment in his past when his own inner boiler blew up and "a slow, red cloud of rage had eclipsed [his] reason" (16). That night he broke his three-year-old son's arm in a fit of rage after Danny spilled some beer on the script Jack was writing. The connection between the real boiler and the symbolic one inside Jack is highly significant as both have the capacity for self-destruction. Another important feature of this episode is the actual, physical descent: Jack descends into the basement in the same way he descends into his own past, into his submerged memories.

While Jack is down in the basement, Danny spends time with the cook. Hallorann tries to assure Danny that though there are remnants of the evil events that happened in the hotel, they cannot harm him: "It seems that all the bad things that ever happened here, there's little pieces of those things still laying around" (88). They are like pictures in a book, and Danny has only to close his eyes and they will be gone. But Hallorann was mistaken and he almost had to pay with his life for this mistake. He underestimated the hotel's capacity for evil and never imagined it could materialize in a tangible, concrete way. He explicitly warns the boy not to enter room 217, but the latter does not listen. As Lucie Armitt suggests, "prohibition usually functions as an open invitation to transgress" (44).

But before discovering what lies waiting in room 217, some attention should be paid to the hedge animals of the hotel. Situated next to the playground are several hedge animals: three lions, a dog, a rabbit and a bull. Jack's responsibilities as caretaker include trimming them. While on the playground, Jack sees the lions shift positions out of the corner of his eye. He puts his hands in front of his eyes, but the animals keep on moving. Thinking back to his drinking days, Jack envisions having such a hallucination under the influence of alcohol, but knows that he is sober.

The hedge animal incident prompts him to distrust his own senses and question his sanity. He starts not to believe what he sees. His mind firmly rejects the physical evidence of the hotel's being alive. If he had realised that the animals actually exist, he would have realised the danger the hotel posed to his family and they could have escaped. But he chooses denial instead, reverting to behaviour he exhibited as an alcoholic. He used to be a heavy drinker but after breaking Danny's arm he stopped drinking. Nevertheless, he still craves alcohol. During the hedge animal episode he experiences the state of mind of an alcoholic again.

He attributes the incident to his being tired and nervous and decides not to mention it to his family lest they question his sanity. Harbouring this secret drives a wedge between Jack and his family. This small crack widens in the course of the novel with his willing participation (willing, because he consciously chooses not to act, and the consequences of his non-action make him responsible to a certain extent for what happens).

The next strategic move of the hotel is to try to harm Danny in one of the most frightening scenes of the novel. Danny is driven by curiosity to visit room 217. The boy draws an analogy with the tale of Bluebeard, whose wife could not resist the call of the forbidden door. The hotel addresses Danny for the first time during this scene, telling him that "[p]romises were made to be broken" (215). The hotel, still in disembodied form, establishes direct contact with him, encouraging him to break his promise to Hallorann not to enter the room. In the bathroom he finds the dead body of a woman in the bathtub, which steps out of it. Danny tries to flee but finds the door closed. Remembering that Hallorann told him the terrifying images would disappear if he closes his eyes, he closes them, but then feels two damp, putrescent hands grasping his neck.

While Danny is in room 217, his father has a terrible nightmare. Jack relives the memory of his father's cruel beating of his mother in front of his four children. Jack felt a mixture of love and hate towards his father throughout his childhood, and this past full of terrors (once he was thrown down from the tree-house and he broke his arm, which clearly foreshadows his breaking of Danny's arm) never seems to have stopped haunting him. It is interesting to note that in a flashback Jack compares his dad to a giant ghost: "In that light he always looked like some soft and flapping oversized ghost in his hospital whites" (222). For King, the main message of haunted house stories is the haunting of the past, which never ceases. The past always influences the present. As King states in *Danse Macabre*, "the past *is* a ghost which haunts our present lives constantly" (265).In his dream Jack hears his father's voice coming through the radio, commanding him to kill both his wife and son. He recoils in terror and smashes the radio to pieces. He kills off the voice, but he also destroys their only means of contacting the external world. Wendy rushes to Jack to see what happened. King arouses some sympathy for Jack from the reader as he breaks down and cries in Wendy's arms, sharing the details of his nightmare with her.

This is the first example of the hotel gaining control of Jack: he destroys the radio on orders from the hotel which masks itself with his father's voice, a figure of terror in his unhappy past. During the dream, he is not conscious of what he is doing, a puppet moving at the master's will. He is compared significantly by Wendy to an animal fallen into a trap: "she saw his true face, the one he ordinarily kept so well hidden, and it was a face of desperate unhappiness, the face of an animal caught in a snare" (229).

The novel sketches a careful gradation of Jack's transformation to a malleable character, willing to do the bidding of the evil powers. He is predisposed to weakness because of his terrible childhood, his problems with alcohol, his quick temper, his lack of self-confidence and his fear of inadequacy and failure. Wendy is convinced "that the three of them had been permanently

welded together – that if their three/oneness was to be destroyed, it would not be destroyed by any of them but from outside" (54), which is exactly what happens. The hotel senses that Jack is the weakest link in the chain that binds the family together and decides to break their union through him. It appeals to his vanity, making him believe it is after him. Only in the end does Jack discover that the Overlook desired Danny's special gift. The realisation that his son is rated higher than himself comes as a blow to Jack's self-confidence. He thought he could rise in the hotel's hierarchy and become a manager one day if he remained loyal. His disappointment fuels his anger towards his son.

After his encounter in room 217, Danny is found in a catatonic state with awful bruises on his neck. Wendy thinks Jack caused the bruises. He is appalled by Wendy's suggestion but he is helpless to defend himself. Angry, he goes to the bar where he holds his first imaginary conversation with Lloyd, the ghostly bartender. He orders drinks and vents his frustration on Lloyd. Then he realises he is on his own without Martinis, or Lloyd, and for a moment, with cold certainty, he thinks he is losing his mind.

Then Danny comes to his senses and tells his parents everything about room 217. The ghost woman presents more of a threat than disembodied voices or fleeting glimpses of past horrors, but it is still not efficient enough to kill Danny. To accomplish this task the hotel needs a human being; ghosts are not strong enough to harm real people. When categorising fantastic texts Rosemary Jackson mentions two themes: *nameless things* and *thingless names*[2] (38). The ghost woman exemplifies a thing with no name. Danny describes her in the following way: "Yes, that's where it was, whatever it was." (217)[3] The inability to attach meaning to it and the helplessness one feels when confronted with phenomena which cannot be placed into any of the orderly categories of real life contribute to a great extent to the feelings of horror in such texts.

Jack goes up to check out the room and as he approaches the door he is overwhelmed by negative feelings towards his son. He becomes angry because Danny was forbidden to enter any of the guests' rooms. As Danny misbehaved, Jack thinks he has received his due. Jack's visit to room 217 is no less frightening than Danny's. The reader already knows that something dreadful lies in wait for its victims. King's strength in this scene is keeping the actual corpse hidden, leaving Jack again in doubt, not knowing which is worse, believing in homicidal ghosts or believing he is losing his mind? He enters the bathroom, draws back the shower curtain, but finds nothing.

Relieved, he starts for the door when he hears a metallic rattling. As he slowly turns back, he sees the curtains are drawn again. He can no longer blame his imagination: a physical object has been moved by an unseen force. He thinks he should tear the curtains apart, but his courage fails him and he leaves the room. While locking the door, he hears footsteps approaching. He closes his eyes with his back against the opposite wall. Above his pounding heart and the rush of blood in his ears he can clearly hear the doorknob being turned by someone trying to get out. He forces himself not to open his eyes and after a while the woman gives up. Jack leaves the corridor, deciding to lie to his family, pretending nothing had happened.

His experience is a nice illustration of Todorov's definition of the fantastic, which is closely linked to the feeling of uncertainty (25). The hesitation between a natural or a supernatural explanation for a certain event is the primary constituent of the fantastic. As soon as we opt for a certain explanation, as Jack does in denying a supernatural occurrence, we leave behind the realm of the fantastic.

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[2] These are empty sings, signifiers without an object (Poe's Tekeli-li, Carroll's Jabberwocky, Lovecraft's Cthulhu).

[3] It is interesting to note the matching page number and the door number.

Again, room 217 served the hotel's interest in separating Jack from his family. Denying what he saw, he tells Wendy that Danny caused the bruises to himself in a kind of trance. The hotel itself is becoming more and more alive, but once again, the ghostly inhabitant of room 217 was not able to open the door once it was closed. The Torrance family does not have to deal with chain-rattling, white-clad apparitions that can easily pass through doors and walls. The ghosts of the Overlook are more like humans and can accomplish some physical acts which demand no particular force (turning a doorknob, drawing a curtain), but the child-killing monster's role awaits Jack.

Hélène Cixous asserts that ghosts are like death materialized. We find them disturbing because they "disrupt the crucial defining line which separates 'real' life from the 'unreality' of death" (Jackson, 69). Our assumptions about reality are challenged, or rather, subverted. Jack refuses to confront such issues and chooses denial as a solution.

The next uncanny episode concerns Danny. While he is on the playground, he enters a cement tunnel which is blocked by snow at the other end. He creeps inside and suddenly a huge pile of snow falls from the top of the entrance, blocking it and leaving him momentarily in the dark. He hears a slithering movement, dead, autumn leaves being thrust aside by someone and flees in terror. When he looks back, he sees a tiny little hand waving to him, begging Danny to go back and join him. With the voice of this forlorn, dead child, "the hotel tries to lure Danny toward death" (Magistrale, 7).

Badly shaken by the episode, Danny wants to return to his parents, but the hotel has a nasty surprise for him: the hedge animals located between the playground and the hotel. Danny is wiser than his daddy. Children are more open to alternate versions of reality; they have fewer problems accepting supernatural occurrences than their parents, whose rigid thought patterns disallow the existence of inexplicable phenomena. The "ossified shield of rationality" (King 1981, 89) on which they rely along with their inability to use their imaginative faculties often work to the disadvantage of adults in horror fiction. Usually if a person is willing to accept he is dealing with a supernatural threat, his chances of survival are better.

Danny does not underestimate the powers of the hotel and knows he is in real danger. He starts to run and the animals chase him, one lion tearing at his trousers and badly scratching his leg. He is found on the terrace with the hedge animals in their usual positions, of course. When Danny tells his parents about this episode, Jack's behaviour makes the reader more uneasy than the simple fright of the ghost-child.

> He stared at his father with widening eyes.
> "You know I'm telling the truth," he whispered, shocked.
> "Danny –" Jack's face, tightening.
> "You know because you saw –"
> The sound of Jack's open palm striking against Danny's face was flat, not dramatic at all. (294)

Jack's only means of silencing Danny is by slapping his face. Jack thereby denies the veracity of Danny's version of the event, that the hedge animals are alive. Jack's behaviour betrays two things: he is afraid and confused, and he does not want to proceed with this conversation because it would force him to admit an unpalatable truth. Yet Jack's actions offer proof to Danny that he now sides with the hotel against Danny.

Ironically enough, right after this scene, when Danny is put to bed, Wendy remarks on seeing the child sucking his thumb: "I don't like that, "she said. "It's a regression" (294). However, regression seems more to refer to Jack's behaviour. Ever since they had arrived in the hotel, all his drinking symptoms returned, except for the drink itself: he is constantly wiping his lips with

a handkerchief, he is chewing on Excedrin and now he hits Danny. Jack is indeed regressing from loving father and husband to a servant of the hotel, willing to sacrifice his only child.

A few days later the hotel's lifts come to life and start to move on their own. Their rattling chains echo the rattling chains of the ghosts of Gothic novels. An old party from 1945 is on the brink of materialization, and since the hotel is becoming stronger and stronger, even Wendy can hear the background noise of the party. Danny actually meets a partier from the past, a man in a dog costume on the corridor who will not let him pass to get to his father. The dog-man is an important instrument in the hands of the hotel, since he successfully prevents Danny from reaching his father, whose insanity reaches its peak that night. If Danny had been able to find his father and talk to him and remind him of the familial bonds of love, Jack might have been saved. But the hotel senses Danny's power over his father through the bond of love and decides to counter the boy's attempt to save him. In tears, Danny retires to his room, while Jack enters the place where his fate is sealed: the hotel bar.

He has just averted a tragedy by letting out the pressure of the boiler and now feels confident that the hotel is going to reward him. Lloyd the bartender tells him the hotel manager is interested in his son's special talent. At first Jack feels anger and resentment: why did he make all those sacrifices if the hotel does not want him but Danny? Then he begs Lloyd not to let Danny come to harm. He senses he is being watched and realises the bar is full of guests: men and women in fancy costumes, all goading him to drink. "'Drink your drink,' they all echoed. He picked it up with a badly trembling hand. It was raw gin. He looked into it, and looking was like drowning" (343). He gives in and tosses down the first Martini he has had in two years. All his consciousness 'flows away' on the 'wave' of the following drinks.

Soon he is confronted by Delbert Grady, the former caretaker (who killed his wife and two daughters and committed suicide), a precursor figure (Jameson), who encourages Jack in his most destructive and uncivilized impulses, alcohol and aggression. There is a repeating cycle of brutality and violence in the hotel. Preying on Jack's male ego, Grady goads him into correcting his family. There is still some love and humanity left in Jack as he tries to bargain with Grady: can not his wife and son just go away? He would willingly stay here. Grady explains to him why the hotel needs Danny. "Your son has a very great talent, one that the manager could use to even further improve the Overlook, to further ... enrich it" (350).

He fans Jack's hopes of being promoted but sets the condition that Jack has to correct Danny in order to advance his career. This is a weak point in Jack and he clings to the possibility of rising in the hierarchy of the management because that would give him back his self-worth and self-confidence. Then he sinks into a drunken sleep while his terrified wife and son are upstairs. To them it is clear that Jack went mad, but they also heard other voices and the music of the party. "The Overlook was coming to life around them" (377).

Then Wendy decides to confront Jack and finds him in the bar, lying on the floor. She can clearly smell alcohol though she cannot see any bottles on the shelves. Jack abruptly comes to his senses and attacks her, making paranoid accusations at Wendy about how she and Danny are trying to conspire against him. He starts to strangle Wendy but Danny arrives and in the momentary confusion she succeeds in knocking Jack out. The little boy is mortified having seen his father trying to kill his mother but Wendy tries to make one thing clear: this is not his daddy, not her husband. "Listen to me, Danny. It wasn't your daddy trying to hurt me. And I didn't want to hurt him. The hotel has gotten into him, Danny. *The Overlook has gotten into your daddy*" (370). Wendy understands that the hotel's objective is Danny, and she also wonders about the consequences for the future: "But if it absorbed Danny ... Danny's shine or lifeforce or spirit ... whatever you wanted to call it ... into itself – what would it be then?" (371).

They lock Jack up in the pantry and Wendy makes an interesting comparison when she closes the door: "He was up on his hands and knees now, his hair hanging in his eyes, like some heavy animal. A large dog ... or a lion." (374) Significantly, there are both a dog and a lion among the hedge animals, which foreshadow what Jack is going to turn into once his bestial nature emerges.

A change takes place inside Jack while he is locked up alone. In his reverie in the pantry he remembers his dad and takes a completely different view of his dad's vicious beating of his mother. Now he can understand his father's reasons, or that there is no need for a reason, and he takes his side. He no longer condemns him for what he did. This bond of sympathy with the abusive father signals that Jack is no longer redeemable. His pipe dreams also appear; he dreams of rising in the hotel hierarchy to the manager's seat. Then the ghost of Grady appears, bitterly reproaching Jack for not dealing efficiently with the situation: "I – and others – have really come to believe that your heart is not in this, sir" (381). He promises Grady he will kill his wife and get the boy for them. In return Grady unlocks the door. This is evocative of the bargain scenes with the devil: he sells his soul to fulfil his ambitions.

Jack leaves the pantry and finds a roque mallet waiting for him. Suddenly he hears a voice coming from everywhere: "*Keep your promise, Mr. Torrance*" (382). The hotel addresses him directly. He grabs the weapon and goes in search of his family.

In the meantime, Hallorann is on his way to the hotel to help the boy who called him using the shining. The hotel sends him nasty messages to make him turn back but he perseveres. Switching tactics the hotel sends a hedge lion to attack Hallorann on his snow mobile. He overcomes the animal which goes up in flames, foreshadowing the hotel's burning. As Michael N. Stanton has pointed out, though the number of animals lessens in their attacks on Jack, Danny and Hallorann, their intensity, their potential to harm people increases towards the end of the novel (Magistrale, 9).

By the time he seeks out his family to kill them, Jack is already lost to the hotel. While chasing Wendy, he is referred to as "it"; he is objectified, dehumanized: "the thing that was wearing Jack's face" (421) Jack is no longer himself; he is no longer in possession of his own body. He is being usurped by the malevolent forces of the hotel that need his human force and physicality to put an end to Danny's life.

The power and intensity of the ghosts seem to increase with the metamorphosis of Jack. They appear more often to Danny, but as soon as he shouts at them "FALSE FACES!! NOT REAL!!" (421), they disappear. However, the most dangerous creature Danny has to confront is his own father, who does not disappear, unlike the ghost gangsters and various dead bodies. The climactic moment of the encounter between father and son in fact brings relief to Danny, because he can clearly see that he is not being attacked by his daddy. "It was hiding behind Daddy's face, it was imitating Daddy's voice, it was wearing Daddy's clothes. But it was not his daddy. *It was not his daddy*" (420).

The creature still raves about him being wanted by the hotel. He is still hurt by the fact that Danny is rated higher than him. Danny strips away Jack's illusions: "The only reason the hotel needs to use you is that you aren't as dead as the others" (426). Danny also tells Jack that the hotel does not keep its promises. The hotel monster sees it is no use trying to deceive Danny so it decides to get rid of the human mask: the face of Jack. Crying "masks off, then" (429), it suddenly turns the deadly weapon against himself and smashes his face into pieces. Danny can see a strange composite of faces appearing instead of his father's face, including that of the ghost-child from the playground and the woman in room 217 – various ghosts whose spirit

partly penetrated the body of Jack Torrance. "But suddenly his daddy *was* there, looking at him in mortal agony, and a sorrow so great that Danny's heart flamed within his chest" (428).

For a brief moment, the real Jack emerges from deep down, sees his son with his own eyes and tells him: "Run away. Quick. And remember how much I love you" (428). A part of his mind is still able to respond to the love he once shared with his son. Showing us the human being buried deep down in the monster, King once again reminds us of the close connection we have with this character. The re-emergence of the suppressed, primary bond of love shows the hotel has not completely vanquished Jack's soul. This image is apt to haunt the reader afterwards since we did not expect at this point in the story to be thrown back into the position of the sympathetic onlooker.

Danny stands his ground and shouts to his father that the boiler is going to explode. The creature shambles away and tries in vain to release the pressure of the boiler before it blows up.

The survivors, Wendy, Danny and Hallorann, barely manage to escape as they witness the final destruction of the hotel. "It shrieked; it shrieked but now it was voiceless and it was only screaming panic and doom and damnation in its own ear, dissolving, losing thought and will [...] fleeing, going out to emptiness, notness, crumbling" (434). Evil is left without a body to inhabit and it escapes into the cold air where it dissolves into nothing.

In a last desperate attempt to regain its power, the hotel tempts Hallorann to kill the boy and Wendy when he enters the shed to retrieve some blankets. The hotel is already on fire, but the shed is still intact, and it seems a small portion of evil resided there. Hallorann is more self-disciplined than Jack and is able to resist. He takes Danny and Wendy back to civilisation and the novel ends on a somewhat optimistic note, with the survivors recovering from their horrible experiences and turning their backs on the past to look ahead into the future.

King's moral is apparent in the last scene in which Hallorann offers the following advice to the little boy:

> The world's a hard place, Danny. It don't care. It don't hate you and me, but it don't love us, either. Terrible things happen in the world, and they're things no one can explain. [...] The world don't love you, but your momma does and so do I. You're a good boy. You grieve for your daddy [...] That's what a good son has to do. But see that you get on. That's your job in this hard world, to keep your love alive and see that you get on, no matter what. Pull your act together and just go on. (446)

Hallorann admits the world's indifference to people's suffering, and the only remedy he suggests is love, which may counter the harshness of life. Another important warning is Hallorann's advice to Danny to proceed with his life without becoming enmeshed in the past the way Jack did. The reader trusts Danny to be able to preserve his image of Jack from the period before the hotel, and that he will not be forever chained to the horrible events that took place there.

Tony Magistrale remarks that in King's fiction, characters who come into contact with sin, if they survive their ordeals, often gain greater knowledge of the world and a better understanding of themselves, thereby reaching a kind of "moral maturity" (Magistrale 22). This also applies to Wendy, who appears to Hallorann as "a human being who had been dragged around to the dark side of the moon and had come back able to put the pieces back together" (443). Even though tragedy occurs, with the loss of a father and a husband, there is an undercurrent of hope in the novel: mother and son survive and carry on with their lives instead of being paralyzed by their sorrow.

What was the role of the ghosts in the novel? They are the ones who push Jack over the limit, bending him back and forth until he snaps. They are responsible for his deterioration. He

had a troubled history, but not all alcoholic fathers assault their loved ones. Jack's human weaknesses leave a small entry open for evil, which immediately enters his spirit.

Without the ghosts' prompting he might have resisted the urge to take up drinking again. He is torn between the love he feels for his family and the false promises of the Overlook. It is worth mentioning that an archaic meaning of the verb "to overlook" is to cast a spell, which clearly shows the manipulative function of the hotel (Ciment). King describes the state of Jack's tortured soul as it is invaded by evil powers. The hotel exploits the insecurities at the centre of his personality. The fantastic originates in a source outside Jack; "the self suffers an attack" (Jackson, 58) as the Overlook invades him.

Jack might also be compared to the hotel since both are haunted places: the hotel is haunted by its evil past (an unsavoury one involving gang murders, mafia executions, suicides and sexual depravity), while Jack is haunted by his father, whose influence he cannot escape. In the same way that there are forbidden rooms in the hotel with awful secrets behind their doors, there are some closed rooms in his mind, containing things Jack might not want to confront. In the beginning of the novel, Wendy describes his psyche with a telling metaphor: "her husband seemed to be slowly closing a huge door on a roomful of monsters. He had had his shoulder to that door for a long time now, but at last it was swinging shut" (121). Unfortunately, that door is going to burst open when his resistance to the Overlook crumbles.

What he has always feared (that he will be a parent like his father) becomes real in the Overlook. When he is chasing poor Danny down the twisting corridors of the hotel, which mirror the winding, confusing memory lanes of his own mind, he repeats the exact words of his father which he shouted before beating Jack up: "come and take your medicine" (417). It is as if the father bursts through the son as the past permeates the present.

The demons he had to deal with were partly of his own making, events from his past, but when they join forces with the evil of the hotel, he is no longer able to withstand their attack on his psyche. He is slowly manipulated into turning against his own son and his wife, losing trust in both of them and mistakenly believing he was placing his trust in the right place, in the Overlook Hotel. He can be seen as a victim of forces greater than himself which he tried to fight without much success. However, in the final confrontation with Danny, the real Jack emerges, if only for a moment, to declare his love for his child.

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Salli J. Kline

Horrors and Whores in Fin-De-Siècle Forensic Psychiatry and the Popular Imagination. The Atavistic Metamorphosis of Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

In 1895 the London publishing house of Fischer Unwin issued the first English translation of a book-length work by the Italian "nerve physiologist" Cesare Lombroso: *La donna delinquente. La prostituta e la donna normale.*[1] It landed like a bombshell on a society whose foundations were already being vigorously shaken by the New Woman and her unrelenting demands for liberation from the subservient, idealized role British men had been proscribing to her for centuries. The translation, entitled *The Female Offender*, not only flamed the apocalyptic anxieties that characterized the fin de siècle but at the same time provided staunchly conservative, well-educated upholders of the status quo, such as Bram Stoker,[2] with a seemingly rational, scientific justification of their way of thinking and an arsenal of horrifying ammunition with which to attack the New Woman and defeat her cause. It supported their views that the New Woman's call for more liberties was not progress but rather regression to a more primitive state of existence and that the New Woman, if not stopped in her tracks, would surely bring about the fall of the British Empire and the degeneration of the populace.

In this paper I will show how Stoker incorporated Lombroso's notions on the nature of criminally degenerate women into *Dracula*, and how both Lombroso's *donnas delinquentes* and Stoker's female vampires, by way of implication, corresponded to the grotesque conservative cliché of the New Woman as an egoistic, licentious creature whose cry for more liberty amounted to little more than the desire to sleep with whomever she wanted whenever she wanted, to gain dominance over men and to completely upset the social structure in the process. For the purposes of the present discussion I will focus on the key "atavistic stigmata" of women predestined to a life of crime as described by Lombroso and show that only a short leap of the imagination was necessary to see them as bloodsucking nymphomaniacs – such as the three lewd, sexually aggressive female vampires who appear to Jonathan Harker in Count Dracula's castle (and later to Mina as thinly veiled champions of women's liberation) or as Miss Lucy Westenra after her metamorphosis. I will furthermore briefly discuss the interrelationship of the three different types of stigmata (moral, intellectual and physical) classified by nineteenth-century psychiatry in order to illustrate how Stoker made use of this central premise of the so-called "Degeneration Hypothesis" to explain the physical transformation of women – the appearance of the features of the vampire in their otherwise beautiful faces – once they had been contaminated with the blood of Count Dracula and had begun to decay morally.

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[1] *La donna delinquente* was originally published in 1893. It was coauthored by Lombroso's assistant and soon-to-be son-in-law, Guglielmo Ferrero.

[2] This is my own view of Stoker as extensively examined and supported in *The Degeneration of Women*. It does not correspond to mainstream interpretations of Stoker. See Kline 1992, passim.

First it needs to be mentioned that the postulations contained in *La donna delinquente* (1893) and in the work that preceded it by a dozen years, *L'Uomo delinquente* (1876), for which Lombroso is best known, were not nearly as original as current Anglo-American scholars appear to believe. The central ideas that form the basis of criminal anthropology, the science Lombroso is widely given credit for having founded, had been in circulation since the early years of the century, in England as well as on the European continent, particularly in France and Germany. Long before *L'Uomo delinquente* was written, European psychiatrists, or "alienists", as they were then called, had reached a consensus that criminal behavior was a special form of lunacy that seemed to affect only the "moral center" of a person. The French had coined the term "folie morale", which the Englishman Pritchard translated as "moral insanity" in his *Treatise on Insanity* (1835), where he defined the concept as a "morbid perversion of the natural feelings, affections, inclinations, temper, habits, moral dispositions, and natural impulses, without any remarkable disorder or defect of the intellect [...] and particularly without any insane illusion or hallucination" (quoted by Ellis, 33). By the time Lombroso was writing, the majority of his colleagues agreed that the most outstanding "mental stigmata" of incorrigible criminals suffering from "moral insanity" were their egoism and utter disregard for the welfare of others, their inability to love combined with an enormous animal-like sexual appetite and their impulsiveness, or incapacity to control their primitive instincts. The famous Viennese sexual pathologist Richard Krafft-Ebing summed things up by saying that they simply didn't have a "heart"[3] – and that is, of course, one of the chief personality traits of the vampires in *Dracula.*

Of further significance in understanding Stoker's reception of the psychiatric postulations of his age and his integration of them into *Dracula* is the fact that the Westenra family has a history of degenerative heart disease, which gives the reader familiar with the Degeneration Hypothesis some advance warning about the course Lucy's life is destined to take. It was believed that because of the threefold interrelationship between mental, somatic and moral stigmata a defect in one of those areas would mirror corresponding defects in the other two. That belief is also central to criminal anthropology and its heavy reliance on such observation techniques as physiognomy, craniology, phrenology and even palm-reading, which Lombroso renamed "anatomico–pathological investigation."[4] The upholders of the classical Degeneration Hypothesis believed that such defects were transmitted genetically from generation to generation, becoming progressively more pronounced until the family deteriorated completely and the line was extinguished (that principle was known as "Morel's Law").

At this juncture it needs to be emphasized that the Degeneration Hypothesis was not just somebody's wild idea but that it actually dominated psychiatric thought from the post-Darwinian era until Freud and the advent of psychotherapy in the early years of the twentieth century. Because it rested on the presumption that mental disorders were genetically acquired and thus incurable, it gave way to heated discussions, not only in professional journals but in the popular periodicals of the period on such issues as to what was to be done with the criminally, or morally, insane and how the population was to protect itself against them and their pollution of the gene pool. Not everyone in Great Britain accepted the hypothesis and, indeed, it had many outspoken opponents there, who claimed that it completely negated the principles of free will and personal responsibility, concepts that formed an integral part of the British way of thinking and cultural tradition. It is, in fact, for that reason that Lombroso's *L'Uomo delin-*

[3] See Lombroso, 1877, 457. Krafft-Ebing's *Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie* (Stuttgart, 1879) and *Grundzüge der Criminalpsychologie* (Erlangen, 1872) are cited.

[4] See Lombroso and Ferrero, [1895] 1959,103. Here Lombroso explains just what he means by "anatomico–pathological investigation".

quente was not translated in England or published there in its original form. Instead a thoroughly revised, virtually rewritten, version of it was published by Havelock Ellis in 1890: *The Criminal.* As he states in the preface, Ellis wrote the book in order to introduce English-speaking countries to the science of criminal anthropology in a manner compatible with their mentality; i.e. with less emphasis being placed on genetic predestination to crime. Whereas Lombroso consistently spoke of the "born criminal," Ellis recommends replacing that term with "instinctive criminal", since "it is not always possible to estimate the congenital element" (17, note 2). It is nevertheless certain that virtually every educated person living in England at the time *Dracula* was published was familiar with the Degeneration Hypothesis and its central tenets as well as with Lombroso's notion of the born criminal whether they agreed with them or not.

Stoker's readers would therefore have been able to understand the underlying significance of Lucy and her deathly ill, hysterical mother being introduced to the story as the last surviving members of an aristocratic family nearing extinction due to congenital heart disease. That somatic defect clearly indicated that Lucy was also suffering from its moral counterpart – a serious defect of the heart in the figurative sense, the inability to love, preoccupation with herself, licentious sexual impulses and all of the other symptoms of a moral degenerate. Her disposition and behavior even before her encounter with Dracula reflect those symptoms. As her letters to Mina indicate, she is narcissistically preoccupied with herself. Not only does she have a habit of studying her face in mirrors, trying to get to the bottom of her own perplexing personality, she confesses that she adores being the center of masculine attention, even though it means breaking the hearts of her would-be suitors and the men who have proposed to her. "Oh, Mina dear, I can't help crying," she writes in one letter without the least bit of sincerity and in her usual fluffy-headed style: "Being proposed to is all very nice and all that sort of thing, but it isn't at all a happy thing when you have to see a poor fellow, whom you know loves you honestly, going away and looking all broken-hearted ..." (57). Lucy's innate inability to love anyone but herself and her radically unconventional, polygamous fantasies are furthermore revealed when she goes on to ponder, "Why can't they let a girl marry three men or as many as want her and save all this trouble?" (59). These personality traits make Lucy a classical example of a degenerate woman destined to a life of conflict with society and well on her way to complete corruption. It comes as no surprise that she is not attacked by Count Dracula in her own home but instead encounters him during one of her somnambulistic outings, when she is out strolling around London, scantily clad in her bed clothes, in the middle of the night. At the time Stoker was writing, somnambulism was considered to be an inherited (degenerative) form of neurosis and hysteria[5] -- and Stoker lets us know that Lucy's father, who has already succumbed to his heart ailment when the story opens, suffered from somnambulism his entire life: "... he would get up in the night and dress himself and go out, if he were not stopped" (72). Thus, as we are led to believe, it was Lucy's inherited hysteric personality that propelled her into the arms of the vampire and ultimately resulted in her complete demonic transmutation.

Lombroso's science of criminal anthropology departed from the classical Degeneration Hypothesis in one very important way, one that is essential to understanding Lucy's metamorphosis into a vampire: it applied Darwin's theory of atavism to human beings. An atavism, as explained by Darwin in regard to plants, was a throwback to an earlier form of life, which is to say that following many generations of positive evolution, "primitive" traits could suddenly reappear in the species. That same theory could be applied to explain the origin and true nature of the "born criminal," Lombroso argued in *L'Uomo delinquente.* The idea occurred to him by

[5] Magnus Hirschfeld was still confirming this popular conviction as late as the mid–1920s, reporting to have observed somnambulism particularly in sexually deranged criminals. See Hirschfeld, 20.

way of a "revelation" he had while performing an autopsy on a criminally insane inmate of the Pesaro asylum where he served as director:

> [...] and on laying open the skull I found on the occipital part, exactly on the spot where a spine is found in the normal skull, a distinct depression which I named *median occipital fossa*, because of its situation precisely in the middle of the occiput as in inferior rodents. This depression, as in the case of animals, was correlated with the hypertrophy of the *vermis*, known in birds as the middle cerebellum.
>
> This was not merely an idea, but a revelation. At the sight of that skull, I seemed to see all of a sudden, lighted up as a vast plain under a flaming sky, the problem of the nature of the criminal—an atavistic being who reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals. Thus were explained anatomically the enormous jaws, high cheek bones, prominent superciliary arches, solitary lines in the palms, extreme size of the orbits and handle-shaped or sessile ears found in criminals, savages, apes, insensibility to pain, extremely acute sight, tattooing, excessive idleness, love of orgies and the irresistible craving for evil for its own sake, the desire not only to extinguish life in the victims, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh and drink its blood. (In Hibbert 210)

As the Swiss medical historian Ackerknecht significantly observes, Lombroso's theory amounts in end effect to a definition of the world's criminal population as a "sort of surviving primordial race" (Ackerknecht, 27).

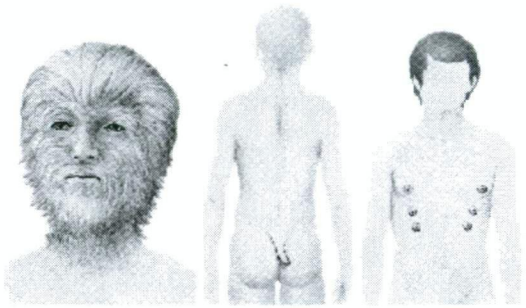

Figure 1

It is worth observing that fantastic speculation along similar lines had been going on since the publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859. As this drawing *(Fig. 1)* shows, there were even some who believed that the real existence of wolfmen could now be scientifically explained and proven through application of the theory of atavism. In *Dracula*, Professor Van Helsing tries to do much the same thing concerning the existence of vampires. Having been called to the scene from abroad to help the protagonists understand and find a solution to their dilemma, he begins by pointing out to Dr. Seward, who, like Lombroso, is the director of a mental institution, that as a psychiatrist he should be well informed about criminal behavior and understand that crime "is a study of insanity" (341). He proceeds to analyze Count Dracula in the terms of criminal anthropology: "This criminal has not full man brain. He is clever and cunning and resourceful; but he be not of man-stature as to brain. He be of child-brain in much. Now this criminal of ours is pre-destinate to crime also; he too have child-brain ..." (341). The vampire on the loose in contemporary fin-de-siècle London, molesting the women of the city and turning them into criminals/vampires themselves, Van Helsing explains in his poor English, is a born criminal in the Lombrosian sense, his "child-brain" an atavism. Mina, to Stoker the epitome of a perfect woman before her exposure to Dracula, gets the point: "The Count is a criminal and of criminal type", she repeats and even goes on to say that "Lombroso would so classify him" (342).

Not only did Lombroso note that the criminal man had an inborn tendency to drink the blood of his victims but also pointed out that his "canine teeth [were] much developed" and he typically tended to suffer from "spasmodic contractions on one side of the face, by which the canine teeth [were] exposed" (quoted by Ellis, 90). Abnormally long and sharp canine teeth were

likewise among the key somatic stigmata Lombroso claims to have observed in countless women with primitive sexual appetites[6]. The atavistic woman, he noted, furthermore often suffered from "an intense thirst, a dry mouth, a fetid breath, and a tendency to bite everybody she meets, as if affected with hydrophobia ..." (Lombroso and Ferrero, 296). As we can see here, the boundaries between fin-de-siècle psychiatry and fin-de-siècle fiction were at times indeed quite blurred. Lombroso's ouvre at least appears to be just as 'late Gothic' in terms of its horrors, specters and villainous monsters as does *Dracula.*

Although reader attention has been consistently focused on the figure of Count Dracula, who in our age has inspired countless spinoffs as well as an international subculture of avid fans, Stoker's own focus was on the Count's female victims, not the ones in Transylvania who appear to have been "un-dead" for centuries already when the story opens, but the young women living in contemporary London. Whereas Lucy represents the born criminal woman as depicted by Lombroso, poor Mina is an example of the perfectly normal British woman who is an innocent victim. In understanding the difference between the two women, and the way in which Stoker thematically incorporated the Degeneration Hypothesis into the story, it is important to note that, while the Count drinks Lucy's blood, he forces Mina to drink his.

