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I. INTRODUCTION

Horror and the Phenomenon of Horror

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the nature, use and value of horror in literature. A speculative theory of horror in literature is offered to account for (1) the creative origin of horror: what are the elements producing it; (2) the mechanism of horror: how it is intensified; and (3) the use and value of horror: how and to what extent does it interpret both literature and reality.

The theory of horror in literature offered here is based on a controversy present both in literature and in life: what happens when a doubt arises about the familiar reality of everyday experience, and what are the consequences stemming from the dilemma that the literary expression of this doubt creates. We suggest that one of the ways of exploring this dilemma in literature is through the creation of a phenomenon of horror. Consequently, we shall not only be concerned with the empirical study of the elements forming the phenomenon of horror in a text, but also with the deductive interpretation of the genesis and evolution of those elements throughout literature.

Before introducing our definition of horror, it would perhaps be worthwhile to discuss some aspects of the term 'horror' and some approaches to its literary manifestation.

When we invoke the term 'horror' regarding something we have just experienced--lived, or read--we are usually describing the sensation of shock and aversion that it has elicited in us. And if it is possible for us to apply the term 'horror' to an experience without necessarily referring to our subjective reaction, it is because of certain signals that denote the potential in the incident for eliciting the sensation.

Despite the many attempts that have been made to differentiate between 'horror' and 'terror' (where, for example, either one would be elicited by physical and the other by supernatural causes; or where an element of 'disgust' would perhaps be associated with 'horror', but not with 'terror'), the meanings of the words themselves do not allow for clear-cut differentiation.

In Klein's Etymological Dictionary of the English Language (1966 edition), we are told that the noun 'horror' comes from the accusative of horror, horrorem, "bristling, rudeness, roughness, shaking, trembling;" which is derived from the verb horrere, "to stand on end, bristle, shake, shudder, shiver, tremble." Similarly, 'terror' derives from the accusative of terror, terrorem,

"great fear, alarm," and in turn from terrere, "to frighten." But terrere itself, under the adjective 'terrible', is shown to stand for terseyo and to be descendent from the common root of Old Indian trasate, "trembles;" Avestic tarshta, "feared, revered," teresaiti, "is afraid of;" Gk. τρέσσειν (for trasein), "to tremble, to flee;" Lithuanian trisû, triseti, "to tremble," etc.,.

The elements of 'fear' and 'alarm' present in the definition of 'terror' seem to indicate that the (terrified) individual is not totally possessed by the experience: though rudely shaken, he is alerted and able to flee. 'Horror', on the other hand, seems to lack any such escape valves: it tends to describe that moment in experience when the individual is totally overcome, incapacitated, or paralyzed.

However, it seems evident that both words tend to describe a subjective reaction of the kind expressed by the common verb 'to tremble'. To differentiate them on the basis of the outer stimulus responsible for the reaction is to pass from a strict definition of the noun to a speculative theory of the phenomenon; from a subjective expression of feeling, to an objective theory about an observed phenomenon; from 'literature' to 'criticism'.

Let us consider some definitions: "Dennis Wheatley holds that terror is experienced in the face of a physical danger only, while the word 'horror' conveys fear of the supernatural. . . . H.P. Lovecraft maintains that only

the term 'horror' is applicable in the tale of the supernatural. Boris Karloff . . . thinks that horror is awakened by gruesome physical realities such as scenes of murder and of sadism, while terror is the feeling we experience in the presence of ghostly things. Algernon Blackwood . . . is is complete agreement with this view." Penzoldt, agreeing with Karloff's definition, says: "obviously it is the first emotion [horror] we experience when confronted with some physical abomination, while the second definition well describes that dread which only supernatural terrors can inspire."[1]

On the other hand, McNally and Florescu, in agreement with Wheatly and Lovecraft, but in complete disagreement with Karloff and Penzoldt, state that "terror is the extreme rational fear of some accepted form of reality, whereas horror is the extreme irrational fear of the utterly unnatural or the supernatural."[2]

Northrop Frye introduces the word 'fear' in his definitions, calling 'terror' "fear at a distance," and 'horror' "fear at contact;" and he defines "ultimate

[1]Peter Penzoldt, The Supernatural in Fiction (London: Peter Nevill, 1952), p.9.

[2]Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, In Search of Dracula: A True History of Dracula and Vampire Legends (New York: Warner Books, 1976), p.155.

horror" as occurring "when the potential passes forever into the actual."[1] Devendra Varma, in The Gothic Flame, comments at length on the nature of horror as opposed to terror, generally agreeing with Penzoldt's differentiation on the basis of physical and psychological causes: "the difference between Terror and Horror is the difference between awful apprehension and sickening realization: between the smell of death and stumbling against a corpse."[2]

Some literary uses of the words seem to justify this differentiation between terror and horror: "who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil, as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave, or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay?"[3]; "I turned . . . and saw Dorian Gray for the first time. . . . A curious sensation of terror came over me."[4] Nevertheless, throughout the works of these and other writers, such as Poe, LeFanu, Maturin and Lovecraft, no such

[1]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New York: Atheneum, 1968), pp. 37; 213.

[2]Devendra Varma, The Gothic Flame (London: A. Barker, 1957), p.130.

[3]Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1970), p.48.

[4]Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), p.16.

pattern emerges. They tend to use the words indiscriminately, sometimes substituting 'terror' for 'horror' when they have used 'horror' too often and viceversa. For instance, in "William Wilson" Poe describes how the protagonist reacts to his antagonist's strange effect upon him in two similar situations by saying, in the first, that "his whole spirit became possessed with an objectless yet intolerable horror;" and in the second, that this effect "added to a feeling of even terror."[1]

However, there is another type of feeling, whose manifestation seems to incorporate these two allegedly distinct phenomena. Frye terms it "dread" or "Angst"; and defines it as "fear without an object." He explains Eliot's objection to Hamlet's undirected emotionality by saying that "Hamlet is best approached as a tragedy of Angst, or of melancholy."[2] Lovecraft's observation, that "the most merciful thing in the world . . . is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents,"[3]

[1]Edgar Allan Poe, "William Wilson," in The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe (New York: The Modern Library, 1965), pp. 634, 640.

[2]Anatomy of Criticism, pp. 37, 67.

[3]H.P. Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," in Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos, Volume I, ed. by August Derleth (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975), p.1.

is closely related to Frye's definition of dread. Such observations on horror and terror illuminate, not so much the subjective sensation, or the partial definition of the term, but what we shall identify as the phenomenon of horror.

In reference to Stevenson's "Olalla," Irving Massey suggests that the "horror of the living fact is the horror . . . of all living facts. . . . All later 'knowledge' is a suppressing of true knowledge, which is the death-saturated, fear-saturated nature of experience that suffuses and overwhelms the mind. Or rather, what is later called 'the mind' is only rescued and separated from the undifferentiated mass of terror which was originally all that 'the mind' consisted of."[1] In this context, consider the following examples: "I started from my sleep with horror . . . . when . . . I beheld the wretch--the miserable monster whom I had created."[2] "He came close to the picture . . . and there was no doubt that the whole expression had altered. . . . The thing was horribly apparent."[3] " . . . a horror of the spirit

[1]Irving Massey, The Gaping Pig: Literature and Metamorphosis (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976), p.109.

[2]M. Shelley, Frankenstein, p.57.

[3]Wilde, Dorian Gray, p.100.

that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth and death."[1]

Or consider this more explicit illustration of the same concept by Poe:

> The moaning and groaning,
> The sighing and sobbing,
> Are quieted now,
> With that horrible throbbing
> At heart: --ah, that horrible,
> Horrible throbbing!
> The sickness--the nausea--
> The pitiless pain--
> Have ceased, with the fever
> That maddened my brain--
> With the fever called "Living"
> That burned in my brain.[2]

This agonized feeling resulting from a consideration of life is closely tied to the power of the imagination: "with certain nineteenth-century romantics, one suspects, the imagination is a kind of psychological balancing-pole whose purpose is to keep the writer sane in a world that

[1]Robert Louis Stevenson, Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, in The Merry Men (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p.386.

[2]Poe, "For Annie," in Complete Works, p.973.

horrifies him."[1] Mario Praz, who wrote The Romantic Agony on this subject, observes that "for the Romantics beauty was enhanced by exactly those qualities which seem to deny it, by those objects which produce horror." And commenting on J. and A.L. Aikin's "On the Pleasures Derived from Objects of Terror" and "Enquiry into those kinds of Distress which excite agreeable sensations" (1773); and Drake's "On Objects of Terror," (1798), Praz says that "the discovery of Horror as a source of delight and beauty ended by reacting on men's actual conception of beauty itself: the horrid, from being a category of the Beautiful, ended by becoming one of its essential elements, and the 'beautifully horrid' passed by insensible degrees into the 'horribly beautiful'."[2] In this respect, witness Frankenstein's awe of an Alpine storm: "While I watched the tempest, so beautiful yet terrific. . . ."[3]

Still, there are numerous instances where the words terror or horror do not necessarily refer to the subject's immediate sensation, nor do they necessarily denote that his inner experience is directly responsible for the

[1]Colin Wilson, The Strength to Dream (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1962), p.7.

[2]Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951), p.27.

[3]M. Shelley, Frankenstein, p.73.

feeling. For instance, in Heart of Darkness, Marlow's voyage into the African Jungle is punctuated by growing references to a feeling of inauspicious foreboding that seems to come from somewhere and everywhere. It is not to be localized. All his references to horror or terror must be understood in this widely generalized manner: "while I stood horror-struck, one of those creatures rose to his hands and knees, and went off on all-fours towards the river to drink;" "I was completely unnerved by a sheer blank fright, pure abstract terror, unconnected with any distinct shape of physical danger."[1] In both instances the feeling is the same. Marlow's mind absorbs concepts, reflects on cosmic perspectives, and it is the consideration of what surrounds him in terms of the potential whole that accounts for his intense feeling of horror.

A similar, ambiguous feeling of oppression is what finally overpowers Dr. Jekyll, when he confesses that he became "solely occupied by one thought: the horror of my other self;"[2] and what gradually encroaches upon Dorian Gray, who more in tone with the romantic spirit, "would examine with minute care, and sometimes with a monstrous

[1]Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (New York: Norton, 1972), pp. 18, 65.

[2]Stevenson, Jekyll & Hyde, p.404.

and terrible delight, the hideous lines that seared the wrinkled forehead or crawled around the heavy, sensual mouth, wondering sometimes which were the more horrible, the signs of sin or the signs of age."[1]

Definition of the Phenomenon of Horror

The development of the phenomenon of horror in a text is dependent on the interaction of three major elements: (1) The metaphysical elements: elements of the extraordinary, from the unusual to the supernatural, and the elements forming the habitual experience of a character in the text; (2) the dramatic elements involved in expressing the character's reaction to this possibility of change; and (3) the element of rejection, marking the character's dramatic reaction to the potential transformation of his experience.

The elements of dreams, visions, hallucinations, etc., while emerging from the realm of the unknown, are only potentially horrific. They do not necessarily produce horror. They are dependent on the elements of dramatization, i.e., the reaction of the individual whose consciousness has been visited by these extraordinary phenomena. In turn this dramatization must lead to a

[1]Wilde, Dorian Gray, p.138.

particular kind of reaction for horror to occur: one of rejection. By this we are not referring to any momentary expression of astonishment, or of wonder, but to the sustained expression of a conflict, of a struggle between the individual's consciousness and those elements that he refuses to admit within his consciousness.

The degree of intensity of horror in a text is therefore directly proportional to the intensity of the character's rejecting the possibility of exchanging his sense of reality for a new or enlarged one. This is in turn obtained by manipulating the dimensions of the metaphysical (the extraordinary and the habitual) and the dramatic elements in the text. Any differences in the horror-phenomena found in different works are therefore a function of the metaphysical and dramatic elements in the text. For instance, if a robbery (extraordinary element) takes place next door, we may see the character react with a certain degree of emotionality (dramatic element) to the possibility that his house (habitual element) may also be robbed. If next his house is burglarized, the dramatic element of the confrontation is intensified and his reaction may also be intensified: he may move to a safer neighborhood. But if his wife gets killed during the robbery (the dramatic and the extraordinary intensified), he may not only reject this experience, but life itself, and commit suicide.

Although in principle there is only one kind of horror-phenomenon, we can distinguish between four categories of horror to represent the different ways in which this conflict between the habitual and the extraordinary can be expressed. These categories are introduced as forming a hierarchy within which the literary expression of the phenomenon of horror can be observed in its totality. From the first to the fourth, the phenomenon of horror is seen to move from an implicit, abstract level, through an explicit, concrete phase and to culminate in another abstract level which is nevertheless explicit and absolute. The variety of horror-phenomenon examined in each category is initially characterized by the degree to which the element of the extraordinary is present in the text.

Potentially, all four varieties of horror, and of the extraordinary, from the unusual to the supernatural, may be present in works examined under any of the four categories. But it is the particular emphasis placed in a text on each of these classifications that determines its category.

(1) Implicit horror, based on the suggestion of the extraordinary (the Unusual).

(2) Explicit horror, based on the creation of an atmosphere of growing uncertainty and unreality (the Extraordinary).

(3) Explicit horror, where the extraordinary becomes

a horror-organism: a) a horror-persona; b) a horror-type (the Non-human).

(4) Absolute horror, where the extraordinary becomes a spirit, a God, or a devil (the Supernatural).

II. THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Although it might seem more appropriate to relate the occurrence of horror in literature to either a historical period or a genre, the phenomenon of horror trascends these arbitrary barriers and can be found in the literature of all periods in history. Even the widely-held proposition that the Gothic period (from the middle of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century) was the heyday, if not the cradle of horror-literature, must be called in question.

Whereas critics such as Mario Praz, Devendra Varma, Robert D. Spector and others suggest that horror gained literary prominence during this period due to historical (social, ideological and scientific) developments, other critics, such as Peter Penzoldt, Northrop Frye and Sylvan Barnet have variously suggested that this is not necessarily the case. The former critics, with the addition of Edith Birkhead, Montague Summers and J.M.S. Tomkins, have thoroughly documented the correlation between the historical developments and the literature of that period; but they have also illustrated the great influence exerted by previous writings on both the Gothic romances and the

horror novels of the same period.

For the sake of convenience, before entering into a general discussion on the historical perspective, we will consider these literary influences under four arbitrary headings: (1) Poetry, (2) Drama, (3) Didactic and Philosophical Essays, and (4) Prose Narrative.

Since this study is not directly concerned with either a historical or a generic survey of horror, but with the theoretical elucidation of its creative origin in literature, the following inventory of works written before the twentieth century is presented only as a rough illustration of the literary and ideological heritage of horror. This catalogue, therefore, is neither exhaustive nor critical, and perhaps omits works that might be considered important by the reader.

Poetry

The first record of horror in English literature (old English) appears in what is considered to be the first epic poem in any modern language: the Beowulf, with its monster Grendel, his mother, the water-hag, and the fire-breathing dragon that kills, and is killed by Beowulf towards the end. Commenting on the "extraordinarily persistent nostalgia" of the romance, Frye observes that "there has never . . . been any period of Gothic English literature, but the list of Gothic

revivalists stretches completely across its entire history, from the Beowulf poet to writers of our own day."[1]

Passing from the tenth to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is relevant to mention Spenser's The Faerie Queen (1589-96), and Milton's "Il Penseroso" (1632) and Paradise Lost (1667). "Il Penseroso" exerted a great influence on many of the followers of The Graveyard School of Poetry, notably on Gray, whose Elegy (1751) faithfully imitates the tone of Milton's poem.[2] The instances of horror in Paradise Lost will be examined in a later section

After Galland's translations of three groups of Oriental tales (The Arabian Nights (1704-17), The Turkish Tales (1708), and The Persian Tales (1714)) and Addison's Oriental allegory, The Vision of Mirza (1711), we come to the publication of Parnell's Night Piece on Death (1722), which heralded the beginnings of The Graveyard School of Poetry. Its major representatives were Ralph (Night, 1729), Young (The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality, 1742), Blair (The Grave, 1743), Collins ("Ode to Evening," "Ode to Fear," in Odes, 1747), Stevenson

[1] N. Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New York: Atheneum, 1968), p.86.

[2] See D. Varma, The Gothic Flame (London: A. Barker, 1957), p.28.

(On Seeing a Scull, 1749), and Gray.

The famous Ossianic poems (attributed to the legendary Gaelic warrior and poet Oisin) presented as translations from the original Gaelic by Macpherson in Temora (1763) did much to revive and call attention to the spirit of the past. After Macpherson, the most important poets to influence the literature of horror were Bürger (Walter Scott translated Lenore in 1796 as William and Hellen), Coleridge ("The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" 1798; "Christabel" 1816) and Poe ("The Raven" 1845).

Drama

From Marlowe's Tamburlaine (1590) to Young's The Revenge (1721), stretches a long list of tragedies, melodramas and sentimental comedies, that used horror and provided later writers with much of their horror imagery and symbolism. Marlowe's Tragedy of Dr. Faustus (1604), and Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus (1592-94), Romeo and Juliet (1594-96), King John (1596-97), Hamlet (1600-1), King Lear (1605-6), and Macbeth (1605-6) exhibit excellent instances of horror. Other important dramatists are: Marston (Sophonisba, 1606; The Insatiate Countess, 1613); Tourneur (The Revenger's Tragedy, 1607; The Atheist's Tragedy, 1611); Webster (The White Devil, 1608; The Duchess of Malfi, 1614); Fletcher & Beaumont (The Pilgrim, 1621; The Knight of Malta, 1647); Ford (Lover's Melancholy, 1629; 'Tis Pity she's a Whore, 1633); Otway (Don Carlos, 1676; The Orphan, 1680); and Steele (The Funeral, 1701).

Essay

The list of philosophical and didactic essays that directly or indirectly influenced the use of horror in literature starts with Dee's A True and Faithful Relation of what passed for many years, etc., (1659) where he relates his experiences with the supernatural. Another important work is Glanville's Sadducismus Triumphatus or Full and Plain Evidence concerning Witches and Apparitions (1681). Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690) and Berkeley's rebuttal, Essay towards a New Theory of Vision (1709) were followed by Addison's Essay On the Pleasures of the Imagination (1709-11) (emphasizing the importance of visual imagery in literature), and Defoe's Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions (1727) (where he credits the existence of the supernatural).

Burke's famous contribution to the Romantic movement, A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757), where he claims that horror is an essential element of beauty, was followed by Johnson's didactic romance, Rasselas (1759) and Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance (1762), which almost singlehandedly transformed the meaning of the term Gothic: "[He] not only claims recognition for Gothic art, but actually suggests that Gothic manners were superior. He fairly strews his pages with expressions like 'Gothic

ages', 'gothic warriors', 'gothic manners', 'gothic enchantments', 'gothic tales', 'gothic poems', and 'gothic romances'. The word 'Gothic', with all that it implies, ceases to be a synonym for 'barbarous' and 'violent' and becomes associated with the poetry and chivalry of the Middle Ages: thus 'Gothic' assumes a second meaning, 'the medieval'." Fielding's attitude towards the term Gothic, as seen in his description of the Palace of Death in his Lucianic narrative A Journey from this World to the Next (1743), reflects the eighteenth century emphasis on the imagination: "He lays stress on 'the structure of the Gothic order' which was 'vast beyond imagination'. By 'Gothic order' Fielding meant the Gothic architecture producing those impressions of venerableness, vastness, and gloominess, which are often loosely designated by 'Gothic'."[1]

Meanwhile, under Diderot's direction, the publication of L'Encyclopédie was under way (1751-1776). Rousseau had published Du Contrat social and Emile (both in 1762); and Voltaire's Dictionnaire philosophique (1764), Wincklemann's History of Ancient Art (1764) and Percy's Essay on the Ancient Minstrels (1765) were soon to appear.

Aikin's "On the Pleasure derived from Objects of Terror" and "Enquiry into those kinds of Distress which

[1]Varma, The Gothic Flame, pp. 12, 11.

excite Agreeable Sensations" (1773) work the same vein as Burke's essay on the Sublime and Beautiful. Eight years before the French Revolution started, Kant published his Critique of Pure Reason (1781). Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution (1790), Fichte's General Science Doctrine (1794) and Drake's "On Objects of Terror" (1798) appeared when the form of the novel was already established and the new genre was in the process of expanding.

Prose Narrative

After the publication of Richardson's Pamela (1741) and Clarissa Harlowe (1748), and Fielding's Tom Jones (1749) and Amelia (1751), the first, though very mild Gothic novel appeared. The melodramatic elements in Smollett's Ferdinand Count Fathom (1753) revolve around the intrigues of the villainous Count, a direct descendant of Marlowe's Tamburlaine. Leland's Longsword, Earl of Salisbury (1762) was followed by another antiquarian's novel, Walpole's The Castle of Otranto (1764), which marked the beginning of what has been called the Gothic epoch in English literature.

After the publication of Goldsmith's The Vicar of Wakefield (1766) and Sterne's A Sentimental Journey (1768), Clara Reeve wrote The Old English Baron (1778) to demonstrate how a Gothic romance could be written without the use of supernatural elements. Three years before the French Revolution started, Beckford published Vathek (1786), which was followed by Ann Radcliffe's A Sicilian

Romance (1790), The Romance of the Forest (1791), The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794), and her masterpiece, The Italian (1797).

William Godwin's the Adventures of Caleb Williams (1794) is one of the first horror novels to exhibit the tendency towards crime and detection that transformed the Gothic romance into the thriller, or suspense novel. But it was with the publication of Lewis' The Monk in 1796 that the full-fledged horror novel made an impact on the scene of English literature. Lewis' next publication, Mistrust (1808), reverts to the less sensational type of Gothic novel popularized by Walpole and Radcliffe; but by this time, horror novels and horror stories--those prose-narratives where the phenomenon of horror appears to be their predominant characteristic--flourished: Shelley's Frankenstein (1818), Polidori's The Vampyre (1819), Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer (1820), Poe's Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque (1839), and Prest's Varney the Vampire (1847) are only a few of the many that were published around this period.

In this same period (1810-1830) Walter Scott published his numerous historical novels and romances. But his translations from the German, especially of Goethe's Götz with the Iron Hand (translated in 1799), which introduced into England the Ritter-roman (romance of chivalry); and, as we have mentioned, of Bürger's ballad

Lenore, exerted an enormous influence on the English writers of this and succeeding periods. Other very influential German works are Goethe's Werter (1774) and Faust (1808); and Schiller's Die Räuber (1781), which introduced into England the Räuber-geschichte (tale of robbers), and Ghost-Seer (1795), which influenced Radcliffe and Maturin directly and marks the beginning of the Schauer-roman (pennydreadful, or shocker) influence in English literature.

After the publication of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights (1847) and Melville's Moby Dick (1851), LeFanu published his Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery (1851), Carmilla (1871) and In a Glass Darkly (1886). From this same period and up until the end of the nineteenth century we also have Collins' The Woman in White (1860) and The Moonstone (1868); Stevenson's Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886) and The Merry Men (1887); Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891); Wells' The Time Machine (1895), The Island of Dr. Moreau (1896), and The War of the Worlds (1898); Stoker's Dracula (1897); and Henry James' The Turn of the Screw (1898).

Historical Discussion

As the critics tell us, there are many and varied reasons as to why the phenomenon of horror should have appealed to writers and readers alike during what is known

as the Gothic period in literary history. Throughout the years, both the writers and the reading public became, as it were, gradually sensitized and influenced by the age in which they lived. In an increasingly cold, rational world, overpowered by the arguments of deists and French Encyclopedists, a time of scientific euphoria that only wanted facts and logical explanations, the response was heavily emotional. The romantic re-creations of the past afforded an escape from both the physical and the ideological realities of the present. And the emotional release, climbing the ladder of sentimentality, romantic love and Gothic anxiety, reached its climax with the advent of the full-fledged horror novel. The Marquis de Sade accounted for the emergence of the phenomenon of horror in literature in such a marked fashion as being

> . . . the inevitable product of the revolutionary shocks with which the whole of Europe resounded. For those who were acquainted with all the ills that are brought upon men by the wicked, the romantic novel was becoming somewhat difficult to write, and merely monotonous to read: there was nobody left who had not experienced more misfortunes in four or five years than could be depicted in a century by literature's most famous novelists: it was necessary to call upon hell in aid in order to arouse interest; and to find in the land of fantasies what was common

knowledge from historical observation of man in this iron age.[1]

The process from melodrama to sentimentality to romanticism, led to romantic anxiety, to outward horror and in the writings of LeFanu, Maturin, and especially Poe, to the analytical search of the psychological depths of fear within the mind.

The scientific experiments and discoveries that might have influenced and inspired the writing of Frankenstein, Jekyll and Hyde, The Island of Dr. Moreau, and other such books, have been lengthily documented. The artistic theories of horror and the sublime (such as Aikin's and Burke's) and the precise literary sources for much of the horror imagery and symbolism (such as Shakespeare and Otway) that preceded and strongly influenced much nineteenth century horror literature have also been studied at length. Both Praz and Varma have carefully examined the period, referring many of the medieval settings, situations and natural scenery found in several Gothic novels to the works of many continental painters and writers.

However, as we mentioned above, the proposition

[1]Quoted from Sade's Idée sur les romans in Mario Praz's "Introductory Essay" to Three Gothic Novels (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1974), p.14.

that the nineteenth century was the heyday of the horror tale has come into dispute. Penzoldt, writing in 1952, affirms that "the great days of the horror tale were in the beginning of the twentieth century." His explanation rests on a socio-historical premise which is the exact opposite of the one Sade used in his argument: "the turn of the century was the period in which subjects that had previously been taboo began to be treated in fiction. Just as authors began to talk more freely about social problems and sex, so they became more daring in their descriptions of horror. With this tendency went a certain desire for artificial excitement that was to be expected in the wealthy middle-class society of countries that for decades had not known the very real horror of wars and revolutions."[1]

Today, the popularity of the horror tale seems to be as strong as it ever was during the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century. More accurately, this is a popularity that never died and, if anything, has always been on the rise. There have been horror stories, novels, plays, songs and motion pictures capturing a large share of the reading, listening and watching audience throughout the twentieth century. Not too long

[1]Penzoldt, Supernatural in Fiction (London: Peter Nevill, 1952), pp. 148, 149.

ago, a new twist was added to the phenomenon of horror in the form of horror musicals such as The Rocky Horror Show and the compositions of Alice Cooper, Black Sabath, Styx and others. While it may be argued that these are satirical, somewhat in the spirit of Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey (1818) and Thomas Love Peacock's Headlong Hall (1816) and Nightmare Abbey (1818), and therefore an indication of the decline of horror in the arts, it may also be argued that they exploit horror as much as they ridicule it; thus serving as further proof of its resilience and adaptability.

From the horror achieved by the crude mixture of sexual perversion, physical pain and demonology that is found in M.G. Lewis' The Monk (1796) to the horror achieved by a similar quality of ingredients that is found in C.R. Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer (1820), F.M. Crawford's "The Dead Smile" (1911), H.P. Lovecraft's "The Thing on the Doorstep" (1946), D. Wheatley's To the Devil-A Daughter (1953), I. Levin's Rosemary's Baby (1967), W.P. Blatty's The Exorcist (1971), and D. Seltzer's The Omen (1976), to name only a few, we can trace an uninterrupted line that spans almost two-hundred years of marked historical change.

It follows from what we have said so far, that the phenomenon of horror in literature is not confined to a particular period in history and that its emergence and

popularity cannot be simply explained by referring to specific historical situations and events. Books whose major achievement is the creation of horror (as opposed to those where horror abounds, but whose major achievement lies elsewhere) started appearing when the novel established itself as a distinct genre. Within this new literary domain, some literary modes--such as horror--soon staked out their territories and prospered; and it became only a question of time and experimentation before they emerged as distinct sub-genres.

Even though specific social developments--such as the increase in literacy and the implementation of technological devices in the printing of books and periodicals--helped to spread this specialized type of literature, the large section of the public who purchased and avidly read it, was no different from the enraptured audiences who had watched "Clytemnestra exulting over her slaughtered husband, or the incestuous Oedipus entering on the stage with bloody eyeless sockets, or the lecherous Pentheus, whose mother will in a frenzy exult over his severed head." As S. Barnet further observes, "we remember that none of the world's four great tragic dramatists shrinks from dramatizing the demonic and the horrible."[1]

[1]Sylvan Barnet, "Introduction" to Titus Andronicus (New York: Signet Classics, 1964), p.xxv.

III. FOUR CATEGORIES OF HORROR

1. Implicit Horror (the Unusual)

The first category of the phenomenon of horror applies to the occurrence of implicit horror. The suggestion of the extraordinary, through insinuation and surprise, makes a ripple on the surface of habitual experience that leads to a disruption of the normal course of events. If the disruption lasts long enough, it may produce tension, anxiety, discomfort, and other sensations of insecurity and unrest that could eventually lead to horror. The peculiar circumstances that surround a certain situation are often brought about by the mysterious behaviour of one of the characters in his attempt to conceal his unusual (often criminal) deeds, from the rest of the world.

Although most works of literature use these elements to achieve tension and character development, they are especially exploited in Gothic romances and thrillers, or mystery novels. The pattern, with minor variations, is usually the same: within a qualified, Gothic or similar 'artificial' setting, peculiar things begin to occur that culminate in a death or similar catastrophic event. This elicits a reaction--through which the characters'

awareness about the disruption of the normal state of affairs is expressed--and a search for the truth is begun. Until things are restored to normal, the characters exhibit the discomfort, anxiety and apprehension signaling their rejection of 'the unusual', and a relatively mild state of chaos sets in. In thrillers, or detective novels, the task of restoration is given to a chosen individual, whose personality enables him to discriminate between what is real and what is not. Usually, the disturbance is traced to a culprit, who, in this context, is burdened not only with his crime against 'reality', but becomes the scapegoat for the collective doubts, sins and fears of the society.