In the 1890s, and until Mendel's Principles of Inheritance were rediscovered in the twentieth century, it was widely believed that the body's genetic material in the widest sense, i.e. all the information pertaining to the mental, moral and physical makeup of an individual, circulated in the bloodstream.[7] The only blood we ever see Count Dracula actually drinking is Lucy's. We are led to believe that hers is the only kind he wants, the only kind consistent with his personality, and that drinking the blood of the other characters in the story would be contrary to his purpose, serving to make him healthy in mind, body and soul. Because of Lucy's loss of blood, Professor Van Helsing in his infinite wisdom and erudition demands that all the male protagonists except Jonathan (who is a married man) donate their blood to her while he performs the transfusions. Since Lucy is a degenerate by birth, the heroic attempt to infuse morality, sanity and physical health into her, of course, miserably fails and only serves to leave the men thoroughly exhausted. The more blood they give, the more she needs.

A comment made by Dr. Seward regarding the transfusions indicates that Stoker was also using them as a metaphor for sexual intercourse, equating blood with the other known carrier of genetic material, sperm: "No man knows till he experiences it, what it is to feel his own life-blood drawn into the veins of the woman he loves" (128). Significantly, the transfusion from Seward to Lucy occurred behind her fiancé's back. Van Helsing warns him not to mention a word about it to Arthur because it "would at once frighten him and enjealous him, too" (128). "Ho, ho!" Van Helsing roars after having given her a good portion of his own blood too, leaving no doubt in the reader's mind as to what is happening on the allegorical story level, "...this so sweet maid is a polyandrist ..." (176).

So once again Stoker is trying to make it clear to the reader that Lucy was a classical example of Lombroso's criminal woman before she turned into a vampire. According to Lombroso, the female counterpart of the ordinary male criminal was a "prostitute" – and by that he meant simply any woman who engaged in promiscuity or any other type of sexual activities that could be considered a pathological deviation from the behavioral norm that prevailed in late-nine-

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[6] Lombroso and Ferrero [1895] 1959, 91. The German psychiatrist Paul Näcke, who was often critical of Lombroso, confirmed his findings in this regard, reporting that he, too, had consistently observed long, sharp incisors in the criminally insane women of Germany and that they were clearly atavisms. See Näcke, 1894,150.

[7] See Stubbe 1963.

teenth century Europe. The ordinary female criminal and prostitute, he claimed, could be characterized by "an inversion of all the qualities which specifically distinguish the normal woman; namely, reserve, docility and sexual apathy" (Lombroso 1959, 297). The atavistic woman, like her primitive predecessors and savages, was not generally criminal or homicidal, he notes, but seemed driven by her animal instincts to "primitive pairing" and actual enjoyment of sexual intercourse.

Figure 2

Figure 3

It is important to note that although Van Helsing's snide remarks about Lucy being a polygamist insinuate that she somehow enjoyed draining the men of their blood, the transfusions are completely in the hands of the men. They give their blood to her willingly while she lies apathetic, passive, lifeless and motionless on the bed, much like in the scene that is depicted above *(Fig. 2)*. Once Lucy metamorphoses into a vampire and begins aggressively demanding their blood, however, once she begins reversing gender roles as in the 1897 painting by Philip Burne-Jones entitled "The Vampire" *(Fig. 3)*, her love turns to hatred and a burning desire to kill, to drive their phallic stakes right through her heartless heart and revel in the joy of her degenerate blood splashing upon them.

Since Dracula was not interested in drinking Mina's blood, she did not require any transfusions. As perplexing as it may seem to those who refuse to see any kind of allegorical message or content at all in *Dracula*, Mina's victimization consisted of her being molested in her own bedroom, where she was peacefully sleeping next to her husband, and of her being forced to drink the contaminated blood of the vampire, as portrayed in this still from Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation of *Dracula* from 1992 *(Fig. 4)* – incidentally the first, and to my knowledge only, film to have ever staged this scene accurately. Van Helsing is horrified at the atavistic metamorphosis that begins to occur in Mina shortly afterwards: "I can see the characteristics of the vampire coming into her face [...] Her teeth are some sharper, and at times her eyes are

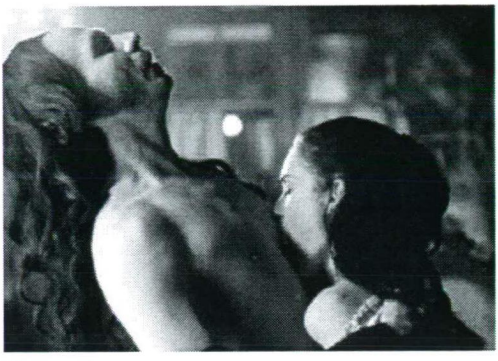

Figure 4

more hard. But these are not all, there is to her the silence now often; as so it was with Miss Lucy" (323). Before being raped by Dracula, Mina had been the very epitome of the "old English ideal," which Lynn Eliza Linton – a very loud and prolific opponent of the "Wild Women" who were causing "Modern Topsy-Turveydom" – described as "once the most beautiful, the most modest, the most essentially womanly in the world [...] with her tender little ways and pretty bashful modesties" (Linton 1886, 340)[8] – an ideal that the "Social Insurgents" seemed bent on destroying. In the terminology used by many others with the same complaint as Mrs. Linton, including Queen Victoria herself, the modern British woman was in the process of "un-sexing herself." To Stoker's mind, she was in the process of converting herself into an "un-dead." And it is precisely that diabolical transformation of the old ideal that he is stressing in *Dracula*. "Madam Mina", Van Helsing wails, "our poor, dear Madam Mina is changing" (323).

Stoker uses a rather interesting dramatic technique to illustrate that British womanhood was in the process of descending deeply into moral corruption. He combines the tenets of criminal anthropology with what was popularly known of Morel's Law and simply speeds up the metabolic process, resulting in an atavistic metamorphosis of women. Whereas according to Morel's Law the degeneration process was slow and gradual, occurring over the course of several generations, in Stoker's fiction it frequently occurs in one and the same person. In fact, women can physically turn into monsters overnight if they have suddenly dropped to that level spiritually by committing some atrocious offence against the moral code.

He uses that technique most dramatically in his final novel, The *Lair of the White Worm* (1911). The hero-teacher in that story, Sir Nathaniel, explains to his novice, Adam, in a series of coded messages that Lady Arabella finally turned into a disgusting, huge white worm because her latent sexual appetite erupted into uncontrollable lust. She had "no soul, no morals, and therefore no acceptance of responsibility" (131). She had been a "monstrosity in human form" (131) all along, he explains. When naïve Adam is unable to understand how pathologies of the mind and spirit could possibly be linked to physical characteristics in such a way as to cause such a horrifying bodily transformation so rapidly, Sir Nathaniel lets him know that even he himself cannot rationally or scientifically explain atavistic metamorphoses of that nature. But, he adds, "someday the study of metabolism may progress so far as to enable us to accept structural changes proceeding from an intellectual or moral base ..." Adam is convinced enough in the probability of that prediction to help his mentor blow up Lady Arabella's lair (or her "hole" as it is sometimes referred to with vulgar explicitness) with (phallic) sticks of dynamite.

A further interesting technique that Stoker uses is the reversal of the atavistic metamorphosis that occurs in the case of Mina. Fortunately for her, the men are able to detoxify her by protecting her against any further exposure to Count Dracula than the initial one while at the same time working to re-purify her thoughts, which in turn purifies her body and soul. As Lom-

[8] Also see the remaining articles by Linton as listed in the references, which provide excellent examples of how the New Woman was viciously attacked in the popular press by representatives of middle-class British society.

broso noted, most criminal women consisted of "occasional offenders," including even "normal women in whom circumstances have developed the fund of immorality which is latent in every female" (Lombroso and Ferrero, 216). Such women were usually the victims of suggestion and could be readapted to society. Van Helsing is convinced that Mina's soul can still be recovered when he sees how horrified she is when the Transylvanian vampire-women reappear on the scene and try to recruit her into their midst, chanting, "Come, sister. Come to us. Come! Come!" (367) in much the same way that the enthusiastic feminists of the day were marching through the streets of London and Manchester, calling out to the good housewives in the crowd to come and join their ranks. "In fear I turned to my poor Madam Mina, and my heart with gladness leapt like a flame," he exclaims, "for oh! The terror in her sweet eyes, the repulsion, the horror, told a story to my heart that was all of hope. God be thanked, she was not, yet, of them" (367). Mina proves that at heart she is still her old self when she begs her husband to have her killed if she ever degenerated so far as to become one of those creatures herself. When asked at which point, exactly, she wished to be murdered for her own good she responds, "When you shall be convinced that I am so changed that it is better that I die than I may live. When I am thus dead in the flesh, then you will, without a moment's delay, drive a stake through me, and cut off my head..." (331). That is when the men realize that she sees things just the same way they do and can therefore be completely reintegrated into their midst.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. Werewolf illustration reproduced in "Evolution: Zufall oder Sinn?" *Bild der Wissenschaft*, 4, 1979.

Fig. 2. Drawing courtesy of the National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland.

Fig. 3. Philip Burne-Jones, *The Vampire*, 1897. Originally exhibited in the National Gallery in London. Current location unknown. Reprint courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. Copyright expired.

Fig. 4. Francis Ford Coppola, *Bram Stoker's* Dracula, 1992.

Rita Antoni

Recycling the Femme Fatale in Tales of Vampirism: Garry Kilworth's "The Silver Collar" and Angela Carter's "The Lady of the House of Love"

Introduction: *Femme Fatale* Vampires in Literary History

According to Jack Holland's claim, "misogyny can push a woman upwards as well as downwards. In either direction, the destination is the same: woman dehumanized" (6). This binary tendency can also be seen in the gender roles manifest in early vampire fiction, where female characters correspond either to the role of the angelic victim or to that of the devilish predatory animal. Vampire fiction, especially up to the 1970s, provides a graphic embodiment of these dichotomic images, which are embedded in a specific view of intersubjectivity that presupposes the inevitability of hierarchy as well as dominant and subordinate positions.

The victim in traditional vampire tales is mostly a sweet, virtuous, passive woman dependent on men, and needing them to intervene against the vampire attacking her. In the case of Miss Aubrey, the victimized female character in the first full prosaic English vampire story, John Polidori's *The Vampyre* of 1819, the intervening efforts prove to be fruitless: "The guardians hastened to protect Miss Aubrey; but when they arrived, it was too late. Lord Ruthven had disappeared, and Aubrey's sister had glutted the thirst of a VAMPYRE!" (Polidori, 24). Possibly due to the sensational character of the work, the portrayal of Flora Bannerworth's helplessness in James Malcolm Rymer's (or, since there has been a debate on authorship, Thomas Preskett Prest's) penny dreadful called *Varney the Vampyre* (running between 1845 and 1847) is even more vivid, as it is represented from her point of view: "Intense fear paralyses the limbs of that beautiful girl. [...] She tries to scream again but a choking sensation comes over her, and she cannot. It is too dreadful–she tries to move–each limb seems weighed down by tons of lead–she can but in a hoarse faint whisper cry,–'Help–help–help–help! [...] The power of articulation is gone,..." (Rymer, 28–9) and the scene is concluded in a way similar to its predecessor: "The girl has swooned, and the vampire is at his hideous repast!" (Rymer, 30).

The other typical role assigned to women in vampire fiction besides that of the *victim* is the *femme fatale,* which reflects male anxieties concerning the threat of non-subordinate, sexual women. In my view, as this figure proceeds in the history of vampire fiction, it gets more and more monstrous, while, at the same time, in a seemingly paradox way, it is also more and more conquerable. In the Romantic imagination she is all attraction and power. This can be the reason why a narrative poem like John Keats' "Lamia" (1820) is often classified among vampiric works, although there is no immediate reference to (blood-)vampirism in it. Goethe's "The Bride of Corinth" (1792) is an exception: the female sucks the young man's blood and, representing the power of paganism over prevailing Christianity, pulls him down into the grave. As Maria Janion points out, the earlier Medieval adaptations of the ancient narrative by Phlegon aim at frightening the reader off physical passion by the repulsiveness of the corpse-bride, but in Goethe's poem the girl embodies youth, love and passion, which could be preserved by a sensual figure like the vampire (Janion, 13–4).

Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" enchants the narrator into endless melancholy; while his Lamia seduces the narrator into self-deception, disclosed by a wise old man immune to the woman's attractive power. This figure will appear as a stock character in several further Gothic works, as a contrastive figure of the victimized, weak male. So, as the nineteenth century proceeds, the *femme fatale*, although she becomes increasingly monstrous, is at the same time executed more and more brutally.

In Theophile Gautier's work of 1832 *La Morte Amoureuse* (or *Clarimonde*) Romuald is tormented to lead a kind of double life as the vampire's lover and a village priest. However, his desire for safety outweighs his desire for Clarimonde, especially when it is revealed she is sucking his blood in order to survive. Although there is no evidence that she wants to kill Romuald – she argues that she takes the smallest amount necessary for her survival and her tears are the manifestations of the first emotional vampire long preceding Anne Rice's Louis (*Interview with the Vampire*, 1975). However, she is killed – with holy water – at the end by the stock character of the wise old man, who, also a clerical man, is again cold and rational enough to be able to withstand the attractive power of the female vampire. The life of Sheridan LeFanu's Carmilla (1872) is terminated more brutally, she is staked, although there is some ambiguity in the ending: after her death, Laura still fancies hearing "the light step of Carmilla at the drawing room door" (LeFanu, 137).

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), which is the culmination of the genre of the vampire novel, we can see both tendencies at the same time, since women begin to show, instead of paralysing fear, responsiveness to the vampire's call, thus threatening to become monsters themselves. The intervention of male characters proves to be effective in Mina's case but futile in Lucy's, whose victimization coincides with the deviance attributed by anxious men to New Women in *Fin-de-Siécle*. As Salli J. Kline states in her book *The Degeneration of Women: Bram Stoker's 'Dracula' as Allegorical Criticism of the 'Fin de Siécle*, these *femme fatale* vampires must be differentiated from the vampire figures who are symbolic manifestations of the New Women in terms of repulsion and the number of potential victims. Firstly, the *femme fatale* is a deadly beauty whilst the New Woman is portrayed as "a disgustingly ugly androgynous being" (Kline, 87). Secondly, the *femme fatale* enchants men slowly through sexual attraction whilst the New Woman is portrayed to be aggressive and immediately threatening. Thirdly, the *femme fatale* seduces "certain weak and whimpering men", whilst the New Woman is a threat to the Empire as a whole (ibid.). For example, New Women seemed to be threatening for conservative men due to the refusal of motherhood as a central (or the only) meaning in their lives. This anxiety is presented graphically in the scene where the three vampire women are about to kill the baby the Count has brought them in a bag (Stoker, 53). No wonder that in the case of these demonized women along with their potential recruit Lucy – as Bram Dijkstra argues in his book *Evil Sisters. The Threat of Female Sexuality and the Cult of Manhood* – "the ritual execution of female vampires always takes the form of a sadistic rape scene blended into a ritual of symbolic female castration" (118). Dijkstra's analogies of clitoredectomy, 'female castration' and removing the *vagina dentata* for removing the head with sharp teeth cannot be left without consideration if we note that the Count is killed merely with knives! (Dijsktra, 118–123). This shows how femaleness is identified with threatening monstrosity in a certain historical, cultural atmosphere. This tendency went on in the early twentieth century as well, ascribing the essence of vampirism to every woman:

> The early twentieth century's ever expanding cultural documentation of the confrontation between the sexual woman and the would-be continent male, her habitual victim, was linked to a growing conviction among physicians, biologists, and other such theologicians of the scientific age, that *all*

> women were, in fact, "real" vampires, driven by nature to depredate the male, and hence creatures who were, even if only in medical terms, dangerous to a man's health ... (Dijkstra, 46–7)

However, the classification still takes place along binarisms: the difference is that these deadly instincts of 'good women' are supposed to have been bridled by civilisation. We can see several examples of this binary view of women along with a growing optimism about patriarchal power: the deadly instincts of these women are always suppressed either by murdering them, or by conditioning and domesticating them. For example, when Mina turns into a bright-eyed, lascivious sexual woman in Tod Browning's film *Dracula*, her fiancé is startled and does not show any sign of responsiveness or titillation; however, he is relieved when the transformation proves to be reversible.

The tendencies to nullify or restrict the *femme fatale* have not disappeared from contemporary vampire fiction either. For example, the sequel to Whitley Strieber's *Hunger* entitled *The Last Vampire* is quite disappointing from a feminist perspective: the once immensely powerful and independent Miriam is demonized, subordinated, and imprisoned by stereotypes (e.g. falling in love with the vampire killer representing hegemonic masculinity). In the end she is killed.

Nevertheless, we can see that the invincible *femme fatale* along with her willing victim still stirs the contemporary imagination. The theme is manifest in its traditional form in Garry Kilworth's short story entitled "The Silver Collar". This story, narrated by the victimized male, was published in 1989, in one of the collections of psychic vampire stories edited by Ellen Datlow, entitled *Blood Is Not Enough: 17 Stories of Vampirism*. The collar mentioned in the title is intended to be a means of protection; however, its function fails when the will or consent to become a victim is stronger. As we shall see, Kilworth treats the *femme fatale* theme in the traditional way.

The handling of the *femme fatale* theme by a woman writer puts the theme in a completely different perspective, showing, first and foremost, the female point of view in the narration. Angela Carter's short story, "The Lady of the House of Love" combines the rethinking of the classical *femme fatale* vampire plot with the rewriting of the well-known fairy tale entitled "Sleeping Beauty" (or "Little Briar Rose"). It was originally published in a volume entitled "The Bloody Chamber", which is a collection of fairy tales rewritten from a feminist perspective. Feminist criticism has also shown from the 1970s that the patterns of feminine representation are basically the same in fairy tales as the ones I have shown in vampire fiction: women are either passive and dependent characters with the only virtue of beauty, or, if they are still assertive and powerful, their (relative) independence is equated with being wicked. The function is the same as in early vampire tales: to maintain the status quo of male dominance. For example, as Karen E. Rowe puts it, "tales which glorify passivity, dependency, and self-sacrifice as a heroine's cardinal virtues suggest that culture's very survival depends upon a woman's acceptance of the roles which relegate her to motherhood and domesticity" (239). However, "The Lady of the House of Love" subverts the traditional distribution of roles characteristic of vampire fiction and fairy tales. As Gina Whisker claims,

> Carter discloses that, by figuring women as either malevolent *femmes fatales* or idealized, doll-like icons, conventional horror disempowers femininity. But rather than simply reveal the limiting ways in which horror writing makes women into either bloodthirsty vampires or quaking violets, Carter's fiction sets out to redefine the genre altogether. (116)

In this essay I am going to carry out a comparative analysis of "The Silver Collar" and "The Lady of The House of Love" focusing on how the depredatory view of heterosexual relationships is portrayed in them and what these representations imply concerning love, desire and

possibilities of liberation. My theoretical framework is derived from Bram Dijkstra's above mentioned book where he argues that even contemporary thinking about gender is formed by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century semi-scientific ideas that intended to legitimate women's subordination. These early works – based mostly upon social Darwinism, merging with psychoanalysis – basically equated all women with vampires. They started out from the presumption that there is a basic instinct of destruction in every woman, and the ideal, passive, feminine woman was only a precarious achievement of civilization. However, if men do not keep their dominant status (by force if necessary), they risk sliding down the evolutionary ladder. These views are long outdated in the scientific sense, but the problem is, as Dijkstra argues and shows through many examples, that they flowed into popular culture and even political practices, resulting in racial hatred and misogyny (4–5). These views have their origin in a depredatory view of relationships, i.e. regarding them as an inevitable struggle, a fight that will result in clear-cut hierarchical positions. The stereotypical women, driven by their "hungry wombs", are out to deprive males of their vital essence, so men must bridle their instincts by rendering women passive and subordinate. Active, confident, feminist women were regarded as degenerate, atavistic creatures, who must be either domesticated or killed. What I am interested in is how the views discussed by Dijsktra merged into the contemporary fantastic, more specifically the contemporary Gothic, and in what way they are maintained, or – a possibility Dijkstra seems to ignore – subverted.

Recycling the *Femme Fatale* Figure: Garry Kilworth's "The Silver Collar" (1989)

According to the editor's introduction, this story "shows the folly of those who believe love can conquer all" (Datlow, 69), but in my understanding it also shows the never-ceasing lure of the *femme fatale.*

The plot follows the tradition in the sense that it is presented from the victim's point of view, and, just as in *Clarimonde* by Theophile Gautier, the narration has a double layer: an older man's (Sam's) story is embedded into a frame story told by a younger man, John. The frame can be described as a Gothic setting – despite the modern vehicle, the outboard motor – the two men are drinking whisky by the fire on a remote Scottish island, in an isolated setting, under the moonlight. In both Gautier's and Kilworth's work, the older man's story has a moral function of warning against the threat of women, although in Kilworth's story it is less explicit. However, the story refers back to the powerful *femmes fatales* who are not destroyed: Sam is a willing victim. Even at the beginning John is suspicious about him, because he is talking about horsedrawn vehicles and old times in the following way:

> A different set of values. A different set of beliefs. We were more pagan then. Still had our roots buried in dark thoughts. Machines have changed all that. Those sort of pagan, mystical ideas cannot share a world with machines. Unnatural beings can only exist close to the natural world and nature's been displaced. (71)

The attempt to embed the clash of value systems in a vampire story dates back as long as Goethe's *The Bride of Corinth*, where pagan religion collides with Christianity. Just as in Goethe's poem, a kind of disappointment is suggested in Kilworth's story too: vampires do not seem to have a place in the new world, but they attempt to reclaim it. These rejected but constantly

recurring vampires are symbolic representations of unwanted human desires, either of ones that collide with the value system of the dominant culture, or of ones that, due to their uncontrollable character, have a threatening power on the character's personal integrity, or sometimes both.

The exclusion of vampires from the new world is based not on a new religion but on constantly developing technology. This kind of anxiety of modernity is presented not only in nineteenth-century Gothic literature by the new stock character of the mad scientist (as in Hawthorne's *Rappaccini's Daughter*, or Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, or an earlier example, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*) but also in contemporary literature. For example, in Whitley Strieber's *The Last Vampire* most vampires, however powerful they may otherwise be, cannot adapt to the technical development of humankind, and they lose the fight against a human hunter, who blows them apart with a special weapon.

In Kilworth's tale, women are the objects of anxiety from the very beginning: "I was afraid of getting into something I couldn't get out of. Woman trouble, for instance..." (71) says Sam. Women's attractive power is portrayed in terms of masculine paranoia in a misogynist manner just as in *Clarimonde*, where the old priest advises the younger one not even to look at women, because they are the source of all trouble. The story, written in the late twentieth century, still reflects the binary view that equates pure reason with men and imposes corporeality/sexuality exclusively on women. It is suggested that women are the ones who put men's minds off rationality, or, in Gautier's story, religion. The point is always the exclusion of women from the achievements of culture or those of the intellect by confining them to sexual drives. In these texts women are the ones who are blamed for all complications of relationships and not, for example, the generally complicated and risky character of human beings and relationships. That is why the fantastic figure of the *femme fatale* vampire is suitable again to reflect male anxieties.

However anxious Sam was, he still meets his fate embodied by a woman with a "bewitching, spellbinding smile" (73) who appears one day in his silversmith's shop and orders a tight-fitting silver collar sealed on her neck. Seeing Sam's reluctance she reveals the truth: she needs the collar as a protective device against a diseased husband-to-be, who is "not like other men" (73). Sam visualizes an ugly folklore vampire, but actually he is beautiful and refined. "He isn't an animal. He's a gentleman," the woman insists, and Sam wonders if she fancies marrying some deity (75). He finally fashions the collar for the lady, with whom he soon gets obsessed. Three weeks later the woman comes back, and wants the collar to be removed, in order that she can give herself fully to the man she loved. The transformation takes place, and she comes back to Sam, claiming him. "Come. I need you" (77). She has the immense physical strength that could be perceived both in Polidori's Lord Ruthven and in Stoker's Dracula.

From this point on the story takes a different path from its nineteenth-century predecessor *Clarimonde* and becomes characteristic of the (late) twentieth century. Namely, Sam is much colder and more practical than Romuald: "I had no illusions about her being in love with me – or even fond of me. She wanted to use me for her own purposes, which were as far away from love as earth is from the stars" (77–8). His aim is a mere sexual relationship: "for once I had allowed my emotions to overrule my intellect" (Kilworth, 78). This is a misogynist assertion again: he equates himself with cold reason and the woman with passion, i.e. unwanted but irresistible temptation. What he wants is to possess her and outwit her: to get away with the *liaison* without being transformed into something insubstantial (i.e. driven by sexual desires instead of reason). To be more precise, he hopes to maintain the 'core' of his masculine subjectivity, which presupposes absolute independence and autonomy.

We can see that the transformation by her vampire lover enhanced woman's appearance: "she was more beautiful than ever, with a paler color to her cheeks and a fuller red to her lips" (79). In other words, she became a sexual woman, and, as opposed to above mentioned earlier representations of this kind of transformation, this is unambiguously plausible to the narrator. A further difference from the earlier *femme fatale* tales is that making love to her is more graphically portrayed in Kilworth than in *Clarimonde,* where emotional affection gains more emphasis than sex in its physical corporeality. The sexual act is an unearthly ecstasy for Sam, but the moment comes when the woman wants to take his blood. The needleprick substituting the fangs is a recurring motif in both Gautier's and Kilworth's story. Like in Strieber's *Last Vampire* the man in Kilworth is driven by curiosity and sexual desire, which he tries to separate from *himself.* He regards the woman as a mere piece of flesh, the object and, at the same time, embodiment of his unwanted desire, which is further intensified by the fact that she is an upper class woman (opposed to the working class man) – thus we can see how misogyny is inextricably linked with class prejudice. Disregarding the potential consequences for her, Sam has injected holy water in his veins, in order to get away with the act without any consequences. However, the trick does not work in the long run: John, the younger man to whom Sam tells his story, has to realize that Sam has not been able to stay away from her and he has been transformed as well.

This story is indebted to the depredatory view of relationships, and it cannot detach itself from the idea of an inevitable hierarchy. The text does not even question its necessity, but it is centered on the fight for the dominant role. Thus the most the potential victim can do is to bring about a role reversal. Sam's strategy is trying to victimize the victimizer, but the woman is able to rearrange the roles and conquer him.

The publication of such a story in 1989 may prove Dijkstra's statement that the depredatory view of relationships has found its way into contemporary popular culture. The solution, according to Dijkstra, is to do away with vampires since

> to fantasize about warlocks and witches, about vampires and werewolves, about Mars, Venus, and the caveman within, is to perpetuate the fantasies of a world eager for war and to remain complicit in the fetishization of others as 'evil,' as 'alien,' as 'inferior.' To do so is to see difference as disease (443).

This might be true for vampire stories following the classical patterns, but the way women writers deal with the *femme fatale* topic reveals the possibility of new perspectives and opens up new directions subverting the traditional gender hierarchy.

Being murdered or becoming a murderer? Can the bird sing a new song? – Angela Carter's "The Lady of the House of Love" (1979)

The story is based on the fairy tale entitled "Sleeping Beauty" (or, "Little Briar Rose"), which shows that it is no good for a young girl to be curious, active and inventive. Once she is left without charge, she sets out to explore the hidden parts of the castle and meets her fate: she takes the spindle, hurts herself and falls into a deep sleep of one hundred years. The curse of the offended wise woman is broken by a man who is, in fact, not a real hero, he is just in the right place at the right time. What is more, in the person of the sleeping princess we have the opportunity to meet the ideal woman, who is, unlike the repulsive, vengeful and powerful wise woman, beautiful, passive, and without a voice. "They lived happily ever after" is, of course, an

important conclusion of all fairy tales, teaching little girls the cardinal female virtues (beauty, passivity) and what they can dream of (getting under Prince Charming's control).

As Andrea Dworkin writes, fairy tales offer only two definitions of woman: "There is the good woman. She is a victim. There is the bad woman. She must be destroyed. The good woman must be possessed. The bad woman must be killed, or punished. Both must be nullified" (649). In the dichotomic way I have shown above, this scheme is applicable to female characters in vampire fiction. This may be the reason why Angela Carter vampirized the protagonist of the tale she reinterpreted, exploiting the Gothic elements it already involved, like the castle or the curse. However, Carter's text does not only point out the flaws of fairy tales, it also puts vampire fiction into a new perspective, emphasizing, at the same time, the problematic character of a depredatory view of relationships.

The first thing the reader notices as an innovation in Angela Carter's tale is the fact that the third-person narrator presents the lady's perspective, and only partially dwells on the young man's. In the preceding literary works we gained no or very little insight into the vampires' thoughts, thus they did not seem to problematize or dislike their existence. However, the second innovative trait is that this lady, surprising as it may seem, does not take pleasure in being a *femme fatale*: "Everything about this beautiful and ghastly lady is as it should be, queen of the night, queen of terror – except *her horrible reluctance for the role*" (Carter, 493, *emphasis mine*). That she refuses to take pleasure in the powerful position of the *femme fatale* may be surprising at first. We may think that the lure of this role must be similar to that of the *vamp* film stars Bram Dijkstra describes by "emotional independence from men, sexual confidence, pleasure in the seductive authority of her body, and 'masculine' economic depredations [which] gave her a centrality in that period's cultural imagination of which today's manufactured 'sex symbols' can only dream" (246). She may seem a demon of "empowerment," but Dijkstra dissolves the lure of the vamp(ire) arguing that "to accept the vampire image of feminine sexuality as a positive model also requires acceptance of the aggressive-reactive principles of the turn of the century's gender wars" (247), i.e. the acceptance of a depredatory view of relationships characterized by an inevitable struggle for dominance. I wish to argue that this is precisely what the Lady aims to steer clear of.

However, she encounters the first problem through her embodying an archetype from which it is impossible to break out:

> Her voice is filled with distant sonorities, like reverberations in a cave: now you are at the place of annihilation, now you are at the place of annihilation. And she is herself a cave full of echoes, she is a system of repetitions, she is a closed circuit. (Carter, 483)

The 'cave' is a symbol for femaleness/femininity, and the 'system of repetitions' can refer to the female biological cycle. Biology is destiny, according to Freudian and social Darwinist views. The Lady also seems to be incarcerated in the 'repetitions' of her female body. However, as we shall see later, she tries to break out of such impediments, pointing out the fact that the limitations of being a female are cultural rather than biological. The idea that she is 'a system of repetitions' may project Judith Butler's performative theory of gender. Associating her with 'the place of annihilation' evokes the above mentioned idea that the basic instinct of destruction was attributed to every woman. This lady is far away from a civilized setting, and far from the authority of men: still we can see that her isolation does *not* result in murdering men with self-abandoned pleasure: "A certain desolate stillness of her eyes indicates she is inconsolable. She would like to caress their [her victims'] lean brown cheeks and stroke their ragged hair" (Carter, 486). However, hunger always overcomes her. So there is a conflict between her will and the in-

stincts determining her behaviour. Is she the embodiment of male desires/anxieties projected upon her?; "She herself is a haunted house. *She does not possess herself*; her ancestors sometimes come and peer out of the windows of her eyes..." (493, *emphasis mine*) She seems to be imprisoned in the traditions of a weird ancestry, a lineage of bloodlust and hunger, which always overcomes *her*. What we can see in the whole story is a desperate struggle for selfhood, a struggle for breaking out of this lineage of murder and the depredatory role.

However, the cards always show the same pattern, and the pet lark in the cage is also a projection of her own, possibly inalterable situation. "Can a bird sing only the song it knows or can it learn a new song?" the story asks. The old song is nothing but her isolation and imprisonment: the (questionable) ability to 'learn a new song' refers to the doubt whether she can break out of her predestined role. She is the monstrous feminine, whether she wants it or not, and because she murders any potential companion, she is condemned to loneliness (disregarding the old crone in her service). Yet, although she is tormented by it, she also wants to fall in love: this is shown by the bridal gown she constantly wears. She becomes a grotesquely tragic character because of this ridiculous garment expressing her seemingly absurd refusal to face the consequences of her power over men and her otherness as a non-subordinated woman.

Her relationship with the British army officer is a subversion of the fairy tale and romance plot as well. As distinct from classical fairy tales, she is not a princess who can be saved by a man. As a parodic motif, she wears a wedding dress, but she kills all applicants for the role of Prince Charming: "The bridegroom bleeds on my inverted marriage bed" (495). It is a kind of ironic role reversal in a situation that is stereotypically seen only in terms of inevitable hierarchy: the virgin who ought to tolerate the pain of the first penetration 'passively' assumes the active role of the penetrator herself, taking the man's blood.

The applicant is a comic figure from the first moment: he arrives riding his bicycle, the symbol for rationality, which is stereotypically a masculine trait (as opposed to 'feminine' emotionality and instinctiveness). As Anne Koenen writes, this story "quite explicitly associates the Gothic mode with a feminine mode of thinking that is juxtaposed to (and vanquished by) a rational scientific mode; that mode is in turn associated with masculinity" (143). Although excluding women from the domain of rationality is also problematic, in Carter's story rationality itself is mocked to the same extent as its gendered character: rationality has no use here, and the male hero is prevented by his cold intellect to judge the situation correctly and realize that he is facing a vampire. The most comic twist is that he mistakes the *femme fatale* for several other, much less powerful images: "bedizened scarecrow" and "a child dressing up in her mother's clothes" (Carter, 490).

> And then he saw the girl who wore the dress, a girl with the fragility of a skeleton of a moth, so thin, so frail that her dress seemed to him to hang suspended, as if untenanted in the dank air, a fabulous lending, a self-articulated garment in which she seemed to live like a ghost in a machine. (490)

In the following paragraphs, she is described in contradictory terms: her "morbid mouth" is that of a whore (491), she is like a doll (492), a "great, ingenious piece of clockwork", "an automaton, made of white velvet and black fur, that could not move of its own accord" (492). These images stand for the static and often contradictory images of 'femininity' that seem artificial and weird rather than attractive, for the very fact that there is really no substance behind their enacted forms. The Lady's case seems to project Judith Butler's views again: "gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed" (25).

Several feminist critics point out that contemporary images of ideal femininity aim at rendering women egoless and, most important of all, childlike and weak. For example, Sandra Lee Bartky describes techniques of disciplining women so that they seem powerless, without any sign of wit or intelligence. The soldier also wants to see the woman having much less power than she actually does.

Thus, we can see that this woman is made up of stereotypical images of the mythical *Eternal Feminine* Simone de Beauvoir also criticized:

> as against the dispersed, contingent, and multiple existences of actual women, mythical thought opposes the Eternal Feminine, unique and changeless. If the definition provided for this concept is contradicted by the behaviour of flesh-and-blood women, it is the latter who are wrong: we are told not that Femininity is a false entity, but that the women concerned are not feminine. (237)

The eternal character of femininity is opposed by its internal contradictions (e.g. child-whore), and its essential character is denied by the fact that the Lady does not want to occupy either of these positions. She yearns to be human through achieving a non-depredatory human relationship. This is not a traditional romance where the heroine happily consents to her own domestication and subordination recognizing the beneficial effects of love, which has a potential of 'curing' independent (and thus, stereotypically unhappy) women. The intentionally benevolent paternal behaviour of the army officer turns out to be foolish. The Lady has been dead for long hours when he is still pondering in the morning light how to transform her, how to cure her:

> We shall take her to Zurich, to a clinic; she will be treated for nervous hysteria. Then to an eye specialist, for her photophobia, and to a dentist to put her teeth into a better shape. Any competent manicurist will deal with her claws. We shall turn her into the lovely girl she is; ... (Carter, 497)

He still does not recognize that he is facing a (dead) vampire, thus his overemphasized reason lacking any imagination is ridiculed again. Classical vampire tales are mocked as his seeing the vampire as a sick child and wanting to cure her is an unusual and comic attitude. Yet there is much more at stake than parodying the traditional vampire plot. No matter how benevolent the 'hero' may seem, he wants to gain power, planning to transform her mind and body. Besides supposing an inner essence to the woman, he also supposes that this essence coincides with the ideologically prescribed feminine woman ('the lovely girl'), and that after certain corrective procedures this supposed core of her 'true' self will evolve. So we can see how the story enacts the discrepancy between the conviction of the male character as a stereotypical repository of reason and the supposed 'feminine essence' as an absolutely irrational given.