To a certain extent, this pattern is illustrated in Measure for Measure (1604), with Angelo as the villain and Vincentio as the detective. In The Castle of Otranto we find almost all the ingredients mentioned above. The setting, in this case, is of primary importance. Being Gothic, the possibilities that the castle affords for the suggestion of the extraordinary are innumerable: "The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty

hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness." Manfred, the prince of Otranto, is the villain who by poisoning Alfonso, the rightful master of the castle, has disrupted the proper course of events. Theodore, the young but noble peasant, is partially the detective; although here, the supernatural, "the form of Alfonso dilated to an immense magnitude," acts as the revealing agent: "'Behold in Theodore the true heir of Alfonso!' said the vision."[1]

It is easy to see how, dispensing with the supernatural, a similar plot could be used to create a similar feeling of apprehension and fear. Clara Reeve's attempt to do so in The Old English Baron failed. The didactic weight that she placed throughout the novel flattened the plot, made the characters uninteresting and effectively blocked any sustained dramatization that might have led to horror.

Ann Radcliffe, however, though resorting to supernatural suggestions to create much of the suspense in The Mysteries of Udolpho, surpassed Walpole in the creation of tension, anxiety and horror. The castle of Udolpho is even more prepossessing than the castle of Otranto; and the malevolence of its master Montoni is far more

[1] Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1958), pp. 117, 190.

effective than Manfred's two-dimensional wickedness. Even more so is her creation of Schedoni, the monk, in The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents: "certain qualities can be noticed here which were destined to recur insistently in the Fatal Men of the Romantics: mysterious (but conjectured to be exalted) origin, traces of burnt-out-passions, suspicion of a ghastly guilt, melancholy habits, pale face, unforgettable eyes. Decidedly there is something of Milton's Satan in this monk, whose whole air and attitudes exhibited the wild energy of something not of this earth'." Based on these attributes Praz traces the character of Schedoni to Shakespeare's King John and Cassius, and to the "Machiavellians and Jesuits who had been among the abiding features of the English theatre of the seventeenth century."[1]

Although supernatural elements are very much a part of these Gothic novels, they are of secondary importance to the elements of setting and character development, which suggest the extraordinary in a well dramatized manner. In Collins' The Moonstone, a half-way narrative between Gothic romance and modern thriller, these elements are still more in evidence, though slightly altered. The source of the extraordinary is of course the diamond

[1]M. Praz, The Romantic Agony (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951), p.59.

itself. The villain is Godfrey Ablewhite, who is destroyed at the end but not before he nearly destroys his rival, Franklin Blake. The detective, or the truth-finding agent is portrayed by two characters: Sergeant Cuff, one of the first detectives in English fiction, and Ezra Jennings, the alienated, melancholy doctor, who by establishing Blake's innocence, vindicates his own life. The extraordinary fact that Blake "entered Miss Verinder's sitting-room and took the diamond" without being aware of it, is later explained by the fact that he was "in a state of trance, produced by opium." Jennings unravels the mystery, which as we find out, had been caused by Blake's incredulity about 'medicine': "He tells me that taking medicine and groping in the dark mean one and the same thing."[1] Ironically, this is exactly what happens: the vexed medical man, Candy, decides he must teach Blake a lesson; slips him the laudanum, and Blake, sleep-walking, takes the diamond. The plot is balanced on the question of whether what seems to be true is really true: Blake did not steal the diamond, he only hid it. Towards the end, the vital test that will prove beyond a doubt what really happened is based on a "physiological principle" that according to Jennings proves the existence of the

[1]Wilkie Collins, The Moonstone (New York: The Modern Library, 1937), p.308.

unconscious mind: "you may remember under the influence of the second dose of opium, the place in which you hid the diamond under the influence of the first."[1]

These fascinating games about the nature of 'reality' are at the heart of any suspense of mystery novel. Sometimes the question is presented in the form of a conflicting character, such as Dickens' John Jasper (in Edwin Drood) whose personality is the source of horror in the novel; or of Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca and the albino preacher in Jamaica Inn, whose haunting personalities serve the same purpose; or of Agatha Christie's Justice Wargrave in And There Were None. The mystery ensuing from the activities of such characters is nothing more than the dramatization of their inner conflicts, which are a mystery to themselves: they act out their doubts, or try to achieve certain ends, usually contradictory, bringing about a disruption in the normal course of events: "From my earliest youth I realized that my nature was a mass of contradictions. . . . From an early age I knew very strongly the lust to kill. But side by side with this went a contradictory trait--a strong sense of Justice." [2] (Wargrave's confession.)

[1] Collins, The Moonstone, p.314.

[2] Agatha Christie, And There Were None (New York: Pocket Books, 1976), p.164.

To unravel the mystery that will lead to the identification of the villain, the writer only offers the reader a few peculiar elements denoting the 'unreal' or disturbing nature of the events with which he is associated. The key to the mystery lies in identifying these elements and in correlating them to the case. In "The Adventures of the Speckled Band," the victim's last words mention "the band, the speckled band." This, connected to "the whistle in the dead of night,"[1] leads Holmes to his conclusion, and once this conclusion proves accurate, to the solution of the mystery. At the same time, other characters, such as the gypsies in "The Speckled Band" and the other guests in And There Were None, may be shown to reveal a potentially menacing, similarly discordant personality. In several mystery novels, the horror of a situation is accentuated by the fact that we don't know who is the source of the disturbance; we are made to feel that everybody is to blame.

Let us consider in some detail one of Christie's less famous novels, After the Funeral.[2]

[1]Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventures of the Speckled Band," in The Complete Sherlock Holmes, Volume I (New York: Doubleday & Company, n.d.), pp. 262, 261.

[2]Agatha Christie, After the Funeral (n.p.: Fontana Books, 1975).

There are two main settings in this novel: first, we are introduced to Enderby Hall, "a vast Victorian house built in the Gothic style," which, making use of all the associations that the term Gothic brings about, sets the tone for what is to come. Then we are made aware, still in the first page of the text, of the contrast between old and new values through the ruminations of Old Landscombe, the faithful butler (reminiscent of Gabriel Betteredge, the House Stewart in The Moonstone): "Too old-fashioned, that's what they'd say, shaking their heads in that silly superior way--as if the old things weren't a great deal better than the new ones! He could tell them that! Gimrack, half the new stuff was--came to pieces in your hands." From this point onwards, there is a continuous back and forth movement between past and present; between the old and the young Abernethies. There is even a portrait of the founder of Enderby Hall, Cornelius Abernethie, with "his hand resting on a terrestrial globe, whether by desire of the sitter, or as a symbolic conceit on the part of the artist, no one could tell."[1] This may be seen to illustrate the symbolic conflict that Christie is setting up between two different 'worlds of mind': by establishing a point of contrast between the old and the young, a second, temporal setting is created.

[1]Christie, After the Funeral, p.7.

A group of relatives gather in Enderby Hall for the funeral of Richard Abernethie, Cornelius' first born, who not only inherited his wealth, but also his character. As we are told throughout the novel, the two go together: the ability to generate wealth and make things last (as 'real' as possible) is connected to a strong, straight character (associated with 'old' values). The only one of Richard's descendants to inherit these qualities is Susan, his niece: "She had the same kind of dominant personality that Richard had had, the same driving energy, the same foresightedness and forthright judgment. Of the three members of the younger generation she alone seemed to be made of the metal that had raised up the vast Abernethie fortunes."[1] But, as Christie never tires of telling us, history repeats itself, and we are introduced to another parallel: Rosamund, as her aunt Cora had been before her, was "famous for speaking the truth at awkward moments." (Funeral, p.185.) She was also famous for living, like her aunt, "in a kind of imaginary world of her own--full of melodrama and fantastic ideas about other people." (Funeral, p.51.) Instrospective, self-defining remarks such as this one and the one about Cornelius' painting, with the detail of the hand on the globe "whether . . . as a symbolic conceit, etc.," are

[1]Christie, After the Funeral, p.45.

the insignia of the suspense novel: paradoxically, while feeding on fantasies and creating 'worlds of their own', their self-conscious, self-appointed function is to identify the 'truths' in life.

All the anxiety and fear in the novel seems to stem from Cora's remark at the funeral that her brother Richard had been murdered. On the trip back to London after the funeral, the relatives gossip about her stupidity, while revealing that all of them had motives for wishing him dead. The next day Cora herself is murdered, and as the plot unfolds, we are again told that all the main characters had the opportunity to kill her. The references to the peculiarity of the situation are numerous: "'There was nothing unusual in her manner--nothing strange--or apprehensive?' . . . something out of the ordinary;" "It seems quite incredible to me;" "I mean, it is odd, isn't it?" But the trusted family lawyer sums up the situation: "Should murder make sense?"[1] After speaking with the police, Entwhistle, the lawyer, visits Poirot. Not only has Cora been murdered ('truth' silenced), but an attempt to poison her servant-companion has been made.

This is the turning point: "I want to know the truth, Poirot," he says; "from now on I occupy myself of everything," Poirot reassures him. (Funeral, p.74.) When the detective

[1]Christie, After the Funeral, pp. 26, 38, 44, 51.

is commissioned it indicates that the present state of affairs is intolerable: "Helen said sharply: 'Hercule Poirot? Then you think--. . . . She spoke mechanically. Her face was white and strained. She said with an effort: 'You think--that Cora was right? That Richard was--murdered?'"[1]

The detective is not an average individual. ("To be 'average' in personality means to suffer from various 'socially patterned defects', as Fromm calls them. That is, the typical person in our society usually shows signs of premature arrest in his growth."[2]) He is gifted, as we said above, with the ability to discern, to discriminate between what is true and what is false. As Poe says of Dupin, the detective "is fond of enigmas, of conundrums, hieroglyphics; exhibiting in his solutions of each a degree of acumen which appears to the ordinary apprehension praeternatural. His results, brought about by the very soul and essence of method, have, in truth, the whole air of intuition."[3] Sherlock Holmes says the same thing, though more succintly: "they say that genius is an infinite

[1]Christie, After the Funeral, p.74.

[2]Sidney M. Jourard, from Personal Adjustment, quoted in A Strange Glory, ed. by Gerry Goldberg, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1975), p.17.

[3]Poe, "Murders in the Rue Morgue," in Complete Tales and Poems (New York: The Modern Library, 1965), p.141.

capacity for taking pains . . . it is a very bad definition, but it does apply to detective work."[1] Nero Wolfe's abilities are similar: "something was happening so fast inside of him and so much ground was being covered, the whole world in a flash, that no one else could really understand it even if he had tried his best to explain." And when Wolfe explained, "it was like being with him in a dark room which neither of you has ever seen before, and he describes all of its contents to you, and then when the light is turned on his explanation of how he did it seems sensible because you see everything there before you just as he described it."[2] Wolfe (Poirot, Holmes, Dupin) is very much aware of his ability, and valuing it (in dollars also) is not modest about it: "You are right, there is something in me that can help you; it is genius." (Fer de Lance, p.11.) Poirot is the same: "And after all, it is natural to me to be right--it is a habit I have! ; "It is not necessary for you to see. I am doing the seeing;" "No need to guess. I know." But Poirot, like Holmes, is well aware that "there were to be no short cuts to the truth. Instead he would have to adopt a longer, but a reasonably sure

[1]Doyle, A Study in Scarlet, in Complete Holmes, p.31.

[2]Rex Stout, Fer de Lance (New York: Pyramid Books, 1972), p.7.

method. . . . For in the long run, either through a lie, or through truth, people were bound to give themselves away."[1]

As in The Moonstone, the conflict here is one of truth against falsehood, reality against unreality. The elements of the extraordinary--the suggestion that Richard may have been poisoned, Cora's violent murder, her companion's attempted poisoning--are played against the elements of familiar reality represented by the stability of the Abernethie family, the butler's comments and the lawyer's measured, objective observations. Most frightening of all is the suggestion that anybody is capable of committing murder if put under enough pressure to do so: "It is the need that counts; it's the desperation that counts." (Funeral, p.40.)

At another level, the reader is challenged to 'find out the truth', i.e., to test his ability in (the eventuality that he is incapable of) finding out the truth. As we see in the end, this is a useless exercise. Poirot, after collecting all the evidence, only finds out the truth in a dream: "he dreamed of the green malachite table. On it was the glass-covered stand of wax flowers . . . Hercule Poirot woke up--and he did know!" (Funeral, p.154.) But though in a dream, the truth came to him after he had

[1]Christie, After the Funeral, pp. 160, 161, 137.

lighted on the one basic clue that Christie deftly drops along the narrative. Often, as is illustrated in After the Funeral, "truth is not always in a well. In fact, as regards the more important knowledge . . . she is invariably superficial."[1]

In the end, all the members of the family are gathered once more in Enderby Hall; Poirot completes his investigation, and the mystery is revealed. As in And There Were None, we have been fooled from the start. By emphasizing from the start Cora's knack for "blurting out unpleasant truths,"[2] we are led to believe that her uncle was murdered. We disregard the obvious. At one point, parodying the line 'the butler did it', Christie has the sensible character in the story say "You mean the companion did do it?" (Funeral, p.47.) And indeed the unsuspected companion turns out to be the murderer in the end.

As in "The Speckled Band," the mysterious is finally explained. But in contrast to "The Speckled Band," where the gypsies are a poor alternative to the cruel Dr. Roylott ("whose face was marked by every evil passion"[3]), the modern thriller tends to distribute the suggestion of the extraordinary in such a way that, as we said above,

[1]Poe, "Murders in the Rue Morgue," Complete Works, p153.
[2]Christie, After the Funeral, p.26.
[3]Doyle, Complete Holmes, p.264.

several people are potentially suspect. For instance, in Ellery Queen's The House of Brass, all the characters gathered by the eccentric, supposedly rich old man are flawed in some respect, and we get the impression that any of them could be the criminal. One of the characters in After the Funeral asks Poirot: "Is there really anyone whose life would bear close investigation?" (p. 118.)

The emphasis of this type of horror is on the purely psychological adjustments necessary to keep up with the subtleties of everyday life, that even in their most minute details reveal the changing nature of reality.

2. Explicit Horror (the Extraordinary)

The second category of the phenomenon of horror applies to the occurrence of explicit horror. The elements of the extraordinary appear initially as suggestions or possibilities, so that the phenomenon of horror is mainly developed through the dramatization of a character's reactions to these extraordinary possibilities. The emphasis here is on the individual reacting to an atmosphere of 'unreality' that oppresses him and that may either come from 'within' or from 'without' himself. Depending on the approach chosen by the writer we can distinguish between two different methods. In the first, the character's expressions of anxiety and disenchantment with life are used to foreshadow the extraordinary and the horror that

is to come. Often it is the character himself who initiates the feeling of oncoming doom (leading to an oppressive atmosphere of horror) by projecting his fantasies or expectations on life, substantiating the nightmare (and the subsequent horror) that eventually encroaches on the 'outer reality' and finally absorbs it. In the second, the elements of the extraordinary are gradually combined to weave an atmosphere of insecurity (where the imponderable becomes the rule) that eventually, as the suspicions of 'unreality' it initially aroused become facts, breaks against the familiar elements of everyday experience, thereby producing horror.

In many of the writings where the first method is employed to create an atmosphere of horror, it is never made quite clear whether the extraordinary elements originate in the mind of a character, or whether they exist independently. The classic example is Hamlet,[1] where the question of whether the prince is mad or only pretending to be so is, to some extent, dependent on whether the ghost is Hamlet's hallucination or in fact real. As Horatio tells Hamlet, a ghost has indeed appeared to Marcellus, Barnardo and himself:

A figure like your father,

[1]William Shakespeare, Hamlet, ed. by Edward Hubler (New York: Signet Classics, 1963).