The transforming acts planned by the male are aimed at depriving the female vampire of her dangerous body parts with which she can hurt men: her claws and her pointed teeth. This might evoke Germaine Greer's views on what she calls castration, that is, depriving women of their energies and forcing self images on them which they do not feel relevant (3). This is a more subtle, psychic version of the butchery Van Helsing and his companions enact on Lucy in *Dracula.* Moreover, the treatment against nervous hysteria means (re)gaining male dominance over indocile female bodies which do not comply with patriarchal regulations of femininity. Thus, the body of the female vampire embodies the female body in patriarchy, which is, ideologically, insufficient and must be altered. On the whole, the army officer does not accept the Lady as she is, he regards her otherness as abnormality, her fatal femininity as a disease which can and must be cured.

The fact that the Lady is willing to give up her depredatory position to a certain extent – he is the first man whom she does not kill – does not mean that she herself is willing to get

victimized and objectified. She does not want to be moved from one static image, that of the *femme fatale*, to another one, that of the *victim*. She wants to throw off static attributes that symbolize roles culturally identified as 'feminine' (like the obedient 'automaton' or the beautiful 'doll') and wants to become a person – a position she has been denied. Consequently, she regards the other as a person, too, not as prey, as victim; but she also refuses to be regarded as one. She aims to do away with the depredatory view of relationships; and the binary of either oppression or demonization of women, i.e. the "good girl/bad girl" dichotomy, which can be traced back as far as the opposing figures of Virgin Mary and Eve. As Robin Ann Sheets proposes, Carter seeks "to escape from dichotomies altogether" (642), but this endeavour fails in this tale: the Lady's death suggests that there is no third way; there is no breakout from the stereotypes of femininity. For the Lady, there is no possibility of *selfhood* beside the originally refused victim-role, besides being regarded as a thing to be cured, altered, and thus to be deprived of power. With her power she can only live on if she turns it against men again – if she gives it up, she inevitably becomes a victim. Thus we can see how difficult it is to transcend the *status quo* which Sheets describes in the following way: "the association of sex, power and sadomasochism in pornography is part of society's common prescription for heterosexual relations" (Sheets, 645). Although Carter "urges women to challenge assumptions about female masochism and to define sexuality outside of dominant-submissive power relations" (ibid.), this seems to be impossible in this tale unless we accept Jody Regel's more optimistic interpretation:

> In this story it is the innocence and virginity of the male which is important because it is his unaffected and guileless treatment of the woman as a human being that breaks the spell and destroys the torment of her life. The ancient constraints and constructs of male hegemony have to be destroyed completely and the fairy tale princess image has to die in order for women to be perceived and accepted as fully human. (Regel 1996)

Alternative masculinity as opposed to the hegemonic one can mean a solution in Carter's other tales, for example "The Bloody Chamber". However, in this case we must notice that the alternative masculinity the army officer seems to embody is only a temporary one due to his lack of experience. As soon as he gains some confidence, he wants to gain authority and dominance over the body of the woman as well. As we could see, he does *not* regard her as human, what is more, the Countess can turn into a human being only after she dies. The scent of the rose reminds the army officer of her for a long time, however, being remembered does not create the desired humaneness and selfhood either. In my understanding "The Lady of the House of Love" expresses anxieties and doubts concerning woman's breakout from her gender-role. Carter's Lady seems to have no chance to stay alive, since she proved to be the product of patriarchal ideology, of a depredatory view of relationships, of which the story in itself offers no way out. However, if we read this story in the context of the other tales in "The Bloody Chamber", we can regard it as a possibility, an occasional doubt, even if it in itself fails to provide a final answer.

Thus we could see the *femme fatale* in two different positions: the dominant and the failing one. Both stories, despite their different perspectives, remain within the depredatory view of relationships, of which the *femme fatale* figure itself is an embodiment. Hence, as long as gender inequality continues, the *femme fatale* will keep her eternal charm, regardless of the reader's (or the spectator's) gender. However, the *femme fatale's* attractiveness is *not* the core of the problem since her figure is not a reason but a consequence, a reflection of already existing engendered power relations, either a manifestation of paranoia, the embodiment of an erotic, masochistic dream, or an insufficient attempt to break out of the ideologically prescribed identity positions.

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Zoltán Dragon

Gothic: Generic Subversion in the Cinema

Introduction

"Gothic fiction is [not] ... a form of 'popular' cultural insurgence, as it is sometimes assumed to be in film studies", argue Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall in their sometimes vitriolic, thoroughly critical overview of the history and tendencies of Gothic criticism (226). Their claim is striking – and mistaken, in several respects. First, film studies rarely if ever addresses issues of literary genres. Second, film studies rarely if ever 'looks down' or criticizes "'popular' cultural insurgences". Finally, film studies – and why stop there, let us include the specific fields of film history, film criticism, and film theory as well – has never ever seriously addressed the issue of Gothic whatsoever, let alone Gothic fiction. The reason for this is simply that the annals of the history of film and of genre theory and criticism have never registered a film as purely *Gothic*. (Those addressing "Gothic film" more often than not tackle issues of horror and psycho-thriller films, never looking at the literary origin and original motifs of Gothic.)

As I will discuss, there are 'cross-generic' labels, such as 'Gothic horror', but the name refers to a filmic tradition of horror films that is quite different from the definition provided by the literary tradition. One may start distinguishing between 'Gothic' and 'Gothic horror' by looking at horror motifs, which are exhaustingly listed in Linda Williams's "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess", and which seem to make up the typical clichés of the so-called "body genre", which concerns the excessive or even extreme uses and representations of the body in film (207–221). The original concept of Gothic fiction is far from the concerns of the body: characters are used to stand for symptoms of an unknown and haunting past, carriers of unwittingly transmitted secrets. It is with the generic category of the body genres – all kinds of horror films, Gothic horror among them – that one can tackle the issue of the body in this context (one is invited to list hundreds of horrors with a Gothic touch, as it were, such as the classics: Tod Browning's *Dracula* [1931] or James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein* [1935]).

In the present essay I wish to explore some basic motifs and themes that recur in film with a clearly identifiable origin in Gothic fiction and see how they are employed in a different tradition and context. In so doing, my final aim is paradoxical to the above standpoint: I will prove that the generic category of "Gothic film" does exist, although at the expense of being utterly subversive of the generic categories inspired, in varying degrees, by Gothic fiction. I will base my argument on the analysis of two recent films, *The Others* (2001, dir. Alejandro Amenábar) and *Gothika* (2003, dir. Mathieu Kassovitz).

Gothic: the insistence on the non-existent

The sensationalist sub-title of this section alludes to a clearly non-sensational issue in film history: while we have the genre of the literary Gothic in literature, one can hardly find any reference to a clearly Gothic film in the past hundred years of the cinema. In fact, fans of Gothic have categorized the sub-genre Gothic horror film, which features ruined castles, dark

and haunted graveyards, eerie noises and atmosphere (Näyhä). Nonetheless, the main focus of this category remains the horror aspect, i.e. a strong obsession with the body, thus leaving Gothic the role of a simple classificatory adjective based on clichés of ghostliness. The virtual non-existence of Gothic as a film genre is striking, since several typical motifs of Gothic fiction have fertilized the film genres of horror, *film noir*, thriller, psycho-thriller, fantasy and adventure films, recently even family films, as Lisa Hopkins argues in her recent book *Screening the Gothic*. Starting from the more traditional view on Gothic, she traces the dispersion of generic particulars of Gothic fiction in contemporary films, especially in "family films" (i.e. films that are usually seen by the whole family together) such as *The Mummy Returns*, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, or *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. According to her,

> These films feature mummies, ghosts, trolls, wizards, goblins, vampires, revenants, and a range of other monsters; but all of these together generate merely a pleasurable frisson. What these films find really frightening is, in fact, families. It is perhaps appropriate that only in the heart of the family, in the form of family-oriented viewing, can the dark, anarchic energies of the Gothic still be seen fully pulsing. (Hopkins)

Indeed, this formulation insists on the importance of the family and implies the pivotal role of the genealogy or family ancestry in Gothic fiction. This takes us from the horror genre towards an avenue that evades categories of the thriller or psycho-thriller, but even that of sheer and clear-cut fantasy films. What Hopkins seems to imply here is an attempt to find a generic category which has long existed in the history of film genres, yet has not surfaced in its own right.

Although Gothic is cited more often than not in connection with the horror genre in film, the stylistic features in terms of the *mise-en-scène* derive from the period of German expressionism in the cinema. The low-key lighting and "distorted, graphic style" of *mise-en-scène* characterize Expressionism in the cinema (Thompson and Bordwell, 109) which, along with the indispensable ghosts, trolls, golems, secrets, curses, and often the motif of *doppelgänger*, became the hallmark of horror and fantasy films. The kinship of the two genres (Gothic in literature and German Expressionism in film) is perhaps best described by the pivotal work of the Expressionist period in German filmmaking: Lotte Eisner's *Haunted Screen*. Although "Gothic" is not mentioned, the tackling of films made by directors Robert Wiene (*Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari*, 1919), F. W. Murnau (*Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens*, 1922), and the works of Fritz Lang explicitly refer to Gothic topics: the mad scientist, the haunted castle, Count Dracula (as Nosferatu), the victimized heroine, and an eerie, haunting atmosphere. It may be claimed that the transmission of Gothic into film happened not through horror films, but rather through the sometimes extremely stylized films of German Expressionism.

On this premise I argue that Gothic – without its horror or thriller overtone – had long been fed into the cinema before its explicit manifestations (such as in the films of Tod Browning and James Whale, or in the famous Hammer Productions). In this sense, there has been a long insistence on the 'non-existent' in film history, making symptomatic resurfacings in various genres through the decades. While I am well aware that many genre theorists and film historians, relying on the filmic canon, would state otherwise, I argue that Gothic as a separate generic category has finally made its way to appear fully in the cinema, without the interaction of any of the related film genres. This does not mean, of course, that this appearance does not bear intertextual traces of those related genres, since, obviously, as Gothic fertilized many genres in the cinema, the argument may be just as easily held the other way round: different filmic genres have influenced the genre of Gothic film as well. Indeed, the two films I will discuss in the present essay feed heavily on clichés of horror and thriller films, nonetheless, they do so by

subverting them to show their literary origins. In other words, the films I am going to engage with explicitly refer to specific modes of Gothic fiction and then present their relation to the established film genres.

Genre, as Steve Neale explains, however, is far from being a simple cataloguing of recurrent motifs or textual stereotypes. According to him, in the tripartite relationship of production, marketing and consumption, genre refers (beyond the cataloguing of the features of a group of texts) to the expectation and hypothesis of the spectator (his/her speculation or horizon of expectation on how the particular movie is going to end, see Neale, 46). Moreover, if film is a "cross-media generic formation" that keeps on referring to itself through certain established codes and conventions, it also means that a clear-cut generic definition in this area is simply impossible (let alone introducing aspects of intertextual transformation, which further complicates the issue, 62). What happens in terms of genre in film is possibly a continuous reworking, extending and transforming of the set of codes and conventions that originally categorize the given films (58). In the two subsections on *Gothika* and *The Others*, I will attempt to show how these films either reappropriate original fictional elements of Gothic, or subvert them in order to reiterate them even more forcefully. But as psychoanalytic theories will help me in claiming such 'subversive reappropriation', I will first turn to the relationship between Gothic and psychoanalysis.

Gothic psychoanalysis

To discuss the 'return of the Gothic symptom', as it were, I will turn to psychoanalysis, the use of which will prove to be essential in the particular analysis of the two films I have selected. In her overview of psychoanalytic approaches to Gothic fiction Michelle A. Massé provides a thematic account on how this specific theoretical grid changed its methodology and agenda when faced with the genre. According to her, Gothic is a genre "that is important to psychoanalytic critical inquiry not solely for its ongoing popularity and easily recognizable motifs, but for the affinities between its central concerns and those of psychoanalysis" (Massé, 230). The list of theoretical ancestry starts – obviously – with Freud, followed by others like Jung, Bonaparte, Klein, Winnicott, Erikson, and finally Lacan, Modleski, and Chodorow.

I do not wish to discuss all of Massé's claims here, but one point needs to be mentioned. Significantly, only one approach is left out or silenced in her account: the very approach that, in fact, uses the same vocabulary as that of the analyzed Gothic text. This is the approach signaled by the names of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, two Hungarian-born French psychoanalysts, whose work concentrates on silenced secrets buried alive in psychic crypts and vaults guarded by ghosts and phantoms, haunting generations by transmitting to unwitting subjects the unspeakable traumatic pains and sufferings of earlier generations. This, I should say, is the adaptation of Gothic *per se*, apt to figure on a theoretical level as well.

In her book, *The Trauma of Gender*, Helene Moglen explores the development of the English novel from a feminist perspective, devoting a chapter to Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. In this chapter she discusses the novel from the perspective of the psychoanalytic theory of mourning developed by Abraham and Torok. Moglen puts *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Mysterious Mother*, Walpole's biography and "the gothic fictions of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, [...] whose writings the originary gothic novel seems uncannily to anticipate" (Moglen, 110). In other words, she puts fiction and theory on the same level to initiate a dialogue that is expected to shed light not only on new interpretations, but also new methodological possibilities.

Indeed, the metaphors Abraham and Torok employ – such as "crypt", "encrypted secret", "exquisite corpse", "phantom" and "intrapsychic vault" to mention only a few – derive from analysands' accounts of their dreams and delusions, in other words, from the direct contact with what Massé would call a "beautifully elaborated fabric of language" (229). This way, as Moglen suggests, Abraham and Torok's analytic discourse retains and "preserves the mysteries that it struggles to investigate" (Moglen, 125). They aim at restoring "the lines of communication with those intimate recesses of the mind that have for one reason or another been denied expression" (Abraham and Torok, 4). To reach this aim, they crystallize their understanding of basic psychoanalytical concepts like mourning and melancholia or introjection and incorporation, which often seem to merge into one another in Freud or later advocates of Freudian methodology. Resolving the often incoherent usage of these notions, Abraham and Torok argue that "it is introjection that facilitates mourning while incorporation blocks the introjective process and produces melancholia" (Moglen, 125). In other words, while the work of mourning is initiated by the process of introjection and progressing via working-through, melancholia is caused by the incorporation of the loss (the deceased beloved, usually), as if burying it alive in a "crypt".

This causes a rupture in the psychic topography of the subject. For the secret encrypted to remain intact, the rupture gets objectified in the psychic formula of the "phantom" (Abraham and Torok, 171–176) – a guard that transmits this crypt from generation to generation, from person to person. This description seems to be the plot of a typical Gothic story: for the subject (the protagonist) usually inherits a secret that determines his/her life and deeds. It is as if a kind of daemonic power had seized the character, dragging him or her towards the inevitable *anagnoritic* scene: the disclosure of the painful, traumatic secret of his or her ancestry. This is one psychoanalytic approach (one as yet barely explored but highly effective) that I am going to employ in my discussion of the two selected films. The other one is a Lacanian approach, utilizing Lacan's thoughts on Freud's *unheimlich*, and suggesting how that term may be a useful concept in defining the category of the Gothic film.

Gothika: reappropriations of a literary genre in film

The beginning of the third millennium saw a myriad of Gothic references in film, starting from the pop-techno-action remake of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (as *Dracula 2000* [2000] and recently its sequels, *Dracula II* [2003] and even *Dracula III* [2004]), through the slasher movie intended as a due commemoration of the monsters of the Universal Studio (*Van Helsing* [2004]), to films such as the vampire-werewolf action-horror *Underworld* (2004). While none of these explicitly take up or refer to their generic origin, significantly, one movie takes it as the very title: *Gothika*.

The central theme of the film, a Dr. Jekyll-and-Mr. Hyde story on the surface, is the clash between rational and irrational, science (psychiatry) versus superstition (para-psychology). Distinguished psychiatrist Miranda Grey (Halle Berry), who works in a mental hospital for convicted women (set in a haunted-like castle building in the middle of nowhere, far from the nearest little village where most of the employees live) is driving home one night after work in thick rain. She is detoured by the police (by the sheriff, a good old friend of Miranda's husband) due to an accident, so she calls her husband while crossing a little white bridge (at which the husband and the sheriff used to fish a lot). As the phone line breaks, she suddenly spots a half-naked girl in the middle of the road, and to avoid running over her, Miranda steers her car off

the road. Climbing out of the car she goes to see if the girl is injured, but when she touches her, an uncanny flame erupts and she finds herself imprisoned in the mental institute she used to work for.

While trying hard to understand how she got into the institute, and trying to remember the hours between the accident on the bridge and her awakening in her cell, it turns out that she is arrested for brutally slaying her husband. Miranda seems to produce symptoms of delusion and even looks as if paranoid psychotic, held by some 'daemonic power'. She scratches her arm with a blade to 'engrave' the words "not alone", which she also paints on the wall of her cell with her blood. These are the two words that the murderer painted on the wall of the room where her husband was killed. Having escaped the institute with the help of the 'ghostly power' that seems to take possession of, or ventriloquize, her, Miranda goes back home, to the scene of the murder to reconstruct what happened. In a fantasy projection the spectator can see her actually witnessing her murdering her husband with an axe, a scene in which she is, literally, not herself.

Finding some clue, she visits the little week-end house in which her husband was supposed to have spent his last day, and there comes across unspeakable secrets. It turns out that her husband tortured young girls before he – along with his best friend, the sheriff – raped them, and they recorded all this on video. It is on one of the tapes that she spots the girl she almost ran over on the bridge. She realizes that this was actually the ghost of the girl who tried to communicate via her body. Hence, the meaning of "not alone" is transformed from the suggested schizophrenia to the implication that the girl was not the only one tortured and eventually killed.

The story, entirely set in badly lit places and ostensibly haunted buildings, features typically Gothic motifs. There is an unspeakably traumatic secret buried in the life of a family which causes problems (symptoms, as it were) that cannot be rationally explained. Miranda is a tormented female character, whose life seems to depend on the disclosure of the ghastly past. She is haunted, or more precisely, possessed by a ghost, who not only communicates through her, but makes her act in a way that she can disclose the cause of its haunting.

It is at this point that the psychoanalytic strategies offered by the work of Abraham and Torok may be helpful for analysis. What happens to Miranda is precisely the inheritance of an unspeakable secret, transmitted in a crypt by a phantom (Abraham and Torok, 173). She produces symptoms that make doctors think she is schizophrenic or even psychotic, which is the work of the phantom, since the role and function of this psychic formation is to produce displays (visual symptoms) in order to hide the encrypted secret more effectively. By presenting false symptoms, the real secret may be preserved, as nobody will look for it when focusing on the compromise formations produced by the subject. As Abraham explains, "the phantom will vanish only when its radically heterogeneous nature with respect to the subject is recognized", and the ventriloquism is disclosed (174).

The unspeakable secret of the husband's crime travels via the suffering of the young girl in the two words of the cryptic phrase "not alone". These words become symptoms of Miranda, making her commit acts she would never have dreamt of. Interestingly, when she is propelled to act, her memory fails: she cannot reconstruct the time of phantomatic 'puppetry'. It is only after recognizing the essential and radical heterogeneity of the phantom (in the form of the ghost of the girl) that she may begin to explore the traumatic secret.

What this brief account shows is that *Gothika* – true to the implication of the title – utilizes and enhances several textual and stylistic features of Gothic fiction, putting them to work in a contemporary visual and narrative framework. While retaining basic elements of the literary genre of the Gothic, the film avoids the expected recourse or detour towards the horror genre, which would nurture the subgeneric category of the Gothic horror film. Instead it pivots around

the thematic and stylistic cohesion characteristic of the literary genre even at the expense of undermining spectatorial expectations. Indeed, it is undermining expectations of the Gothic horror and the conscious reappropriation and reiteration of the literary features that posit *Gothika* as a Gothic film.

The Others: the subversion of the genre, or the problematics of inside and outside

Alejandro Amenábar's 2001 film, *The Others*, is perhaps the best example of the generic category of the Gothic film. Set in the late years of World War II on the extremely foggy and dark, secluded island of Jersey, it presents the life of Grace (Nicole Kidman) and her two children in a castle. Light cannot enter the building as the children suffer from a rare and strange illness: they are allergic to light. As Grace explains to the new household staff of three entering the castle one gloomy day, "no door can be opened in this building until another one is closed".[1] The three household employees, an elderly woman, an old gardener (who usually acts as an echo of the woman), and a mute young girl act in a strange way, they do not even wish to be shown around the place before taking their job, as they "have already been around here some time". One day strange noises invade the house: it is as if somebody were living there in secret. Although heavily religious and rejecting even the slightest implication of superstition, Grace starts to hunt for ghosts in the castle. The noises become more and more frequent, including very elaborate piano music, too. Grace's daughter, Anne says she meets the ghosts (a man, a woman, a boy named Victor and a "witch") every day, and she explains that they make the noises and want Grace and the family to leave the place. Anne is punished for her suggestion.

As Grace's behavior becomes more and more intolerable, the three employees decide to reveal their true identity: they are in fact dead. The disclosure of the secret happens when the "intruders" or "the Others" attempt to reach Grace and the family by holding a séance led by the "witch" (who is in fact a blind elderly lady, trying to establish the lines of communication with Grace and the children). Anne is willing to communicate and reveals the secret at the core of the little fatherless family: they are the ones who are dead. Then Grace tells the truth to the children, according to which she killed them by pushing pillows to their faces until they suffocated, and then killed herself with a gun. Fearful of ghosts, the "live" family leaves Jersey, letting the ghosts (Grace and the children, and the three employees) continue to haunt the castle.

The trick the film plays on the spectator is not conspicuous at first. The film starts and goes on until the very end as if we were watching a typical ghost story unfold: a young, beautiful but tormented woman moves to the empty castle to take refuge from the raging war. Her husband being enrolled and fighting somewhere on the continent, she hires staff to be able to spend her life with the children who suffer from that very strange and incurable illness. The point of view is entirely allocated to the female protagonist, Grace, so the spectator is made to believe what she does and how she perceives things: that the castle is haunted by ghosts. The unconventional trick is that the castle is haunted by ghosts indeed, but this time the ghosts are the ones we believe to be the living.

This way the traditional Gothic ghost story set-up is turned upside down. This might mean a kind of anti-Gothic perspective, a critical stance towards the literary genre; however, I suggest that it is precisely this seemingly subversive logic of the narrative that establishes Gothic as a

[1] All subsequent quotes, unless indicated otherwise, are my transliteration of the film.

film genre *per se*. Since the literary Gothic motifs that fertilized or enriched many a genre in film history are today considered to be *par excellence* generic features of the respective film genres, those original Gothic motifs may hardly be listed as typical features of a Gothic film. If the tables turn, however, that is if the original motifs are kept but subverted in an uncanny way (uncanny being explicitly a Freudian reference here in the sense of the "familiar unfamiliar"), the film cannot be listed under the generic headings of film studies.

The Others then is a study of the Freudian *unheimlich* but with a narratological and indeed visual trick. Hence perhaps it is more appropriate to use the Lacanian rendition of Freud's concept: the *extimate*. According to Parveen Adams, Lacan's rendering of the term in French blurs the border between inside and outside ('in-timate' and 'ex-timate') in a way that – similarly to Freud's original concept – the term contains both sides of the binary opposition (Adams, 149). As Adams explains, Lacan's term demonstrates the psychoanalytical claim that "far from being complementary opposites, inside and outside rely on a certain coincidence rather than opposition" (148). This way the border between outside and inside, between 'us' and the 'others' is questioned. Elizabeth Bronfen, blending Abraham's theory of the phantom with the notion of extimacy goes further to claim that Lacan's concept is essentially useful, since it can "designate the phantomatic, encrypted presence of kernels of the real traumatic knowledge in the Symbolic", where this encrypted *nescience* (i.e. not knowing that one is the carrier of a secret) "returns not only as a hallucination but as an embodiment with both psychic and somatic reality" (Bronfen, 385). This is how Mladen Dolar puts it in his essay on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*:

> It points neither to the interior nor to the exterior, but is located there where the most intimate interiority coincides with the exterior and becomes threatening, provoking horror and anxiety. The extimate is simultaneously the intimate kernel and the foreign body; in a word, it is *unheimlich*. (Dolar, 6)

The Gothic in *The Others* is manifested in the confusion of the 'others' and 'us', which happens in terms of life and death, inside and outside, defenders of the home and intruders. As Susan Hayward explains, until the 1960s, witnessing the birth of the psychological thriller, films (most significantly what some call the Gothic horror films) presented the monsters or aliens outside us (Hayward, 190). This means that the subjects' repressions, the unconscious impulses, the id, were projected outside to be able to tackle the integrity of the subject and, at the same time, to keep it intact. Nonetheless, what was projected and thus perceived as outside, originated from the innermost recesses of the inside, thus the invisible became visible, the forgotten remembered, to add a few more binary oppositions to the above.

The discussion of the blurring of the boundaries of these very basic dichotomies may also help to fully reconsider the Gothic project in the cinema. As Moglen explains, Gothic fiction focused on topics "excluded from dominant myths of the cultural symbolic", deconstructing the very "boundaries that separate legitimated elements of the hegemonic culture from their illegitimate others (e.g., the integrated from the fragmented self, sanity from madness, rationality from irrationality, social sameness from difference, and defined from indeterminate meanings)" (Moglen, 111). What *The Others* seems to achieve is precisely this originally Gothic fictional project. Tackling the irrational, it does not claim to disclose a higher truth, but it rather points to meanings that fail to be registered in language, i.e. in rational discourse.

Through the subversion of genres (both filmic and to a certain extent literary, as well), *The Others* reworks the codes and conventions of the Gothic fiction in order to extend and transform the generic requirements of film. This marks the birth of the Gothic film. *The Others* plays heavily on the conventions of Gothic fiction, horror film and psychological thriller, but does

so in order to turn them upside down. This way the spectator's expectation is detoured from the generic stereotypes towards a more active and interpretive participation in the production of meaning. The spectator is interpellated, as it were, to reconstruct landmarks of his or her own horizon of expectation in order to tackle the experience generated by the film. This reworking, however, means both a return to and a return of the Gothic base. Subversion thus becomes an act of establishing a genre in film.

Conclusion

The aim of the present paper has been to argue for a long repressed tradition present in the history of film genres, manifest only via other generic categories: the Gothic film. I have discussed two recent films, *Gothika* and *The Others*, which seem to point beyond the already existing categories of film genres, more or less explicitly taking up and utilizing features and motifs the origins of which can be located in the literary genre of the Gothic fiction. To argue for the existence of the genre of the Gothic film means to show the way these films subvert in a paradoxical way not only the horror and/or thriller categories of film, but to a certain extent (playing with the clichés of Gothic fiction) those of the literary origin, as well.

Gothika reappropriates many generic features of Gothic fiction, while refusing to keep the easily recognizable ones of the Gothic horror genre. This way the film modifies or rather activates the spectator's interpretive skills leading to a kind of updating of the Gothic fictional mode. *The Others* presents a different case: the film subverts the features of both the filmic genres akin to Gothic and, to a certain extent, of the literary origin as well. This way of reworking familiar material results in the establishment of a new generic category: that of the Gothic film.

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Elisabeth Skokan

Fantastic Frankenstein. Early Dramatisations of Mary Shelley's Novel and their Treatment of Supernatural Elements

> [I]ts gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect, more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy daemon to whom I had given life.[...] I thought of pursuing the devil, but it would have been in vain, for another flash discovered him to be hanging among the rocks of the nearly perpendicular ascent of Mount Selève. (Shelley, 73)

When the scientist Victor Frankenstein, the protagonist of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus* (1818), describes how he felt during his second encounter with the monster, the contempt for his own creation is obvious. In his eyes, the monster, who has just murdered Victor's younger brother William, has lost every connection with a human being – "Nothing in human shape could have destroyed that fair child" (73), he continues.

As these quotations already indicate, *Frankenstein* is characterised by a number of fantastic elements. Indeed, the novel is considered a classic of fantastic literature. C. N. Manlove offers a definition of fantasy that can be directly applied to Shelley's novel. According to Manlove, a fantasy is "a fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of the supernatural with which the mortal characters in the story or readers become on at least partly familiar terms" (1). The supernatural elements in *Frankenstein* concern the creation and consequent deeds of his monster. Moreover, Shelley's story stands in the tradition of the Gothic novel, a fantastic genre generally connected with gloomy settings (dungeons, castles), frightening characters (ghosts, demons) and other elements of horror and terror.

While modern readers may particularly enjoy these fantastic elements of the novel, they were the main reason why *Frankenstein* was initially criticised and perceived as irrational and absurd. Thus, in *The Quarterly Review* of January 1818, John Wilson Croker calls *Frankenstein* "a tissue of horrible and disgusting absurdity" (383). Only gradually did the novel obtain the status it undoubtedly holds today. Indeed, the story of *Frankenstein* owes much of its success to the numerous stage versions produced throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in the 1820s. For, among the readers who appreciated the novel from the beginning, in spite of the negative criticism, were some contemporary playwrights who saw the potential of the fantastic narrative about Frankenstein and his monster for spectacular plays. They knew that the theatrical audience of their time appreciated a large proportion of spectacle, and dramatists were eager to meet that expectation. They did not only profit from Shelley's *Frankenstein*, their stage versions also had a positive effect on the novel's popularity and influenced its subsequent perception.

Although the supernatural elements were a major reason for the playwrights' interest in *Frankenstein*, they employed those elements with great liberty. In this paper, I propose to analyse a selection of early melodramatic and burlesque adaptations of *Frankenstein* in order to show what aspects made the novel a suitable source for dramatisations. As it would be beyond the scope of my paper to treat all *Frankenstein* plays produced in the nineteenth century, I will concentrate on early texts between 1823 and 1826. Since it is my aim to analyse how the adapt-

ing playwrights achieved the transformation and proliferation of *Frankenstein* on stage, I will examine dramatisations from this crucial first phase.

The 1820s form the first phase of *Frankenstein* dramatisations. According to Steven Earl Forry, the author of *Hideous Progenies: Dramatizations of* Frankenstein *from Mary Shelley to the Present*, the first years after the novel's publication were "years of transformation and proliferation" during which the "myth [of *Frankenstein*] was mutated for popular consumption" (ix). The two most prominent *Frankenstein* plays of that time are Richard Brinsley Peake's *Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein* (1823) and Henry M. Milner's *Frankenstein; or, The Man and the Monster* (1826). Both were constantly revived and stayed popular well into the 1840s (Forry, 13). *Presumption* and *The Man and the Monster* belong to the theatrical genre of melodrama, the most popular form in the first half of the nineteenth century, which is characterised by a clear distinction between good and evil, commonly expressed through stereotypical characters such as hero, heroine and villain. As the term melodrama indicates ('melos' is Greek for music) an essential characteristic is the accompaniment of action and dialogues by music.[1] Another popular theatrical genre of the nineteenth century, the burlesque, is represented by the anonymous *Frank-in-Steam; or, The Modern Promise to Pay* (1824).[2] A burlesque typically ridicules a certain subject, exaggerates emotions, or even provides a comic version of an existing literary work.[3] *Frank-in-Steam* is a parody on Shelley's story as well as on its successful stage adaptation by Richard Brinsley Peake. Melodrama and burlesque were the theatrical forms that most attracted the audience of the early nineteenth century. The melodrama, in particular, appealed to the playgoers with its thrilling and sensational elements, often achieved with the help of fantastic characters and events. In the following, the dramatists' treatment of the supernatural elements in Mary Shelley's novel will be examined. The aim is to show which of these elements were transformed, what kinds of changes can be found, and what the possible reasons for the transformations were.

Shelley's *Frankenstein* attracted the playwrights' attention with its broad repertory of fantastic elements. These can be divided into two basic groups: The first group concerns the infusion of life to a being made of dead body parts, with the help of (pseudo-)science, which includes alchemy and Victor's application of unknown scientific methods in order to create a human being. The second group consists of those passages of the novel in which the creature's superhuman appearance and abilities are described. When comparing the novel and its dramatisations, I will apply this basic classification to the playwrights' treatment of the fantastic aspects and show what strategies were used to adapt the story for the stage.

In the novel, the monster's creation is approached with a sense of rationality and probability. The methods used by Victor Frankenstein are related to alchemy and galvanism, two 'scientific' methods that were believed to infuse life to lifeless matter by many of Shelley's contemporaries.[4] In *Frankenstein*, Victor mentions his early acquaintance with alchemy: at the age of thirteen, he was interested in "[n]atural philopsophy" (37) and "entered with the greatest diligence into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life" (38). When his narration comes to the

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[1] For detailed descriptions of melodrama and its characteristics see: Michael R. Booth, *English Melodrama*; Maurice Willson Disher, *Blood and Thunder*; Michael Kilgarriff, *The Golden Age of Melodrama*; Frank Rahill, *The World of Melodrama*.

[2] Two more *Frankenstein* plays were produced in the 1820s: Richard Brinsley Peake's *Another Piece of Presumption* (1823) and John Kerr's *The Monster and Magician*. However, the link of both plays to the original *Frankenstein* story is much weaker, which is why they have been omitted from this study.

[3] For characteristics of the burlesque see Booth 1991, 197.

[4] For Mary Shelley's background on these methods see Elizabeth Nitchie, "Frankenstein Explores the Destructive Potential of Science", 53–7.

creation of the monster, he gives a detailed account of his preparatory studies and the composition of the originally lifeless creature, explaining why all the difficulties he met with did not make him despair:

> The materials at present within my command hardly appeared adequate to so arduous an undertaking, but I doubted not that I should succeed. I prepared myself for a multitude of reverses; my operations might be incessantly baffled, and at last my work be imperfect; yet when I considered the improvement which every day takes place in science and mechanics, I was encouraged to hope my present attempts would at least lay the foundations of future success. (51)

Victor repeatedly stresses his awareness of the disbelief he might cause, thus supporting his credibility as narrator. While Shelley pays considerable attention to the scientific background that leads Victor to the creation of the monster, the animation scene itself is kept rather vague. The reader is merely told that the vivification is accomplished "on a dreary night of November" (55). Victor's reaction to his creature's appearance, however, is again described in great detail. Yet the facts that finally led to his success are not explained. Mary Shelley's intention behind that particular arrangement of scientific and fantastic elements concerning the monster's creation is suggested in the Preface to *Frankenstein*, which is generally acknowledged to be the work of her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley. Speaking in the voice of the author, he stresses the aim "to preserve the truth of the elementary principles of human nature, while I have not scrupled to innovate upon their combinations" (11).

The supernatural or rather superhuman traits of the creature suggested in the novel concern the latter's looks as well as his physical abilities: he is taller, stronger and also faster than an ordinary man, and has an unnaturally yellow skin (Shelley, 55). His physical strength is particularly striking and is described repeatedly by his creator. A scene where Victor experiences it with a feeling of unprecedented horror is his third encounter with the creature on Montanvert, a glacier of Mont Blanc. He vividly recalls those events in his narrative: "I suddenly beheld the figure of a man, at some distance, advancing towards me with superhuman speed. He bounded over the crevices in the ice, among which I had walked with caution [...]" (94). Victor has to acknowledge his inferiority to his own creature.

These fantastic aspects concerning the monster's creation as well as its supernatural traits posed a challenge to those dramatists who decided to turn *Frankenstein* into a play. Only some of the elements could be expressed by a combination of dialogue and action on stage. As the stage directions of the dramatic texts indicate, a range of special effects and spectacular action were employed to create a feeling of terror and excitement.