> Armèd at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
> Appears before them, and with solemn march
> Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked
> By their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes,
> Within his truncheon's length, whilst they, distilled
> Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
> Stand dumb and speak not to him. (3. 2. 199-206)

If the ghost is real, the next question is whether Hamlet's conversation with the ghost is a product of his imagination ("He waxes desperate with imagination." [1.4. 87.]) or, again, as real as the apparition. Previous to being told about the ghost, Hamlet is severely depressed, irritable, bitterly resentful of his mother's marriage to his uncle. In his first soliloquy he contemplates the possibility of suicide: "that the Everlasting had not fixed/ His canon 'gainst self-slaughter." (1. 2. 131-2.) Paradoxically, when Horatio tells him about the ghost, it seems to fill him with ardor and new life, and he immediately associates his previous ill-feelings with the apparition. Both have a common cause: "My father's spirit--in arms? All is not well./ I doubt some foul play." (1. 3. 256-7.) But, whether because of Hamlet's behaviour, or because of the apparition, or because of both, Marcellus also remarks (commiseration or observation) that "something is rotten in the state of Denmark." (1. 4. 90.) On the other hand, when the ghost cries to them to

"swear," (1. 4. 148, 155, 161.) only Hamlet seems to hear; and when the ghost again speaks to Hamlet, in his mother's presence, Gertrude neither sees nor hears him: "This is the very coinage of your brain." (3. 4. 138.) Thus, although we have the evidence for the ghost, we have no evidence for his conversation with Hamlet.

Henry James dramatized such a controversial situation in The Turn of the Screw,[1] where the reader never finds out whether the governess is imagining things or actually sees the ghosts of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel. James also focuses on the conflict taking place in her mind; and, as in Hamlet, because she does not face the situation with determination, we are made to doubt her sanity: "I shut myself up audibly to rehearse--it was at once a fantastic relief and a renewed despair--the manner in which I might come to the point." (Screw, p.79.) While Hamlet justifies his irresoluteness on moral or religious grounds (3. 3. 73-96.), the governess justifies her lack of determination on her reluctance to "violate as rare a little case of instinctive delicacy as any school-room, probably, had ever known." (Screw, p.70.) Her indecision (in not confronting the children to avoid 'violating their delicacy') is as exasperating as Hamlet's:

[1]Henry James, The Turn of the Screw (New York: Random House, 1930).

"They have the manners to be silent, and you, trusted as you are, the baseness to speak!"[1]

In Heart of Darkness,[2] from the observer's point of view, we have a similar situation. Marlow's experience is like an epitaph on Kurtz's calvary. It annotates what should be understood as a universal process of realization about the nature of Man. Early in the narrative the suggestion is made that Marlow, at one level of expression, operates as a universal persona: "a queer feeling came to me that I was an impostor;" (Darkness, p.13.) and that his journey will take him 'beyond' his intended destination: "I felt as though, instead of going to the centre of a continent, I were about to set off for the centre of the earth." (Darkness, p.13.) While nearing Africa, he feels the imminent loss of his sense of reality: "For a time I would feel I belonged still to a world of straightforward facts; but the feeling would not last long. Something would turn up to scare it away." (Darkness, p.14.) Soon after landing he finds out that a European has recently hanged himself: "'Why, in God's name?' I cried. He kept looking out watchfully. 'Who knows? The sun too much for him, or the country

[1]James, Turn of the Screw, p.70.

[2]Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (New York: Norton, 1972).

perhaps?'"[1]

On a larger scale, Marlow has embarked on a voyage of discovery into the soul similar to the one undertaken by Hamlet and the governess. He is afraid because he feels that "his world of straightforward facts" will dissolve against the unnatural presence of "the grove of death." (Darkness, p.20.) Whether it is a journey into madness, or into primitive nature, it is a journey that transcends immediate reality and sets at conflict something within us. Poe, dispensing with elaborate dramatization, goes to the heart of the matter in his study of perverseness in "The Black Cat." The plot is the background for the expression of the same inner conflict that Hamlet endures and Marlow annotates: "this spirit of perverseness, I say, came to my final overthrow. It was this unfathomable longing of the soul to vex itself--to offer violence to its own nature--to do wrong for the wrong's sake only."[2]

Whether plunging into unchecked passion, as in Hamlet's outburst in the graveyard scene, or into perverseness directly, as the character in "The Black Cat," this is a dramatization of the individual's plunge into the darkness of non-experiential reality. As we suggested

[1] Ibid., p.15.

[2] Complete Works, p.225.

while discussing the definition of horror, it is a universal apprehension, carefully suppressed early in life, and gradually replaced, as Massey puts it, by "knowledge," or "the mind." It is the nightmare, the fear of the bad-dream; when we read about it we can relate to it and 'understand' it as if we were the participants: "Baudelaire's discovery of Poe was, as it were, a revelation of his own hidden self: 'J'ai vu, avec épouvante et ravissement, non seulement des sujets rêvés par moi, mais des phrases, pensées par moi, et écrites par lui, vingt ans auparavant.'"[1]

In Hamlet, the reaction is converted into an active search for the truth. Shakespeare, perhaps somewhat influenced by Bacon's emphasis on inductive experimentation, puts Hamlet in the role of the detective. The prince, like Poirot, plays the naive, and like Holmes or Nero Wolfe, prepares a suitable setting to test his conclusions:

> Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
> Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
> It is a damnèd ghost that we have seen,
> And my imaginations are as foul
> As Vulcan's stithy. (3. 2. 82-6.)

Marlow's journey is also a search for the truth; but whereas Marlow sees reflected in the jungle and in

[1] M. Praz, The Romantic Agony (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951), p.145..

Kurtz the passions and fears of his soul, Hamlet incorporates all of these: he is the observer, the object; and the darkness is in his heart:

> O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. (2. 2. 258-260.)

Poe's and LeFanu's stories are like moonbeams, casting a shaft of pale light on the edges of these spiritual adventures. They reveal the tortures of the mind in the throng of inner reckoning; but they reveal them when the individual has virtually succumbed to the demon of inner desolation. In "The Tell-Tale Heart," the subject introduces himself when the struggle with his inner self is over: "it was the groan of mortal terror. . . . It was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me."[1] Squire Toby's character in LeFanu's "Squire Toby's Will,"[2] seems to be inexorably weighted towards evil. All the dread and anguish that accompany his inner meditation make of

[1] Poe, Complete Works, p. 304.

[2] Joseph Sheridan LeFanu, Best Ghost Stories of J.S. LeFanu (New York: Dover Publications, 1964).

it a living hell rather than a clean struggle. The haunting apparitions of his father first, and of his brother later, do not come as in Hamlet to enlighten but to torture him. The dog that appears out of nowhere and with whom Toby exchanges fondness and hatred, is, like the cat in Poe's "The Black Cat," and the white cat in LeFanu's "The White Cat of Drumgunniol," a symbol of that part of himself where fears and anguish originate. As in "The Black Cat," when the dog is finally 'killed', Toby gets a respite--but not for long. Soon afterwards, thinking that the ordeal is over, he gives in again to evil: "there is a determined gravitation towards evil, which, if left to itself, will bear down first intentions."[1] In "The White Cat of Drumgunniol," the narrator's grand-uncle, who was haunted by the cat, "drank his share, too, and cursed and swore, when he was vexed, more than was good for his soul." (Best LeFanu, p.413.) In one of his encounters with the white cat, horror is manifested by the 'natural' recoiling from the 'unnatural': "he saw . . . with a slow motion, gliding along the ground . . . a white object. . . . The horse stopped short. . . . It was bright moonlight and my grand-uncle was chafed by the horse's resistance, and, seeing nothing to account for it, and being so near home, what little patience he possessed

[1]LeFanu, "Squire Toby's Will," in Best Lefanu, p.16.

forsook him, and, plying his whip and spur in earnest, he broke into oaths and curses."[1] The cat, as the narrator understands it, is the ambassador of death; or as we understand it, the man's 'inner spirit', out of control and announcing the end of the man's 'outer experience': "this thing has about it a suspicion of malice. It is the messenger simply of death. And its taking the shape of a cat--the coldest, and they say, the most vindictive of brutes--is indicative of the spirit of its visit." (Best LeFanu, p.417.) In Bram Stoker's "Squaw," the symbolic function of the cat as the incarnation of a character's perverseness, that once allowed to grow unchecked rebounds vindictively against him, is dramatized in a different way. An insensitive, prank-loving, but unmistakably sadistic individual, drops a stone over a wall on a large cat and her kitten to "make them wonder where it came from."[2] The stone kills the kitten: "with a muffled cry, such as a human being might give . . . she looked the perfect incarnation of hate. . . . Then she made a wild rush up the wall as if to reach us, but when the momentum ended fell back, and further added to her horrible

[1] LeFanu, "The White Cat of Drumgunniol," in Best LeFanu, p.414.

[2] Bram Stoker, "Squaw," in The Bram Stoker Bedside Companion (London: Quartet Books, 1974), p.103.

appearance for she fell on the kitten, and rose with her black fur smeared with its brains and blood."[1] Later in the day, the man decides to try out an Iron Virgin exhibited in the Torture Tower of the castle he is visiting. The man, who calls the artefact "the squaw," says he has not "funked an odd experience yet," (Stoker Companion, p.109.) and slipping into the box, asks the museum attendant to lower the spiked lid slowly over him to get the full effect of the experience. Suddenly, the cat, who the man also calls "the squaw," flies up at the attendant's face and the spiked lid slams down on the man, whose face, previously cruel, is now "frozen with terror." (Stoker Companion, p.112.)

The source of the unknown, of non-experiential reality, where horror and madness originate, is symbolized in Heart of Darkness by the African jungle--also a symbol of life and of the mind: "The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there--there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly;" "The mind of man is capable of anything--because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future."[2] As if in answer to Hamlet's dilemma in the famous soliloquy,

[1]Ibid., p.103.

[2]Conrad, Heart of Darkness, pp. 36, 37.

Marlow observes that there is only one way to penetrate the darkness and grasp reality: "He must meet that truth with his own true stuff--with his own inborn strength . . . [with] a deliberate belief."[1]

The plight of Kurtz, to whom the darkness had "whispered things about himself which he did not know," (Darkness, p.59.) is the plight of Voss, in Patrick White's Voss, meeting his 'fate' in the uncharted deserts of Australia with only an obsessive heroism to support him. Kurtz derives in part this impulse from the hope and expectations of his "Intended." The same is true of Voss and Laura, who, "given time . . . might have healed each other."[2] This type of relationship illustrates the conflict between the earthy, social side of human nature, and the inner self, forever isolated, forever trying to come out. In this sense, Laura and Kurtz's Intended represent the mass of humanity, the audience, or chorus. Obviously there cannot be one without the other. The 'man' enters the labyrinth holding one end of the thread, while the 'woman' holds the other end outside. In Wuthering Heights, Cathy drops the thread and Heathcliff is forced to retrace his steps, groping, unguided, while Cathy herself is also lost. But the thread guiding the man outside is the same

[1]Conrad, Heart of Darkness, p.37.

[2]Patrick White, Voss (n.p.: Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd., and The Book Society Ltd., 1957), p.408.

that has guided him inside: In Heart of Darkness, "the gift of expression . . . the pulsating stream of light," which is Kurtz's unique gift, is also "the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness." (p.72.) This gift, what his intended believes in, is what 'redeems' Kurtz in the end: "He had summed up--he had judged. 'The horror!' . . . this was the expression of some sort of belief;" "It was an affirmation, a moral victory paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfactions. But it was a victory!" (Darkness, p.72.)

In the writings where the second method is used to create an atmosphere of horror, the extraordinary comes from the outside, gaining ground and growing in importance until it collides with the habitual. It is a less effective method than the first: unless the elements of the extraordinary are portrayed in a vivid, dramatic manner, the reader is unable to relate to them, because, at ~~least~~ initially, they are not presented through the consciousness of a character, but stand outside, beyond the reach of association.

This method is often used in allegorical horror tales, such as Galsworthy's "Timber,"[1] where a man gets

[1]John Galsworthy, "Timber," in The Lucifer Society (New York: Signet Books, 1972), pp.27-36.

lost and dies in the forest he intends to cut down, or Christie's "The Call of Wings,"[1] where a rich man gives away his fortune after hearing an uplifting melody from the flute of a mysterious cripple--who is glad to have lost his legs because they were evil. One of the best of this type of stories is Chesterton's "The Angry Street."[2] A man, who during forty years had each day gone up the same street to the train station, finds the street one day becoming steeper and steeper with each step he takes until it slants up, at a sharp angle. A strange being then appears and tells him that the street has been neglected and is asking for justice. He replies that the street is inanimate, and all it does is go to the train station. The being then cries out whether the road thinks he is alive, since year after year all it has seen him do is go to the train station. Hawthorne's "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment,"[3] where a group of old people regain their youth, but in their ensuing enthusiasm spill the water that rejuvenated them, is another remarkable allegorical horror tale.

[1] The Lucifer Society, pp. 41-54.

[2] Ibid., pp. 36-41.

[3] Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," in Classic Ghost Stories (New York: Dover Publications, 1975), pp. 132-142.

In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and The Hound of the Baskervilles, the second method is used to create an atmosphere of horror. The "agility astounding, strength superhuman, ferocity brutal, butchery without motive, [and] grotesquerie in horror absolutely alien from humanity," are the "deviations from the plane of the ordinary" that combine to produce horror. Even though it turns out that no supernatural cause is responsible, but a "large fulvous Ourang-Outang of the East Indian Islands,"[1] the atmosphere of horror that Poe manages to create is explicit and powerful. The same is true of Conan Doyle's "giant hound:" "A hound it was, an enormous coal-black hound, but not such a hound as mortal eyes have ever seen. Fire burst from its open mouth, its eyes glowed with a smouldering glare, its muzzle and hackles and dewlap were outlined in flickering flame. Never in the delirious dream of a disordered brain could anything more savage, more appalling, more hellish be conceived than that dark form and savage face which broke upon us out of the wall of fog."[2]

In Harlan Ellison's "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs,"

[1]Poe, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," in Complete Works, pp. 161, 154, 162.

[2]Doyle, The Hound of the Baskervilles, in Complete Holmes, vol. 2, p.757.

Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," and Ray Russell's Sardonicus, both methods are effectively combined to produce masterpieces of the phenomenon of horror. In Ellison's tale we see the horror of the 'unnatural' city (New York) embracing the horror of its dehumanized inhabitants in a "black mass . . . staged . . . in the insane-asylum of steele and stone." The 'God' they worship is a human-city hybrid, a "deranged blood God of fog and street violence;" born of the dark side of the spirit trapped in the city, no longer as a "whipped dog," but as a "strong man-eating beast."[1]

In Poe's tale, Roderick Usher's "constitutional evil," was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted." Morbidly, his "malady" harmonizes with the "unnerving melancholy House of Usher."[2] Here again , we are introduced to a character whose humanity has been pushed almost beyond the bounds of experience. Appropriately, the world of the senses is fading away from him: "He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of

[1]Harlan Ellison, "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs," in Deathbird Stories (New York: Dell Books, 1976), pp. 36,34,37.