In the three plays examined in this paper, *Presumption*, *The Man and the Monster* and *Frank-in-Steam*, there is always an individual creation scene, either at the beginning or at an early stage of the play. Taking up a much larger proportion than in the original novel, more weight was attributed to this scene in the plays. In Peake's melodrama *Presumption*, the audience can indirectly witness the monster's animation, notably through a window which allows them to peep into Frankenstein's study. The use of different lights indicates the changes inside the laboratory:

> (*A blue flame appears at the small lattice window above, as from the laboratory.*) [...] *a sudden combustion is heard within. The blue flame changes to one of a reddish hue.*)
> *Frank.* (*Within.*) It lives! it lives! (143)

Through the combustion, the change of light from blue to red, and Frankenstein's following exclamation that "it lives", the audience is informed about the monster's vivification in a very spectacular way. In the corresponding scene of *The Man and the Monster*, Milner uses stage direc-

tions that remind one strongly of Peake's text. While Frankenstein is trying to infuse life to his creature inside the laboratory, "a faint glimmering of light appears behind the window", and shortly thereafter, a "strong and sudden flash of light is [...] seen at the window" (193). Milner extends the suspense and horror by an extra scene, showing the monster's first movements inside the laboratory. The following directions are given to the actors:

> [*Frankenstein*] *rolls back the black covering, which discovers a colossal human figure, of a cadaverous livid complexion; it slowly begins to rise, gradually attaining an erect posture, Frankenstein observing with intense anxiety. When it has attained a perpendicular position, and glares its eyes upon him, he starts back with horror.* (194)

Here, Milner adds an element that cannot be found in either the original novel or its first dramatisation by Peake: the audience witnesses the very first movements of the creature. The probability of the events is clearly not at the centre of this scene.

The playwrights of both *Frankenstein* melodramas did not hesitate to stress, and even intensify, the spectacular nature of Frankenstein's sensational creation, thus destroying the balance of fantasy and science attempted by Shelley in her novel. They refer explicitely to obscure scientific methods involved in that creation. While Shelley's Victor Frankenstein never mentions the direct influence of alchemy on his creation, the link to alchemy is established very clearly in the melodramatic versions.

In the first scene of Peake's *Presumption*, in a dialogue with Frankenstein's friend Clerval, the servant Fritz speculates about his master's current project, coming to the conclusion that Frankenstein must be "raising the Devil" (138). Clerval, who knows about his friend's interest in the "occult sciences" pursued by scientists such as Agrippa and Paracelsus, suspects that his secret has to do with "the transmutation of metals and the elixir of life" (140). In this early scene, Peake raises the audience's interest in the supernatural experiments associated with alchemy.

The references to obscure scientific methods in *The Man and the Monster* are manifold. Among Frankenstein's skills are the "transmuting of metal, and converting of water" (Milner, 191) into wine – two typical examples of alchemy. Frankenstein himself tells the audience that he is going to fill a dead body with life, and the interior of his laboratory is filled with objects for alchemical operations: "On a long Table is discovered an indistinct Form, covered with a black cloth. A small side Table, with Bottles, and Chemical Apparatus, – and a brazier with fire" (194).

The monster in *Frank-in-Steam* is not animated with the help of chemistry. Frankenstein, simply called Frank, wants to instil life in a corpse he has stolen from a graveyard. But the body rises without his help, as though it was in trance rather than dead, and turns out to be Snatch the Bailiff, Frank's chief creditor. The connection to alchemy is mentioned only once, again by Frank's servant, who compares his master to Dr. Faust: "he has been locked up in his study for the last three hours poring over the big book with Skeleton figures. He's certainly going to raise the devil or Doctor Foster" (Anonymous, 178). This intertextual, parodistic reference to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's tragic drama *Faust*, published in two parts in 1808 and 1832, is typical of the nineteenth-century burlesque which abounds in allusions to current social and literary phenomena.

The creation of a human-like being with the help of pseudo-scientific methods provided the adapting playwrights with fantastic material for their versions of *Frankenstein*. Through spectacular action and light effects, the monster's animation was effectively portrayed on stage. Allusions to matter transmutation or life elixirs would have irritated the readers and critics of the novel by disrupting the sense of probability. But the masses at the theatres were strongly attracted by repeated references to the methods of alchemy.

The fantastic parts of *Frankenstein* dealing with the creature's supernatural appearance and strength posed a challenge to the dramatists. While it was impossible to provide a "being of a gigantic stature, [...] about eight feet in height" (51), his inhuman looks and superhuman power could be transferred more easily to the *Frankenstein* dramatisations. At the beginning of his dramatic text of *Presumption*, Peake gives a detailed description of the actors' costumes, starting with that of the monster:

> THE MONSTER'S APPEARANCE AND DRESS. – Dark black flowing hair – à la Octavian – his face, hands, arms, and legs all bare, being one colour, the same as his body, which is a light blue or French gray cotton dress, fitting quite close, as if it were his flesh [...]. (135f.)

Similarly, Milner's directions include that the actor of the monster is supposed to wear a "[c]lose vest and leggings of a very pale yellowish brown, heightened with blue, as if to show the muscles" (190). Both playwrights stress the unnatural skin colour chosen by Mary Shelley in her novel, but other than Milner, Peake presents an even less lifelike colour: a light blue or gray instead of yellow.

The strength of the creature is portrayed in a spectacular scene at the end of Act I in Peake's melodrama. As soon as his creation has come to life, Frankenstein realises that he has formed a hideous and evil monster and wishes him to be dead. A scene with a stress on physical action and very little dialogue follows. The monster "breaks through the balustrade or railing of gallery", "jumps on the table" and, when attacked by Frankenstein with a sword, "snatches the sword, snaps it in two and throws it on stage" (144). As these stage directions show, it is important for Peake to convey the superhuman qualities of the creature to the theatre audience.

A parallel scene appears in Milner's *The Man and the Monster*. Again, Frankenstein attempts to destroy his own creation once his full ugliness has shown. But, again, the monster is far superior in strength to his creator:

> [T]he Monster, who with utmost care takes the sword from him, snaps it in two, and throws it down. Frankenstein then attempts to seize it by the throat, but by a very slight exertion of its powers, it throws him off to a considerable distance. (194)

In contrast to the two melodramas, the burlesque *Frank-in-Steam* does not ascribe superhuman traits to the monster. The fantastic element of an apparently dead body brought back to life is retained, but the horrifying aspect of the creature is that it turns out to be Snatch the Bailiff, Frank's worst enemy. Rather than stressing the monster's horrifying aspects, as the melodramatic versions *Presumption* and *The Man and the Monster* do, the burlesque *Frank-in-Steam* ridicules them.

So far, the dramatists' treatment of existing fantastic elements has been examined. Yet the *Frankenstein* plays also show some entirely new features in connection with Victor's creation. In their melodramas, Peake and Milner add to the monster's inhumanity by making him dumb. In *Presumption*, the creature can only grumble. Peake basically neglects the six central chapters of the original novel, where the creature talks about his experiences and feelings in a surprisingly eloquent manner. The human quality that is added to the creature's existence through his narrative is missing in both *Presumption* and *The Man and the Monster*, where he is equally speechless. The effect thus achieved by the playwrights is a large proportion of physical action in the melodramas. Instead of talking about his first experience with music, for example, the monster has to express his feelings with the help of gestures. Thomas P. Cooke, who played the monster in *Presumption*, had to carry out the following stage directions given by Peake:

> [H]*e hears the flute,* [...] *stands amazed and pleased, looks around him, snatches at the empty air, and with clenched hands puts them to each ear – appears vexed at his disappointment in not possessing the sound.* (*Peake 1990, 146*)

Surprisingly, Mary Shelley herself, who attended a performance of the melodrama in September 1823, approved of Cooke's acting. In a letter to Leigh Hunt she writes: "Cooke played ——'s part extremely well – his seeking as it were for support – his trying to grasp at the sounds he heard [...]" (Morton, 30). She must have been well aware of melodrama's particular characteristic of extensive physical show and accepted it. Peake and Milner decided to ommit the monster's narration in order to satisfy the more sensational expectations of the audience.

Concerning the creature's dumbness, the burlesque *Frank-in-Steam* again differs from the two melodramas. Since the 'monster' is not a new creation made up of various body parts, but an existing, only presumably dead, person, he can speak just as he did before his reappearance. However, this does not mean that the author of *Frank-in-Steam* moved back to the original story. He rather reduced the fantastic appeal of Shelley's novel by replacing an actual human being for the creature. While the early melodramas intensify the horror aroused by the creation, the burlesque version ridicules the fear of Frankenstein's monster.

A fundamental transformation from the novel to its early dramatisations concerns the monster's creation as well as his supernatural traits. In Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the creature is not portrayed as an evil being from the beginning of his existence. When he tells Victor about his bad experiences with people, in the central chapters of the book, the reader is led to sympathise with him. Even his creator is overwhelmed by a momentary feeling of sympathy and responsibility. He agrees to form a female companion for the monster, a task, however, that he does not fulfil, once he has realised the possible consequences of creating "a race of devils" (Shelley, 160). The rejection of the monster is a consequence but not the immediate reaction to the circumstances of his animation. This aspect is strongly simplified by the playwrights. Why Frank, the burlesque equivalent of Frankenstein, fears his "monster" is obvious: Snatch the Bailiff is his main creditor, and Frank has to kill him in order to avoid further persecution. At the end of *Frank-in-Steam*, he succeeds and is applauded by all his friends, who also feared the resurrected bailiff. Other than the author of *Frank-in-Steam*, Peake and Milner stayed faithful to the development of the monster's evil nature as a consequence of the people's reactions to his ugly appearance. Still, in both melodramas, Frankenstein holds his creation in contempt from the beginning and immediately decides to destroy him. In *Presumption*, Frankenstein seems to anticipate the consequences of his creation as soon as the monster has come to life: "a flash breaks in upon my darkened soul, and tells me my attempt was impious, and that the fruition will be fatal to my peace for ever" (Peake, 143). In *The Man and the Monster*, Frankenstein's reaction is similar. He immediately attempts to kill the creature with a dagger, threatening: "thy horrid contact would spread a pestilence throughout my veins; touch me, and I will straightaway strike thee back to nothingness" (Milner, 194). Thus, the monster's inhuman appearance determines the necessity of his death in the *Frankenstein* melodramas, whereas in the novel, Victor's final decision to destroy his creation is taken much later. It takes the monster's murders of Victor's brother William, his friend Henry Clerval and his wife Elizabeth, until he finally sees no other solution: "I had formed in my own heart a resolution to pursue my destroyer to death, and this purpose quieted my agony and for an interval reconciled me to life" (Shelley, 192). Other than Shelley's novel, the melodramas focus on the monstrous features of the creature rather than his growing moral monstrosity. This simplification turns the complex story of *Frankenstein* into the spectacular stage versions expected by the playgoers of the early nineteenth century.

We have seen how the adapting playwrights made use of the fantastic elements, inspired by their implied spectacular qualities. Like many other successful Gothic novels produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was immediately recognised as a useful source for entertaining plays. The appropriation of existing novels and dramas was very common at the time of the publication of the novel. What Michael R. Booth says about melodramatic versions of Gothic novels in general, also applies to the *Frankenstein* plays:

> What the melodramatists did with the Gothic novel was to simplify and intensify: wherever possible sensations were elaborated and the supernatural emphasized. (1965, 69)

The emphasis of the supernatural is evident in both Peake's *Presumption* and Milner's *The Man and the Monster*. The creation and animation of the monster form a central part of both melodramas and are explicitely linked to pseudo-science. The creature's supernatural traits are indicated by his costume and a lot of physical action, where he overpowers Frankenstein and other characters with his superhuman strength. The burlesque version *Frank-in-Steam* takes up parts of the creation scene as it is presented in the melodramas. Yet it quickly turns away from the central theme of Frankenstein's creature and his monstrosity. The entertaining quality is achieved by a combination of ironic allusions to Shelley's *Frankenstein*, its melodramatisations by Peake and Milner, as well as references to various other literary and social phenomena. The melodramas *Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein* and *Frankenstein; or, The Man and the Monster*, on the other hand, are characterised by spectacular representations of fantastic elements, most of which are at least suggested in Shelley's original novel.

When the playwrights adapted *Frankenstein* for the stage, their success depended strongly on the expectations of their audience, and their expectations included "sensation and violence" as well as "eccentric humour, and native English jollity and spirit" (Booth 1969, 7). To provide humour and jollity is the main goal of the burlesque *Frank-in-Steam*; hence the parodistic treatment of *Frankenstein's* fantastic aspects. Peake and Milner did with the novel what most melodramatists of their time did: "where the novelist tended to suggest horrors the playwright made a satisfying physical show of them" (Booth 1965, 69). Without doubt, the theatrical world of the 1820s, and of the whole nineteenth century, owed many evenings of spectacular entertainment to Shelley. At the same time, it was especially Peake's melodrama *Presumption* that triggered a second edition of *Frankenstein* in 1823, the year of its first season at the English Opera House in London. The success of Mary Shelley's novel is closely linked to its appeal to the contemporary playwrights and their role in making the story of *Frankenstein* known to a large audience.

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Katalin Kocsis

Transgression and Subversion in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* by H.G. Wells

This essay seeks to highlight aspects of H.G. Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau (Fig. 1)* which cause the novel to be considered one of the first works of science fiction. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau* Wells goes beyond the usual form and content of the novel as genre, transgressing and even subverting them by placing them into the field of the fantastic.

Over the last couple of decades numerous critics have attempted to delimit fantastic literature as well as its subgenre science fiction. In her work on the fantastic, for instance, Lucie Armitt writes "where genre definitions tend to seal up texts, the fantastic opens them up to an ambivalence that must conspire against the formulaic" (33); hence it seems that the genre does not lend itself to definition. Despite the lack of consensus among critics in the field, the following features are most frequently associated with the fantastic: the uncanny, transgression, subversion, and characteristics of setting, style, atmosphere and plot.

Figure 1

According to Armitt, "there is an intrinsic connection between the fantastic and transgression" that allows the genre to resist all attempts to fix it to a definition which would assign it limits. This connection "must also manifest itself on the level of narrative content" (33). Transgression on the level of content usually means the "encounter with [and breaking] social taboos" (Armitt, 34). As Jackson writes, "Social and sexual transgression, the violent breaking of taboos [...] rejects limits imposed upon the 'human'" (79). The atmosphere shared by the texts of the genre is also in connection with transgression: "The very fact that the concerns of transgression lie with the liminal position and the threshold which is forced, implies in itself that our response to the free play of transgression may often be tentative, equivocal and perhaps even fearful" (Armitt, 35). While "transgression" implies the "breaking or violating of any law",[1] the meaning of the word "subversion" is even more severe. "To subvert" means to overturn, to ruin, to destroy, to undermine the principles of something.[2] This is why Jackson includes this word in the title of her book on the fantastic. For Jackson, "the literature of subversion" also contains a political dimension in its expression of the "pressure of dominant hierarchical systems". This manifests itself in its presentation of "a natural world inverted into something

[1] According to the *New Webster's Dictionary*, 1636.

[2] Op. cit., 1530.

strange, something 'other'" (17). These texts show "fantasy's attempt to 'turn over' 'normal' perceptions and to undermine 'realistic' ways of seeing" (Jackson, 49).[3]

Jackson writes further, the "literature of the fantastic has been claimed as 'transcending' reality, 'escaping' the human condition and constructing superior alternate, 'secondary' worlds" (12). For Jackson, the fantastic is a "literary mode", "from which a number of related genres emerge" (7), science fiction being one of these. Just as in other genres of "the literature of subversion", in science fiction the "elements" of reality are inverted, "re-combining constitutive features in new relations to produce something strange, unfamiliar and *apparently* 'new', absolutely 'other' and different" (Jackson, 8). Thus science-fiction writers do not *invent* new worlds, but *invert* their own into something seemingly new. This "subversive function" of science fiction is a means of transgression, which in Jackson's definition means the overturning of the "rules and conventions taken to be normative" (14). Science fiction is preoccupied with issues of time and space, "as well as fictionalizing a new vision of spatial relations", it is also "generically concerned with the interpretation of boundaries between problematic selves and unexpected others" (Armitt, 72, 73).

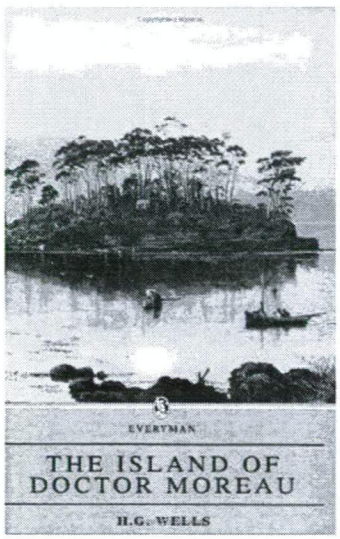

Figure 2

Fantastic novels are usually set far away from England in southern Europe, or some exotic island; science fiction novels are set similarly far away from the known or familiar, or in distant past. This feature in the fantastic and science fiction can be traced to the escapism of the Romantic era. Wells may also have intended to serve the inclinations of escapism, but he also tried to meet traditions of the English novel. By choosing the island as the setting of his novel, he follows writers like Defoe (though the theme of the island and shipwreck is as old as Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which is also often discussed as a forerunner of science fiction).[4] The symbolism behind the image of the island is worth examining. *(Fig. 2)*

It usually suggests a closed-in space surrounded by water, but at the same time it also implies an endless openness, surrounded by a boundless ocean and a horizon *without limits*. The ocean evokes positive feelings of calmness and inner peace. Unlike this image, however, Doctor Moreau's island evokes only uncertainty and a sense of the uncanny from the beginning of the novel.

[3] In Jackson the phrases "fantasy" and "fantastic" mean the same.

[4] Wells adopts a method used by Defoe, suggesting in the introduction that the story told is true and that the events were noticed by the hero of the novel, though the "publisher" – who is the hero's nephew – does not know whether his uncle had any intention of publishing it. He gives exact geographical data for the island, further underlining his claim that the story is true. In his novels Defoe gave a short preface or introduction written by the "editor" or "publisher" about the travels of the hero, in order to try to make the reader believe that this is a true story, a true account of the hero (written in first person singular) sometimes even claiming that the novel now being read is based on the travel descriptions of the hero himself. Similar islands appear in William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies*, or in Robert Merle's *The Island*. Other similarities are that all the three novels are about shipwrecks – or a plane-crash in the case of Golding – and about the survival of a group of people in hostile surroundings and circumstances, not to mention the questions of social problems discussed in all three novels, including *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, where the island is a place of isolation and brutality.

The feeling of closure is a feature which is another characteristic shared by fantastic texts. According to Jackson, the "limited nature of space" gives "an additional dimension" to the landscapes of the fantastic texts, "where [...] transformation [...] can be effected. This additional space is frequently narrowed down into a place, or *enclosure*, where the fantastic has become the norm" (49). Such an enclosure can be found on the island of Doctor Moreau, where the operations, or transformations, take place. This "Gothic enclosure" has the function in these texts of "a space of maximum transformation and terror" (Jackson, 47).

As Prendick, the protagonist of the novel, approaches the island on a boat after being shipwrecked and then rescued by a strange ship, he begins to experience unease in connection with the island, and its inhabitants, which enhances his growing feeling of the uncanny. The reader's uncertainty is augmented by the protagonist's admitted delirium and mental weakness. As the narrator-protagonist is alone and unconscious in the boat after his ship had sunk, his credibility comes into question. His delirium may represent a mental breakdown, and the entire episode may only be the result of a troubled mind. Moreover, the fact that the narrator-protagonist falls asleep at the end of most chapters (which begin with his awakening) may also imply that the story is only a dream or a hallucination. This undermining of the narrator's credibility calls to mind such gothic works as *Frankenstein* or Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights,* where Lockwood's reliability is questioned through similar devices. On the other hand, however, Prendick's credibility is strengthened by his abstinence from alcohol. On the ship which he is taken aboard, the doctor (Montgomery, as the reader later finds out) looks after him. When Montgomery and his strange companion, *M'ling,* are taken ashore along with the animals which had been transported in cages aboard the ship, the habitually drunken captain insists that Prendick must also leave the ship. On the island Prendick meats Doctor Moreau and is offered a room inside the enclosure, where he hears terrifying cries at night. He runs into the forest where he encounters beasts which he is unable to identify. He is taken back to the enclosure by Montgomery, where he is informed at last about the doctor's experiments on the animals. Later in the wood Prendick meets the beasts and their 'priest', the Sayer of the Law. He figures out that these strange beings are the outcome of Moreau's experiments, through which he tries to create humans out of animals. Becoming better acquainted with the animals, he sympathises with the beasts increasingly and tries to save them from further experiments, but in the end he realises that they cannot be rescued; neither can Montgomery nor the doctor.

The novel is also suffused with Biblical analogies. The God-figure of the text, as well as the Christ-figure, is a mere mockery of God, just as the beasts are mockeries of human beings, as Prendick observes. Moreau is not powerful enough to create a human being; his creations lack body parts, some of which are distorted or useless (e.g. human fingers which are unusable). They try desperately to walk upright in the human fashion, but ashamed of themselves, they return repeatedly to walking on all fours. As a Christ-figure Montgomery has messianic tendencies; he wants to save the beasts, but he fails. (His addiction to alcohol shows his weakness. In addition to his inability to act, he does not even consider what happens outside of the enclosure. He feels safe in it and thinks everything will right itself on its own). The island itself may be seen as an inverted Eden. Where God has disappeared, Jackson asserts, an empty space remains, which must be filled. Into this vacancy, in the place of God, another realm appears "which is neither identical with God's sphere of being, nor with that of man", something in between these two. This is the region of the uncanny, an "empty space produced by a loss of faith in divine images" (63). In the story Moreau steps into God's place, creating his own beings, his own world. His world and his people need him; they need his laws and taboos too, and it is these limitations which stimulate the events and against which the beasts rebel. These mock-Biblical

elements are the embodiments of some desire for a transcendental power, but as in most modern fantastic texts, the ends of this desire in the novel are no longer known: "breaking finite, human limits, becomes its only (im)possibility" (Jackson, 79). "Transgression takes limit to the edge of its being, to the point where it virtually disappears, in a movement of pure violence" (Jackson, 79), which is represented by the murder of Moreau and Montgomery by the beasts.

Subversion occurs in the depiction of English society in the text. This is not the only novel in which Wells portrays English society. He did the same in *The Time Machine*, his first novel, where two kinds of future humans represent the two classes of Victorian society: the working class and the upper class. The picture given in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is similar: the Beast Folk represent the exploited underclass and the group of humans the upper class. The sailors and the captain on the *Ipecachuana* are alcoholics who lack moral principles, thereby illustrating the "experience of liminality". They treat M'ling and the caged animals in a bestial manner. Moreau, the mock-God and Montgomery, the mock-Christ are the only examples of humans in the text apart from Prendick, who remains true to his beliefs but is as weak as the others. At the point when he thinks suicide is the only solution (after the other two are already dead and he remains the only human being among the half-animals), he proves as too cowardly to kill himself. Montgomery is also an alcoholic but, as Doctor Moreau's partner, he gains insight into what is happening on the island and treats the beasts in a more friendly way than Moreau, who only sees them as his creatures.

In connection with Montgomery's addiction to alcohol, it is interesting to note Prendick's abstinence. As opposed to Montgomery's weakness, he reveals mental strength and resolve. The first occasion occurs on the boat when he had no other choice, as he was unconscious. The second time he accepts alcohol when the situation on the boat worsens. He notes that what Montgomery gives him tastes like blood. This scene also allows for a Biblical interpretation: if Dr Moreau is the God-figure and the beasts worship him, Montgomery may serve as a Christ-figure. He provides a connection between humans and animals, or between God (Moreau) and the 'congregation' (the Beast Folk). As a Christ-figure, Montgomery gives his 'blood' (alcohol) to Prendick, whom he later tries to 'convert' (to convince him that what he and Moreau do on the island is right).

Even the portrait of the people in England, where he returns, is not a positive one: the English remind him of the beasts he met on the island; he sees the same faces, the same eyes, the same facial expressions. Maybe his fancy is playing tricks on him, but the people around him may really be beasts. If the latter is the case, the description of the society on the island is really a portrayal of English society in a harsh satire that confuses the English with the society of the Beast Folk.

According to Todorov, the fantastic "lasts only as long as a certain hesitation: a hesitation common to reader and character" (175). Watching the "evil-looking boatmen" and knowing that something is definitely wrong, Prendick certainly experiences hesitation. He feels suspense, knowing nothing for sure. Suspense appears as early as in the first chapter, where the behaviour of the others and the presence of the animals on the boat remain unexplained. Prendick finds it all a mystery – including Montgomery and the doctor – until he learns the background story – though not all of it – from Montgomery and from Moreau himself. Prendick manages to recall data and events, like the facts he remembers about Moreau. In his work on the uncanny Nicolas Royle claims that "[t]he uncanny involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced" (1). This feeling of uncertainty – and experience of the uncanny – begins to grow in Prendick, when he hears the crying of the puma, which he *believes to be* the cry of a human being tortured: he interprets the signs the wrong way.

Having the impression that Dr Moreau is performing vivisection on humans, and for fear that he could be next, Prendick flees from the enclosure and experiences "something in the forest". This is the point where the feeling of the uncanny reaches its peak: "The thicket about me became altered to my imagination", Prendick recounts. "Every shadow became something more than a shadow, became an ambush, every rustle became threat. Invisible things seemed watching me" (Wells, 173).

As the story is told by the protagonist in retrospect, he also sees that he only imagined the things that frightened him. Prendick is not omniscient, which means that the narrator knows as little as the reader. The narrator experiences the same uncanniness and uncertainty as the reader. Later in the same chapter the narrator says: "I turned and stood facing the dark trees. I could see nothing – or else I could see too much. Every dark form in the dimness had its ominous quality, its peculiar suggestion of alert watchfulness" (Wells, 179). Familiar by daylight, the wood becomes strange and alienated at night. The alienation of the known is another feature of the uncanny. The uncanny feeling, Royle states, "comes above all, perhaps, in the uncertainties of silence, solitude and darkness" (2).

The wood is also the home of the Beast Folk. The creatures feel safe in the wood and unsafe outside of it: for them the "enclosure" is the uncanny, along with the "House of Pain", the cries and the memories they may have about the operations. The wilderness is the home not only of the Beast Folk but also of Prendick, when he runs away from the enclosure. He finds himself among the beasts, who think he is a newcomer, one of them, and let him sleep in their cave and even take care of him. This way, the wood soon turns into a familiar place for Prendick, where he can run away and hide.

On a psychoanalytical level the wood signifies the *other* side of humans; that is it is the realm of the subconscious, where supernatural (super size) beasts, half-animal, half-human live like satyrs. These hybrids represent the suppressed thoughts, feelings and desires of the ego. Wells blurs the dividing line between *beast* and *human*. The human characters have animalistic features, the animals have human traits. The Beast People behave in ways similar to human beings: they have their own morals, which may be different from those of men, but they definitely have more morals than Dr Moreau, who remains indifferent to the suffering of the animals on which he experiments.[5] They also have their own language. (However, language is the first trait they will lose in the course of devolution). They receive a legal framework, which is also a characteristic of being human, at least according to Moreau, who makes the Law. They get religion, which is also devised by Moreau and in close relation to his Law. Moreau himself becomes their God, and they have their priest, the Sayer of the Law, and their rituals whereby they recite the sentences of the Law, kneeling and moving their body to and fro, as if singing a psalm of praise.

Montgomery is more sympathetic to the beasts than Moreau (or Prendick, who needs time to digest what he witnesses). He is an intermediary between the creatures and the humans. He is not without animalistic features either. He is unable to resist the temptation of alcohol, which releases his feelings and suppresses his reason. Prendick knows that Montgomery is rushing towards his death at the end, when he gives alcohol to the beasts, which has the same effects on them, freeing their animal drives and survival instincts, and seeming to accelerate their regression.

When Moreau and Montgomery break their own law about not eating meat, their transgression spreads through the whole community of beasts, thus causing their death. According to Bataille (80–85), as religion (being a set of laws) is built upon a feeling of fear (of God and/or

[5] See Ricardo Garijo's illustrations to Wells' best-known novels. Fig. 1.

of punishment), it leads to transgressions to dispose of fear, and transgression always accompanies violence and brutality. The Beast Folk are aware of the fact that they can only get rid of the laws if they free themselves of Moreau, the Father or God, who made them. Besides fear, people are always tempted to break laws. Transgression, or the dissolution of order, always ends in death: the death of God, in this case the death of the doctor. Transgression leads beyond the limits, but keeps the existing limits until the advent of death. With the death of God, laws and limits cease to exist and can therefore no longer be trespassed against, hence prompting the return of order – according to Bataille. But does order really return?

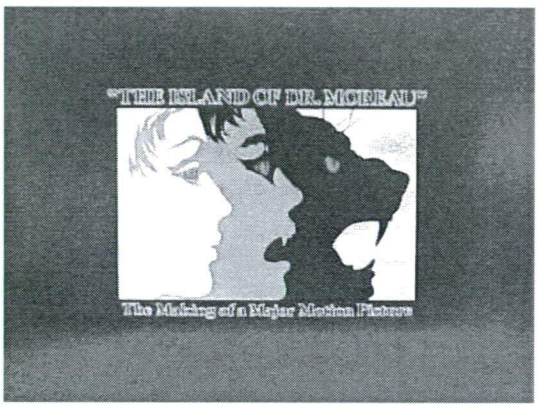

Figure 3

The beasts show the link between the animal and the human, the (missing) link in evolution. *(Fig. 3)* Darwin's *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859, and around the time when the novel was written, vivisection, blood-transfusion and transplantation were important themes in scientific debates, as was the crossing of different species.[6] This is a further theme in the novel: in addition to moral limits, the dangers of scientific progress and the responsibility of the scientist are also implied.

The border between the species is violently transgressed by the mixture of animals, just like the border between human and animal, on which a new element appears: the Beast Folk. They embody the themes of fantasy literature listed by Jackson (16): disunities (mainly in the beasts, whose appearance and movements make one feel as if they were put together by chance), heterogeneity, and the theme of the 'Other'. For Prendick, the Beast People are the Other at the beginning of the novel, but later, when he returns to England, everyone else becomes an Other. Reality becomes for him an area of non-meaning, of non-human (and non-animalistic), an area of in-between.

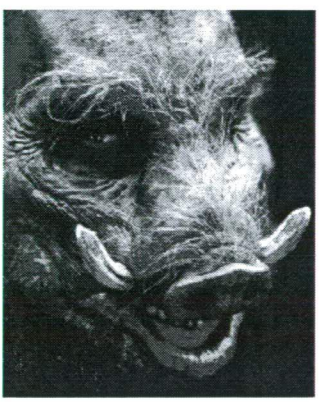
Figure 4

In a psychoanalytical interpretation the Other would be the beasts in the wood, who are other than human, other than animal. The transformation of the beasts, which is a transgression in itself, is only started by Moreau, but not finished, and the regression of the beasts cannot be stopped. The hesitation that never left the reader grows stronger towards the end of the novel. Prendick leaves the island seeing the animals assuming their 'original forms'. *(Fig. 4)* Since they are artificially made from the parts of different animals (just like Frankenstein's creature is made from the body parts of different corpses), however, they have no original form to which they can return. Once the transgression has taken place, it is impossible to return to a state of order. At the end of the novel, the fate of the beasts remains unknown. The reader only knows that the transformation has not stopped. There is "a resistance to stat-

[6] See the *Scientific American*, June, 1896.

ic, discrete units" in the figure of the beasts; just as in Prendick's eyes the people in England are a "juxtaposition of incompatible elements". They have a "resistance to fixity", as has the fantastic itself (Jackson, 19). Thus, the Beast Folk work as a metaphor for the fantastic.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. Ricardo Garijo's drawing. Source: <www.monsterwax.com>

Fig. 2. The cover of an Everyman edition of the novel, on which the island has the central role. Source: <www.rageboy.com/mbimages/cover_clip2_wells_moreau>.

Fig. 3. The process of the 'making': from animal into human – and vice versa?
Source: <www.qwipster.net/doctor_moreau_77.jpg>. Artist unknown.

Fig. 4. A pig-man (from the film adaptation of 1996). *The Island of Dr. Moreau.* Dir. John Frankenheimer. Screenplay by Richard Stanley and Ron Hutchinson. Source: <www.projo.com>.

Ágnes Matuska

'Uncreating' Oneself. Fantastic Agents of Intermediality in Tudor Drama[1]

The agents of 'uncreation' I treat within this paper are specimens of a dramatic stock figure in Tudor plays, representatives of the figure called the Vice, who features in about forty plays between 1530 and 1580. The relation of Vices to sin is undeniable, still, the name of the figure is misleading in the sense that it primarily suggests moral corruption. As it will appear from my argument and from the play I will refer to, called *Jacke Jugeler* from 1553–58, the immoral and thus condemnable aspect of the Vice can easily disappear in favor of another characteristic, that of his ability to conjure up or create the imaginary reality of a playworld, or, as the prologue of the drama in question refers to the same, a "fantasticall conceite".

As for the general characteristics of the Vice figure, he is best described by his elusiveness, complexity and polymorphous quality, his partly foolish and partly devilish features, his mockery and villainy, his comic quick-wittedness and satirical wickedness, and quite importantly, his histrionic skills. To differentiate clearly between fools, Vices and devils is admittedly not easy, and apparently not always possible. Thus, it is no surprise that the spectrum of the interpretations of the Vice by present day scholars spans from devils to fools, from viciously comic or even downright evil tempter-devils to subversive tricksters.[2] He is commonly understood as featuring in 'popular' plays and having a characteristic bawdy humor, involved in corrupting with his immoral attitude not only characters of the play but members of the audience as well. What needs to be taken into account when weighing the importance of the Vice's moral significance is his peculiarly complex theatrical presence: the fact that he directly addresses members of the audience, reveals his plans to them, makes them his accomplices, and also comments on the events from an outsider's position. The Vice, thus, is a truly intermedial figure, acting as a go-between, on the one hand, connecting, the world of the dramatic fiction with the world of the audience, and on the other hand negotiating between two media, two different versions of theatre and playing, two separate but intermingling theatrical traditions or rather logics of playing. One of these traditions is embedded in a native ritualistic playing (both pagan and Christian),[3] where the festive reality of the play and the reality of the audience participating in that festivity obviously intermingle, where *extemporizing* is allowed, and where a presentational logic of the play predominates the representational logic of creating illusionary playworlds. The other type of

[1] My research for this article was aided by a Folger Shakespeare Library Fellowship and a Hungarian State Eötvös Scholarship.

[2] The most important issues regarding the debate about the Vice are the following: the validity of including Vice-like characters into the discussion if the figures are not explicitly called "Vices" either in the list of characters or within the text; the extent to which the Vice's comedy is condemnable (either from a moral or an aesthetic point of view); the way in which he typically supports or subverts the morality pattern. The latter opinion is held by Weimann (1978), the former by Spivack (1958) and Dessen (1986). The difference in opinions is partly but not entirely based on the elusive corpus of plays. Another problem arises from the fact that there are references to non-dramatic vices as well e.g. by Mares (1958–59) or Welsford (1935), featuring in popular festivities

[3] Cf. Axton (1977).

playing is representational in the sense that it does offer an illusory reality on stage, and marks a clear distinction between itself and the reality of the playhouse the audience is in.[4]

The Vice, a figure frequently played by the leading actor of the troupe, is justly equated with a master of ceremonies, and thus epitomizes the fantastic in the sense that he is the spirit of playing, of conjuring worlds.[5] This interpretation of the figure is parallel to the one found in anti-theatrical texts where the terms *vice* and *fool* are frequently mentioned together to describe the immoral behavior of actors.[6] As Enid Welsford also notes, "supposed early references to fools prove to be references to 'histriones', 'buffoni', 'joculatores' and other vague terms for actors and entertainers" (114). The appeal of the Vice is frequently dismissed as treacherous, and the merriment he offers through the play is regarded as immoral – both by contemporaries and by present-day scholars. Still, it is difficult to overlook the moral ambiguities that undermine such a clear-cut picture, ambiguities that are caused by his mentioned dramatic complexity, by his multi-faceted nature of having the function of both director and actor within his own play. The Vice is an ideal deceiver not only as a corrupter but as an actor as well. However, as leader of the troupe he justly plays the prime mover of the game: in this sense his functions inside and outside the play overlap. Obviously it is possible to separate the distinct layers or functions of the Vice within the play, i.e. the tempter within the play and the main actor and director, still, one cannot but keep in mind that the different functions become manifest through the body of the same actor, which complicates the character's moral assessment. In any case, the Vice's role-playing and game-making quality is valuable in itself, if not for the schemes he devises within the play, then for the play he offers to the audience.

Interestingly, the activity of not only Vices, but more generally, of actors – creators of fictitious worlds and identities – turns into "uncreation," a sin against God's work from the point of view of puritan anti-theatrical pamphlet writers. They frequently identify actors with vices and theatre with the "school of the Vice". William Prynne in *Histriomastix* (1632), for example, speaks in a highly condemning tone of "witty, comely youths" who devote themselves to the stage, "where they are trained in the School of Vice, the play-house..." (in Pollard, 191). In the anti-theatrical discourse the fantastic, imaginary playworlds coming to life on stage are considered as fictitious lies that are eating away the reality of the audience. Acting as changing one's identity is equated with lying, while a further problem is caused by the fact that the identities taken up by actors leave neither the original selves of the actors unchanged, nor the onlookers safe. "For who will call him a wise man that playeth the part of a fool and a vice?" asks Philip Stubbes reprovingly in the *Anatomy of Abuses* (in Pollard, 122), while Munday claims that "all other evils pollute the doers only, not the beholders or the hearers [...] Only the filthiness of plays and spectacles is such that maketh both the actors and beholders guilty alike" (in Pollard,

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[4] These two types of theatre and their characteristic intermingling in dramas of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries are treated in several intriguing studies. The terms used to describe the different theatrical traditions vary, however. Attila Kiss (1995) talks about emblematic vs. photographic theatre, Robert Weimann (1999) opposes representational with performative, while Douglas L. Peterson (1992) contrasts ludic and mimetic play. It seems to me that what Timothy Reiss describes as dialectic (as opposed to analytical) tragedy describes precisely the merger of theatrical traditions (Reiss 1980, 4).

[5] For the prominence the Vice receives among the other characters see Bevington 1962, 80–1.

[6] See Philip Stubbes in his *Anatomy of Abuses*. "Playing the vice" describes everything bad that can be learned from playing and acting. (Stubbes in Pollard, *Shakespeare's Theatre*, 121–2). Also in *Histriomastix* William Prynne is grieving over the unfortunate fact that "witty, comely youths" devote themselves to the stage, "where they are trained in the School of Vice, the play-house..." op.cit. 291.

66).[7] Prynne literally claims that actors by playing female parts "*uncreate*" themselves, become fantastic creatures, "monsters", as he calls them, "offering a kind of violence to God's own work":

> Is this a light, a despicable effeminacy, for men, for Christians, thus to adulterate, emasculate, metamorphose, and debase their noble sex? Thus purposely, yea, affectedly, to unhuman, unchristian, uncreate themselves, if I may so speak, and to make themselves, as it were, neither men nor women, but monsters (a sin as bad, nay worse than any adultery offering a kind of violence to God's own work)...(in Pollard, 291)

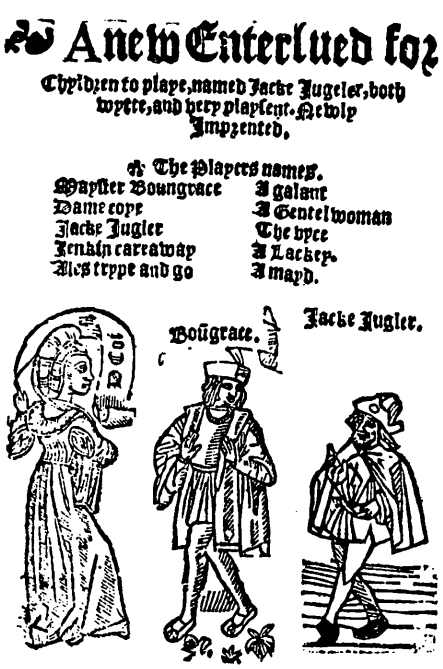

Figure 1

Thus, the creation of fictional identities on stage is rejected as an abominable sin, as uncreation. With a curious turn of logic, however, "uncreation" as the fictionalization of identity may be thematized specifically as the very prerequisite of good pastime and mirth. In the next part of my paper I will concentrate on a specific uncreation as it is carried in the play called *Jacke Jugeler* by the eponymous character.[8] Although clearly termed as such on the title-page of the drama *(Fig. 1)*, the Vice of this particular play has been left rather neglected by critics, perhaps precisely for the lack of moral corruption that is generally expected from the character. A strong argument supporting the understanding of the Vice as the epitome of play and mirth emerges from this play once we compare the prologue with the opening lines of the lead character: whatever the Prologue says about the role of the play applies to the function of the Vice not only at a metaphorical level, but at a textual level as well. Let me provide an illustration for that.

The Prologue, advertising the play and precluding criticism of joyful pastime stresses the importance of "quiet mirthe and recreation" (l. 19) and claims that "[h]onest mirthe and pastime, is requisite and necessarie" (l. 26) to the mind the same way as eating and drinking is to the body. The audience's strength "may be refreshed and to labours suffise" through honest mirth (ll. 20–1):

> For the mynd, saith he, in serius matters occupied
> If it have not sum quiet mirthe and recreation
> Interchanungeablie admixed, must niddes be sone weried
> [...]
> Therfor intermix honest mirthe in suche wise
> That your strenght may be refreshid and to labours suffise.
> ll. 15–21

[7] Gosson, however, does give parallel examples: "The shadow of a knave hurts an honest man; the scent of the stews, a sober matron; and the show of theatres, a simple gazer" (in Pollard 2004, 23).

[8] For references to the play I used the Marie Axton edition (1982).

After the Prologue's exit the actor playing the title role enters, greets and addresses members of the audience directly in the general fashion of Vice-presenters, and expresses his joy at meeting them:

> Now by all thes crosses of fleshe, bone and blod,
> I rekine my chaunce right marvylus good
> Here now to find all this cumpanie
> Which in my mynd I wyshed for hartylie,
> (ll. 90–94)

As he continues, he echoes the Prologue's lines on the need for good pastime, picking up the contrast made by the Prologue between labor and being merry, as he says, in times "when [he] may and take no thought" (l. 99). He is tampering with the border of "honest mirth" with his sexual allusion in the lesson he has learnt well from his mother, namely that he makes sure to "make merie oons a daie":

> For I have labored all daye tyll I am werie
> And now I am disposed too passe the tyme and be merie.
> And I thinke noon of you but he would doo the same,
> For who wol be sad and nedithe not is foull to blame.
> And as for me, of my mother I have byn tought
> To bee merie when I may and take no though –
> Which leasune I bere so well a waye
> That I use to make merie oons a daie.
> (ll. 94–101)

The parallels between the prologue's announced and the Vice's own intentions with the play thus validate all the mischief the Vice is to carry out, since the source of the announced necessary merriment in this context is clearly the play that the Vice organizes. He is the one who not only provides but also embodies and generates the "mirthe and recreation" mentioned in the opening lines. Similarly to his predecessor, Mischief from *Mankind*, who specifies his role as "I am come hither to make you game" (l. 68), Jacke too generates suspense around the play he is about to present.

> And now if all things happin ryght
> You shall see as mad a pastime this night
> As you saw this seven yers, and as proper a toye
> As ever you saw played of a boye.
> (ll. 102–5)

What is, then, this game, this "mad pastime" about? The Vice who is the chief entertainer and the engine of the plot arranges a comic situation by dressing up as a servant, Jenkin Carreawaie, who is the page of a master called Baungrace. Clearly, this role of acting, pretending to be someone else fits Jacke perfectly well: as a Vice-entertainer, Jugeler and actor, he is playing himself by making deceit his role. As Jacke himself explains:

> This garments, cape, and all other geare
> That now you see apon me here
> I have doon oon all like unto his
> For the nons, and my purpose is
> To make Jenkine bylive if I can
> That he is not him selfe, but an other man;

For, except he hath better loke then he had,
He will cum hyther starke staryng mad.
(ll. 174–181)

To cut a long story short, this is exactly what happens. Both playing with identity as well as the loss, or the questionability of identity become sources of mirth. Initially Jenkine Carreawaie is skeptical about the apparent loss of his self:

Doo not I speake now? Is not this my hande?[9]
Be not these my feet that on this ground stande?
...
How may it then bee that he should bee I
Or I not my selfe? It is a shameful lye.
I woll home to our house, whosoever say snaye,
For surelye my name is Jenkin Carawaye!
(ll. 514–521)

However, he soon becomes more confused:

I se it is soo, without any doubte,
But how the dyvell came it aboute?
Who soo in England lokethe on him stedelye
Sall perceive plainelye that he is I.
(ll. 569–72)

Thirty lines later he is completely lost:

Good lorde of hevyne, wher dyd I my selfe leave?
Or who dyd me of my name by the waye bereve?
For I am sure of this in my mynde
That I dyd in no place leve my selfe byhynde.
(602–5)

We should note that the source of Jenkin's horror is the same as Jacke's and the audience's mirth: the possibility of the magic through which the actor can be detached from his everyday self, and through which the audience's reality can be intermingled with the play's fiction on the one hand, and the horror of being detached from one's self and reality on the other.

Jenkin further contemplates about the way he lost himself, and finally ends in self-accusation:

Yf I had my name played away at dyce
Or had sold my selfe too any man at a pryce
Or had made a fray and had lost it in fightyng
Or it had byne stolne from me sleapyng,
It had byne a matter and I wold have kept pacience;
But it spiteth my hart to have lost it by suche open negligence.
Ah, thou horesone, drousie, drunken sote!
(ll. 606–12)

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[9] There is a parallel locus in late 20th century cinema: in John Cassavetes's *Husbands* (1970) in a scene with a similar poignancy in its comedy the character played by the director tries to convince his female partner about his own hand not being his.

The curious thing with the play is that both Jacke and Jenkin exhibit characteristics of Vices. One personifies the joy of creating a play, while the other is the one who is made ridiculous, and makes good sport because we laugh at him. Jenkin is Vice-like in disregarding the order of his masters in favor of indulging in worldly pleasures and petty mischief, such as dicing or stealing apples. He is Vice-like also because he becomes the butt of corrective laugher after his schemes go wrong. Thus, if Jacke Jugeler personifies the Vice-entertainer who pursues the role-playing trade of Jugelers and can mimick anybody, his pendant in the play, Caraway stands for a type that precludes the idea of detachment necessary for play. It may also be said that he sticks to his role, and thus becomes laughable once he is mocked out of it.

At the end of the play, however, the prologue puts Jenkin in such a position that the audience may even sympathize with him, and his loss of identity is put into another context: now the backdrop is not his foolishness, but the times when "simple innocents are deluded" (l. 1001). It is important, though, to see the paradoxical choice available to the audience of the play in this situation.[10] If they enjoy the play, they too become deluded by the illusion of the actor personifying Jenkin and presenting the loss of his identity. This impersonation is a clear parallel to Jacke's mockery in playing Jenkin. However, we might develop a more nuanced understanding of illusion than Jenkin's delusion by Jacke in the play, and see detachment possible not only from everyday reality when entering the world of the play, but also the possibility of detachment from the illusion imposed by creation and uncreation on stage.

The audience is invited to succumb to the creative power of the play, to let them be "uncreated" from their everyday selves in order to enjoy playmaking, the ritualistic creation and uncreation, or, as Kent Cartwright has it, "the rhythms of engagement and detachment" from the play's fiction.[11]

As we have seen, Jenkin is desperate, but the audience had been urged to be delighted – both by the prologue and by Jacke. While this central element of the play's plot, playing with and losing one's identity, is most of the time irresistibly comic in *Jacke Jugeler* (and as the prologue points out, it serves to refresh the strength of the audience), in later, Shakespearean drama the questionability of identity will stand at the root of mature tragedies, such as *King Lear* and *Othello*. In other words, in the example of these Shakespearean plays disaster is created by the fact that the identity of the protagonists seems to rest on their constructedness through fiction (as in Othello's case) or on the relative position one fulfils within a social network (as in Lear's instance). The madness of those characters, similar to Jenkin's in some sense, will have a different effect, and the plays as "mad pastimes" are no innocent tales.

The fiction of identity generated by an actor is parallel to the fiction of reality propelled by the theatre. While the prologue of Jacke Jugeler calls the play a "fantasticall conceite", and invites the audience not to bend their brows sourly at seeing the main character juggle with characters and levels of fiction, as we have seen, an essentially similar playing with identity in theatre becomes a monstrous act in the eye of the anti-theatricalists as well as a major tragic topic in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays.

Eventually the type of theatre featuring a Vice is indeed replaced by another type of theatre where the ontological ambiguities and the dramatic complexity disappeared with the figures themselves, entailing a change both in the assessment of the idea of creating "fantasticall conceites" through playing, as well as in the untenable intermediary character connecting the realms

[10] The same issue is treated by Peterson (111), although he comes to a slightly different conclusion: "It is rather like looking into a mirror and laughing at our own willingness to embrace and illusion."

[11] For this reference I am indebted to Karen Kettnich.

of fantasy and reality. A notable instance allowing us to trace back this change in the way Shakespearean characters rooting in the earlier tradition were reinvented or even made to disappear, is the example of the Fool of Lear from the Nahum Tate version from 1687. Timothy Reiss discusses the same issue in his *Tragedy and Truth* when he talks about the earlier type of theatre which "seeks to draw the spectator almost physically into action, to cause the condition of his life to be fused momentarily with what is carried out not so much in front of him as with his participation," and the later type "in whose terms Shakespeare, for example, will be recuperated by neoclassical critics" (Reiss, 5). With this same gesture specific types of creation and uncreation, playing with reality and identity lose their mirthful aspect, and become irreversibly monstrous activities. It becomes impossible to interpret positively the Vice's type of puzzling uncreation both as actor and as character undermining basic assumptions the audience has about reality.

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ILLUSTRATION

Fig.1. *Jacke Jugeler*, the title-page of the drama. Source: *Early English Books Online.*

Larisa Kocic-Zambo

Geraldine as a Liminal Character Between Sappho and Lilith

In the preface to "Christabel", published in 1816, Coleridge claimed to have written the first part of the poem in 1797, the year when the "Controversy Concerning the Talents of Women" was at its height. This controversy triggered such a prolific response that the editor of the *Monthly Magazine* felt compelled to "beg leave to decline inserting any further letters on the subject" (Baker-Benfield, 381). The issue of the "Talents of Women" was, of course, brought into limelight by Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, published in 1792. As a result of the ensuing politically tinged debate, G. J. Barker-Benfield argues, women in the 1790s were offered the alternative of either "the approved vision of mindless sensibility or the outlawing bogey of the strong-minded Amazon", a conflict of choice that existed "both within women, and between women and the surrounding male and female authorities, telling them what it was to be female" (382). In the light of this argument, Jarrold E. Hogle sees the two main characters of Coleridge's poem as embodiments of the mindless sensibility (Christabel) and the amazonesque bogey (Geraldine), respectively (24). According to Hogle, Coleridge, when writing "Christabel", had inevitably to face "the cacophonous debate of many voices, unusually intensified by the late 1790s, on how woman, whether as mother or lover or daughter or sister, was to be defined and either vindicated or regulated" (25). But precisely because of these "many voices", Geraldine, the 'bogey' of "Christabel", resists definition, and for that matter vindication and regulation too. Instead, she assumes a liminal position between two iconic female characters which added their own voices to the "cacophonous debate" Coleridge had to face. One of them is Sappho, the first female poet laureate, who served for centuries as the role model for women striving to break free of the "mindless sensibility" imposed on them by male societies and whose representation as such underwent a radical decline by the time of Coleridge. The other one is Lilith, the emerging icon of the independent, strong woman, whose character gradually overshadowed and eventually replaced that of Sappho as a role model for women. Tracing the connection between Sappho, Geraldine and Lilith, in the present paper I aim to show how the liminal position of Geraldine works within the framework of the literary fantastic as far as these three female characters embody Todorov's concepts of the uncanny, the marvelous and the fantastic.

By the eighteenth century, the representation of Sappho, the Greek poet laureate of antiquity, had undergone a radical shift. Sappho had become a split persona, measured by a double standard. On the one hand, her work and a certain aspect of her life were objects of scholarly admiration in that they became the icons of the rediscovered notion of "the sublime."[1] On the other hand, her name was also a popular term of abuse. This decline of Sappho's reputation was in part due to Alexander Pope's (1688–1744) repeated attack on Lady Mary (Pierrepont) Wortley Montagu (1689–1762), an erstwhile friend of Pope's, but after mysterious circumstances an object of his derision, and hence a target of his ridicule under the name of Sappho (Reynolds, 123,

[1] For a comprehensive history and anthology of Sappho's reception in Western culture see Margaret Reynolds' brilliant *The Sappho Companion.*

124). For Pope Sappho was "almost always a term of abuse for women writers" (Reynolds, 125), but this kind of libeling was not in Pope's unique practice. Prominent women writers in the eighteenth century were commonly related to Sappho. Beside "the English Sappho", namely Katherine Philips, others, like Elizabeth Carter, and Elizabeth Rowe were also compared to their ancient model. Mary Robinson is called the "British Sappho" in the *English Review* in December 1796. However, popular publications like *Satan's Harvest Home* (1749), *A Sapphick Epistle, from Jack Cavendish* (1782), and the highly popular *La Nouvelle Sappho* (1789) introduced Sappho as a label of a "new sort of sin", which according to the anonymous author of *Satan's Harvest Home* was practiced "frequently in Turkey, as well as at Twickenham at this Day" (Reynolds, 127).[2] Reynolds even suggests that some of these publications "may have been on display in public places," citing for example a book entitled *The Sappho-An. An Heroic poem of three cantos, in the Ovidian stile, describing the pleasures which the fair sex enjoy with each other.... found among the papers of a lady of quality...* (1740) annotated with an address in Covent Garden, "Tom's Coffee House, April 10, 1749."

Coleridge himself was not devoid of this double standard with which Sappho was measured. Virginia L. Radley, among the first to connect Sappho to Coleridge's "Christabel," points out a *Notebook* entry by Coleridge, stating his plan

> to write a series of Love Poems – *truly Sapphic*, save that they shall have a large Interfusion of moral Sentiment [and] calm Imagery on Love in all the moods of the mind – Philosophic, fantastic, in moods of high enthusiasm, of Simple Feeling, of mysticism, of Religion – comprise in it all the practice [and] all the philosophy of love. (534)

Coleridge thus shared the fascination Sappho exhibited among contemporary literati as the icon of the sublime, even contributing his own Sappho-inspired verse, "Alcaeus to Sappho" (1800). Reynolds thus includes Coleridge among the few, who displayed a benign approach to Sappho as opposed to the many who regarded her merely as "the first young classic maid that bestowed her affection on her own sex" (140). Although Radley is cautious in claiming that "Christabel" could be the potential execution of Coleridge's plan to write a series of truly Sapphic love poems, she maintains that his *Notebook* entry is "relevant in a consideration of the meaning of Christabel" (140). Radley suggests that Coleridge was "alluding not to the mechanics of versification but to the intensity implicit in the word" (Sapphic), and therefore considers "Christabel" a "study in ambivalent love-relationships" (537), one of them being that between Geraldine and Christabel. However, one wonders if Coleridge was not inspired by his friend, Mary Robinson's sonnet sequence *Sappho and Phaon* published in 1796, for in the preface to the sonnet Robinson offers an explanation for her choice of subject (see Reynolds, 152, 153) not unlike the plan Coleridge cherished regarding a Sapphic "series of Love Poems." This, however, leads us back to "Christabel." Namely, the review of Robinson's *Sappho and Phaon* in the *English Review* (December 1796) might lend some support to Radley's claim by exposing the underlying Sapphoan similarities between Robinson's sonnet and Coleridge's "Christabel."

The reviewer reproaches Robinson for adopting "the contortions and dislocations of Della Crusca" (Pascoe, 385), a charge echoed by William Hazlitt when reviewing "Christabel" in *Examiner*, 2 June 1816: "There is something disgusting at the bottom of his [Coleridge's] subject, which is but ill glossed over by *a veil of Della Cruscan sentiment* and fine writing – like moon-beams

[2] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu lived in Twickenham, as did Anne Conway Damer (1749–1828), who was allegedly the keeper of many "mistresses" (Reynolds, 127), and thus the addressee of "A Sapphic Epistle, from Jack Cavendish" (127, 140–143).

playing on a charnel-house, or flowers strewed on a dead body" (Jackson, 207, *italics mine*). And although Hazlitt refrains from telling his readers exactly what is "disgusting" in Coleridge's subject, his reference to Della Cruscan sentiment hints at 'obscene' imagery and 'crude conception[s]' offensive to sensibility. For as Jacqueline M. Labbe says, the "Della Cruscan poetry, in its English incarnation, charts a romance in terminology that offends the sensibilities of sensibility: it is too physical, too open, too desiring, too expressive", but most dangerously "it allows for, even encourages, the poeticizing of erotic attraction." Sappho, in her derogatory aspect, was moreover intrinsic to the argument of the most vocal critic of English Della Cruscanism, William Gifford. His *The Beviad and Maeviad* was written in response to the serialization of the romance between Della Crusca and Anna Matilda, whose correspondence through poetry appeared first in *The World* in 1787–8, only to be collected and produced in book form in *The British Album* going through several editions from 1788 until 1794 (Labbe). Gifford finds great satisfaction in reporting the termination of their "everlasting" love especially since "all the lovers of 'true poetry'... expected wonders from it":

> The flame that burnt with such ardour, while the lady was yet unseen, they [the readers of *The World* and *The British Album*] hoped would blaze with unexampled brightness at the sight of the bewitching object. Such were their hopes. But what, as Dr. Johnson gravely asks, are the hopes of man! or indeed of woman! – for this fatal meeting put an end to the whole. Except a marvelous dithyrambic which Della Crusca wrote while the impression was yet warm upon him... nothing has since appeared to the honour of Anna Matilda: and the "tenth muse," the "angel," the "goddess," has sunk into an old woman; with the comforting reflection of having lisped love strains to an ungrateful swain. (xii-xiii)

Therefore, in Gifford's account, Anna Matilda becames the epitome of Sappho, the "tenth muse,"[3] purring forth her lascivious "amatory epistle[s] fraught with lightning and thunder" (ibid) only to find her "Phaon" [Della Crusca] too fastidious. From here it is but one step for the reader to conjure up the anonymous *Sapphic Epistle, from Jack Cavendish* pronouncing the similar, though extended account of Sappho's fate who "when an old maid, and unfit for man's love [...] pursued the young girls of Mytelene, and seduced many" (Reynolds, 140).[4]

Hence Hazlitt's comment on "something disgusting" at the bottom of Coleridge's subject, "which is but ill glossed over by a veil of Della Cruscan sentiment" hints both at an erotic content and the execution of it with the ghost of Sappho-Matilda between the lines. The comment relates particularly to the bed-chamber scene in "Christabel", in which the puzzlement over Geraldine's character and over the nature of her relationship with Christabel is most prominent:

[Geraldine to Christabel] But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.

Quoth Christabel, so let it be!
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

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[3] Plato (c. 427–348 BC) is credited with the saying: "Some say that there are nine Muses... but how careless, look again, ... Sappho of Lesbos is the tenth" (Reynolds, 70).

[4] This step is by no means arbitrary for Gifford's description of the forsaken Matilda (left with "the comforting reflection of having lisped love strains to an ungrateful swain"), it is but an echo of a stanza from *A Sapphic Epistle*: O! think how Phaon us'd the dame, / Curse on his impious heart and name, / Curse on his cold disdain: / A cruelty, like his, would prove / To me a perfect cure for love, / Of ev'ry vig'rous swain.

But thro' her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts mov'd to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bow'd,
And slowly roll'd her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shudder'd, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and in full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side –
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
And she is to sleep by Christabel.
(227–248)[5]

Intrigued by an omission in "Christabel" he considered "absolutely necessary to the understanding the whole story" (Jackson, 206) – "Behold her bosom and half her side – / *hideous, deformed, and pale of hue*" – Hazlitt might have felt that Coleridge was trying to hide something. In pointing this out, Hazlitt misquoted Coleridge's poem, altering the latter's punctuation by changing a period to an exclamation mark in line 248: "And she is to sleep by Christabel!"[6] The change heightened "the anxiety and impropriety of the scene, suggestively investing the verb 'sleep' with a stronger sexual sense" (Koenig-Woodyard). Coleridge himself was aware of the scene's sexual potential, which he tried to suppress through several editorial alterations. Line 248 from the 1816 edition, "And she is to sleep by Christabel," in the 1800 holograph read as "And she is to sleep with Christabel." The change "gestures at Coleridge's attempt to physically separate Geraldine and Christabel as they share the same bed" (Koening-Woodyard), but readers, parodists, critics and even the poet[7] seem to have questioned "whether two women should even be in the same bed at all" (ibid). Coleridge suspected Hazlitt as the source for the scandalous rumor that Geraldine "is a man in disguise" (Swann, 211; Koenig-Woodyard) – a notion Rossetti will later attribute to Coleridge himself.[8] But as the responses to the 1816 edition suggest,

[5] The quotation is from the third edition of "Christabel" from the year 1816. All subsequent quotations from the poem, if not noted otherwise, will be from this edition.

[6] Hazlitt first quotes the poem as it appears in publication (with the addition of the exclamation mark) and then points out the omission as follows: "... Behold her bosom and half her side – / A sight to dream of, not to tell! / And she is to sleep by Christabel! The manuscript runs thus, or nearly thus: Behold her bosom and half her side – / Hideous, deformed, and pale of hue" (Jackson, 207).

[7] Still not at ease, Coleridge deletes the line from several dedication copies of the 1816 edition, supplementing it with "And must she sleep by Christabel?" (to David Hinves) and with "Oh shield her! Shield sweet Christabel!" (to James Gillman, and others). The later version will be lastingly committed to print in the 1828 and the subsequent editions of the poem. As Koenig-Woodyard argues, "these accreted changes provide glimpse not so much of the creative process, as they do of self-censorship in process – of Coleridge silencing the potential sexuality of 'Christabel.'"

[8] "I daresay Coleridge altered this [i.e. omitted the description of Geraldine's bosom as old] because an idea arose which I actually heard to have been reported as Coleridge's rare intuition – viz. that Geraldine was to turn out to be a man!!" (Allen, 77).

and as Karen Swann argues, Hazlitt's "scandalous" rumor "is a subterfuge masking the real scandal of Christabel – that Geraldine is a woman" (211).

Thus, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century's reception of Coleridge's "Christabel" was similar to that of Sappho – it led a double life. Claire B. May, for example, is right in claiming that the earlier readings of the poem emphasize in the character of Geraldine and Christabel "a bipolarity of good and evil" and it is only the later readings of the poem that "prefer a psychosexual interpretation of their relationship, with Geraldine representing repressed desire, Christabel's unassimilated, possibly homoerotic, sexuality" (699). Indeed, literary critics tended to overlook the sexual code of "Christabel" either by frank denial and dismissal, or by mysterious allusions that left readers guessing.[9] However, as Chris Koenig-Woodyard amply unfolds in his article "'Christabel' and the *Christabelliads*", contemporary parodists were also quick to expose and ridicule the sexual and gothic representation of the Christabel-Geraldine relationship. In the following, I aim to show how eighteenth-century representations of Sappho as a lewd tribade contributed to these receptions of "Christabel."

In discerning Geraldine's Sappho-like features, the anonymous semi-pornographic novel *La Nouvelle Sappho* is of special interest. Often reprinted in London and Paris at the end of the eighteenth century and in the nineteenth century, it purported to reveal the secrets of a private club called "La Loge de Lesbos." In the extract included in Reynolds' anthology, a young novitiate describes the ceremonial temple of the sect as follows:

> On the altar to the right as you enter is the bust of Sappho, as the oldest and the best known of the Tribades... All around and into the distance were placed, on the many shelves cladding the walls, the busts of the beautiful Greek girls whom Sappho celebrated as her companions. At the bas you could read the names of Thelesyle, Amythone, Cydno, Megara, Pyrrine, Andromeda, Cyrine, &c. In the middle was a bed raised up in the form of a basket lit by two lamps either side. Here reposed the president and her pupil. All around the salon, seated on Ottoman sofas, piled with cushions, were women, with limbs interwined, or gazing into each other's eyes. Each couple was composed of *a mother and a novice, or in the mystic terms, of an 'incubus' and a 'sucubus'.* (145, 146, *italics mine.*)

For the readers familiar with this passage, or the conventions of it, Coleridge's lines, "And lo! the worker of these harms, / That holds the maiden in her arms, / Seems to slumber still and mild, / *As a mother with her child*" (285–288, *italics mine*), were not describing a maternal nurturing, "aligning her [Geraldine] with the maternal, however frightening and desirable" (May 708), but a "mother and a novice", or in mystic terms, "an 'incubus' and a 'sucubus'".[10] At least, the ano

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[9] James Gillman, Coleridge's physician and first biographer, noted that the passage describing Christabel in Geraldine's spell-bound embrace did not "escape coarse minded critics, who put a construction on them which never entered the mind of the author of Christabel, whose poems are marked by delicacy" (Gillman, 293–4). One suspects Gillman of the same delicacy as the poem, because he refrained from telling the reader what exactly those constructions of coarse-minded critics were. Koenig-Woodyard records the attempts of Coleridge's family to protect the poem "from those who would reveal the poem as a homo- and hetero- sexual work". Delson notes Nethercot's refusal to import into his elaborate interpretation "any of the sexual overtones surrounding the vampire and lamia legends" (131). Interestingly, Nethercot mentions the contemporary parodies, however, he "refers to this level of interpretation as 'lurid' and 'scandalous'" (131n6).

[10] Both Delson and May see the description of Christabel's awaking from Geraldine's embrace (lines 298–305) as "a post-coital repose" (Delson, 140, May, 710) pointing out words like "after-rest" and "rapture" in lines 440–446 [*sic*]. May is tempted to see this in Lacanian terms, asking if "these lines provide a glimpse of the maternal as a source of primal jouissance?" (711). Her suggestion, though not elaborated on, is very tempting, for Lacan's feminine jouissance could explain Christabel's sense of "her sins unknown" since the one experiencing the jouissance "knows nothing about it" (see Lacan, 76, 77), as well as her inabi-

nymous writer of *Christabess,*[11] the first parody to appear soon after "Christabel" in 1816, fills the scene with sexually suggestive terms and imagery:

> And, lo! the worker of the spell
> Hugs the maid, and sleepest well;
> Sleepest – or else she seems to sleep,
> Like a Ram beside a Sheep.
> (In Koenig-Woodyard)

If there is any doubt in the reader, it is not directed towards Geraldine's character – whether she is a witch, a vampire, a nurturing mother or a man in disguise – but towards her activity. Does she sleep, or else "seem to sleep"? The simile "like a Ram beside a Sheep" moreover recalls Iago's sexually charged insinuation in *Othello*, when he is up to rouse Desdemona's father against the black Moor ("... Even now, very now, an old blacke Ram / Is tupping your white Ewe" [1.1.88]), as noted also by Koenig-Woodyard. Geraldine is thus seen as a Sappho-like incubus,

Figure 1

Figure 2

lity to speak of her hour with Geraldine, for "in the experience of feminine jouissance, the subject becomes the site of the ineffable" (Neroni, 218). Moreover, the feminine jouissance would also account for the narrator's inability to convey an uninterrupted narrative, for as Lacan says "neither man nor woman has been capable of articulating the least thing that holds up on the subject of feminine enjoyment" (ibid). But to quote from *A Sapphic Epistle, from Jack Cavendish:* "[...] now my muse hath ta'en a dance, / And lend me off, full frisk to France, / Which was not my intention [...]" (Reynolds, 141).

[11] *Christabess by S. T. Colebritche, Esq. A right Woeful Poem, Translated from the Doggerel by Sir Vinegar Sponge* (London: J. Duncombe, 1816) (Koening-Woodyard, see also Nethercot, 32).

an image reinforced also by contemporary visual representations of Sappho, in which the poetess sheds the props traditionally associated with her profession – the instrument of her songs and the laurel wreath – and instead exposes her pert breasts, the symbol of her lasciviousness *(Fig. 1 and Fig. 2)*. Hence, the contemporary parodies of "Christabel" see the scene of Geraldine shedding her robes not as a scene of horror, as some critics have suggested, but as an erotic interlude advertising sexual licentiousness:

> Down dropt her shift, and – O dear me!
> She's naked! – naked!! – naked!!! – see! –
> But, reader, turn away your view,
> She's not to sleep with me or you.
> (*Christabess* in Koenig-Woodyard)

The exposing of breasts, moreover, seems to be a stock argument in attacks against licentious women in the 1790s, and no doubt Sappho was the one to set the model. One only needs to recall Reverend Richard Polwhele's satiric critique of the feminist principles expounded by Mary Wollstonecraft. In his heavily annotated poem, *The Unsex'd Female* (1798), he envisions the consequence of Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* as follows:

> I shudder at the new unpictur'd scene,
> Where unsex'd woman vaunts the imperious mien;
> Invoke the Proteus of petrific art;
> With equal ease, in body or in mind,
> To Gallic freaks or Gallic faith resign'd.
> The crane-like neck, as Fashion bids, lay bare,
> Or frizzle, bold in front, their borrow'd hair;
> Scarce by a gossamery film carest,
> *Sport, in full view, the meretricious breast;*
> *Loose the chaste cincture*, where the graces shone,
> And languish'd all the Loves, the ambrosial zone.
> (15–26, *italics mine*)

In this respect, the omitted line in "Christabel" that caused such a puzzlement for Hazlitt, served not so much to hide, but rather to highlight the very sensuousness of the scene Coleridge was about to suppress, evoking furthermore the image of Sappho, the icon of licentiousness. Yet, interpretations like that of Hazlitt, and of Gillman, cemented also the notion of horror connected to this scene. For although subsequent editions still lack the descriptive line of Geraldine's bosom ("hideous, deformed, and pale of hue"), readers have equated the sight greeting Christabel's eyes with the ambiguous mark of shame and seal of sorrow Geraldine mentions in line 257. It is partly this scene that introduces the mythological figure of Lilith into the present discourse.

In 1895 George MacDonald, a long-time admirer of Coleridge, was to build the picture of Geraldine's mark of shame and seal of sorrow into his novel *Lilith*:

> "What is that under thy right hand?"
> For her arm lay across her bosom, and her hand was pressed to her side. A swift pang contorted her beautiful face, and passed.
> "It is but a leopard-spot that lingers! it will quickly follow those I have dismissed," she answered. "Thou art beautiful because God created thee, but thou art the slave of sin: take thy hand from thy side."

> Her hand sank away, and as it dropt she looked him in the eyes with a quailing fierceness that had in it no surrender. He gazed a moment at the spot.
> "It is not on the leopard; it is on the woman!" he said. "Nor will it leave thee until it hath eaten to thy heart, and thy beauty hath flowed from thee through the open wound"! (323–4)

Although the parallels between MacDonald's romance *Lilith* and Coleridge's "Christabel" have been repeatedly noted (see for example Prickett, 195, 196), as well as Coleridge's influence on Dante Gabriel Rossetti, from whom the latter "inherited Geraldine the deamon-woman... creating from her his Lilith" (Railo, 380, 269), the mythological figure of Lilith has seldom emerged in critical debates as a model for Geraldine.[12] But it is not only in retrospect that Lilith surfaces as a proto-Geraldine figure. One of the first potent signs that hint at Geraldine being more than a mistress in distress is the angry moan of the old "mastiff bitch" emitted while Christabel and Geraldine were crossing the Baron's court:

> The mastiff old did not awake,
> Yet she an angry moan did make!
> And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
> Never till now she utter'd yell
> Beneath the eye of Christabel.
> Perhaps it is the *owlet's scritch*:
> For what can ail the mastiff bitch?
> (142–148, *italics mine*)

As in the bed-chamber scene, the narrator here, too, fails to supply the reader with the exact image of "what can ail the mastiff bitch." Instead, there is a tentative allusion to an owlet's scritch – a mere sound, yet ominous, for it recalls the nocturnal fowl superstitiously regarded as a bad omen. But more importantly, the screech owl has a specific connection with the she-demon Lilith.[13] In the works of the Kabbalists, Lilith is, among other things, a "demon of screeching – her name taken as if derived from the verb YLL, 'to scream'" (Patai, 248). Notably, in the only brief scriptural reference to Lilith (Isaiah 34: 14) the Hebrew word *lilith* is rendered "screech owl" in the English King James Version of the Bible.[14] Yet Lilith is also closely associated with Geraldine's bestial image of the snake. In the *Zohar* ("Book of Splendor"), the most important work of the Kabbalistic literature written ca. 1286 by Moses de Leon, Lilith is the female of Samael, the King of Demons and is "called Serpent, Woman of Harlotry, End of All Flesh, End of Days" (*Zohar* i.148a, Sitre Torah in Patai, 231). The Serpent title of Lilith is important because the *Zohar* also tells the story of the snake (Lilith) seducing Eve.[15] Geraldine and Christabel can be thus seen as reincarnations of Lilith and Eve, for the former is to the lat-

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[12] Even Amy Scerba's remarkable survey of the development of Lilith representations from early Jewish texts through the Romantic period mentions only Goethe and Keats prior to Rossetti's poems about Lilith, although McFarland argues that "Coleridge, in truth, may lie behind Keats's entire poem [that of 'Lamia']" (145).