[2]Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher," in Complete Works, p. 235.

certain texture; the odors of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror."[1] The degree of distancing that Poe manages to superimpose on the insubstantial plot in the story is enormous. This distancing is based on a dilating sense of perspective dependent on a series of relationships which, individually, and in their totality, illustrate what Ketterer terms the "pictorial paradigm of that agonized juxtaposition" of the "apocalyptic imagination:" "A limited world of fragile order maintains itself, precariously at best, over a threatening and unknown context."[2] The narrator, representing the 'ordered' world, is linked through a boyhood friendship to Roderick Usher, who represents the 'unknown' world; similarly, Roderick is intimately 'connected' to the house; to the world of the senses; and to his sister, the natural extension of the physical world he has abandoned. The house itself, we are told, was on "the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn." (Complete Works, p.231.) From the narrator's comments we pass to Roderick's "malady," to his strange sister, to Roderick himself, to the house,

[1] Ibid., p.235.

[2] David Ketterer, New Worlds for Old (New York: Anchor Books, 1974), p.14.

and finally, to the tarn. In this manner, the extraordinary elements are magnified again and again, in an increasingly threatening scale. The sounds that Roderick expects to hear, and hears inside his brain, are finally echoed by the house; and the "morbid acuteness of his senses" is finally fulfilled by the sounds from the beating heart of his sister, whom he abandoned in her coffin, even though he knew from the "sounds" that she was still alive. When Roderick dies, the house soon crumbles into the waiting tarn: "the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the 'House of Usher'."[1]

In Russell's Sardonicus, a young man violates his father's grave to recover a winning lottery ticket from the pocket of the vest in which he had been buried. When he opens the grave, "the face of his father, in the rigour of death, looked directly and hideously upon him . . . the dead lips drawn back from the teeth in a constant and soul-shattering smile!"[2] In spite of his horror, he returns home with the ticket; but as he glances at the mirror, he sees that his face has become a replica of his father's, his lips drawn back in a perpetual Risus Sardonicus.

[1]Poe, Complete Works, p.245.

[2]Ray Russell, Sardonicus, in The Playboy Book of Horror and the Supernatural (Chicago: Playboy Press, 1968), p.50.

Years later, he blackmails a doctor to have himself cured, and again the imponderable happens: after the doctor injects him with curare to relax the facial muscles, "he was absolutely unable to open his mouth, thirsting and starving in the midst of plenty . . . until he finally died."[1] The horror from his mind, and the horror from outside, clash, and clash again, twisting the atmosphere of horror into a tortured knot of its own: the liquid injected, we find out at the end, had not been curare, but pure, distilled water.

3. Explicit Horror (the Non-human)

The third category of the phenomenon of horror applies to the creation of explicit horror in the form of a horror-organism. Before specifying what we mean by this, let us consider for a moment the principle at work behind the hierarchy of horror. We said above that as the elements of the extraordinary become more explicit, and as their opposition to familiar elements becomes more highly dramatized, the phenomenon of horror is intensified. In the first category we saw how the extraodinary was expressed through the actions of certain individuals; and in the second category, how the discordant personality of the individual is the center of attention of the narrative.

[1] Ibid., p.70.

In the third category, those elements of the extraordinary presented (in the second category) as pieces of the human puzzle resisting integration, are converted into characters that, because of their diverse natures, we call horror-organisms. They may occur as characters whose literary reality is, initially, a human reality, and that we call horror-personas; and they may occur as creatures whose literary reality resides beyond the level of human reality, and that we call horror-types. When the organism embodying the extraordinary is made to relate to a particular individual, or to men generally, we see it as a horror-persona; but when it is made to relate to a universal 'superhuman', or 'non-human' condition tending to represent the extraordinary as independent of Man, we see it as a horror-type. There cannot be a clear-cut division between the two, since there is frequently the case of the amphibious organism, partly horror-persona and partly horror-type. For instance, a character that appears to be mostly a horror-type may operate as a horror-persona for a certain individual, and inversely, an individual's horror-persona may attain the proportions of a horror-type if the aspects of the extraordinary it embodies denote its independent existence beyond the individual as a human being. The twin, or intimate self-image of an individual, and the alien monster invading Earth from another planet can be seen as the two extremes of the horror-organism.

Since the transition from the horror-persona to the horror-type is based on a general principle of expanding symbolism, we shall refer to those organisms that are originally human and able to relate to the human characters in the text as if they themselves were human, as horror-personas. From this point of view we place vampires and werewolves within the domain of the horror-persona, but close to that of the horror-type; and creatures such as Frankenstein's Monster and Dr. Moreau's Beast Folk within the domain of the horror type, but close to that of the horror-persona. Whereas some horror-personas are endowed with the beyond-human attributes of a horror-type, they remain bound to their human origins, where they struggle to return. Their conflict consists in their loss of humanity. The opposite is true of the horror-types. They belong to the world of beyond-human matter, a world governed by non-human laws, subject to non-human principles. When forced into the world of human experience, imprisoned by human laws, their reaction is to break the artificial bonds tying them to their alien existence and to escape. When a human character enters their world, or when they enter the human world, both realities clash and the struggle denoting horror ensues.

Within the domain of the horror-persona the principle of expanding symbolism is also at work. It is possible to distinguish between two main types of horror-personas,

depending on whether they are portrayed as relating to a single individual, or to a universal human principle. The first kind of horror-persona can be seen as the manifestation of certain elements of a character's personality. These elements may be suppressed, or unconscious, or they may be consciously formulated as a wish or as a metaphysical concept. The second kind of horror-persona can be seen as the manifestation of a primitive idea or myth, that represents a force almost independent of the individual (similar to that represented by the horror-type).

Some narratives achieve the creation of the first kind of horror-persona without ever completely revealing its identity: does it reside in the subject's obsession, or does the haunting character have an existence of its own? Although the horror-persona is presented as another character, neither as a ghost, nor as an apparition, the confusion results from the fact that usually it behaves as a complement to the subject's personality.

In Poe's "William Wilson," the protagonist is (characteristically) flawed by his "evil propensities," that make him "self-willed, addicted to the wildest caprices, and a prey to the most ungovernable passions."[1] While a young boy in school, his leadership and despotism are implicitly challenged by another boy, who bears the

[1] Complete Works, pp. 627, 626-7.

same full name and who was born on exactly the same date. Thus, William Wilson's extreme personality is dramatically balanced by the other's moderate personality: "He appeared to be destitute alike of the ambitions which urged, and of the passionate energy of mind which enabled me to excel. In his rivalry he might have been supposed actuated solely by a whimsical desire to thwart, astonish, or mortify myself."[1] Dorian Gray's relationship to his picture achieves a somewhat similar balance, when he wishes "that his own beauty might be untarnished, and the face on the canvas bear the burden of his passions and his sins; that the painted image might be seared with the lines of suffering and thought, and that he might keep all the delicate bloom and loveliness of his then just conscious boyhood."[2]

In Hugh Walpole's "The Silver Mask,"[3] the horror-persona intrudes upon the subject's life to shift the balance to the opposite side. Miss Sonia Herries is a rather weak and passive middle-aged woman: "Although intelligent, she suffered dreadfully from impulsive kindness. All her

[1]Ibid., p.630.

[2]O. Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), p.100.

[3]The 9th Fontana Book of Horror Stories (n.p.: Fontana Books, 1975).

life she had done so. The mistakes that she had made--and there had been quite a few--had all arisen from the triumph of her heart over her brain."[1] The young man she takes into her house is "the handsome young man of all romantic stories, tall, dark, pale, slim;" and as he confesses later, "a pimp, a thief, a what-you-like--anything bad." ("Mask," p.50.) Their two personalities seem to coalesce in "the mask in silver of a clown's face." She owns the mask and he is attracted to it "as though with his very soul." ("Mask," pp. 51, 55.) Dorian's picture has similarly robbed him of his identity. The painter acknowledges as much when he asks Dorian: "Have you noticed in the picture something curious?--something that probably at first did not strike you, but that revealed itself to you suddenly?"[2] Dorian is originally unconscious of his beauty, of his soul, but the painter is not: "I wanted to have you all to myself." (Dorian, p.123.) After trying to paint him as Paris, and as Adonis, "one day--a fatal day, I sometimes think--I determined to paint a wonderful portrait of you as you actually are." (Dorian, p.124; my italics.) From this moment, as in Poe's "The Oval Portrait," Dorian's spirit is absorbed into the painting. He does not 'live' anymore, but in the

[1] Ibid., p.50.

[2] Wilde, Dorian Gray, p.123.

painting. In this sense, he becomes the horror-persona: an empty shell, a mere appendage to the living portrait, "whose changing features showed him the real degradation of his life."[1] Dorian 'lives' but does not experience. The experiential and the non-experiential have dramatically changed sides.

The Captain's double in Conrad's The Secret Sharer arrives in time to add a new dimension to the Captain's sense of reality. When he takes command of his ship--overtly symbolizing his arrival at the threshold of consciousness--the Captain feels alone; his position is "that of the only stranger on board:" "but what I felt most was my being a stranger to the ship; and if all the truth must be told, I was somewhat of a stranger to myself."[2] His double, Leggat, spurred by an unyielding determination needs the Captain's help in his drive to freedom. He appears at the point where the Captain is entertaining severe doubts about his ability to measure up to his task: "I wondered how far I should turn out faithful to that ideal conception of one's own personality every man sets up for himself secretly." (Sharer, p.94.)

William Wilson and Sonia Herries are past the point

[1] Ibid., p.149.

[2] J. Conrad, The Secret Sharer, in 'Twixt Land and Sea (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1947), pp. 93-4.

of doubt. Their other-selves come to haunt them, but cannot change them. William Wilson's feelings for his double "formed a motley and heterogeneous admixture;--some petulant animosity, which was not yet hatred, some esteem, more respect, much fear, with a world of uneasy curiosity." His double showed for him "a most unwelcome affectionateness of manner,"[1] similar to the fondness exhibited by the cat towards his master in "The Black Cat," and by the dog towards Squire Toby in "Squire Toby's Will." The difference between these and "William Wilson" rests on the enlarged element of the extraordinary that the significantly more conscious symbolism in "William Wilson" represents. The young man who insinuates himself on Sonia Herries, and whose spirit seems to reside in her silver mask, gradually encroaches upon her life, until her wish to be "oh--so terribly--to be kind to someone!"[2] is fulfilled when he takes over her house and locks her in a room, alone with the spirit of her horror-persona: the silver mask. The same thing happens to Dorian Gray. Although the painter wants to possess him, it is Dorian who articulates the wish to disrobe himself of the responsibility that experience entails: "He had uttered a mad wish that he himself might remain young and the portrait

[1]Poe, "William Wilson," in Complete Works, p.630.

[2]Walpole, "The Silver Mask," p.55.

grow old."[1]

The young man's power over Sonia Herries, "something both helpless and defiant, like a wicked child,"[2] is similar to Miriam's power over Mrs. Miller in Truman Capote's "Miriam." Like William Wilson and his double, the old woman and the young girl also share the same name. As in "The Silver Mask," the old woman's initial feeling of attraction, gives way to a feeling of profound disgust. In the end, as in "The Silver Mask," and "The Picture of Dorian Gray," she realizes that "the only thing she had lost to Miriam was her identity;"[3] and that the young girl is only a dissociated part of herself.

Wilson and his double are also one and the same: "[We] were the most inseparable of companions;" "his singular whisper, it grew the very echo of my own;" "the same name! the same contour of person! the same day of arrival at the academy! And then his dogged and meaningless imitation of my gait, my voice, my habits, and my manner!"[4] The Captain in The Secret Sharer experiences a "mental feeling of being in two places at once." (p.126.) Like Wilson, when he contemplates his double asleep, the

[1]Wilde, Dorian Gray, p.100.

[2]Walpole, "The Silver Mask," p.55.

[3]Truman Capote, "Miriam," in The Lucifer Society, p.246.

[4]Poe, "William Wilson," in Complete Works, pp. 631-2.

Captain sometimes feels that he is looking at himself: "the uncanny sight of a double captain busy talking in whispers with his other self;" "his head hanging on his breast--and perfectly still. Anybody would have taken him for me."[1] This feeling grows until the Captain starts doubting the independent existence of his double: "Can it be, I asked myself, that he is not visible to other eyes than mine?";" [it was] like something against nature, inhuman." (Sharer, pp. 130, 135.) But unlike Wilson and Dorian, who haunted by their images, destroy themselves by destroying their conscience ("In me didst thou exist--and in my death, see . . . how utterly thou hast murdered thyself;"[2] "he seized the [knife] and stabbed the picture with it . . . lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart."[3]) the Captain is liberated through his image. The double, who emerges from the water (symbolizing the extraordinary) returns to its world after having guided the Captain through his apocalyptic experience: "the secret sharer of my cabin and of my thoughts, as though he were my second self, had lowered himself into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for

[1]Conrad, The Secret Sharer, pp. 105, 115.

[2]Poe, "William Wilson," in Complete Works, p.641.

[3]Wilde, Dorian Gray, p.237.

a new destiny."[1]

In these examples, the doppelgänger, or double, seems to reflect a certain aspect of the individual, either filling a vacuum in his consciousness, or depriving him of some aspect of his personality. The drama is, to a large extent, depicted at a psychological level. The transition from the first to the second kind of horror-persona is characterized by an enlargement of the conscious symbolic conflict, to include both a psychological and a physical struggle, whereby the extraordinary is intensified. In Stevenson's Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Arthur Machen's "The White Powder," instead of having a separate character who complements or influences the individual psychologically, the familiar and the extraordinary seem to battle for the possession of his body. At the same time, the abstract debate accompanying every phenomenon of horror becomes much more explicit.

Beyond the dramatic level of expression in Jekyll and Hyde lies this debate, the final level of meaning in the narrative. One way to approach it is by examining first the phenomenon of metamorphosis on which the dramatic aspects of the plot are based. Massey's incisive observations about this phenomenon lead to the static situation that the dramatic development portrays: "Jekyll can hide in

[1]Conrad, The Secret Sharer, p.143.

Hyde, but where is Hyde to hide? (or to put it differently, Jekyll is Jekyll-Hyde, but who is Hyde?)"[1] Massey, however, seems to erase Jekyll completely out of the picture and to shift the weight of the debate to Utterson. (Gaping Pig, pp. 102-3.) He sees the conflict, not between Jekyll and his other-self, Hyde; but between the prevailing Hyde and Utterson, the lawyer. And he sees Hyde as the representation of "an avenue of escape" for "the good." (Gaping Pig, p.90.) Massey's argument is that 'the good' has two choices: good and evil; but that 'evil' has no choice, and resorts to violence as its sole means of expression. While this is plausible, it does not take into consideration what might have motivated Jekyll's transformation (his choice of 'evil'). The conflict, after all, does take place in Jekyll. The initial reason why Jekyll's transformation stops at Hyde is because the dramatization of his conflict is carried only as far as Hyde, Jekyll's horror-persona. This creation is not merely the 'tails' side of a coin, the only other alternative available. Hyde could have been further transformed into a mass of corrupt, decaying flesh, as occurs with Francis Leicester in "The White Powder," or into quite a different thing, depending on how the writer might have chosen to develop

[1]Irving Massey, The Gaping Pig (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976), p.101.

the conflict. The tags of 'good' and 'evil' are nothing more than dramatic labels, usually attached to the habitual and to the extraordinary respectively, but not belonging exclusively to either one.

When Dr. Jekyll refers to the "perennial war among my members," he is not referring to his "duplicity of life," or even to his "partial discovery . . . that man is not truly one, but truly two." He is saying that, as far as he has been able to ascertain, there are two forces acting upon him, but there may be more: "I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens."[1] In other words, man, to Jekyll, is a chaotic aggregate of elements. And Jekyll himself, as a dramatis-persona, represents the intellectual observer in the act of considering this chaotic body of disassociated elements. The conflict between this amorphous mystery (man) and the effort to assimilate this mystery (Jekyll), is the dramatization of the attempt to assimilate the unknown, and the unknown itself; the conflict between the experiential, through which Jekyll tries to comprehend the extraordinary, and the extraordinary itself. But Stevenson's problem, the usual problem, is how to relate these elements of the unknown

[1]R.L. Stevenson, Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, in The Merry Men (New York: Random House, 1929), pp. 382, 383.

to conventional elements, so that they can be 'understood' according to something we can associate with. It is impossible. There has to be a middle element, a certain feeling, perhaps, that we know about, that we can easily relate to, but which bears a close resemblance to the unknown because we never want to think about it, we never want to become immersed in its nature. This, of course, is evil: a collective term for everything destructive, painful, deadly, it has acquired a super-meaning that we associate with the loss of consciousness (will and reason) that may result when we experience any of the above feelings. At this secondary, dramatic stage Massey's analysis becomes relevant. Hyde, a mere symbol, suddenly inexplicable, takes over. The communication device by which Jekyll can be "driven to reflect" on himself becomes Hyde. Trying to cross the gate, he is thrown back into himself; and, because he falls back into "the state of [his] own knowledge,"[1] or experience, he is trapped in the vicious circle of horror that results from the attempt.

Utterson, in this context, represents Jekyll's link to humanity. Although he can be seen as a Marlow figure, an observer, or even more, as the detective, he can perhaps be more accurately described as the audience; Jekyll's social equivalent, the 'understudy' who could

[1] Ibid., p.383.

potentially produce another Hyde. In this sense he takes on the role of the 'female' element; like Kurtz's Intended, harboring the 'image' of a 'dead' man that can be born again.

In Machen's "The White Powder," we are told what the chemical preparation, the fruit of Jekyll's experiments might have actually been. Francis Leicester takes a drug to relieve his melancholy state. As a result of excessive study he becomes weak, nervous, and "awoke now and then of nights from fearful dreams, terrified and cold with icy sweats." After he starts taking the drug, prescribed by the family physician, "such was the transmutation of his character that in a few days he became a lover of pleasure, a careless and merry idler." Days later, his sister observes "a change . . . I heard no more about his pleasures, and one morning as we sat at breakfast together I looked suddenly into his eyes and saw a stranger before me."[1]

At this point in the narrative he is Hyde. He hides from his sister (his natural link with society) by becoming a "stranger:" withdrawing from his familiar habits and eventually turning into his horror-persona. But his transformation, that began the moment he started taking the drug, does not stop there. Patches of burnt flesh

[1]Arthur Machen, "The White Powder," in Strange Ecstasies (n.p.: Panther Books, 1973), pp. 37, 39.

appear on his arms; and when they finally break down the door to his room, "there upon the floor was a dark and putrid mass, seething with corruption and hideous rottenness; neither liquid nor solid, but melting and changing before our eyes, and bubbling with unctuous oily bubbles like boiling pitch."[1]

As in Jekyll and Hyde, his transformation is explained in a document, here given by the family physician to Francis' sister. The document is written by the chemist who analyzed the drug. The powder, left on the shelf for many years, had changed, due to "certain recurring variations of temperature," into "the powder from which the wine of the Sabbath, the Vinum Sabbati, was prepared." ("Powder," pp. 50, 51.) When the neophytes drank the wine prepared from this powder, they "found themselves attended [each] by a companion, a shape of glamour and unearthly allurement, beckoning them apart, to share in joys more exquisite, more piercing than the thrill of any dream . . . [and] . . . that shape that allured with loveliness was no hallucination, but, awful as it is to express, the man himself." The transformation, however, is not into one, but into three different beings: "the house of life was riven asunder and the human trinity dissolved, and the worm . . . that which lies sleeping

[1]Ibid., p.48.

within us all, was made tangible and an external thing, and clothed with a garment of flesh. And then . . . the primal fall was repeated and re-presented, and the awful thing veiled in the Mythos of the Tree in the Garden was done anew."[1]

What tempts the neophytes after drinking the Vinum Sabbati is similar to what tempts Jekyll after he determines never to take the drug again: "the liberty, the comparative youth, the light step, the leaping impulses and secret pleasures, that he had enjoyed in the disguise of Hyde."[2] And like Squire Toby and the protagonist of "The Black Cat," the 'spirit of perverseness', which Jekyll feels "as of Hyde struggling after freedom," (Jekyll and Hyde, p.396.) finally overcomes his resolution and drives him to use the drug again. In the end, as with Francis in "The White Powder," Jekyll's personality becomes totally corrupt, and, rejecting any further attempts to transcend the experience, he eventually dies: "this is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself." (Jekyll and Hyde, p.407.) "[W]hat began with corruption, ended also with corruption." ("Powder," p.52.)

In "William Wilson" the extraordinary is presented as an integral aspect of the protagonist's personality,

[1]Ibid., p.52.

[2]Stevenson, Jekyll and Hyde, p.395.

his demon, or conscience, related only to himself. In Jekyll and Hyde the horror-persona has a much more universal character. It can be seen as a conscious metamorphosis, a deliberate attempt to penetrate the 'heart of darkness' of the extraordinary. In Jekyll and Hyde, therefore, the conflict between the habitual and the extraordinary is symbolized much more overtly than in "William Wilson;" and in "The White Powder," this is carried one step further, the extraordinary manifesting itself through Francis as if by chance. He appears to be merely a medium for the extraordinary to reveal itself.

Next in this process of symbolic expansion, through which the extraordinary becomes increasingly articulate, is the extreme kind of horror-persona: on the border-line with the horror-type, it is characterized by being one of the many that could be generated in a process through which the unknown manifests itself. Although it may represent the blind-end in the development of an individual's personality, similar to Jekyll's Hyde, it is not confined to a particular character, but stands for a general human condition. The theme of the vampire, and to a lesser extent, of the werewolf, is based on this pattern. The individual is assaulted by a force that only shows itself after it strikes and weakens him. When he is alterted, it is by the infection itself, and therefore it is usually too late.

The werewolf and vampire myths on which their literary counterparts are generally based, may be seen, as Penzoldt observes in The Supernatural in Fiction[1], as the expression of certain subconscious fears and desires that originate in childhood. Somehow, the ambiguous element of the curse--indicative of the shame associated with those feelings and their conscious suppression--provokes the metamorphosis through which the victim is compelled to re-enact the primitive fears and desires of the society.

In Algernon Blackwood's "Camp of the Dog," a young man's sexual desire takes the form of a wolf who communicates with the girl he loves by howling at her while she's sleep-walking. Since the young man is a native Canadian, the element of the curse becomes "the Indian blood . . . the ancestral cry;" and the werewolf represents "the soul of Sangree, the long suppressed, deeply loving Sangree, expressed in its single and intense desire--pure utterly and utterly wonderful."[2] But in order to achieve a happy ending, where the 'wolf' is killed, the suppressed desire fulfilled and Sangree cured (sangre means 'blood' in Spanish), the reverse metamorphosis that takes place is

[1](London: Peter Nevill, 1952), pp. 37-43.

[2]Algernon Blackwood, "The Camp of the Dog," in John Silence Physician Extraordinary (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1914), pp. 381, 380.

rather bizarre. From Sangree's body emerges the wolf, leaving behind a "small, shrunken body . . . the cage from which most of the life, and not a little of the actual corporeal substance, had escaped into that other form of life and energy, the body of passion and desire."[1]

In Guy Endore's The Werewolf of Paris,[2] Bertrand's metamorphosis into a werewolf is traced to the curse resulting from the mutual hatred between two neighboring families. His ancestor, the youngest member of the Pitamonts, is caught in his disguise as a monk in the act of butchering the rival Pitavals in their sleep. He is thrown into a deep well, similar to the one in Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum," and fed on raw meat for fifty years, in the course of which his cries have turned into wolf-like howls. Eventually (we are not told the exact details), he is taken out of the well and lives long enough to reproduce. Bertrand, his descendant, rampages through the countryside and the streets of Paris, killing first to satiate his appetite for human flesh, and then as an added ingredient to his sexual orgies with the prostitutes and unwary citizens of Paris. He is conscious of his condition, but cannot control it: "his mind kept repeating, 'I'm cured, I'm cured,' but he knew that he wasn't and he

[1] Ibid., p.383.

[2] (London: Sphere Books, 1974).

knew that it was only at the expense of Sophie that he kept the beast within him at bay."[1] After he falls in love with Sophie, and confesses his strange disease to her, she offers him a knife, so that instead of devouring her during their love-making, he will at least appease his appetite for blood: "Was it not I who first offered myself to you? Was it not I, who bought the knife because you were afraid your teeth were too painful?"; "He uncovered her. There was scarcely a portion of her body that had not one or more cuts on it . . . he bent over her body. . . . The blood welled up, ruby-red. He put his mouth to it at once and drank greedly . . . 'poor little baby,' she murmured." But his desire is to kill her: "'I'm killing her slowly anyhow," he raged, 'why not have done with it?'" (Werewolf of Paris, pp. 203, 200-1, 206.)

Finally, his uncle, who knows about Bertrand's condition, interns him in an insane asylum, where his double nature becomes a source of entertainment for the orderlies: "It got to be quite good sport to starve him for a day, then open his door suddenly and fling in a bone covered with shreds of flesh. . . . The sound of enamel grinding against bone filled the room with a sinister crackling." (Werewolf of Paris, p.242.) The orderlies turn out to be

[1]Ibid., p. 205.

as brutal as Bertrand can be in his nature as a werewolf. They starve, drug and whip him when drugged. They introduce nails through the soles of his shoes and force him to walk around on them. Finally, Bertrand jumps through a window holding a dwarf, mongoloid female in his arms, thinking she's Sophie, killing both himself and the woman. His uncle, in the statement he presents before a court of law to excuse Bertrand from the responsibility of his actions, attributes his condition to the obscure powers of evil: "Evil exists. And evil breeds evil. The horrors and cruelties of history link hands down the ages. One deed engenders another, nay, multiplies itself. One perpetrator of crime infects another. Their kind increases like flies. If nothing resists this plague, it will terminate with the world a seething mass of corruption."[1]

Throughout the book run the echoes of cruelty and destructive aggression that Bertrand personifies. But who are the werewolves? From the hatred between the two neighboring families, to the German siege of Paris towards the end of the Franco-Prussian War, the werewolf motif reverberates against a background of incessant conflict, bloodshed and hate. The relationships between individuals are marked by a cruelty and violence that rudely parody basic human relationships. The cannibalistic nature of the relationship

[1]Ibid., pp. 211-2.

that develops between Bertrand and Sophie may be seen to represent the badly suppressed cannibalistic nature of the relationships between mother and child, man and wife, state and subjects. Bertrand finally emerges as an unwilling martyr: a Christ-figure that has been chosen at random. His immolation is not voluntary: he is made to atone for the sins of a depraved humanity--not as a redeemer--but as a sacrificial victim to 'the obscure powers of evil': everyman's horror-persona.

Harlan Ellison's "The Place with No Name,"[1] suggests, on the other hand, that a certain element of Justice is involved in this metamorphosis into the archetypal scapegoat: "Thus, view Norman Mogart [a pimp, a junkie, a coward], hung between the torture posts of his limitations and his desires.' Swinging gently in a breeze of desperation." ("No Name," p.214.) Walking the New York streets, out of money, all his habitual alternatives exhausted, Norman's attention is suddenly caught by a sign hanging on a store-window that reads "ESCAPE INSIDE." Through a series of physical and mental transformations he is transported to a cliff on the inside of a mountain, where "Prometheus was chained to the rock:" "So the Justice finally sent you." Prometheus tells him: "Now. Touch me." ("No Name," pp. 224, 225.) Norman obeys, and moments later he is alone,

[1] Deathbird Stories (New York: Dell Books, 1975), pp. 212-227.

"chained in the place of Prometheus; himself having become the fire-bringer:" "And Norman thought of the man the Justice had found to take the place of that other, and he knew that when April came around again, he would be given his crown of thorns."[1]

The sexual symbolism that is so much a part of the werewolf and vampire themes, and the (frequently) religious allegorical content of the vampire tale are no coincidence.

In Stoker's Dracula,[2] sexual symbolism and Christian allegory are weaved together over and beyond the fabric of the vampire motif. Their significance, however, directs us to a deeper level of meaning, where the conflict forming the core of the phenomenon of horror resides.

Dracula attacks his victims in their sleep. Both Lucy and Mina, through whom the Count attempts to reach the mass of humanity, "London with its teeming millions," (Dracula, p.54.) are attacked in moments of unconsciousness. Lucy's sonambulism makes her even more receptive to the vampire's advances. The same is true of the nameless heroine in LeFanu's Carmilla[3] and to some extent of

[1]Ibid., pp. 225, 226.

[2]Bram Stoker, Dracula, in The Annotated Dracula, ed. by Leonard Wolf (New York: Ballantine Books, 1974).

[3]J.S. LeFanu, Carmilla, in Best Ghost Stories of J.S. LeFanu, pp. 274-340.

Christabel's dreamy night-walks through the forest where she meets Geraldine.[1] The moment they are bitten, they seem to be conceived to another world. Their essence ("The blood is the life! The blood is the life!")[2] is taken from them so that, as more and more of it flows into that world where "sleep has no place it can call its own," (Dracula, p.275.) they will soon follow. When they 'die', they are 'born' into that world. This process is very similar to the natural process of reproduction encompassing the aspects of sexual intercourse, pregnancy and birth. When Christabel tells Geraldine that her mother's spirit is watching over her, "That she should hear the castle bell/ Strike twelve upon my wedding day," Geraldine betrays her intentions by immediately commanding the spirit--as if Christabel's mother were her rival--to leave: "Off, wandering mother! Peak and Pine!/ I have power to bid thee flee." ("Christabel," p.22.) After Dracula strikes, Lucy and Mina wake up the next morning with the signs of contentedness that betray sexual satisfaction. They harbour the seed of transformation that, in the case of Lucy, grows into Lucy's vampire, or Lucy's horror-persona. Similarly with Christabel, whose spirit "passively did

[1] S.T. Coleridge, "Christabel" (London: Carlton Classics, 1923).