[13] For a detailed survey of Lilith see Raphael Patai's *Hebrew Goddess*, 221–254.

[14] "The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the *screech owl* also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest" (Isaiah 34.14). Interestingly enough, the Latin Vulgata translates lilith with the word lamia ("Et occurrent daemonia onocentauris et pilosus clamabit alter ad alterum ibi cubavit *lamia* et invenit sibi requiem") – the myth whereof A. H. Nethercot demonstrated as being the analogical matrix for Coleridge's poem.

[15] "After the snake had lain with Eve and cast filth upon her, she bore Cain" (Zohar iii.76b–77a, in Scerba). No doubt, it is this connection between the snake and Lilith that makes the latter the sire of Cain in Edward Le Comte's novel, *I, Eve,* in which he retells the story of the Fall from Eve's point of view.

ter "as a siren is to a mermaid [...] Lilith is assertive, seductive, and ultimately destructive: Eve is passive, faithful, and supportive" (Schwartz, 6). Hence Judith Plaskow, a professor of religious studies and a proponent of feminist theology, claims that the core of the negative fears and desires of the rabbis who created Lilith is that Eve will become like her if exposed to her influence (Kyam, 379–380). This very fear is manifested in "Christabel", for Christabel displays the snake-like features of Geraldine in the hissing sounds she emits, and in the passive imitation of Geraldine's facial expressions (560–583).

To what extent Coleridge was familiar with the Lilith legend before or during the composition of "Christabel" is not clear. He obviously read of Lilith before the publication of his poem, when he translated Goethe's *Faust*.[16] Although Lilith's role in Faust is not fundamental (i.3764), it is still important for, according to Scerba, it brought Lilith from the realm of Jewish mysticism and thought into that of "mainstream" literature and culture.[17] However, Coleridge did not need to rely on Goethe to learn about Lilith. As he was fond of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), the perusal of which was highly popular among the Romantics, Coleridge must have read the entry about Lilith in its "Digression of the Nature of Spirits, bad Angels, or Devils, and How they cause Melancholy." It reads: "Concerning the first beginning of them [i.e. daemons] the Thalmudists say that Adam had a wife called Lilis, before he marryed Eve, and of her he begat nothing but Devils" (1.2.1.2).[18]

What Sappho and Lilith have in common at this point is their sexual independence, exhibited by Sappho in her love for her same sex, and by Lilith in her refusal to succumb to Adam's dominance and imposed sexual position. This aspect of Lilith (i.e. the first, albeit unsuccumbing, wife of Adam) is first introduced in *The Alphabet of Ben Sira* (circa 800 CE), one of the founding texts of the Lilith legend written in the style of a commentary on the *Bible* with a pronounced irreverent tone, which renders it "one of the earliest literary parodies in Hebrew literature, a kind of academic burlesque" that included "vulgarities, absurdities, and the irreverent treatment of acknowledged sancta" (Bronznick, 168, in Scerba). In the following I give a relevant excerpt of the Lilith story:

> After God created Adam, who was alone, He said, 'It is not good for man to be alone' (Genesis 2: 18). He then created a woman for Adam, from the earth, as He had created Adam himself, and called her Lilith. Adam and Lilith immediately began to fight. She said, 'I will not lie below,' and he said, 'I will not lie beneth you, but only on top. For you are fit only to be in the bottom position, while I am to be the superior one.' Lilith responded, 'We are equal to each other inasmuch as we were both created from the earth.' But they would not listen to one another. When Lilith saw this, she pronounced the Ineffable Name and flew away into the air...
>
> (Stern and Mirsky ed., 183–184, in Scerba; see also Patai, 223–224)

This portion of the Lilith story has been the most frequently quoted and appropriated one. One aspect of alteration is especially important, namely, that Lilith, although created like Adam a human, will acquire an immortal status. In Patai's words:

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[16] Coleridge began the translation of Goethe's *Faust* in 1814, but he later abandoned the project. James McKusick claims that the 1821 anonymous English translation of *Faust* is the work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The translation was edited by Frederic Burwick and James C. McKusick and published by Oxford University Press in November 2007.

[17] For example, Dante Gabriel Rossetti used the Lilith quote from *Faust* as an "epigraph" to his painting (Scerba).

[18] Burton's *Anatomy* was partially also the source for another character in "Christabel", namely, for Leoline (see 2.3.7).

> No she-demon has ever achieved as fantastic a career as Lilith, who started from the lowliest of origins, was a failure as Adam's intended wife, became the paramour of lascivious spirits, rose to be the bride of Samael the Demon King, ruled as Queen of Zemargad and Sheba, and ended up as the consort of God himself. (221)

Because of the metamorphosis of her roles – many a times manifested in bodily metamorphoses as well – Lilith leaves the realm of the natural to inhibit that of the supernatural, and thus gives birth to an elaborate Jewish demonology (Schwartz, 8) appropriated by Burton, and the Romantics. Because of Lilith's predominantly supernatural nature, she is also a perfect embodiment of the Todorovian marvelous.

Sappho, on the contrary, has no demonic features. One could consider her damned but she still remains a mortal whose mortality is especially pronounced by her dramatic death, or supposed death. In Reynolds' words, "on the one hand, her leap into space represents a sublime moment of will, of self-glorification in a starry sky" rendering it the most popular scene in the late eighteenth century, "just after the Enlightenment and with the rise of the Romantics." On the other hand, and more pertinent to the present paper, "the fall into the abyss suggests human failure [...] and so Sappho became associated with 'the fallen woman', the sexually suspect carrier of disease and social disruption" (7). In terms of Todorov's theory on the fantastic, Sappho is thus the polar opposite of the marvelous, and hence of Lilith. Sappho is uncanny, as far as uncanny "is a confrontation with 'concealed' repressions [...] something that we might wish had 'remained... secret and hidden but has come to light'" (Armitt, 50). What had been secret, or rather hidden in connection to Sappho, was her sexuality. In the most influential and the most translated of all Sappho's extant verses (Fragment 31) the poetess looks at, and desires, a girl who favors a man; however, most of the translations preceding the eighteenth century make the speaker of the poem male. But, as Raynolds puts it, "if a translator had Greek, he (usually he) would have known the sleight of hand he was practicing" (22). Applying Freud's observation, one can say that Sappho's uncanniness belongs to "that class of the frightening that leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" (Thomas, 52).

With Lilith as the supernatural and thus marvelous, and Sappho as the "natural" yet uncanny, Geraldine exhibits the liminal position of the fantastic – the hesitant in-between, the infinitely suspended uncertainty. For the fantastic, in Todorov's terms, occupies only the duration of the process of decision between the uncanny and the marvelous, and the minute we choose our side we leave the fantastic behind (see Todorov, 25). And since "Christabel" is a fragment, or in W. H. Coleridge's words, a "sequence of fragments" (Thomas, 54), the character of Geraldine never completely lapses into that of Sappho, nor into that of Lilith. Leaving his poem unfinished Coleridge (probably unawares) resisted narrative closure and denied his readers "consolatory means" that, according to Armitt, would have allowed the female protagonist (Cristabel) the only, and from a feminist critical point of view, reductionist way 'out' by "winning her prince and embracing the enclosures of the 'happily ever after'" (28). For the same reason, Coleridge was able to voice the fear of "the outlawing bogey of the strong-minded Amazon" without having those fears pacified, or even clearly defined. The character of Geraldine raises multiple questions, but it refuses to answer them. The reader is thus left to his own devices – be it conscience, faith or ideology – to answer those questions, or to remain hesitant and succumb to the infinite fantastic nature of Geraldine.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. "Sappho listening to the insinuation of Love." Engraved by Mannin after a picture by Giovanni Battista Cipriani (Dublin, c. 1783). Size 10 x 7 inches (25 x 18 cm). Source: <http://www.intaglio-fine-art.com/images/trn095a.jpg>.

Fig. 2. "Sappho embracing Love." Engraved by Mannin after a picture by Giovanni Battista Cipriani. Size 10 x 7 inches (25 x 18 cm). Source: <http://www.intaglio-fine-art.com/images/trn095b.jpg>.

Zsófia Anna Tóth

The Paradox of Kurt Wimmer's Film *Equilibrium*

It has always been a central concern of written and visual artworks to discuss the dangers of the '(post-)modern world's scientific and technological developments. The innovations's potential harm is believed to reside in their stimulation of sensations and their transformation of human existence into an alienated, mechanical non-being. This is an especially favored topic of science fiction novels and films. *Equilibrium* (2002) is a captivating film that treats the question of humans-turned-machines as tools in the hands of a 'Power' willing to create perfect stability in a dehumanized, or rather post-human world called Libria.

My aim in this paper is to discuss the modes and reasons why humans are turned into mechanical beings in the film entitled *Equilibrium*. The fantastic is tackled through the discussion of science fiction and dystopia. The focus of my analysis is on the mechanical aspect of these humanoid creatures and the question whether the citizens' 'pharmaceutical mechanization' can ever result in the desired, yet totalitarian, effect of creating equilibrium, and, if not, what grotesque results are realized. My stance is that, in the film, humans – even if dehumanized by drugs – are incompatible with this 'heavenly' state, so that equilibrium in *Equilibrium* turns out to be an impossibility, a paradox in itself.

In my analysis, I pay special attention to the role of central(ized) manipulation of people and how this manipulation affects their mental and bodily functions and, mainly as a result of this, how they view the(ir) world and themselves in it. The title of the film under discussion suggests that the aim of the regime in this futuristic dystopia is to create and maintain equilibrium in the world and in the lives of people. It could be supposed that in order to achieve this 'ideal', the means used would be peaceful with regard to the common good of people, whose welfare is supposedly the goal to be achieved. However, the regime in question does not employ pacifistic modes. Thus, it seems that the whole "enterprise" is already a paradox in itself. Talking about peace, safety, the survival of the race and the benefit of people can be seen in the forefront, but in the background the means through which these are to be realized are oppression, manipulation, violence, murder, lies and degradation.

Equilibrium is a science fiction film treating the question of dystopia in a futuristic and technocratic fantasy world – a world where the central focus is on technological change, development and scientific experiments such as social, climactic, geological and ecological changes (Cuddon, 791). On the basis of Abrams' definition it can also be stated that science fiction and fantasy are closely related, since they both "represent an imagined reality that is radically different in its nature and functioning from the world of our ordinary experience" (Abrams, 278), while the setting is often projected into the future. Abrams also states that sci-fi and fantasy stories often handle fictional utopias or dystopias, projected into the future (279). *Equilibrium* seems to be a utopia with a contestable equilibrium, and turns out to be an example of a perfect dystopia – the negation of the utopia it sets out to realize. Utopias, according to Abrams, are "fictional writings that represent an ideal but nonexistent political and social way of life" (327). The expression itself derives from the title of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, which he created "by conflating the Greek words 'eutopia' (good place) and 'outopia' (noplace)" (Abrams, 328). Dystopia, by contrast, has been defined as:

> The term dystopia ("bad place") has recently come to be applied to works of fiction, including science fiction, that represent a very unpleasant imaginary world in which ominous tendencies of our present social, political, and technological order are projected into a disastrous future culmination (Abrams, 328).
> The seeming impossibility of utopia (and the many failures to create it) has produced its converse: dystopia or anti-utopia; in some cases almost chiliastic forecasts of the doom awaiting mankind (Cuddon, 959).

Equilibrium is a dystopia. The film is set after World War III, which has caused immense devastation. Thus, the leaders of Libria came up with the idea that the cause of all the problems in the world and the reason for wars and death is human sentiment manifested in hatred and rage. The aim of the regime is to achieve peace, to live in a safe, calm world, to live without wars and desolation, and to secure the future of the human race. For this aim all inhabitants must get rid of emotions. Thus, the Librians create humanoid automatons through the use of a medicine called "Prozium".[1]

Prozium is to be taken at regular intervals by injection, whenever special watches alert the people to do so. It has an immediate effect and sedates the users, who continue their lives like automatons without feelings, emotions or thoughts about humanity and the meaning of life.[2] A perfect example of this is when John Preston, the hero of the story, and his partner Errol[3] Partridge arrive back from a clean-up raid: while Partridge is incomprehensibly affected by the events, Preston claims that after these clean-ups he always becomes reassured of their vocation. Partridge answers this by asking whether their raids really have the intended result (Preston looks at him saying "I beg your pardon?") and realizing what he has done, Partridge injects the drug immediately. There is a sudden change and he replies like a machine that the clean-ups are indeed effective. (Soon after this, however, he is executed like the other "emotion rebels.") *(Fig. 1, Fig. 2)*

This scene grasps in minute detail the grotesque nature not only of the given situation but of the whole dystopian world with all its theories encompassed in "Equilibrium." Wolfgang Kayser summarizes the essence of the grotesque in three sentences: "[...] THE GROTESQUE IS THE ESTRANGED WORLD" (184). "[...] THE GROTESQUE IS A PLAY WITH THE ABSURD" (187). "And thus we arrive at a final interpretation of the grotesque: AN ATTEMPT TO INVOKE AND SUBDUE THE DEMONIC ASPECTS OF THE WORLD" (188). In the world of "Equilibrium" all these aspects can be detected, it is a perfectly estranged, alienated world warring against emotions, feelings, the human aspects of the biological and anatomical

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[1] Probably referring to *Prozac*, a much-known and widely-used drug today, which is usually prescribed as a treatment for major depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder and panic disorder (Choice Media Inc., *Health Square* 2006). However, it is also common knowledge nowadays that this is a very dangerous and problematic antidepressant and should not be prescribed because it has more negative effects than positive ones and long-lasting damages if taken. As an addition to all this: Prozium is a portmanteau of Prozac and Valium both having calming, sedative effects. (Internet Movie Database Inc., *The Internet Movie Database,* 2006). Nevertheless, Prozium was originally to be called Librium (and sound as if it liberated people from all their chagrin and problems) and because the state is called Libria and its citizens Librians in the film. However, in reality Librium is a registered trade name for the anti-anxiety drug chlordiazepoxide. Thus, the name was changed quickly (Internet Movie Database Inc., *The Internet Movie Database* and Choice Media Inc., *Health Square,* 2006) .

[2] It is similar to soma in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* except it is not meant to provide an occasional hedonistic or positive experience (although it does so on a regular basis). It is meant to sedate people and to create a constant calm and neutral mental state of equilibrium.

[3] His name probably alludes to his erring. He is the first one to err among the clerics (at least, the first of whom we know).

Figure 1

Figure 2

construction of humanoid creatures. According to Kayser's idea about the grotesque "[t]he mechanical object is alienated by being brought to life, the human being by being deprived of it. Among the most persistent motifs of the grotesque we find human bodies reduced to puppets, marionettes, and automata, and their faces frozen into masks" (183). This description applies to all Librian subjects. People are automata resembling programmed computers, their faces are masks frozen into an emotionless expression. They are like puppets, marionettes manipulated and used by the leaders for their own means and ends.

These manipulated, transformed, controlled entities become very similar to cyborgs. In this film, we encounter an unusual kind of cyborg. The members of this dystopian empire are not cyborgs in the sense that their bodies are built up or created as a mixture of machine and wo/man in their 'material' entity. Rather their human bodies are turned into machines by annuling any kind of human attribute in them through the effect of Prozium, which influences and manipulates their minds and thinking and turns them into 'true' mechanical beings. They are automata: flesh and blood entities without feelings, sentiments, affections, wishes, personal attitudes and any sort of individual characteristic features; their minds are modified. Hence, they are not cyborgs in a sense of material and physical machine-wo/men but in a mental sense.

Through Prozium, the government produces the perfectly docile bodies that can be used, directed, manipulated in such ways as best suit the aims of the central power. The image of the people of Libria thus corresponds with the idea of the docile body defined by Michel Foucault.

> La Mettrie's *L'Homme-machine* is both a materialist reduction of the soul and a general theory of *dressage*, at the centre of which reigns the notion of 'docility', which joins the analysable body to the manipulable body. A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved. The celebrated automata, on the other hand, were not only a way of illustrating an organism, they were also political puppets, small-scale models of power [...]. (1995, 136)

According to Donna Haraway, a "cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as of fiction" (149). Even though this definition of the cyborg fails to apply to *Equilibrium* Haraway's next claim sheds new light on the film: "[l]iberation rests on the construction of the consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility" (149). Liberation is only possible if consciousness is constructed in a way that makes it possible and if oppression is apprehended, and thus, possibilities could be opened up for changes or for new ways. As long as everyone takes Prozium incessantly and without questions or protest, oppression does not end. Unless someone ceases to take this

medication and is able to realize the whole situation, liberation is not possible. Nevertheless, there are people who refuse to take it and form the resistance movement against the leading power. There is a fierce fight for liberation, but the final victory is only feasible if the 'savior figure' refuses medication likewise, joins the resisting powers and redeems the people from their terrible fate. This 'saviour figure' is John Preston, but he needs time to realize this and turn against 'the Father', a God-like figure at the head of the empire.

The quintessential aim of the central power is to achieve peace and equilibrium by depriving the citizens of their human qualities. The fight for peace creates fierce violence in the name of peace and, eventually, turns out to be a fight against emotions, because they presume that peace is only possible for humankind if they annihilate the 'human'.

Several other films discuss similar cases of how an emotionless society tries to control its members in an authoritative and dictatorial way such as *Alphaville, une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution* (1965) or *Pleasantville* (1998). In fact, science fiction literature and film often deal with future societies which eradicate emotions or with mechanical creatures who awaken to 'human' senses. To name just a few: in *Artificial Intelligence: AI* (2001) a little robot would like to be a 'real' boy and tries to regain the love of his human mother, and later on to find his 'real' mother; as such he embodies a robot struggling with emotions similar to the Oedipal complex. In *Bicentennial Man* (1999), a robot – an android – becomes more and more human-like as he has feelings and ventures on an emotional fight for his right to become human. *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991) is about a robot that becomes human-like by starting to understand people and to develop affections towards human beings. In the case of *The Island* (2005), clones, used as safety backups, as living organ-providing 'stores' treated as nonhumans, struggle with personality and identity problems. In *Con Flux* (2005), a perfect assassin, a dehumanized and anatomically modified human-machine creature, regains her old consciousness – memories and emotions from the time when she was a real human being. The famous *Matrix Trilogy* (1999–2003–2003) focuses on the boundary between mechanical and human, introducing machines which stand for the fake 'equilibrium-creators'. *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) features a very intelligent computer, HAL–9000 with a personality and a superior intelligence who starts to behave like a man. *Solaris* (1972) and *Metropolis* (1927), one of the oldest and most fundamental films in film history and in science fiction, tackle the question of human versus machine, their intermingling, transformation, and eventually their fight. *Solyaris* forces us to face the old dilemma of human emotions, wishes and desires and what a machine or a mechanical being can do with them, how a disembodied entity can manipulate, experiment and work with human sentiments exploring humanness or humanity. In *Metropolis* workers become machine-men, almost literal embodiments of cogs in a machine. Their mode of salvation is understanding, humanity and love. The 'savior figure' here is a woman who has an evil double in the form of a machine woman, a *femme fatale* who brings destruction and desolation. By the end of the film, everybody is saved by her death and the destruction of the machines, so that an Eden-like picture constitutes the final shot and promises to provide the final answer to everything.

In all of these films, the quest for the ultimate answer to all problems lies in human emotions and the struggle with them either as machines or humans, or machines turned humans, or humans turned machines. *Equilibrium* joins these films in the problematization of human emotions as the source of all pain and bliss, of good and evil, as something that cannot be eliminated and annihilated because it constitutes the driving force of our existence. *Equilibrium* also presents a concept where the desired equilibrium deconstructs itself through its own (quasi-) realization, which occurs through the elimination of human sentiments.

In *Pleasantville*, another film that treats the question of emotions and their role in forming society, we do not have an absolutely emotionless society, only a 'pleasant' one, without any troubling sentiment or characteristic features. But as David and Jennifer 'drop into' this world, everything slowly changes: the black and white is exchanged with a wide variety of colors, and the emotions become intensified, evidently, not without conflicts. *Alphaville* resembles *Equilibrium* in so far as love, self-expression and emotions are not 'simply' missing. Rather they are all banned and those who venture into these 'fields' are outlaws, criminals, delinquents who are punished or even killed in a technocratic society. It seems that the attempts at handling this theme end in a fight for the freedom to feel and have sentiments. The conclusions of these films emphasize the significance of emotions and their central role in human life; for without them there is no life, which suggests that a perfect peaceful state is not 'compatible' with humans, and in a sense, humankind and peace are not a 'successful match'.

Equilibrium also attempts to reveal the mysteries of the combination of peace and human nature, which turns out to be a mismatch. While Prozium enforces a peaceful state through medical operation in the bodies and minds of the people, their emotions are able to break through this 'blessed equilibrium' and cause accidental disturbances. Only a few select are capable of this, yet their 'excellence' can liberate everyone. Moreover, the chosen one has that wonderful ability to appear absolutely emotionless without medicine solely by controlling himself. At first, he cannot defeat the lie detector, but in the end, when he is cornered, Preston is capable of suppressing his feelings to the extent that the lie detector shows the emotional level of a steel pipe. Our protagonist sets out as a perfectly emotionless automaton, who is the best secret agent in the emotion detection and destruction squad and who is absolutely rigid and steel-like. However, ironically his professionalism in his job is due to his hidden ability to detect feelings. It is an oxymoron that the best automaton is the best person to find sentiments and to destroy them, but this man slowly realizes that Prozium is not what people really need and he therefore refuses to take it any longer. As the film proceeds, he sees things with an increasing clarity, he becomes human, and he eventually liberates everyone from the 'heavenly equilibrium' they are forced to live in. Thus, he gives them a chance to find their own happiness without central, forced, and uniformist happiness.

The name of our protagonist is also telling: John Preston. John is one of the most widely-used Christian male names in the world, which suggests that he is a common everyman. However, other implications allude to his importance: firstly, the name means "the Lord is gracious" or "Yahweh is gracious;" secondly, the one among the twelve apostles whom Jesus Christ liked the most was John, the supposed author of the fourth Gospel and Revelation; and thirdly, John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ who baptized him (Campbell). These Biblical references imply that John Preston as the highest-ranking Grammaton Cleric in Libria has a symbolical significance in the evolution of the plot. He is a successful man because he never makes mistakes, always detects the sense-offenders, and finds the hidden places of accumulated prohibited objects – as the job of the Tetragrammaton Clerics is not only to find the guilty people who dare feel but also the objects that might arouse feelings, such as literary works, art works, musical pieces, and vivid colored objects. John's family name, Preston, means "priest town" (Campbell) and also signals that he is the "center of the Clerics", the leader of all.

This suggests that the protagonist is a chosen person although at the beginning he does not realize this, while 'the Father' of Libria and the whole Tertragrammaton Council – the government of Libria – as well as the leaders of the resistance – the Underground movement – know him well and all of them are aware of his hidden abilities. The film is also about his awakening recognition of his abilities and the mission attached to his talents. In fact, he is the Savior, the

Messiah, the Redeemer of the people. This is explained in part by Jürgen – the leader of the Resistance – and in part also by Du Pont,[4] who turns out to be the successor of the Father. (The latter's death was kept a secret and Du Pont was elected as his substitute while the screens and hologram pictures went on with the projected images of the original Father's figure and face). The protagonist's full name, Grammaton Cleric First Class John Preston, is pronounced right before he finally (although unknowingly) connects his destiny with the resistance to Tetragrammaton, when he kills a whole squad of policemen in defense of his life and of a little Bernese Mountain Dog puppy. In this scene, he is lit from behind by the headlights of a truck and we get the image of Christ on the cross when he raises his arms (ironically though he has guns in his hands and starts shooting). This image is repeated again later 'at the final countdown', when he kills all the leaders, including Du Pont, the Father surrogate.

The 'world' where this all takes place is a rigid, lifeless machine-like construction. Libria is a dystopian city-state, a police state where "the Father" as he is named occupies the central position as an ultimate ruler, a God-like figure. His personality cult and absolute dictatorship render the Father omnipresent: he is equipped with the all-seeing "Eye of power" (Foucault 1980, 146–65) that exercises its disciplinary gaze everywhere and all the time.[5] Images of the Father are projected on screens, while his hologram figure gives a speech highly-guarded by policemen in a sacred place. It is revealed only at the end of the film that "the Father" had died a long time ago and his non-existence was covered up by artificial over-representation. The Tetragrammaton Council is the so-called 'government' (but these leaders turn out to be the greatest sense-offenders, who indulge in the possession of forbidden objects). Unconditional conformity is enforced by the police (in fact, an army) and the special order of the police,[6] the Grammaton Clerics. These are trained to anticipate in advance and to predict the movements and actions of others and to know in advance who will dare to feel.[7]

The whole of Libria (as if an implication to a library, the container of all knowledge) is a technocratic and futuristic manifestation of the Symbolic Order with 'the Father' on top who is really the figure of the 'Law'. In fact, everything happens in the name of the Father (Lacan

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[4] Jürgen's name means "farmer, earthworker" and may be an allusion to George the dragon-slayer as Jürgen is a form of George (Campbell), while Du Pont's name signals that he is the bridge, the connection between the Father and the others since no one can meet the Father.

[5] The film has references to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, with allusions to Big Brother, the Party or the Thought Police (Orwell, 1964). *Intertextuality* is hardly avoidable and the web of allusions and connections is tightly interwoven considering the number of works that deal with issues similar to those of *Equilibrium* (2002).

[6] According to Leighton C. Whitaker, institutions train their members to make certain sacrifices for the common good and they are often required to destroy the opponents (Whitaker, 73–77). Whitaker adopts Rummel's categorization of governments where three types are listed: democratic, authoritarian and totalitarian. The degree to which they differ signals the citizens' abilities to question the given government's authority and their right to kill others and their own people likewise. Since the more totalitarian a central power is, the more liberties it will take and the more people it will kill. Its leaders are usually God-like figures. There is an element of self-destruction in power and this changes according to the dynamics of the given power (Whitaker 2000, 163–168). All this is prevalent in *Equilibrium* (2002) and the totalitarian system in the film shows the signs of all this described above.

[7] This also has connections and allusions to *Minority Report* where a Precrime Police Force and three Pre-Cogs have to predict and detect crimes before they are committed: they know what has to be done and they arrest people before they have the chance to commit the crime; thus, supposedly, a crime-free society is created (Spielberg, 2002). In *Equilibrium* (2002) the Tetragrammaton Clerics also have to sense and know when somebody feels or commits a sense offense and they have to be able to predict the next step of the delinquent; and thus, the Clerics have to capture and kill the offender.

2001, 186). *Equilibrium* is the name of the centers where Prozium is distributed and the Nethers is the name of the place outside of Libria where most of the Resistance hides (and also under the ground in Libria) – these are the remnants of former civilizations (and cities) destroyed in World War III.[8]

Libria could also be described in terms of Vilém Flusser's concept of the city as an entangled net of knots of intersubjectivity, a complex conglomeration of multiple nets (of relations) and, in effect, a fractured chaos. It cannot be located geographically because it exists in the relations between people and it is also a dance of masks (Flusser, 320–8). Similarily, Foucault's idea of 'heterotopia' suggests that people do not live in a void, but in a heterogeneous space, inside places which are "like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. [...] outside of all places, [...] absolutely different from all [...]" (1998, 239). Several of Foucault's "heterotopias" can be connected to Libria, such as the privileged, sacred or forbidden places, the boarding school, rest homes, psychiatric hospitals, prisons (Foucault 1998, 240), museums and libraries (Foucault 1998, 242). Libria is all this in one, it is privileged and sacred, and at the same time, a container of forbidden places. It is like a boarding school with military regulations and strict 'education'; it is like a rest home or a psychiatric hospital because people are drugged and treated; it is like a prison because people are closed, locked within this sphere where they are under close and constant surveillance and they have to keep strict regulations. Libria is like a library and/or a museum where the enclosed knowledge of all time and places can be found (though it is accessible solely to the privileged). According to Foucault, in libraries and museums time never stops (1998, 242). Thus, it seems that Libria is eternal – an allusion to the *Città Eterna.*

Tetragrammaton is of vital significance in the text, since it is the name of the central power, of the rulers' order-like military organization, and of the government. Tetragrammaton is the usual reference to the Hebrew name for God. Tetragrammaton means "the four Hebrew letters, YHWH, in the name of God" (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica,* 11: 660). As the definition continues: "Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, his name being revealed to Moses as four Hebrew consonants (YHWH) called the tetragrammaton" (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica,* 12: 804). The main symbol of this state is a circular image with four "T" letters with their feet in the center (their flag is similar to the flag of Nazi Germany except here there are four "T"s in the middle instead of a Swastika). This way, it looks as if there were four Crosses of Tau in the middle.[9]

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[8] The name, Nethers, probably refers to the Underground and the underworld, the Netherworld because nether really means 'under' or 'lower' as in the case of Netherland meaning 'under-land', the 'land under'.

[9] The significance of this symbolism has to be revealed since the *ankh*, the *tau*, and the *swastika* are all connected, and carry similar connotations. The interpretation of these and other kinds of crosses and the symbol, the cross itself, add to the interpretation of the message of the film. They all lead to the idea that John Preston is a savior figure in a world where the power is expressed through religious symbolism primarily focusing on the cross and its implications. As follows: "[T]he sign of life in ancient Egypt was the ankh, in Coptic *onech.* It is formed by a loop elongated downward, to which a tau is attached [...] Much discussion has been devoted to the meaning of the ankh as a hieroglyph used to designate life. Egyptologists agree in regarding it as the symbol of life as opposed to death-earthly life and life after death. [...] Although the meaning of the ankh as a symbol of life is clear, the question of its origin has given rise to numerous hypotheses. The first interpreter, Athanasius Kircher (seventeenth century), considered it a mystical *tau.* [...] The gammadion is a Greek cross with its ends bent at right angles: four gammas attach to a common base, all pointing either clockwise, to the right, or counterclockwise, to the left. In India, it is an ancient solar symbol and is the emblem of the god Visnu, representing the cosmic wheel spinning on an axis. When the branches point to the right, the cross is called a swastika [...] or, in Sanskrit, a *svastika.* [...] The swastika did in fact

The Tetragrammaton symbol brings us back to the Orwellian notion of the Panopticon where the Other's gaze is present all the time to perform an invisible, inescapable surveillance (Foucault 1995, 170–228). This, according to Žižek, can result in a compulsive need to be observed constantly so as to feel that our subjectivity is reassured (2001b, 203). In the Lacanian framework, the emergence of subjectivity occurs in the "mirror stage" when the child reaching this stage identifies with the image perceived in the mirror (2004, 1–9). In Žižek's terms, the identity formation in our highly technological world can even result in the experience that "I exist only insofar as I am looked at all the time" (2001b, 203). He claims that it can even reach the point of a tragicomic reversal of the Panopticon when the Other's gaze becomes the guarantee of the subject's being, without which it would cease to exist (2001b, 203). Similarily, Vivian Sobchack[10] discusses the question of the "expanded gaze" and claims that the subject is threatened by the Other's objectifying gaze, while Nishitani's critique suggests that the Other's gaze does not serve to annihilate the subject but to strengthen it (98). In *Equilibrium*, we meet this phenomenon in that the subjects (meaning citizens) become subjects (meaning subjectivity) through the constant gaze of "the Father" – and not only through his gaze but his voice, which is matched with it and is projected towards the people all the time from screens

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experience great diffusion throughout the areas of Aryan migration. [...] Hitler reappropriated it as an Aryan cultic sign and a symbol of anti-Semitism; from 1933 to 1945 he made it the symbol of Nazism. [...] If it is confirmed that the cult of Visnu took over the fertility cults of the pre-Vedic era, the swastika could have been adopted as a symbol of universal life that the god Visnu is in charge of maintaining. In the swastika we would have a meaning analogous to that of the ankh in Egypt: fullness of life. [...] In Roman art, artists have more than once represented Christ against a swastika [...]" (Eliade, 155–157). The cross "is a primordial symbol related to three other basic symbols: the center, the circle, and the square (Champeaux and Sterckx). By the intersection of its two straight lines, which coincides with the center, it opens this center up to the outside, it divides the circle into fours parts, it engenders the square. In the symbolism of the cross, we will limit ourselves to four essential elements: the tree, the number four, weaving, and navigation. [...] The number four is the number symbolizing the totality of space and time. [...] The number four has various cosmological aspects: four cardinal points, four winds, four lunar phases, four seasons, and the four rivers at the beginning of the world. [...] This idea of wholeness and universality symbolized by the number four is also found in the biblical texts. [...] *Revelation* appropriates this number as characterizing the universe in its totality: four angels, four corners of the earth, and four winds (*Rv.* 7:1)" (Eliade, 158–160). "For Christians, the cross is a sign evoking a historical event basic to the history of salvation: the crucifixion and death of Jesus at Calvary. [...] The church itself is a great mystery in which the cross is the decisive event for salvation and is linked to the mystery of creation. [...] On a tau-shaped cross a figure is fastened, his arms outstretched, his head-an ass's head-turned toward another figure in adoration before him. [...] In the second century, Christians engraved three forms of the cross in the catacombs [...]: 1, the Greek cross, the Latin cross, and the *tau*, which is the shape of the torture instrument to which Origen and Tertullian allude. [...] Archeological documentation gives us diverse cruciform symbols [...]: the decussate cross, or cross of Saint Andrew; the patibulary cross (the *tau*); the capital cross, called the Latin cross; the Greek or quadrate cross; the *florida* cross, covered with ornaments; the ankh or ansate cross, the sign of life used in ancient Egypt and taken up by the Christians; and the gammadion cross, used also in the Aryan world. [...] Christian symbolism of the cross is linked to the mystery of creation as well as to the mystery of redemption" (Eliade, 161–163). At quite an early phase, the cross became the most frequent Christian symbol and the object of cultic worship. According to early Christian documents, its shape was/is connected to the Greek letter *T* (→*Tau*) (Diós, 552). The cross was an ancient tool of execution with the help of which the most severe crimes or a revolt against the central power were punished. When Jesus was crucified there were only two types of crosses used: the *crux commissa* with a T shape and the *crux immissa* (or *capitata*), the Greek or the Latin cross (Bartha, 29). The cross of Christ could only be the *crux commissa* or the *crux immissa* (or *capitata*) (Haag, 951).

[10] She deals with the work of Bryson who examines Sartre, Lacan and Nishitani's concepts about the gaze.

all over Libria. These screens function as mirrors and people find their subjectivity through "the Father's" gaze.[11]

John Preston's 'true' or 'new' subjectivity is also found through mirrors. There are many scenes involving looking into mirrors. His 'original' or 'old' subjectivity was constructed in a way described in the previous paragraph.[12] However, when he has to execute his former partner, Grammaton Cleric First Class Errol Partridge, for sense-offense the next morning, he accidentally misses his prescribed dose. This time, he stands in front of a mirror in his bathroom. Soon after this, there is a raid in Mary O'Brien's flat (a Librarian woman who has stopped taking Prozium and has accumulated many forbidden objects) where Preston forces her to look into the mirror to see what has become of her. At this moment he actually starts to realize what has become of him. From this point on, the colors are also slowly coming into his life. The contrasts of colored and almost black-and-white shots as well as the contrasts of well-lit (bright) and badly-lit (dark) shots are remarkable and carried out with perfection. Everyone wears black, grey or dark blue uniforms, their hair is fixed strictly to their heads as if they were robots. The only person who is colorful (even among the rebels) is Mary O'Brien, who always wears colorful dresses and whose hair is let down. The protagonist, in spite of his improvement, at the end, wears 'only' white, indicating his purification, his transformation from 'black' to 'white'. He becomes an avenging angel.