[2] Stoker, Dracula, p.133.

imitate/ That look of dull and treacherous hate,"[1] the spirit of vampirism is already looking out of the other world through her eyes. Mina is treated in time, but before the seed of vampirism is aborted in her, Van Helsing and his entourage treat her as a rape victim: "But dear Madam Mina are you not afraid; not for yourself, but for others from yourself, after what has happened?"; "Time is now to be dreaded--since once he put that mark upon your throat."[2]

From this point of view, the world of the vampire represents a world not much different from our own. In the world of the vampire we are conceived in desperation, as it were, in a dream, from where we only 'awake' when we truly die. The sexuality associated with the act of conception, when the vampire becomes irresistible, is the link uniting both worlds; the curse through which the individual attempts to escape from the dream, but fails. As in "The White Powder," where the individual is tempted by his image and cannot resist, the touch of Dracula serves the same purpose: "I was bewildered, and, strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him. I suppose it is a part of the horrible curse that such is, when his touch is on his victim." (Dracula, p.255.) The reaction of Salem's

[1] Coleridge, "Christabel," p.38.

[2] Stoker, Dracula, pp. 258, 276.

inhabitants to the vampire that gradually takes over the town in Stephen King's Salem's Lot[1] is similar: "As the stranger came closer, Dud understood everything and welcomed it, and when the pain came, it was as sweet as silver, as green as still water at deep fathoms." (Salem, p.146.) As the town's people become vampires they go out in search of their relatives and closest friends, who, with the exception of a man and a boy, cannot fight off the irresistible attraction. Mark, the incredibly self-collected boy is courted by his closest friend:

> "Mark... I finally came, Mark. Please..."
>
> Of course. You have to invite them inside.
>
> He knew that from his monster magazines, the ones his mother was afraid might damage or warp him in some way.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Yet if you looked in the eyes, it wasn't so bad. If you looked in the eyes, you weren't so afraid anymore and you saw that all you had to do was open the window and say, "C'mon in, Danny," and then you wouldn't be afraid at all because you'd be at one with Danny and all of them and at one with him. You'd be--
>
> No! That's how they get you! . . .

[1](New York: Signet Books, 1976).

"Mark, let me in! I command it! . . .

Mark began to walk toward the window again. There was no help for it. There was no possible way to deny that voice. As he drew closer to the glass, the evil little boy's face on the other side began to twitch and grimace with eagerness. Fingernails, black with earth, scratched across the window-pane.

Think of something. Quick! Quick!

"The rain," he whispered hoarsely. "The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain. In vain he thrusts his fists against the posts and still insists he sees the ghosts." . . .

"Mark! Open the window!"

"Betty Bitter bought some butter--"

"The Window, Mark! . . ."

"--but, says Betty, the butter's bitter."

He was weakening . . . Mark's eyes fell on his desk, littered with model monsters . . . the plastic ghoul was walking through a plastic graveyard and one of the monuments was in the shape of a cross.

With no pause for thought or consideration (both would have come to an adult--his father, for instance--and both would have undone him), Mark swept up the cross, curled it into a tight fist, and said loudly: "Come on in, then."[1]

[1]Ibid., pp. 240-1.

Mark's instinctive reaction is to entertain his mind by chanting. This liberates his senses from the spell long enough for his eyes to look away from Danny, find the plastic cross, and drive his suitor away. Perhaps the attempt at seduction also fails because Danny and Mark have not yet reached puberty. Even though Danny has recently been fully 'awakened', Mark has kept his emotive 'innocence' to some extent still intact, as he demonstrates by being able to think about his monster magazines, and especially about his mother at such a crucial time.

Dracula's words after the consummation of the act are a mocking parody of the Christian marriage ceremony--but very close to the truth: "And you . . . are now to me, flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin . . . and shall be later on my companion and my helper."[1]

Several of Ellison's stories are closely related to the vampire and werewolf themes. His approach, however, is quite different from that of the conventional werewolf or vampire tale. In "Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans,"[2] the protagonist is a penitent vampire-werewolf in the literal search of his soul: "His life had been anguish and guilt and horror, had been the

[1]Stoker, Dracula, p.255.

[2]Harlan Ellison, "Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans," in Deathbird Stories, pp. 274-313.

could I do the other; since there is ever a sort of fair play herein, jealousy presiding over all creation.[1] (My italics.)

Starbuck, Ahab's Marlow, annotates the grotesque oceanic safari. With his cosmic vision he pictures the Pequod as a 'ship of fools', a perversely polarized world embarked in search of itself:

> Oh, God! to sail with such a heathen crew that have small touch of human mothers in them! Whelped somewhere in the sharkish sea. The white whale is their demigorgon. Hark! the infernal orgies! that revelry is forward! mark the unfaltering silence aft! Methinks it pictures life. Foremost through the sparkling sea shoots on the gay, embattled, bantering bow, but only to drag Ahab after it, where he broods within his sternward cabin, builded over the dead water of the wake, and further on, hunted by its wolfish gurglings. The long howl thrills me through! Peace! ye revellers, and set the watch! Oh, life! 'tis in an hour like this, with soul beat down and held to knowledge,--as wild, untutored things are forced to feed--Oh, life! 'tis now that I do feel the latent horror in thee! but 'tis not me! that

[1]Herman Melville, Moby Dick (New York: Signet Classics, 1961), p.167.

> horror's out of me! and with the soft feeling of the human in me, yet will I try to fight ye, ye grim, phantom futures! Stand by me, hold me, bind me, O ye blessed influences![1] (My italics.)

As Starbuck tragically apprehends, the Pequod also represents the 'inscrutable' darkness swelling and shunning Ahab. Shrouded in the fog, sprayed by the sea, or whitened in ice and moonlight, the ship often becomes the Whale: "as the short northern day merged into night, we found ourselves almost broad upon the wintry ocean, whose freezing spray cased us in ice, as in polished armor. The long rows of teeth on the bulwarks glistened in the moonlight; and like the white ivory tusks of some huge white elephant, vast curving icicles depended from the bows." (Moby Dick, p.113.) Finally, as the 'bantering bow' and the 'brooding stern' of the Pequod meet Moby Dick, the ship is sucked into the vortex of the maelström, much in the same figurative way that Frankenstein is pulled by the Monster towards the North Pole.

The peristaltic and python-like coiling of the whirlpool in Poe's "A Descent into the Maelström,"[1] gives it the appearance of an immense intestine, a gigantic gut, like the belly of a monstrous whale. The swirling motion

[1] Ibid., p.172.

[2] Complete Works, pp. 127-140.

of the narrator's boat, "round and round we swept . . . in dizzying swings and jerks,"[1] seems to mesmerize him, as if the snake were looking into his eyes and swaying its body to and fro like a pendulum. Eventually the maelström's walls become like a 360° screen, projecting concrete things of everyday use, as if he were trapped inside a meditation-box, bombarded with material, ephemeral images, in a mockery of their habitual stability, the objects swallowed each at a time into the abyss:

> Looking about me upon the wide waste of liquid ebony on which we were thus borne, I perceived that our boat was not the only object in the embrace of the whirl. Both above and below us were visible fragments of vessels, large masses of building-timber and trunks of trees, with many smaller articles, such as pieces of house furniture, broken boxes, barrels and staves. . . . 'This fir-tree,' I found myself at one time saying, 'will certainly be the next thing that takes the awful plunge and disappears,' --and then I was disappointed to find that the wreck of a Dutch merchant ship overtook it and went down before. ("Maelström," pp. 137-8.)

The narrator's incredible detachment from the danger of his situation (similar to Mark's in the presence of

[1] Ibid., p.137.

the vampire) illustrating the hypnotic, beyond-experience quality of the maelström, allows him to visualize the entire incident--himself included ("I found myself . . .")--which is translated for us in the language of ideal objectivity--scientific observations:

> At length, after making several guesses of this nature, and being deceived in all--this fact--the fact of my invariable miscalculation, set me upon a train of reflection that made my limbs again tremble, and my heart beat heavily once more.
>
> It was not a new terror that thus affected me, but the dawn of a more exciting hope. This hope arose partly from memory, and partly from present observation. . . . I made, also, three important observations. The first was, that as a general rule, the larger the bodies were, the more rapid their descent--the second, that between two masses of equal extent, the one spherical, and the other of any other shape, the superiority in speed of descent was with the sphere--the third, that, between two masses of equal size, the one cylindrical, and the other of any other shape, the cylinder was absorbed the more slowly.[1]

These observations reveal that he was led to the

[1] Ibid., p. 138.

conclusion that only by abandoning his human status--abandoning the boat--and becoming an 'object', will he be saved: "I no longer hesitated what to do. I resolved to lash myself securely to the water-cask upon which I now held, to cut it loose from the counter, and to throw myself with it into the water."[1]

What has apparently taken place in the narrator's mind is an exact replica of what is taking place outside, in the whirlpool. His mind has first followed its gyration, in dizzying motion; then it has 'taken-in' the specific elements of the situation: what are the objects, what is their shape, their texture, etc; at this point he has presented the problem to himself, trying to absorb its meaning as fully as possible: which ones are being sucked in first and which ones are able to stay afloat longer; next, through the use of memory (the experiential within a non-experiential situation) he is able to elucidate what is the object he should attach himself to in order to survive; finally, through the power of his will, he puts this resolution into action, and, trusting his conclusions, jumps into the sea "without another moment's hesitation." ("Maelström," p.139.)

There are several confusing areas in this tale, all stemming from the ostensibly outrageous marriage of the

[1]Ibid., p.139.

fantastic image of the whirlpool to the astringent, scholastic peroration of the narrator. This apparent juxtaposition of two views of reality, two styles, two worlds; between the creative imagination and abstract reason, living imagery and dogmatic statement, the exuberance of the mind and the predictability of dead matter, makes of the tale a baffling, grotesque organism that seems to stagger, to gasp for the air of understanding what it is all about--what is the point.

Most of the confusion results from our failure to adapt to the narrator's change of literary status: to detach ourselves from him as he does so from himself: he stops being a dramatis-persona (the actual man tossed about in his boat by the raging gulf) and becomes our propia-persona (the calm, unconcerned observer) when he starts explaining the sequence of events that lead to the correct conclusion. That 'second' narrator (the observer) provides us with the abstract map that the thread of vision from the speechless 'first' narrator (the man in the boat) leaves behind. This scientific guide is a dead structure, an excrement, or a fossil of the real inspiration which the 'living' narrator undergoes.

This dead frame is also symbolized by the boat--the product of human technology, itself the end result of experiments on buoyancy and hydrostatics. Ironically, the first-narrator's abandonment of his 'human status'--

both when he becomes the detached, inductive scientist, and when he jumps the boat--is what keeps him human; what enables him to project himself out of the gaping jaws of the chaotic, equally dead frame ("liquid ebony") of the whirlpool. But once we see through this double-talk, the paradox dissolves.

Poe's use of 'empirical imagery' in "The Maelström" is very similar to the ritual practice of the Inner Theater[1]; the spiritual exercises of Ignatius de Loyola; the pattern of meditation in John Donne's Holy Sonnets (derived from Loyola); and, from a philosophical point of view, to Kant's attempted reconciliation of a priori and a posteriori classifications of knowledge in Critique of pure Reason. Through the use of the imagination, memory, reason and will, Poe shapes a situation where sense-experience produces the material rudiments (memory, abstractions) that the creative imagination orders into true knowledge. The analytical and the synthetic are thus brought together by establishing the ordering principle as another empirical element.

Much of Frye's study of William Blake, Fearful Symmetry, is a discussion on the tensions between the creative imagination and memory, concrete vision and

[1]See W.Y. Evans-Wentz, Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1935).

abstract reason. Eventually it becomes impossible to isolate any of these categories from the combined effort of the mind:

> Now it is true that we derive from sense experience the power to visualize, just as Beethoven derived from his hearing the power to "visualize" sounds after he had lost it. It may even be true that we do not visualize independently of sense without the help of memory. But what we see appearing before us on canvas is not a reproduction of memory or sense experience but a new and independent creation. The "visionary" is the man who has passed through sight into vision, never the man who has avoided seeing, who has not trained himself to see clearly, or who generalizes among his stock of visual memories. If there is a reality beyond our perception we must increase the power and coherence of our perception, for we shall never reach reality in any other way. If the reality turns out to be infinite, perception must be infinite too. To visualize, therefore, is to realize. The artist is <u>par excellence</u> the man who struggles to develop his perception into creation, his sight into vision; and art is a technique of realizing, through an ordering of sense experience by the mind, a higher reality than linear unselected experience or a second-hand evocation of it can

give.

. . . . . .

> The world of memory is an unreal world of reflection and abtract ideas; the world of sight is a potentially real world of subjects and objects; the world of vision is a world of creators and creatures. In the world of memory we see nothing; in the world of sight we see what we have to see; in the world of vision we see what we want to see. These are not three different worlds, as in the religions which speak of a heaven and hell in addition to ordinary life; they are the egocentric, the ordinary and the visionary ways of looking at the same world.[1]

In Poe's tale there is such an organization: the scientific discourse of the second-narrator is swallowed by the image of the whirlpool; and this in turn is swallowed within the realized vision of the first-narrator.

The inflexible, superhuman quality of the forces of nature, that either absorbs us or destroys us, has been exploited in many narratives (such as du Maurier's "The Birds," Benchley's Jaws, Herbert's The Rats, Wells' The Island of Dr. Moreau and The Food of the Gods; and in films

[1]Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 25-26.

such as the Godzilla and King-Kong movies), where Man becomes prey to the unleashed elements of beyond human matter. Whether it is in the form of animals, or more elementary physical matter like earthquakes, tidal waves, thunder storms, etc., the extraordinary gains immense proportions, overwhelming man and his habitual reality, the earth that shelters suddenly shaking him, making him aware that he is a mite on her back. When called upon to dramatize an apocalyptic experience, writers have always turned to the elements of nature for inspiration and substantiation: the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Plagues, the Parting of the Sea, and the Earth-Tremors on the death of Jesus, are some of the classic examples.

Norman Spinrad's "Subjectivity,"[1] envisages the creative energy of nature, loosened during an apocalyptic experience, from the point of view of a group of individuals who are used as guinea-pigs to see if the experience can be successfully transcended. The story is, in a very wide sense, reminiscent of St. John's Apocalypse. Five men and five women are sealed inside spaceship Number

[1] Strange Ecstasies (n.p.: Panther Books, 1973), pp. 116-129. (All further references to this work will occur parenthetically within the text, and will be given only by page number.)

Thirteen, that is propelled by a drive at half the speed of light, and sent on a sixteen year round trip to Centaurus. Centuries earlier, the unified government controlling Earth, realized that "the planets and moons of Sol system having been colonized, Man [must] turn his attention to the stars:" "Most especially, a psychologically and sociologically enlightened government which sees the handwriting on the wall, and has already noticed the first signs of racial claustrophobia--an objectless sense of frustrated rage, increases in senseless crimes, proliferation of perversions and vices of every kind. Like grape juice sealed in a bottle, the human race had begun to ferment." (p.116.) That ancient government first sent a selected crew of "ten carefully screened, psyched and trained near-supermen" (p.117.) which never came back. Then they sent combinations of supermen and superwomen, and "in two years they had ten superlunatics." (p.117.) But they could not afford to give up. A new world had to be found: "Monomania had produced Great Things, in the form of a c/2 drive. It now proceeded to produce Unspeakable Horrors:"

> The cream of the race has failed, reasoned the Solar Government, therefore, we will give the dregs a chance.
>
> The fifth ship was manned by homosexuals. They lasted only six months. A ship full of lesbians

bettered that by only two weeks.