The morning after the look into Mary O'Brian's mirror John awakens from a nightmare, he sits up, tears off the opaque cover from his window, and stares at the beauty of the rising sun for the first time in his life. It is as if a different Other were looking at him, it is a different image in front of him, not the one he is accustomed to. He rushes into the bathroom to inject Prozium but looks into the mirror with the gun-like medicine feeder in his hand pressed to his neck, he gazes into the mirror, and then refuses to inject the liquid. *(Fig. 3)* When they have another raid afterwards, for the first time he looks into the eye of a dying person and is deeply touched. When he seeks the secret place of the hidden prohibited objects, he suddenly catches sight of a tiny hole in the wall. He peeps into it and discovers magic on the other side: searching through the objects, he finds an old gramophone, listens to the First Movement of Ludwig van Beetho-

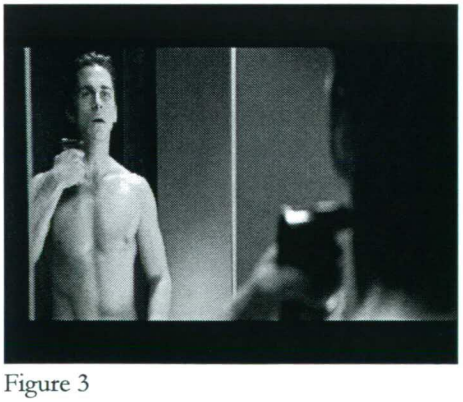

Figure 3

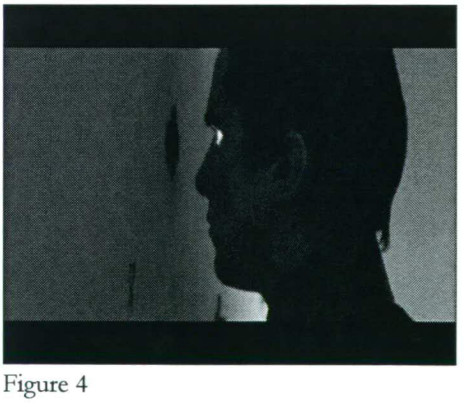

Figure 4

[11] There is a possible allusion to Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* with these huge screens surrounding people and projecting a certain ideology towards them (for example towards Mildred). People find their existence and their subjectivity through these projections in which "aunts" and "cousins" interact with them.

[12] However, it has to be mentioned that all kinds of subjectivity gained via the processes of the mirror stage (as it is theorized by this concept) are misrecognitions, misconceptions and false subjectivities. So even Preston's newly gained subjectivity is also a mirage in a sense.

ven's Ninth Symphony and starts crying. The act of peeping in the hole seems to model the classic case of the "voyeur" as defined by Sartre (Silverman, 164): although in this case nothing awakens Preston to his awareness of himself-as-spectacle, he gains a sense of himself, a self-consciousness and becomes a desiring subject (in the Lacanian sense) (Silverman, 168), so as to make the final decision to change his life and take up the fight. The tiny spot of light is exactly on his eye as if blinding him, as if creating the blind spot through which the actual seeing happens and through which he becomes himself/a true self. *(Fig. 4)*

The problematization of the body is immediately interconnected with the consideration of mental processes and the construction of subjectivity. The body is inherently experienced as a representation, a phenomenon of the psyche (Merleau-Ponty, 108). The people in *Equilibrium* are automata only to the point when they awaken to their real being. The film recalls how extremely difficult it is to realize one's positioning in the ideological framework in which someone is constituted and entrapped (Althusser, 294–304 and Žižek 2001a, 312–325). However, John Preston is capable of self-recognition – in reality or in illusion.

The aim of my paper was to examine the possibilities of equilibrium's functioning in a society and its compatibility with human nature – as problematized within the framework of a dystopic society. Equilibrium can never be achieved in its ideal form since humans are not capable of maintaining a harmonious balance. According to the film, in the context of human society either the humanness is kept without managing a peaceful and ideal state, or a 'humanless' society is created full of mechanical beings living in perfect peace and harmony with themselves and with others. Equilibrium proves a paradox in the interpretational framework of a dystopian vision of the future as presented in *Equilibrium*.

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Sarah Herbe

The Fantastic in Disguise in Hard Science Fiction. A Case Study of Brian Stableford's "Snowball in Hell"

After having examined several attempts to define hard science fiction in *Cosmic Engineers*, his 1996 study on this subgenre, Gary Westfahl comes to the conclusion that all definitions basically agree on three points:

> Hard science fiction is *scientifically accurate* according to the knowledge of its day; hard science fiction includes *explanations and presentations* of its scientific facts; and hard science fiction is based on *careful extrapolation*, or scientific thinking, from known facts to speculations. (1996, 26)

What is, strikingly, absent from this generic definition, however, is a reference to the fantastic in hard science fiction. Frank McConnell, in his contribution to *Hard Science Fiction*, edited by George E. Slusser and Eric S. Rabkin in 1986, mentions the fantastic in connection with hard science fiction, but he emphasises that it should best be avoided:

> The hard SF writer, from Verne to Asimov to Larry Niven, has always made it a point of personal pride that his work is strict extrapolation from the known, with no – or as little as possible – adulterating admixture from the purely fantastic. (17)

Thus, it can be gathered that hard science fiction tries by all means to avoid looking fantastic – fantastic taken to mean that "which exist[s] only in imagination"("Fantastic", *OED*). Roughly, it can be said that the fantastic moment of hard science fiction lies in its presenting scientific innovations which are as yet impossible. By exploring one specific example of British hard science fiction I shall examine how these impossible, fantastic elements in hard science fiction are not presented as something that has sprung only from imagination, but strive to be closely based on what is scientifically possible and known. I shall thereby discuss the characteristic traits of this genre. The text which will serve as an illustration is Brian Stableford's "Snowball in Hell" (2004, 81–119), a short story first published in 2000.

In "Snowball in Hell", Dr Hitchens, a geneticist working as a scientific advisor to the British Home Office, participates in a raid of an illegal laboratory, which is given the code-name "Animal Farm" by the investigators. The raiders are not told what kind of illegal research is supposed to be going on in the laboratory, but they know that it has something to do with transgenic animals and human genetic material – hence the name. During the raid the place catches fire, but while the other raiders manage to get out, Dr Hitchens is lost in the building and is saved by "Animal Farmers" – inhabitants of the laboratory – who decide to stay inside when they hear shooting going on outside. Dr Hitchens starts a discussion with one of his saviours, a teenage girl called Alice, who is very vague about her origins. She implies that she is of porcine parentage, though she looks perfectly human. Dr Hitchens finally gets out of the place, but his saviours manage to escape. He learns that DNA tests carried out on some of the Animal Farmers who were killed during the raid have shown that they actually had the genotype typical of pigs, though they looked indistinguishable from ordinary humans. During the rest of the story, Dr Hitchens tries to find out how it was possible to breed such creatures, and how such a dis-

crepancy between genotype (the "complete genetic makeup of an organism" [Russel, 12] and phenotype ("the measurable attributes that an organism has" [ibid.]) affects the question of what it means to be human.

Considering the ideas transported in "Snowball in Hell" it is fairly obvious why this story should be called fantastic: the assumption that a girl carries the genome of a pig and actually is the offspring of pigs is definitely far removed from the contemporary reader's world of experience and rings utterly impossible. What distinguishes science fiction, and hard science fiction in particular, from other fantastic genres, though, is that it strives to explain rationally that which is fantastic. In the following I shall examine the short story's relation to the reader's actual world, the scientific language and explanations it abounds in, and discuss the scientific attitude which is displayed in connection with narrative perspective and structural traits of "Snowball in Hell".

"Snowball in Hell" and its Relation to the Reader's World of Experience

Ulrich Suerbaum, Ulrich Broich and Raimund Borgmeier argue that the reader's willing suspension of disbelief when reading science fiction is only possible when the text, in addition to presenting new and strange things (that which Darko Suvin has called the "novum" [7–8 and 64]), contains enough familiar facts and knowledge to which the reader can readily relate to (see Suerbaum, Broich and Borgmeier, 17). Colin Manlove has put this precondition of well-functioning science fiction as follows: "The science-fiction writer throws a rope of the conceivable (how remotely so does not matter) from our world to his" (17), which, according to him, distinguishes science fiction from fantasy. Peter Stockwell argues in the same vein when he says that "[t]he reader's judgement of how close and accessible the fictional world is to the actual world will determine whether the fiction is plausible or implausible" (166). In "Snowball in Hell", many ropes from the fictional future world to the actual world are thrown, and the fantastic ideas and new scientific findings are embedded into a world that is familiar to the early twenty-first-century reader.

Relating to the story world is made easy by its being set in the twenty-first century and in England. Thus, even though it is set in the future, it is not entirely removed from the reader's own space and time, so that links to the reader's present and knowledge can be easily established. It becomes clear throughout the narrative that the reader and the protagonist share background and cultural knowledge. The world at large still seems to function in a way that is familiar to the reader. This is true for the foundations of society – e.g., there are still governments that can set up laws, there is a police to enforce these laws, there are hospitals for the ill or injured – as well as for its particulars: people shoot with guns, preserve data on storage disks or publish their scientific findings. Apart from these and other general familiarities, the text refers to specific facts of the turn of the century that will make the reader get a grasp of the story, e.g., the Human Genome Project is referred to (though in the past): "When I'd first met Hemans, way back in '06, he'd been working in the public sector himself, helping to tidy up the loose ends of the Human Genome Project" (Stableford, 101). From this passage it also becomes clear that the story is not set at the beginning of the twenty-first century, but the time span that has elapsed between 2006 and the present of the story is somewhat confined by the fact that both Dr Hitchens, the first-person narrator, and his fellow geneticist Dr Hemans already worked as scientists at that time, and are still working at the time the story is set.

There are also numerous intertextual references any reader (not only the ones well-read in science fiction) will most probably recognise: already the title of the story is an allusion to George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, which is then taken up again by calling the laboratory where the experiments are conducted "Animal Farm". Further, Dr Hitchens discusses both H.G. Wells's *Island of Dr Moreau* and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* with Alice's name being inspired by the latter book.

Scientific Explanations

Against the background of these familiarities, the reader is introduced to the hard science kernel on which the idea that humans can be grown from pig embryos is based. Though these ideas from the realm of science fiction might be partly new and not totally comprehensible to the average reader, who is not trained in genetics, they are still based on the standard of knowledge of the late-twentieth century. State-of-the-art genetics is used as a basis for extrapolation, and, in order to achieve plausibility, expository stretches of scientific jargon are inserted into the characters' conversations, thus fitting perfectly Westfahl's idea about hard science fiction, according to which "[t]he form's characteristics include long scientific explanations and a creative process of scientific extrapolation" (160–1). In "Snowball in Hell", these explanations do not stay on the surface but go into great detail, as can be seen from the following passage in which the protagonist tries to communicate his insights into the basic biotechnological idea of this story to a policeman and an undersecretary of the Home Office:

> "If Hemans is telling the truth," I went on [...], "he and his colleagues didn't need to transplant any genes to make her human. DNA-analysis of the dead bodies supports that contention. The difference between a human being and a chimpanzee, as Alice pointed out, is very small. The most important differences are in the homeotic genes – the genes that control the expression of other genes, thus determining which cells in a developing embryo are going to specialise as liver cells or as neurons, and how the structures built out of specialised cells are going to be laid out within an anatomical frame. If you have an alternative control mechanism which can take over the work of those controlling genes, they become redundant – and as long as the embryo you're working with has the stock of genes required to make all the specialized kinds of cells you need, you can make *any* kind of an embryo grow into any form you required. You could make human beings out of pigs and cows, tigers and elephants, exactly as Alice said – and *vice versa*." (111–12)

This is just an extract from an explanation which takes up more than four pages all in all, thus "Snowball in Hell" also qualifies as a real hard science fiction story by Isaac Asimov's standards:

> By hard science fiction, I mean those stories in which the details of science play an important role and in which the author is accurate about those details, too, and takes the trouble to explain them clearly. (in Westfahl 1996, 21)

That scientific detail plays an important role in Stableford's narrative cannot be denied, however, the question after scientific accuracy, still remains: how is the average reader to know whether what is presented in a science fiction story is actually accurate and true science?

It might be helpful at this point to consider science fiction writer Alastair Reynolds' view. Reynolds, a scientist himself, claims the following for hard science fiction texts:

> What exactly do I mean when I say hard SF aims at plausibility? By this I mean that good hard SF stories should try not to contain glaring errors of fact, and by fact I mean the kind of detail which

> is easily checked using standard reference material – popular science books, for instance. (quoted by Cramer and Hartwell, 620–1)

Gregory Benford argues towards a similar direction, though conceding a bit more freedom to the hard science fiction writer when he says that "one should not make errors which are visible to the lay reader" (84). What is certainly true of "Snowball in Hell" is that the scientific terminology that is used can be readily looked up in science books. In some cases, the reader is even aided by additional explanations given in the text itself. This is the case with some terms from the field of biotechnology which even an interested reader is rather unlikely to be familiar with. (The necessity to give such additional information is created by conversations in which one interlocutor is not a scientist, and thus needs plausibly more detailed information than fellow scientists.) The definition of "homeotic genes", quoted in the passage above, sounds as if taken straight out of a textbook on genetics,[1] as does the explanation of "phylotopic stage":

> If I could also figure out a way to delay an embryo's phylotopic stage – that's the moment at which the control of an embryo's development is transferred from the maternal environment to the embryo's own genes – I might be able to stop the homeotic genes kicking in at all. (Stableford, 113)

A description of the *exact* technique how these homeotic genes were stopped from 'kicking in' by the scientists who created the children that look like humans from pig embryos is, however, left out. The protagonist comes close to understanding how it was achieved, but the process is not described in detail. Leaving out the ultimate explanation might, on the one hand, be seen as a flaw; on the other hand it prevents the science fiction writer from having to invent a new procedure which he might not be able to explain with the existing knowledge about biotechnology. To put it more bluntly: it saves Brian Stableford from having to 'lie' about the technique with which such a being could be created. Staying thus in the realm of speculation – how such a procedure *could* be explained on the basis of current biotechnological knowledge – also prevents the story from the danger of becoming dated too quickly, which is a general drawback of hard science fiction texts that are very specific. Daniel Samuelson compares this dilemma of hard science fiction – namely that speculations of science in science fiction texts are liable to becoming obsolete due to new scientific discoveries – to Tzvetan Todorov's hesitation between the fantastic and the marvellous (see Todorov 1975):

> The cutting edge is always somewhere between the known and the unknown, the proven and the unproven, like the 'fantastic' in Tzvetan Todorov's conception, always threatening to resolve into the mundane or the marvelous. Scientific and technological progress make mere reportage out of SF 'hypotheticals'. Short-lived theories make once bright ideas only 'alternate history.' (Samuelson 1993a, 149)

This describes very well the basic 'danger' – or rather, possibility – of hard science fiction ceasing to be fantastic in the course of time, when the actual innovations overtake the ones imagined in fictional texts. From this it also follows that readers of different time periods will not necessarily perceive the same things as fantastic in hard science fiction texts.

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[1] Compare the definition of "homeotic genes" with the one given in Russel's *Genetics*: "a major class of genes called the *homeotic* (structure-determining) genes specifies the identity of each segment with respect to the body part that will develop at metamorphosis. Homeotic mutants cause a segment to develop into a different body part from that normally specified." (Russel, 571)

The Scientific Attitude

Apart from employing scientific language and being absolutely accurate about facts, it also seems to be crucial that a rigid scientific attitude is displayed in hard science fiction. Benford states that "[m]ore important than the factwork, though, is an understanding of science, its methods and worldview" (Benford, 84).

In "Snowball in Hell", this attitude is evident especially in the protagonist's behaviour. Dr Hitchens, the genetic engineer, is very intent on not letting himself be carried away by speculations and unproven possibilities that he is confronted with. He is careful not to draw premature conclusions, as can be seen from the following passage:

> And who the hell were they, anyway? I couldn't help jumping to the obvious conclusion, but I refused to entertain it. I was supposed to be a scientist, not some sucker who'd swallow up any urban legend that happened along. (85–6)

Dr Hitchens is also constantly reminding himself of the possibility that he might be the victim of some terrible hoax:

> If she wasn't the child of someone of the staff, she had to be one of the experimental subjects – or, I reminded myself, someone *pretending* to be one of the experimental subjects. (88)

Or:

> Dr. Moreau had remade beasts in his own image by means of surgery, but modern scientists had much cleverer means at their disposal – and the degree of success they might be expected to achieve was far greater. I had to remind myself again that all of this could be a bluff run by a thoroughly human child, and that I was only playing along to see how the story would go. (90)

The latter quote shows a certain optimism and faith in the possibilities of science – a traditional trait of hard science fiction (see e.g. Roberts, 82), which is shared by Stableford (especially as far as biotechnology is concerned),[2] but not by all hard science fiction writers of the younger generation. This optimistic and science-friendly attitude also becomes obvious in the following passage, when Dr Hitchens tries to convince government officials of the benefits of legalising the techniques Dr Hemans and his colleagues have developed: "... For once in our lives, let's not stand in the way of progress. I know that you're not going to be grateful for the advice, but my vote is that we simply let them all go and let them get on with it" (116).

The underlying scientific attitude of this short story is also evident in a discussion about publishing the results of one's experiments: publishing is presented as the right thing to do for a scientist who wants to be respected by the scientific community and Dr Hitchens blames Dr Hemans for not making his sensational findings public, but Dr Hemans counters this attack by appealing to the scientific practice that he did not want to publish incomplete work for which some corroborative evidence was still lacking:

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[2] In the introduction to *Designer Genes* Stableford says: "I have spent a great deal of time during the last twenty years in the production of essays and stories which attempt to construct hypothetical societies in which biotechnologies are boldly and promiscuously deployed to the benefit of human individuals and societies. [...] The stories in this collection [...] are exercises in the same spirit [...]. I suppose that it would be wildly optimistic to hope that they might be capable of changing the way that anyone might think about the potential of biotechnology – but what kind of world would we be living in if it did not have room for a few wild optimists alongside the legion of pessimists who are steadfastly convinced that discovery can have no product but disaster?" in *Designer Genes*, 13–14.

> "But you haven't published any of your work," I pointed out. "You haven't applied for any patents. Even by private sector standards, that's unusually secretive."
> "We haven't published because the work wasn't complete," Hemans retorted, "and now, thanks to your murderous interference, it never will be. We haven't applied for any patents because we aren't ready." (104)

Here, also the scientific practice of patenting is referred to.

The scientific attitude is not only emphasised by Dr Hitchens' circumspect behaviour and by his discussing common scientific standards and practices, but also made explicit by the fact that Dr Hitchens repeatedly refers to himself as a scientist, as for example in the following passage:

> As a *scientist*, of course, I wasn't at all sure of that – engineered organisms hardly ever breed true, and it was perfectly possible that even if the ersatz girls could produce offspring, the offspring in question might have snouts and tails – but we had to consider the worst possible case. Bringing human-seeming babies out of a sow's womb might sound no more likely than making silk purses out of sows' ears, but we had moved into unknown territory, *scientifically* speaking. (100, *emphasis mine*)

In this move into unknown territory, the moment of extrapolation is inherent. As has already been stated, this technique is central to science fiction, and especially to hard science fiction, as e.g. Samuelson has put it:

> Depending mainly on what is verifiable, or at least that which is consistent with what is thought to be known, hard SF predominantly bridges the gap [between the known and the unknown] with extrapolation, extending trends or tendencies from one time frame (or domain of knowledge) into another. (1993b, 199)

The scientific explanations given in "Snowball in Hell" are based on what is already known, and they serve to move the reader, along with the protagonist, from ignorance to knowledge. The reader is able to follow Dr Hitchens' change of attitude towards what he is confronted with by having access to the first-person narrator's thoughts (which also makes it easy for the reader to get an insight into the geneticist's scientific attitude and scientific way of thinking, as has been shown above).

According to Suerbaum, Broich and Borgmeier the first-person narrative is not the favourite narrative situation in science fiction, as it often involves a certain emphasis on the character's reflections, which used to be of marginal importance in many traditional modes of science fiction (see 42). In "Snowball in Hell", however, the first-person narrator is cleverly employed to advance the plausibility of the fantastic assumption that is put forward. This is achieved in the following way: the first-person narrator who is presented as a respectable scientist with a rigorous attitude towards science, is sceptical about the new possibilities that he is confronted with and is, over long stretches of the short story, unwilling to believe what is suggested first by the rumours about the 'Animal Farm' and then by Alice's hints at her origin. The reader is very likely to identify with the first-person narrator of the story who refuses to believe what he is told. The reader thus shares the scientist's initial doubts, but these doubts might then also be shed along with the scientist's, as Dr Hitchens grows to believe what he is told when it is supported by evidence (the DNA tests which prove that the Animal Farmers really have the genome of pigs) and hints by fellow scientist Dr Hemans. Still, some readers might be more difficult to convince than the scientist, and when Dr Hitchens no longer doubts that Alice and her fellow 'Animal Farmers' are the offspring of pigs, other characters, such as an interrogating policeman, take over the disbelieving part.

> "That's bullshit," the policeman said. "You've said all along that they had to make up the difference. We have to have the extra genes that make us human."
>
> "That's true," I agreed, wondering how simple I could make it, and how simple I'd need to make it before he could understand. "And until today I'd assumed, just as you had, that the extra genes would have to be transplanted [...]." (112)

From this passage it can be seen how explaining anew what has already been said before is justified by introducing characters who need as much information as lay readers are supposed to need in order to understand the relevant facts ("wondering how simple I could make it, and how simple I'd need to make it before he could understand").

Structural Characteristics

In "Snowball in Hell", the fantastic is thus made plausible partly because the protagonist, who is built up as a respected scientist throughout the story, sheds his doubts as to the possibility of a human-shaped creature featuring the genome of a pig in the end, but this fantastic possibility is not taken for granted right from the beginning. The entire story is structured around the central idea of trying to find an answer, solving a puzzle, and thus shares characteristics with the genre of romance (the quest motif) (see e.g. Rose 1981), but also with detective fiction. As Peter Stockwell has stated, "[I]n science fiction stories (and in the related genre of detective fiction), the objective and end-point is often a conceptual resolution and explanation of a puzzle or anomaly" (163). This is definitely true of "Snowball in Hell": the desire to find out what the secret experiments in the Animal Farm are all about, to know how they were conducted is the driving force behind the entire short story, as can e.g. be seen from the following dialogue, taken from the beginning of the short story:

> "But what are they actually supposed to have done, exactly?" one of my juniors was reckless to ask.
> "If we knew exactly," came the inevitable withering reply, "we wouldn't need to include you [i.e. a geneticist] in the operation, would we?" (81)

Throughout the entire story, the characters constantly 'ask' questions and want to 'find out' what was happening, Dr Hitchens is, e.g. almost exhilarated when, though in the unfortunate situation of being locked inside the raided building, it occurs to him that this circumstance might have put him "in a uniquely good position to find out exactly what the Animal Farmers were really up to." (87) In his ensuing conversation with Alice he asks her numerous questions in his attempt to be told the truth about her origins, and the same pattern is repeated when he discusses the matter with Dr Hemans. In the end, he arrives at a relatively satisfying answer, and, as has been shown, the reader accompanies the protagonist in this process. The seemingly fantastic is thus (more or less) explained for both characters and readers at the same time. Something which was definitely new and fantastic for the reader at the outset of the story was so as well for at least some of the characters in the story. In hard science fiction stories, solutions and answers are usually given; when something is unclear or appears to be fantastic to the characters in science fiction it is usually – as in Stableford's story – plausibly and rationally explained in the course of the story or at its ending (this is especially the case with short stories). This basic epistemological attitude goes hand in hand with the scientific attitude of wanting to find accurate answers.

That the characters themselves have to search for an explanation step by step is, however, only one possibility for presenting the fantastic in hard science fiction. Another common strategy is trying to win the reader's acceptance or willing suspension of disbelief by presenting the fantastic as something which is perfectly normal for the characters in the story. This is the case in the following passage from Paul McAuley's "Gene Wars" (first published in 1991), where only the readers perceive something as fantastic and try to find out how it can be explained.

> Evan lived with his aunt, in the capital. He was fifteen. He had a street bike, a plug-in-computer, and a pet microsaur, a cat-sized triceratops in purple funfur. Buying the special porridge which was all the microsaur could eat took half of Evan's weekly allowance; that was why he let his best friend inject the pet with a bootleg virus to edit out its dietary dependence. It was only a partial success: the triceratops no longer needed its porridge, but it developed epilepsy triggered by sunlight. (36–7)

Here, the obviously fantastic pet microsaur is embedded into an enumeration of perfectly familiar objects, whose handling belongs among everyday activities.

While in some stories readers have to pick information from clues and hints; in others they are explicitly informed by expository stretches, which are only inserted for the reader's sake, but not for the characters', who are already used to and thus no longer disturbed by the changed conditions or scientific inventions. In the following passage, taken from Geoff Ryman's novel *The Child Garden* (1989), the readers are told the reasons and consequences of the changed colour of humans' skin:

> People were purple. Their skins were flooded with a protein called Rhodopsin. It had once been found only in the eye. In light, Rhodopsin broke down into sodium, and combined carbon and water.
> People photosynthesised. It was a way of feeding them all. There were twenty-three million of them in the Pit. In summer they baked in tropical heat, stretching out in the parks in early morning, to breakfast on light. In the raw and bitter winters, they would lean against sheltered walls and open up their clothing in gratitude. Milena would see them from her bus. Their rippled flesh would be exposed, their swaddlings of black winter clothing would be drawn back. They would look like carvings in baroque churches. (3)

For Milena, the protagonist of Ryman's novel, purple, photosynthesising people are the norm, while for the reader, of course, such a condition is far from normal.

Conclusion

In order to sum up what constitutes the fantastic in hard science fiction it does not suffice to consider fantastic to mean "existing only in imagination" or "proceeding merely from imagination," ("Fantastic", *OED*) as hard science fiction writers try very hard to base their innovations firmly on what is scientifically known and accepted. It might thus be necessary to revert to the original sense of the Greek verb "fantäzein", meaning "to make visible", (ibid.) to approach the fantastic in hard science fiction: this subgenre of science fiction tries to make visible that which is not (yet) possible in our actual world of experience, but what could possibly come into existence in the future. It presents the 'not yet possible' as a continuation of what *is* already possible and tries to achieve plausibility not only by an abundance of scientific detail, but also by employing a scientific attitude and a solution-oriented structure.

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Lívia Szélpál

The Fantastic Sides of Alternative History through Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*

> Whatever is anachronic is obscene. As a (modern) divinity,
> History is repressive, History forbids us to be out of time.
> Of the past we tolerate only the ruin, the monument, kitsch,
> what is amusing: we reduce this past to no more than its signature.
> (Barthes, 177)

One afternoon I was looking through the library bookshelves for something to read, and pulled out Philip K. Dick's book *The Man in the High Castle.* Previously I had read some blurbs about this novel; I remembered that the plot took place after World War II and I was certain that it was not to my taste. A kind of mind and heart debate is always fighting in me whenever I encounter the history of World War II. The mind of the historian knows that it is our human duty and moral obligation towards the victims of the war and *Shoah* to study and shed light on the horrors, injustice and tragedies of the slaughter because we have to remember and preserve the crimes of the war in our collective memory so as to not let them happen again. Yet the heart of the woman always shies when it has to face the harsh and brutal facts and wants to run away from this world of injustice since one cannot really understand how the Holocaust could have happened; it cannot be explained rationally, it resists representation, it is outside history (Kisantal, 32). When I looked at the title *The Man in the High Castle,* the first thing that came to my mind was the mental image of Hitler in the *Berghof,* the house in the Bavarian Alps which served as both his headquarters and his chief residence during World War II. Once I opened the book and read it carefully "the man in the high castle" turned out to be a fiction writer in the novel and Hitler was only mentioned as a senile old chap with syphilis of the brain. This was my first encounter with the genre of alternative history.

Alternative History as a Genre

The Man in the High Castle published in 1962 is more than a science fiction novel; it presents an alternative history after World War II. The plot is set in the United States, 15 years after the Axis Powers defeated the Allies in World War II and the U.S. submitted to German and Japanese military occupation. The novel takes a real historical event, World War II, and then makes a detour from 'real' history by creating a different scenario about the future.

Alternative history is a genre of speculative narrative representation and belongs to the field of unconventional history.[1] The definition of unconventional history is problematic and highly relative, as Brian Fay argues; "one can be unconventional only in relation to something that is conventional" (1). In this way, Fay – in the absence of a more precise term – describes and de-

[1] See, for example, *History and Theory,* 41. 4. Theme Issue 41: "Unconventional History." (Dec., 2002): 1–144; Szélpál Lívia, "A történelem jövője: bevezetés egy nem hagyományos történetírás (unconventional history) elméletébe," *Aetas* 22. 1. (2007): 135–146.

fines the unconventional way of historiography *vis-à-vis* the canon of academic history. Exploring the unconventional ways of history writing, for instance in the form of alternative histories, has the potential to deepen our knowledge about historical representation, find new conceptual resources and shed light on the limits and strengths of academic history (ibid.). In this sense, History is not universal, not something that bears absolute meaning that can be reached by empirical research, but a multiplicity of polyphonic histories. Of course, unconventional history sounds like a contradiction in terms, but it is a rethinking of the debate about the "objectivity", "historical authenticity", "relation of fact and fiction", and the "connections of the historical discipline and narrative paradigm of history" that was provoked by the linguistic turn in academic circles (Szélpál, 136). Emphasizing the urge for rethinking history became common in the 1990s. Gyáni argues that rethinking is necessary because of the changed status of historiography and the altered role of the historian and the state of art within the frames of collective memory, public history and mass culture due to the different nature of historical cognition, new perspectives of international historiography and inter- and multidisciplinary challenges (Gyáni, 272).

Alternative history derives largely from historical facts, science fiction, the historical novel, and the fantastic. Alternative history is also depicted by other names such as *allo-history*, *counterfactualism*, *virtual history*, and *uchronia*, though the most common term is *alternative history* (*alternate history* in the US; Rosenfeld, 90). In French, alternate history novels are called *uchronie*. This neologism is based on the word "utopia" (a place that does not exist) and the Greek for time, *chronos*. A *uchronia*, then, is defined as a time that does not exist.[2] Generally, the plots of alternative history works are set in a world in which the past has diverged from history as it actually happened; more simply put, alternative history asks the question, "What if history had developed differently?" In other words, it is a 'what if' approach, which deals with what might have happened if some specific event in history had not occurred or had turned out differently; for instance, what if Hitler had won World War II, if the South had won the Civil War or the American Revolution failed to happen (Rosenfeld, 90).

In academic historical circles, 'what if' speculation has been unpopular due to its counterfactual character. For this reason it is crucial to emphasize that alternative history does not coincide with revisionist history, which intends to rewrite history and change or ignore real historical events like the Holocaust for its own purposes. Alternative history is a kind of literary game of choices in history and a view into the psyche and collective memory of a society. To follow Hayden White, history is also a moral burden since it is always the product of human choices. In the past, history was supposed to provide some sort of training for life or to be a philosophy teaching by examples. Failing to do so, history as a state of art turned out to be practically unable to prepare men for the possible coming of any war or to teach them with its explanations and examples what would be expected of them during the war (White, 120). Historical imagination in 'what if' speculations can provide a way out of this dilemma.

[2] For more information about alternative history visit the internet website, *Uchronia* (<www.uchronia.net>, accessed January 23, 2007).

Modal and counterfactual claims in 'what if' speculations[3] are playing with mathematical equations like this: "If some event A was the cause of event B, and B is of interest, then the counterfactual 'Had A not occurred, B would not have either'" (Bulhof, 145). The question arises, however, what is the use of all this? Historians do use modal and counterfactual claims to identify causes and establish causal connections, to explain historical events, judgments and choices of agents in history and to highlight the importance of particular events (Bulhof, 199, 145). What makes alternative histories different is that rather than writing and creating predictions about the past, they employ *scenario writing,* a method for thinking about the future (Staley, 73). This history of the future takes into consideration the new paradigm of science and the driving forces that can manipulate the future in different directions (Staley, 79). Thus, "the goal of scenario writing is not to predict the one path the future will follow but to discern the possible states toward which the future might be 'attracted'" (Staley, 78).

Posing counterfactual historical questions, as Gavriel Rosenfeld argues, is not a completely new phenomenon. It is inherent in our human nature to raise 'what if' questions in order to lament, or express our changing view about the present. Therein lies the main function of alternative histories, notably to explore the past less for its own sake than to utilize it as an instrument to comment upon the present by reflecting on an author's hopes and fears. Alternative histories assume different typological forms depending on how their authors have viewed the present. Given its subjective character, alternative history lends itself to being studied as documents of memory, and these narratives can shed light upon the evolution of historical memory by giving voice to the concerns and fears of the present (Rosenfeld, 93). Therefore, among the topics of alternative histories are mainly crucial historical events that significantly changed the flow of history, such alternatives being the Nazis winning World War II, the American Revolution failing to occur, Jesus not being crucified, the atomic bomb not being dropped on Japan, or Hitler escaping into post-war hiding. Due to its interdisciplinary character alternative histories have appeared in a multitude of cultural representations such as novels, short-stories, films, television programs, comic books, historical monographs or internet web sites (Rosenfeld, 90). These "vehicles of memory" highlight that the essential issue in "the history of memory is not how the past is represented but why it was received or rejected" (Confino, 1390). This is also the main concern of alternative histories, to quote Confino: "Why is it that some pasts triumph while others fail? Why do people prefer one image of the past over another?" (Confino, 1390).

On the other hand, as Rosenfeld argues, alternative histories can be traced back to Antiquity, when such historians such as Thucydides and Livy wondered how their own societies would have been different if the Persians had defeated the Greeks or if Alexander the Great had waged war against Rome. As a modern literary genre, however, alternative history traces its roots back to the mid-nineteenth century, when the first allohistorical novels were published in post-Napoleonic France. Such works remained almost exceptional, however, well into the twentieth century, and few alternative histories appeared until the 1960s. Thereafter, however, "the legitimation of science fiction as a popular genre of creative expression helped boost the

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[3] See, for instance, Niall Ferguson ed., *Virtual History* (London: Picador 1997); or Robert Sobel, *For Want of a Nail: If Burgoyne Had Won at Saratoga* (London: Greenhill Books, 1997). Sobel's classic work in the genre of alternative history is a perfect example of non-fiction alternative history works by being framed as a "real" historical monograph. The work is full of fictionalized footnotes and bibliographical sources and tells the two hundred years of history that followed after the British general John Burgoyne's victory over the rebel troops at the Battle of Saratoga in 1777; and of course just the opposite was true in the 'real' history.

fortunes of its lesser-known allohistorical offshoot" (Rosenfeld, 91–92). Then the counter-cultures of the 1960s, the rise of postmodern historiography, and political trends such as the end of socialism and the cold war eroded the power of deterministic worldviews and helped alternative history to move from the margins to the mainstream – not to mention recent trends in science such as chaos theory and information technology, which also provide a fruitful springboard for allohistorical speculation (Rosenfeld, 92).

Legitimation is also the key factor of Rosenfeld's article on alternative history in the thematic issue of *History and Theory* (Dec., 2002). He summarizes and introduces to 'academic history' the genre which was previously known only among the smaller circles of alternative history fans. Although his article is thought-provoking, he focuses only on the history and ideological background of the American alternative histories and leaves open the question whether his assumptions concerning the functions, forms and topics of alternative histories are universal or culture-dependent and vary across national boundaries and over time. According to Rosenfeld, the three most popular topics in American alternative histories are the Nazis winning World War II, the South winning the Civil War, and the American Revolution failing to happen.

As Rosenfeld proposes – in a rather deterministic way by ignoring, for instance, the possibility of different forms mixing – alternative histories have generally two forms: fantasy and nightmare scenarios. *Fantasy scenarios* envision the alternative past as superior to the real historical record in order to express dissatisfaction with the present. *Nightmare scenarios*, by contrast, depict the alternative past as worse than the real historical record in order to vindicate the present (Rosenfeld, 93). In this sense, the original function of allohistorical narratives of a Nazi wartime victory was to convince American readers to support American intervention in the Second World War. Fred Allhoff's *Lightning in the Night* (1940), for instance, reinforced the sentiment that America needed to defeat the Nazis by projecting dark pictures of the consequences of failing to do so (Rosenfeld, 95).

According to Rosenfeld's scheme, the main form of alternative history scenarios changed with the ideological context. In this sense, (1) in the first three decades of the postwar era up until the early 1970s, *nightmare scenarios* dominate by depicting the alleged Nazi wartime victory in moralistic terms as creating a dystopian hell in the world. Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* (1962) is a suitable example of this scenario by presenting a dystopian image of the Nazi occupation of the United States. Then (2) in the cold war era of the 1970s and 1980s, as Rosenfeld argues, Americans feared the Soviets more than the Germans, which diminished the sense of horror and portrayed the alternative of a Nazi regime in much more normalized terms as a relatively tolerable event. In short, the alternative ceased to be regarded as a nightmare scenario and increasingly became viewed as a *fantasy scenario*. Of course, the Vietnam War, the cold war tension, the scandal of Watergate, the upheavals of the Civil Rights and Feminist movements affected the forms of alternative histories, as well. The most striking and extreme example for this period may well be John Lukacs's essay "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" (1978), in which he argues "that American neutrality, by ensuring a Nazi victory, would have prevented the advent of the cold war and would have brought such benign trends as European unification under the direction of pragmatic Nazi leaders like Albert Speer" (Rosenfeld, 97). (3) After the end of the cold war *nightmare scenarios* appear again. One example is the 1995 film adaptation of *Fatherland,* written by Robert Harris, in which a brave and keen journalist (of course American in striking contrast to the British original) helps U.S. president Joseph Kennedy to give up the plans of any normalized political relations with the old dictator Hitler, in 1962, by revealing evidence of the Holocaust (Rosenfeld, 95–98).

In my view, there is one crucial element of every alternative history that constitutes the fantastic, which is the *point of divergence* as a common feature in all allohistorical speculations. Generally speaking, the alternative scenarios present pivotal events of world historical importance such as the death of great politicians, decisive military victories or defeats, the rise of crucial cultural or religious movements, and even demographic trends, such as migrations or plagues (Rosenfeld, 94). In alternative history fiction, the point of divergence is used as the starting point for extrapolation and counterfactual speculations. For instance, in Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*, the point of divergence is Franklin D. Roosevelt's fictional assassination in 1933.

Another characteristic feature of fictional alternative histories, which constitutes the fantastic element in their plots, is the *point of difference*: "the thing or things that differentiate the world portrayed in science fiction from the world we recognize around us, is the crucial separator between SF and other forms of imaginative or fantastic literature" (Roberts, 6). Darko Suvin coined the term *novum* (meaning new or new thing) to refer to this *point of difference*. Thus, the common characteristic between SF and alternative history is that their plotlines are usually based on a number of interrelated *nova*, such as the futuristic technology. This *novum*, however, "must not be supernatural, but need not necessarily be a piece of technology"; it can be a different model of gender, as well (Roberts, 6–7). For instance, in the novel *The Man in the High Castle*, the technology of Germany is very advanced; air travel from Germany to the U.S. by the Lufthansa Meg-E rocket ships takes only half an hour. In the novel, Germany has even solar colonization programs based strictly on racial discrimination, that is, only a white, blond, potent Aryan can dream about taking part in this extraordinary project. Moreover, this imaginary world is on the verge of a nuclear Third World War between Japan and Germany.

Paradoxically, science fiction can be described as one of the least scientific of fictions in the sense that it owes hardly anything to the facts of experience. Unlike "conventional" fiction, "which accepts the necessities of experience as given and fantasizes from there, SF sets up fictional necessities and then obeys them" (Huntington, 348). This paradoxical freedom within a structured imperative is the crucial feature of SF that makes it possible for its various forms and subgenres, such as alternative history to be connected to other literary genres and even to sciences such as history or sociology. In Suvin's sense the portrayed utopias and dystopias can be called "social science-fictions" and many of them are "analogous to modern polycentric cosmology, uniting time and space in Einsteinian worlds with different but co-variant dimensions and time scales" (381).

The Man in the High Castle as an Alternative History

Dick's story is a *nightmare scenario* and a thought-provoking but depressing contemplation about the possible alternatives of the Nazi victory that depicts a highly dystopian narrative of the Japanese and Nazi German colonization of the U.S., the genocide of the Jews and slaughter of races, for instance, in Africa. It is an intelligent meditation on the nature of history and historicity – a quasi-philosophical work cast in fictional form: an alternative history.

Dick's fictional world is a subversive reality, where a Mickey Mouse watch is valuable, the mass production of fake historical artifacts a general phenomenon, while authentic contemporary art is not appreciated and even misunderstood. The characters simply do not understand why someone would like to make or even buy contemporary art when the supposed historicity of the artifact is what matters. In the novel, history and the value of historicity is

represented as commodity without its sublime ideas. One of the main characters, Frank Frink, of Jewish origin, is working in a factory producing fake colt pistols to be sold on the market as 'real' civil war memorabilia. In a dialogue with her girlfriend, the factory owner, Wyndham-Matson, highlights this paradox of the material reality of historicity and its relative character. He shows her two cigarette lighters by commenting upon historicity:

> 'Look at these. Look the same, don't they? Well listen. One has historicity in it.' He grinned at her. 'Pick them up. Go ahead. One's worth, oh, maybe forty or fifty thousands of dollars on the collectors' market.' (...) 'Don't you feel it?' he kidded her, 'The historicity?' She said, *'what is historicity?' 'When a thing has history in it.* Listen. One of those two Zippo lighters was in Franklin D. Roosevelt's pocket when he was assassinated. And one wasn't. One has historicity, a hell of a lot of it. As much as any object ever had. And one has nothing. *Can you feel it?' He nudged her. 'You can't. You can't tell which is which. There's no "mystical plasmic presence," no "aura" around it.* (...) I'd have to prove it to you with some sort of document. A paper of authenticity. And so it's all fake, a mass delusion. *The paper proves its worth, not the object itself?* (65–66, *emphasis mine*)

Dick's alternative history awakens a crucial question in the reader, notably whether history is just 'out there,' a collection of solid facts like the mass produced historical artifacts or if it is something indeterminable existing only in the minds and memories of people. Of course, this extreme relativism can only happen in a fictional form by transgressing the boundaries of historical discipline while highlighting the repressed creative side of historiography.

The *point of divergence* in the novel between the world of *The Man in the High Castle* and the history as it actually happened in the Rankian sense is the fictional assassination of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933, which entailed fatal consequences in world history. The succeeding presidents of the U.S. were unable to cope with the the Great Depression and their isolationist policy led to the disaster of Britain and continental Europe falling to the Axis Powers in the war. The Japanese completely destroyed the American fleet in Pearl Harbor and the U.S. was conquered and divided by the Axis Powers. The Eastern U.S. was under German, while the Western States were under the Japanese. The Midwest and the Rocky Mountains remained a kind of autonomous buffer-zone. After Adolf Hitler was incapacitated by syphilis, the head of the Nazi Party Chancellery, Martin Bormann, assumed the leadership of Germany. They launched space explorations and landed on the Mars, spread and invented new technologies such as television and rocket airplanes. The Germans created a totalitarian colonial empire and continued their slaughter of races in Africa, where they killed the black African people. Meanwhile, Japan went a different way in Asia and territories in the Pacific Ocean. Their rule was also totalitarian but somehow "lighter" than the German madness. The Japanese, for instance, ceased the genocide of the Jewish population in their territories.

Similar to the cold war tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union after World War II, there was a political tension between Germany and Japan, involving an extended spy system that interweaves the plotlines of the novel. One of the turning points of the novel is when Bormann dies and Joseph Goebbels and Reinhard Heydrich compete for the office of Reich Chancellor. In the end Goebbels became the leader and his faction of the Nazi party sought war with Japan by launching Operation Dandelion, while Heydrich is the "good guy" who sent a spy (Rudolf Wegener/Mr. Baynes) to the U.S. to negotiate with Japan and prevent the war since his side of the Nazi party 'only' wants to colonize the solar system. As one character, Juliana contemplates upon their history:

> *He (Frank) and I could sign up for one of those colonizing rocket ships. But the Germans would disbar him because of his skin and me because of my dark hair.* Those pale skinny Nordic S.S. fairies in those training castles

> in Bavaria. [...] Their trouble (Germans) is with sex; they did something foul with it back in the thirties, and it has gotten worse. Hitler started it with his – what was she? His sister? Aunt? Niece? And his family was inbred already; his mother and father were cousins. They're all committing incest, going back to the original sin of lusting for their own mothers. That's why they, those elite S.S. fairies, have that angelic simper, that blond babylike innocence; they are saving themselves for Mama. Or for each other. *And who is Mama for them? She wondered. The leader, Herr Bormann, who is supposed to be dying? Or – the Sick One. Old Adolf, supposed to be in a sanatorium somewhere living out his life in senile paresis. Syphilis of the brain, dating back to his poor days as a bum in Vienna*... the long black coat, dirty underwear, flophouses. [...] *And the horrible part was that the present-day Germany was a product of that brain.* [...] *The views had infected civilization by now, and, like evil spores, the blind blond Nazi queens were swishing out from the Earth to the other planets, spreading the contamination.* (39–40, *emphasis mine.*)

The Man in the High Castle has no central plot but rotates around several interconnected storylines by telling the personal histories of the following characters: (1) a German spy (Rudolf Wegener/Mr. Baynes), (2) Mr. Tagomi, (3) Robert Childan, (4) two San Franciscan industrial workers, Frank Frink and Ed McCarthy, (5) the factory owner Wyndham-Matson and his lover, (6) Frink's ex-wife Juliana and (7) "the Man in the High Castle," named Hawthorne Abdensen, the author of another alternative history: *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy.*

The plot of the novel shifts in time and space with these different storylines. Rudolf Wegener/ Mr. Baynes is a German spy and travels under cover as a Swedish merchant to meet Mr. Tagomi who is the head of the Japanese trade commission that rules the territories both economically and politically. They want to prevent a possible war, which is the ambitious intention of the ruling Nazi regime. Meanwhile, Mr. Tagomi undergoes a personal crisis and has to decide between his loyalty to the totalitarian regime and his humaneness. Robert Childan is a merchant and the main carrier of "American historical artifacts" such as comic books to the Japanese and Mr. Tagomi. He also goes through a kind of moral development by giving room, among the fake historical artifacts, to the authentic contemporary American art in his shop. Frank Frink and Ed McCarthy give up their jobs in Wyndham-Matson's factory to begin a small jewelry business and create authentic pieces of American art. Their work has a kind of supernatural effect on the Americans and Japanese who get in touch with these items. Mr. Tagomi, for instance, gets a kind of revelation from a small triangle-shaped brooch made by Frank Frink and sold by Childan while meditating upon it in a park. In the end, Mr. Tagomi indirectly saves Frank from the concentration camp by refusing to sign the order for Frank's transportation back to Germany because of his Jewish origin. Frank's ex-wife Juliana travels through the States to find and save the author of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy,* which is popular but banned because in it the Axis Powers lost the war. She is accompanied by Joe who becomes her lover and claims to be an Italian veteran of the war but is a Gestapo agent hired to kill the "man in the high castle" hiding somewhere in the Rocky Mountains. In the end, Juliana saves the author by killing Joe.

The two elements that connect the diverging storylines are the alternative history novel entitled *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* that most of the characters in the novel read and the use of the *I Ching* or the Book of Changes, a kind of prophecy book that most of the characters consult before making any decision. The fact that they are heavily dependant on its predictions gives Dick's novel its uncertain and discontinuous character.

The Grasshopper Lies Heavy is an alternative history within Dick's alternative history. It is a piece of cult fiction in which the Allies won the war. Although closer to actual history, the novel portrays another scenario of World War II, according to which Roosevelt survives the assassination attempt and the U.S. enters the war. In this scenario the British are the determining factor in the history of the war and win against Nazi Germany. Great Britain, still

led by Chruchill, remains a colonial empire after the war. In the end, the British form a superpower with racist tensions. The author Hawthorne Abendsen is rumored to be living in exile in a highly guarded fortress in the Rocky Mountains. Thus, he is called "the man in the high castle". The title of the book, *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy,* is actually a line from *Ecclesiastes* (12:5), generally interpreted to refer to the infirmities of age (Rickman, 377).

Consultation of the *I Ching* features throughout *The Man in the High Castle.* Several characters, both Japanese and American such as Mr. Tagomi, Robert Childan, Frank and Juliana Frink, consult it for important decisions. The use of the *I Ching* spread through the Japanese territories of the U.S. with the 'advent' of Japanese colonization. As Mr. Tagomi says in the novel:

> 'We are absurd,' Mr. Tagomi said, 'because we live by a five-thousand-year-old book. We ask it questions as if it were alive. It *is* alive. As is the Christian Bible; many books are actually alive. Not in metaphoric fashion. Spirit animates it.' (72)

According to an anecdote, Dick himself claimed that he wrote *The Man in the High Castle* using the *I Ching* to decide on plot development. In an interview Dick revealed that he had been using the *I Ching* in his private life since 1961, "to show me a way of conduct in a puzzling or unclear situation" (Warrick, 28). In later years Dick explained the puzzling and enigmatic end of his novel by putting the blame on the *I Ching* for the ending it provided him. As he argued, "When it came to closing down the novel, the *I Ching* had no more to say. So there's no real ending on it. I like to regard it as an open ending" (Rickman, 374).

In the novel the *I Ching* prophecies connect and interweave the personal histories of the characters. Often they get a similar prediction although they are remote from or even do not know one another. The ironic twist at the end of the novel is that the truth dawns on Juliana that Abendsen used the *I Ching* to write *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* to decide on the plot development, as Mrs. Abendsen reveals to Juliana:

> *One by one Hawth made the choices. Thousands of them. By means of the lines. Historic period. Subject. Character. Plot.* It took years. Hawth even asked the oracle what sort of success it would be. [...] So you were right. You must use the oracle quite a lot yourself, to have known. (245, *emphasis mine.*)

Finally Juliana decides to ask the *I Ching* in the presence of the Abendsen couple why the author wrote the alternative history of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy.* The answer of the *I Ching* is that because it was the truth and it only used Abendsen to write it:

> *Oracle, why did you write The Grasshopper Lies Heavy? What are we supposed to learn?* [...] She began throwing the coins; she felt calm and very much herself. Hawthrone wrote down her lines for her. When she had thrown the coins six times, he gazed down and said: 'Sun at the top. Tui at the bottom. Empty in the center.' [...] 'It's *Chung Fu,*' Juliana said. *'Inner Truth.* I know without using the chart, too. And I know what it means.' Raising his head, Hawthorne scrutinized her. He had now an almost savage expression. *'It means, does it, that my book is true?' 'Yes,' she said. With anger he said, 'Germany and Japan lost the war?' 'Yes.'* (246–247, *emphasis mine.*)

This means that the history in the novel was not the result of science, politics or technology but that of a supernatural phenomenon, and their world turns out to be a fictional one. This revelation fascinates Abendsen, who compares Juliana to a daemon who will spread the truth to the world:

> *'This girl is a daemon. A little chthonic spirit that [...] roams tirelessly over the face of the earth.'* [...] She's doing what's instinctive to her, simply expressing her being. She didn't mean to show up here and

> do harm; it simply happened to her, just as weather happens to us. I'm glad she came. I'm not sorry to find this out, this revelation she's had through the book. She did not know what she was going to do here or find out. I think we're all of us lucky. So let's not be angry about it; okay?' Caroline said, *'She's terribly, terribly disruptive.' 'So is reality,'* Hawthorne said. (247–248, *emphasis mine.*)

Therefore the *I Ching* and the philosophy of the ancient Tao turn out to be the main anti-Nazi symbol which represents the perpetual changes of time and "absorbs the dualities of good and evil, light and darkness, and understands them as equally essential to creation and to life" (Simons, 266). According to oriental philosophy, transgressing the universal principles that hold together the universe is like separating yin and yang, the necessary destruction and creation, which results in division and imbalance. Paradoxically the Nazi quest for the "high castle" of the uniformly white Aryan absolute culminated in their denial of life, their dark, empire-obsessed, genocidal ruin of the earth (ibid.). At the end of the novel, the final *I Ching* prophecy also reveals the fact that whatever *scenario* of world history is working in any of the possible realities, the totalitarian Nazi regime could only bring disastrous consequences. This is the moral burden of our history, which is determined by human choices.

What conclusion can be drawn? The novel remains open-ended; and every answer to its questions can only be either sentimental or pathetic cliché within the literary game of 'what if.' Nevertheless, many characters make moral decisions that can be considered 'correct' ones. Juliana discovers that there is at least one 'better' universe and saves Abendsen's life. Tagomi finds enlightenment by saving the lives of Frank and the spy Wegener, who saves the world from a possible world war by passing on information to the Japanese about the forthcoming German operations. Childan discovers the true value of authentic American art in contrast to the cult of the fake historical artifacts.

Alternative histories reveal the psyche of a given society, its fears, projections, and traumas. They ask those questions inherent in our human nature that cannot be asked in a "scientific" work due to the constraints of the discipline. In sum, alternative histories with their fantastic and nightmare scenarios make us think and address issues that are decisive in our reality such as technology, gender, race and history.

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Dóra Szauter

Solutions of the Fantastic in Umberto Eco's *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*

Bonum est diffusivum sui.[1]

This time it is not Umberto Eco's well-known anglophilia, his influence on English literature, or his being an authority on Joyce that brings up his name. It is his last novel, *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* (2006, henceforth *QL*) that is worth a note in a project investigating the workings of the fantastic. Instead of trying to decode its vast network of intertextual references, for which the web offers the resourceful *Queen Loana Annotation Project* (Ketzan 2006), I will focus on the 'fantastic' qualities of the novel.

A weekend novelist by his own admission, Eco has made it his specialty to write fiction which brings together his two worlds as creative writer and critical theorist. Consequently, he has made it difficult for reviewers and critics to engage with his novels. When he self-reflexively ironizes the position both of author and reader, he also reminds critical commentators of their parasitic roles (Hutcheon, 2).

More encyclopaedic than any of his previous bestsellers, complete with an amnesiac protagonist, Yambo, who – due to his state – is especially alert to his senses, it is a repository of intermediality. *QL* is the memoirs of an (ex-)schoolboy from Fascist Italy, abundant in Italian, French and Anglo-American pop and high cultural hypertexts. Eco himself conceded that he wrote it with his own generation in mind and included his own personal memories and memorabilia.[2]

QL is also a fictionalized version of Eco's elaborate theory of intertextuality. After he presented the triad of intentio auctoris, intentio operis and intentio lectoris in *The Limits of Interpretation* (Eco, 1981), he introduced a fourth level of intention, intentio intertextualis (Eco 2004, 121). Eco suggests that there are three additional levels within which such intention works: conscious direct intertextuality, subconscious intertextuality, and cultural intertextuality, all three of which are at play in the novel. Consequently, the intertextuality of *QL* is more than citationism – it comprises the foundational assumptions that form the basis of the text. The mnemonic associations of Eco's protagonist form an intertextual encyclopedia (Eco 1979, 21), the background for the intertextual dialogism of the text, which – with the inclusion of songs and scents – gives way to intermedial dialogism. These associations become the source of

[1] Originally, the motto comes from Thomas Aquinas, but it could be quoted from Eco (2006, 410). See Eco (2004, 121) and (2004, 233) on how intertextuality tends to run wild.

[2] As far as translation is not about comparing two languages but about the interpretation of a text in two different languages (Eco 2001, 14), a negotiation process (Eco 2003, 6), which involves a shift between cultures, Geoffrey Brock created the Anglo-American *Queen Loana*. All the more so, because the translator/negotiator, worked with Eco in close cooperation and was given a great deal of freedom. There are several passages in the novel in English, which are imitations rather than translations. He also omitted or changed lines that would not work in translation – one-liners, and allusions that only Italians could make sense of. On the other hand, with Eco's precision, he translated the song lyrics in a way that they could still be sung to the original melodies (Ketzan 2005).

intertextual irony[3] when Yambo realizes that everything he thinks or says has already been said before.

Lastly, and somewhat similarly, *QL* is an experiment in wiki-technology, as Eco structured it to mimic the free-associative behaviour of electronic navigation. Indeed, Yambo's childhood memories emerge wiki-like, as random fragments, and form nodes in an exponentially expanding extranet. However, the differences of the two media, i.e. the physical finiteness of the book compared with the easy permeability of the wiki-world, question if Eco's idea is at all justifiable (Ng 2005).

Having considered analytical aspects that immediately offer themselves, my argumentation takes a different turn. To me, above all, *QL* is a combination of the previously introduced aspects, and thus, it becomes the show case of what I would call the laboratory of the literary fantastic.[4] This laboratory is gradually built up during the novel and it is completed in the last chapter, which is to become my main focus of interest.

QL is a first-person novel, and Eco frequently references himself, especially his earlier novels *The Name of the Rose* and *Foucault's Pendulum*. He also enumerates such archetypal structures as the travelogue or the house metaphor of the personality. Of course, we have his favourite labyrinthine library, a library of Babel,[5] in the old chapel at his boyhood country home (this time packed with comic books rather than manuscripts) and in a more abstract way, in the form of the novel itself.

Not only is the book a library of Babel, but within this library it takes the shape of the book of books. Even structurally, *QL* has its Old Testament: Part One ("The Incident") and Part Two ("Paper Memory") – an enumeration of the collection of memories and memorabilia, which occupy their true places in the New Testamental Part Three ("OI NOΣTOI").[6] This ends with the equivalent of John's Revelation, the aforementioned last chapter, in which all this is mixed up for good and all.

If this was not enough, *QL* is subtitled as an illustrated novel. For the majority of the book, the graphics have the function of an 'etcetera,' and they are there to create the impression of the abundance of material Yambo comes across (Ng 2005). It is also in the decisive last chapter that their interaction contributes to the 'laboratory circumstances.'

As usual with Eco, the protagonist's name stands for more than it first seems. Giambattista Bodoni, late eighteenth-century Italian printer and engraver was a conscious choice.[7] His coldly elegant books were especially made to be admired for typeface and layout, not to be read, consequently, he was indifferent to the quality of the text he printed ("Giambattista Bodoni"). His mechanical perfection in typography is in line with the crisis of Eco's character: remembering everything (he has ever read) – being touched by nothing.

Yambo, a sixtyish antiquarian bookseller, suffers a cardiac event, which results in a targeted amnesia. He loses his autobiographic memory and is left with what he calls his "paper memory," a kind of cultural memory, which retains all he has ever read and seen, but nothing of his

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[3] See (Eco 2004, 212–35).

[4] Eco (2004, 121) himself uses the chemistry metaphor to describe textual interactions in his imagination.

[5] Eco (2004, 118–35) questions the intertextuality between his own work and the work of Borges. He queries whether such intertextuality is a conscious representation of a link or a subconscious interplay of references.

[6] Oi nostoi, i.e. the returnings.

[7] Perhaps not surprisingly, Bodoni was a follower of John Baskerville, father of the type face Baskerville, a familiar surname from *The Name of the Rose* (Eco 1983).

personal history. His doctor[8] and his family advise him to retire to his family's country home, where he finds himself faced with a large collection of old books, magazines, comics, newspapers, records, advertisements, elementary school notebooks, advertising posters, and postage stamps, embedded in a leitmotivic fog, and filtered through his "crumpled parchment lobes." Occasional experiences of, as he terms it, a *mysterious flame*, indicate that some important memory is on the way. Typically, the expression comes from a childhood comic book with a disappointingly insipid plot but a mesmerizing title:

> In effect, what seemed to have fertilized my slumbering memory was not the story itself, but the title (...) Having forgotten the 'historical' Loana, I had continued to pursue the oral aura of other mysterious flames. And years later, my memory in shambles, I had reactivated the flame's name to signal the reverberation of forgotten delights. The fog was still, as always, within me, pierced from time to time by the echo of a title (253).

In his search through images and texts, Yambo does not heed his doctor's advice concerning rest, so when he discovers a copy of Shakespeare's 1st folio, an enormous value to a book dealer, he suffers a second incident.

In this first part of the novel, that is "Part One: The Incident" and "Part Two: Paper Memory", the reader witnesses how the text structure takes the place of Yambo's world structure[9] and opens up his universe to explicit intermediality. An afternoon snack prompts him to quote Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985): "The distinctive scent of bitter almond ...," while his doctor's enquiry about his name inspires "Call me ... Ishmael?"[10] What he sees is quotations all around,[11] and much rather than first hand experiences, these are his anchors in reality – a reality that is also to be questioned later on.

Among others, he comes across a poem he, as an adolescent, wrote about the nature of memory:

> I build myself memories./I stretch/life into this mirage./With every passing moment,/with every instant,/I gently turn a page/with my unsteady hand./And memory is that wave/that ripples the waters briefly/and disappears". (280–1)

Prophetically, this becomes the script for his "crescendo of mysterious flames," as he calls his near-memory experiences. Let us, for example, take the alphabetic transcription of the *sffft* sound from comic strips:

> Noises. I saw all of them, paging through comic after comic...Among the various noises, *sffft* came to mind, and my forehead beaded with sweat. I looked at my hands: they were shaking. Why? Where had I read that sound? Or perhaps it was the only one I had not read, but heard? (237)

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[8] Dr. Gratarolo, the first person he meets after his first incident – a somewhat unsettling frame to the novel, if we consider his name a reference to Guglielmo Gratarolo, sixteenth-century physician, editor of Verae Alchemiae Artisque Metallicae (1561), a collection of alchemical texts (Ketzan 2006).

[9] In his theoretical works, Eco (1979) also references the text-structure world-structure theory (Petőfi, 1978).

[10] See Melville (1851).

[11] To make the reader's job easier, quotations are mostly printed in italics. When quoting from the novel, I kept the *italics* throughout my paper.

In vain does he master world literature if, similarly to the eighteenth-century Bodoni's elegant typeface, the quotations remain empty structures without content:[12]

> My life as an encyclopaedia continues. I speak as if I were up against the wall and could never turn around. My memories have the depth of a few weeks. Other people's stretch back centuries. A few evenings ago, I tasted a small nut. I said: *The distinctive scent of bitter almond.* In the park, I saw two policemen on horseback: *If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.* (40)

The most intimate and personal experience he can have is his awakening body consciousness: brushing his teeth, making love to his wife and defecating in the garden. These are his most human moments and Eco apparently took pleasure in their sensual rendering. For the reader, too, these are moments of leisure, there is no urge to rack their memory for classic lines – personal experiences are always at hand.

An Odysseian title, OI NOΣTOI, heralds Part Three, where all the ingredients listed before finally enter into reaction. At this point, the narrative shifts to a dream state in which Yambo himself does not know whether he is asleep, comatose, or dead.

> Now I do not live in the stream of time. I am blessedly, in the eternal present. Angelo is before my eyes, the day of his obsequies and also the days of his triumphs. I can move from one memory to the other, and experience each as the *hic et nunc.* (315)

In this ambiguity, the reader is also presented with images that extend beyond those in the physical collection at Solara, and the story moves back in time to Yambo's boyhood and early adolescence, the visual and musical popular culture of Mussolini's Italy presented in lucid and sequential memories: "I have regained my memory. Except that now – when it rains it pours – my memories are wheeling around me like bats."

Paper memory finally triggers personal memory and offers solutions for previously inexplicable associations:

> The tin frog and Angelo Bear. In the attic they had popped into my mind at the same time because Angelo Bear, too, became linked to my sister, when she later became an accomplice in my games – and a glutton for milk candies. (312)

It takes this second coma for Yambo to access his memories and for the reader to learn how the fog, the stamps from Fiji, and the alphabetical transcript of the sounds from comic books are all inextricably linked.

He remembers now that *sffft* was the sound of his childhood friend cutting his own neck on a foggy night – a horror he had been fleeing all his life. We also learn that his search began long before his first incident – in the jungle of images he has always been looking for only one, that of his lost first love, the angelic *Lila Saba.*[13]

> And Lila's face? Now I should be able to see it, but it is as though memories were coming to me of their own accord, one at a time, in an order they have chosen. I simply must wait. I have nothing else to do. (315)

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[12] Ironically, Eco puts (less well-read) readers in the same shoes: they can only remember that they should remember.

[13] An anagram for Sibilla, Yambo's Polish assistant back in Milan. She is the source of an absurd inner conflict since he can not remember whether they were having an affair before the incident. Later, he learns that Lila Saba's real name was also Sibilla.

The familiar fog still hovers over the sequences of condensed memory complete with self-reflective detours. "This is fog: not read, not described by others – real fog, and I am in it. I have returned." The ingredients, however, are still chemically pure and and the reader can not help thinking that the first three hundred pages were mere preparation for what is in store. The ultimate answer, Lila's face, is missing and is nowhere to be found. What Yambo calls for is a solution, a solution of his memories in the laboratory of the fantastic.

"Lovely thou art as the sun," a hymn to the Virgin Mary, is the title of the climactic last chapter, free of the burden of self-reflection, in which Yambo finally surrenders to images and sounds. Throughout the majority of the novel, the integrity of the plates of artifacts from Second World War Italy is fully kept and the relationship between the written text and the images retains the narrative dominance of the text.[14] This ceases to be the case when Yambo senses himself rising out of the fog of his altered state, and memories begin to mingle and merge within him. At this point, the illustrated novel turns into something like a graphic novel without inserted speech bubbles. An evocative series of full-page montages brought together in single panels finally makes use of the images' potential and results in narrative synergy.

Although the whole novel borders on the fantastic, it only starts to unfold in this last chapter. "Why make distinctions between Mamma, Angelo Bear, and Queen Loana?... I have the supreme power to create my own gods, and my own mothers." With the ultimate declaration: "My Ontology is out of joint," what I would call the 'chemistry of the fantastic' comes into play.

Yambo's relationship with religion, specifically Roman Catholicism, is not without ambiguity throughout the novel. The psychological vicissitudes he experienced as a young boy at the Oratory are positively Joycean.[15] In this respect, the last chapter is a compensation that he provides for himself, at the level of imagination, for what he lost at the level of faith (Jackson 1981, 18). The climactic vision starts with a proper evocation of Queen Loana:

> O good Queen Loana, in the name of your hopeless love, I do not ask that you reawaken your millenary victims from their stony sleeps, but merely that you restore to me a face... I, who from the nethermost pit of my enforced sleep have seen what I have seen, ask that you uplift me higher, towards a semblance of health. (Eco 2006, 421)

And Queen Loana does not let him down. Like a visionary, a John of Revelation, he starts to see all at once – the Alpha and the Omega of his personal universe. With this, the text turns into a film script. "And at last, great God, I saw. I saw like the apostle, I saw the centre of my Aleph from which shone forth not the infinite world, but the jumbled notebook of my memories" (ibid.).

The spectacle refuses to observe units of time, space and character; inverts elements of this world; recombines its constitutive features transformed according to the author's historical position; merges incompatible elements (Jackson, 1–8); and all this in a carnivalesque staging. Eco's self-made full-page collages envisage the surreal juxtaposition of external images. These, rather than personal memories, are reflections of Yambo's mind trying to reintegrate past events (Stewart).

A rapid sequence of characters appears from diverse sources on a Wanda Osiris fashion rising staircase with a black background, most of which have been presented in their original layout earlier in the novel. An apocalyptic variety show starts with characters from pop and high

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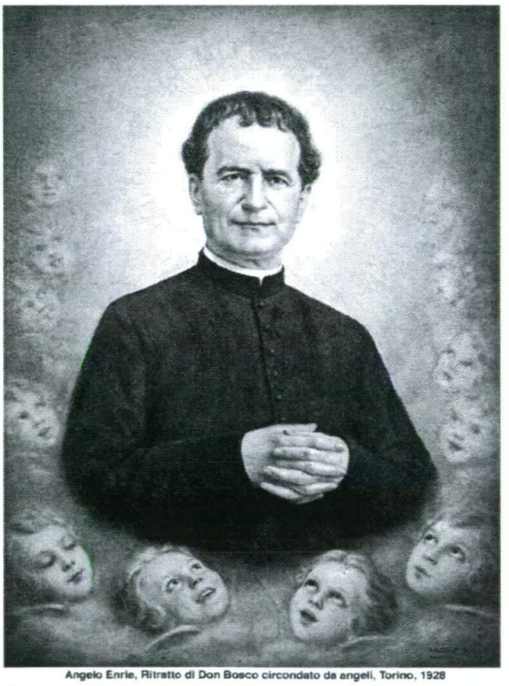
[14] See McCloud, 152–161.

[15] See Joyce 1917.

culture: the Book of Revelation is rendered as a Flash Gordon melodrama. The cast is as follows: at the top of the stairs, upon the throne, Ming the Merciless, Lord of Mongo; with the symbols of the four Evangelists replaced by other Flash Gordon characters; among them the Witch Queen Azura, who resembles a great harlot. The language turns Biblical, too: "when I saw her I was amazed with great amazement" (Mark 5: 42). Then begins a fight and finally, with the help of a swarm of Vespas, Ming the Merciless, Lord of Mongo is defeated.

The show goes on, in Yambo's high school setting, featuring a character from an aspirin advertisement, Mandrake the Magician singing *A Stairway to Paradise* from *An American in Paris* (the kind of melody Yambo was always irritated by); the Dragon Lady with *Sentimental this autumn evening sky*; and the Flash Gordon characters on their victorious return with *Blue skies, smilin' at me*. To mention some of the most illustrious guest appearances: the Seven Dwarfs are here in the company of other Disney characters, fifteen of Yambo's uncles tap-dancing for *I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy* with Mary Poppins wearing the cap of the Paul Street boys and a Pinocchio nose; Sandokan and Cyrano; Josephine Baker in a banana skirt *(Fig. 1)* humming a penitential hymn, and many more, including his family and his friend with his neck cut wearing the brace from the Renoir movie *Grand Illusion,* when at last, Queen Loana appears who welcomes Don Bosco of the holy cards *(Fig. 2)*, who is chanting the influential war melody *Lili Marleen* – in Latin.

Figure 1



Angelo Enrie, Ritratto di Don Bosco circondato da angeli, Torino, 1928

Figure 2

When the two give their consent to Yambo to finally see the face of his lifelong obsession Lila Saba, there is some prolonged suspense with Yambo guessing what Lila will be like. He quickly regains his self-control and the new flow of quotes is cut short in the following manner:

> No, no what wicked literature am I letting myself be seduced by, I am no longer a prurient adolescent... I would simply like her as she was, as I loved her then, just a face above a yellow jacket. (Eco 2006, 447)

And abruptly, the novel ends with "a faint, mouse-coloured *fumifugium* (...) spreading from the top of the stairs, veiling the entrance." 'Base' and 'acid' – Baker and the penitential hymn, Don Bosco and *Lili Marleen* – merge only to extinguish each other and leave us with the solvent: the omnipresent fog.

Throughout the novel, we have witnessed how intermediality became the doorway to the fantastic. It is in its nature, I might add, as it does not only mix but at the same time also thematizes media – channels through which we access reality. And reality is what the fantastic feeds on. Thus, *QL* is not only a monument to a generation, a fictionalized theory, and a printed experiment in wiki-technology, but also the schoolbook of the laboratory of the fantastic.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. Stanislaus Walery. 1928. "Josephine Baker in Banana Skirt from the Folies Bergère production *Un Vent de Folie*". Gelatin silver print (5 1/2 x 3 5/16). Private collection, St. Louis, Hulton Archive. Source: < http://www.sheldonconcerthall.org/presspix/ baker/ Baker_Banana_OLG.jpg>.

Fig. 2. Angelo Enrie. 1928. "Ritratto di Don Bosco circondato da angeli." Source: <http: //santiebeati.it/immagini/?mode=view&album=22600&pic=22600BA.JPG&dispsize= Original&start=20>.

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The question "What Constitutes the Fantastic?" was raised in connection with two bilateral dissertation networks between the Universities of Salzburg and Szeged funded by the Aktion Austria-Hungary and entitled "The Fantastic: Genres and Media of Cultural Representation" (2004-2008), coordinated by Sarolta Marinovich-Resch, György E. Szőnyi and Sabine Coelsch-Foisner. This network involved over twenty young researchers, who regularly met at jointly organised workshops and explored generic properties of the fantastic both by reading literature, examining films, and discussing theories of the fantastic. The present volume brings together a selection of the papers given at these workshops. It documents our work, showing the paths we pursued and the texts with which we engaged within the framework of this joint doctoral programme rather than offering a chronological reading of key fantastic texts or following one particular approach.

The essays included in this volume reflect the wide range of concrete research topics of the PhD students (from Szeged and Salzburg alike), such as fantastic body transformations, possible and imaginary worlds of science fiction, the theoretical and generic issues of classical and postmodern vampire literature, fantasy worlds in comics and graphic novels, etc. The cooperative research work has paid special attention to the theoretical issues in connection with larger genres, too, such as romance, Gothic, horror, and magic realism. We have also found it important to stretch the scope of investigations through large cultural periods, from early modern times to postmodern representations.