Number seven was manned by schizophrenics. Since they were already mad, they did not go crazy. Nevertheless, they did not come back. Number eight was catatonics. Nine was paranoids. Ten was sadists. Eleven was masochists. Twelve was a mixed crew of sadists and masochists. No luck. (p.117.)

By the time spaceship Number Thirteen was ready, "the Solar Government had decided that the crew of ship Number Thirteen would attempt to cope with the terrible reality of interstellar space by denying that reality." Their newest, "as-yet-untested [hallucinogen] was an unbelievably complex compound tentatively called Omnidrene:" "So they sealed five men and five women--they had given up on sexually unbalanced crews--in ship Number Thirteen, along with half a ton of Omnidrene and their fondest wishes." (p.118.)

Months go by, during the course of which the crew "had discovered that if any two of them concentrated on something long enough to materialize it, anyone who wanted to could see it in a moment." (p.121.) In this manner each gets his and her pet hallucination: a camel, a saint-bernard, a pop-eyed snake, a fire-breathing dragon and other such things. They can also alter their environment, and eventually transform their common-room into a bucolic garden enclosed within four walls that

offer mental security and shade, and "fresh air, sunshine . . . a fountain, a few palm trees, grass [and] flowers." (p.122.) Eventually, unless they give up the Omnidrene, and thus the Garden, they become incapable of making their hallucinations evanesce. Instead, they grow bigger and more menacing with time:

> Just then, Marsha burst into the garden, screaming: 'Make it go away! Make it go away!'
>
> Behind her slithered a gigantic black snake, with a head as big as a horse's, and bulging red eyes.
>
> 'I thought we agreed to leave our private hallucinations in our cabins,' snapped Brunei. . . .
>
> They tried to erase the snake, but it just rolled its big red eyes.
>
> 'That won't work,' said Vera. 'Her subconscious is still fighting us. Part of her must want the snake here. We've all got to be together to erase it.'
>
> Marsha began to cry. The snake advanced another two feet.
>
> 'Oh, quiet!' rasped Lazar. 'Ollie, do I have your permission to bring my dragon into the garden? He'll make short work of the snake.' (p.123.)

One by one, their hallucinations snap out of their symbolic, dream-induced existence and take over the ship. The crew is trapped in the Garden, much in the same way that the human race is trapped in Sol, but even the Garden

starts becoming 'real', clouding, and getting chillier with each passing night.

Six months out:

Things wandered the passageways and haunted the cabins. Marsha's snake was back. There was Lazar's dragon, which seemed to grow larger every day. There was also a basilisk, a pterodactyl, a vampire bat with a five-foot wingspread, an old-fashioned red spade-tailed demon and other assorted horrors.

Even Oliver Brunei's friendly Saint-Bernard had grown to monstrous size, turned pale green and grown large yellow fangs.

Only the Spanish garden in the common-room was free of the monstrosities. Here, the combined conscious minds of the ten crew members were still strong enough to banish the rampaging hallucinations.

The ten of them sat around the fountain, which seemed a shade less sparkling.

There were even rainclouds in the sky. (p.124.)

Finally, when even the Garden is invaded, they suddenly remember to think of Earth: "'Only one thing's strong enough!' he bellowed. 'Earth! Earth! EARTH! Think of Earth! All of you! We're back on Earth. Visualize it, make it real, and the monsters'll have to disappear.'" (p.127.) When the spaceship suddenly reappears in the Spaceport and the attendants anxiously open the hatch, out march the

ten crew members; but when the attendants are about to speak--they scream: "Because out of Starship Number Thirteen's main hatch sauntered a twelve-foot green dragon, followed by a Tyrannosaurus Rex, a pterodactyl, a vampire bat with a five-foot wingspan, an old-fashioned red, spade-tailed demon, and finally, big as a horse's, the pop-eyed head of an enormous black serpent..." (p.129.)

This story was quoted at length because it successfully encapsules and makes full use of the basic elements that are usually associated with the horror-type: the juxtaposition of two worlds, and the attempt to overcome the 'experience' or 'reality' barrier separating the momentary, time-chained world of the senses, and the timeless, Golden world of the mind. Like Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," and Shelley's Frankenstein, Spinrad's "Subjectivity" stretches our sense of perspective by extrapolating models of the same situation to farther and farther narrative domains, so that when all of these settings are connected, we get an almost functional relationship, affording optimal detachment and analytical study. Basically it is the same principle developed by Poe in "Descent into the Maelström," and also throughout this speculative study of the phenomenon of horror.

The first vignette depicts a dehumanized mass of living creatures jammed-shut against their wills in a world from which they want to escape. The escape-world

only exists in their minds. The next set of vignettes, stretching the connection like an elastic band, inch their way farther and farther apart from the first vignette. The starships are extensions of the mind-world attempting to fly away from the physically decaying world. Ironically, but inevitably, each spaceship contains the extraordinary vs. familiar situation, and is in itself a tiny replica of Sol. At the same time, each vignette is different, exhibiting an assortment of elements from the first vignette (from supermen to sado-masochists) that yield points on the same curve (one single function). The optima is reached when Omnidrene, the most advanced realitilytic enzyme is discovered. Even the drug and the c/2 drive represent a 'mind within the mind' vignette. Within starship Number Thirteen the charade is fully developed again, but this time, the roles are reversed: the Bug-Eyed-Monsters, Vampires, Devils, etc., bursting out of cabins and passageways, represent the people in Sol, whereas the no-longer-real crew are pushed within the Dream-Garden and become the 'ideas', living only as the expectant apocalyptic wish of the people in Sol.

The satirical element in "Subjectivity" is obviously predominant: the burlesque vignettes with which Spinrad has sugared the horror-pill dissolve once the concept of the phenomenon of Horror has been assimilated. When the curve hits the ground, the situation in the spaceship

vignette has reverted to the conditions of the first vignette: a dehumanized mass of living creatures--the physical horror-types fully independent of human control--jamming the starship where an aborted escape-world has frozen with the death of yet another idea.

In The Island of Dr. Moreau, the parallel between the Beast Folk and humans is much less subtle than the corresponding parallels in Frankenstein and "Subjectivity." The Beast Folk are much more hideous, and infinitely less rational than the Monster; however, in many respects their personalities exhibit a closer resemblance to human nature: "I would meet the Fox-Bear Woman's vulpine, shifty face, strangely human in its speculative cunning, and even imagine I had met it before in some city by-way;" "seeing the creature there in a perfectly animal attitude, with the light gleaming in its eyes . . . I realized again the fact of its humanity."[1] Dr. Moreau's practical reason for performing his experiments is very weak:"I wanted--it was the only thing I wanted--to find out the extreme limit of plasticity in a living shape;" (Moreau, p.108.) but Wells' descriptions, and his sustained allusions to the strong element of animalism in Man direct the reader's

[1]H.G. Wells, The Island of Dr. Moreau, in The Works of H.G. Wells Atlantic Edition in 28 vols., vol. 2. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), pp. 107, 120.

attention to the symbolic personality of the horror-type: "Each time I dip a living creature into the bath of burning pain, I say, This time I will burn out all the animal, this time I will make a rational creature of my own. After all, what is ten years? Man has been a hundred thousand in the making."[1] The implication that Man is no less an animal than Moreau's creatures is very clear. The satirical function of the Beast Folk reminds us of Swift's Yahoos. When Prendick finds himself back in civilization, he is, like Gulliver, afraid of the animal nature of men: "I could not persuade myself that the men and women I met were not also another, still passably human, Beast People, animals half-wrought into the outward image of human souls, and that they would presently begin to revert, to show first this bestial mark and then that." (Moreau, p.170.)

The extraordinary attains a non-human identity with the creation of the horror-type. Even though it can be conjured up by an individual, and even though it may represent an outer manifestation of the immensity within the individual, the question that is being asked by emphasizing the independent nature of the horror-type is whether we are not merely a partial manifestation of the force that emerges through the horror-type: whether it is us who conceive the monsters, or whether it is the monsters who have

[1] Ibid., pp. 98-9.

conceived us.

In Shelley's novel, the Monster is the direct result of Frankenstein's enquiry into the causes of things. Therefore, according to the parameter that he himself has established, without his horror-persona Frankenstein cannot realize that he exists; or in other words, does not exist. At this point, the Monster becomes Frankenstein's creator, his surrogate mother: in the same way that the Monster came to his senses through the echoes he perceived from nature, Frankenstein is born to awareness through the reflections that the Monster hurls at him. The argument is then catapulted to a level beyond the concrete realities of both nature and the individual. Thus, we could say with Moreau that "the thing before [us] is no longer an animal, a fellow-creature, but a problem."[1] The controversy is finally reduced to the essential conflict, to the question mark. The principle governing the phenomenon of horror is all that remains.

4. Absolute Horror (the Supernatural)

The last category applies to the creation of absolute horror, where the extraordinary becomes a spirit, a God, or a devil. In the works dealing with this kind of horror-

[1] Ibid., p.94.

phenomenon, the conflict with which we ended the third category (a conflict of identity) atttains cosmic proportions: the human characters are seen as part of a supernatural perspective, where they no longer play the role of the observer, but of the observed. They become, as it were, subjects of experimentation, behaving almost at random except when responding positively or negatively, almost like lower organisms, to the elementary stimuli of 'light' and 'darkness'; the habitual and the extraordinary.

The cosmic distancing of the supernatural perspective arms the writer with a powerful tool, a combination telescope and electron microscope, allowing him to orchestrate the most minute details of his findings within the uninterrupted strain of the universal theme; and thus, to fully develop, and in some cases fully dramatize, the question that was being asked by acknowledging the independent reality of the horror-type. Generally speaking, the books we shall be discussing here deal with the interactions between human characters--who initially represent the habitual--and supernatural characters--who initially represent the extraordinary.

In books dealing with extraterrestrial beings, such as Wells' The War of the Worlds, First Men on the Moon, or even The Time Machine, the view of man as a potential prey to forces greater than himself is somewhat similar to the cosmic perspective found in books dealing with absolute horror:

"as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water."[1] Although the Martians, the Selenites and the Morlocks are not supernatural beings, but extreme horror-types, other forms of extraterrestrial beings, such as Lovecraft's Great Old Ones, and even some of Harlan Ellison's indefinable, myth-embroidered Deities can be considered within the realm of the supernatural.

The transition from these beings to the abstract figure of the Christian devil is marked by an enhancement of the subjective struggle taking place within the individual as a result of his interactions with the supernatural entity. What at first was seen as a disruptive force, like the Martian invasion in War of the Worlds, becomes more closely identified with badness in Lovecraft's Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos and is finally synonimous with evil in Lewis' The Monk and Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer. Inevitably, this transition is accompanied by a simultaneous increase in the autonomy of the supernatural being, and as we said, in the subjective response of the human characters

[1]Wells, The War of the Worlds, in The Works of H.G. Wells vol. 3, p.213.

to the activities of this being. Thus, what was seen as an outside interference, eventually becomes identified with an everyday experience; and through a study of the devil (the extraordinary) as absolute evil, we are again forced to look for the answers within the individual. Our attention is therefore channeled into two different areas: first, a cosmological one where the universe is studied and where the physical attributes of supernatural beings may be relevant; and second, a psychological, or spiritual one, where the universe becomes a symbol for the unknown within us, and where the physical attributes of supernatural beings become relevant only as far as their knowledge sheds light on the universe within. The two are inextricably connected, and it is the enormous distancing provided by the first, that allows the writer to concentrate on the second.

In the same way that Shelley's Monster represents the aroused life-force potentially present in nature, while at the same time appearing to human eyes as a distorted replica of humanity, the salient characteristics of the predecessors of the Christian devil (in this literary scheme) are associated with a distortion of the laws of nature as the characters in the text know them. Wells' Time Traveller is able to find his way into the Time Dimension after carrying his investigations "into the geometry of Four-Dimensions," and after reaching the

conclusion that "there is no difference between Time and any of the three dimensions of Space except that our consciousness moves along it."[1] This implies the existence of an order of reality higher than that suggested by three-dimensional geometry. The surprise with which his theory is received puts him in the role of the supernatural agent, connecting two worlds physically at odds. The surprise and incredulity (rejection) with which his guests react to the theory, and to the actual model of the Time Machine, and the patent horror with which the Time Traveller himself reacts to the polarized society of the 'future' Earth (the Morlock's stockbreeding of the Eloi), is comparable to the surprise, and subsequent rejection, with which the Martians react to intelligent life on Earth: "They are dangerous because, no doubt, they are mad with terror. Perhaps they expected to find no living things--certainly no intelligent living things."[2]

In Lovecraft's bizarre descriptions of Cthulhu we find the same basic emphasis on the distortions of time and space--with the implication that by undermining these, the whole structure of our conscious understanding will automatically collapse: "In this fantasy of prismatic

[1]Wells, The Time Machine, in The Works of H.G. Wells, vol. 1, pp. 8, 5.

[2]Wells, The War of the Worlds, p.25.

distortion [Cthulhu] moved anomalously in a diagonal way, so that all the rules of matter and perspective seemed upset."[1] The horror-story writer in Frank Belknap Long's "The Space-Eaters," yearns to "suggest a horror that is utterly unearthly; that makes itself felt in terms that have no counterparts on Earth." He wants, not merely to "hint at it or suggest it--any fool can do that--but actually to describe it. To describe a color that is not a color! a form that is formless!"[2] Unfortunately for the expectant reader, the story itself does not achieve this. Some attempts at expressing this feeling of unearthly existence, such as Lovecraft's "The Outsider," are more effective precisely because the dramatization is portrayed in human terms:

> Unhappy is he to whom the memories of childhood bring only fear and sadness. Wretched is he who looks back upon lone hours in vast and dismal chambers with brown hangings and maddening rows of antique books, or upon awed watches in twilight groves of grotesque, gigantic, and vine-encumbered trees that silently wave twisted branches far aloft. Such a

[1]H.P. Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," in Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos, vol 1, ed. by August Derleth, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975), p.31

[2]F. Belknap Long, "The Space Eaters," in Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos, vol. 1, pp. 103, 105.

> lot the gods gave to me--to me, tha dazed, the disappointed; the barren, the broken. And yet I am strangely content and cling desperately to those sere memories, when my mind threatens to reach beyond to the other.[1]

'The other' is both the world of men, where he does not belong, and the objective image of himself. Lovecraft's narrative rolls out of the mind-camera eye located in the Outsider's head. Thus it aims outwards and inwards, so that the story is told even though the Outsider does not 'remember' all the details. In this way Lovecraft makes use of the inability to use language for non-experiential descriptions by dramatizing the Outsider's anguished isolation and his failed attempt to 'reach through'. Notice the emphasis on the proximity, yet tremendous distance between the Outsider's subjectivity (he thinks he is normal, and he is to himself) and his outward, objective self:

> I now stepped through the low window into the brilliantly lighted room, stepping as I did so from my single bright moment of hope to my blackest convulsion of despair and realization. . . . Scarcely had I crossed the sill when there descended upon

[1]H.P. Lovecraft, "The Outsider," in The Lurking Fear and Other Stories (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), p.107.

> the whole company a sudden and unheralded fear of hideous intensity, distorting every face and evoking the most horrible screams from nearly every throat. Flight was universal. . . . As I approached the arch I began to perceive the presence more clearly; and then, with the first and last sound I ever uttered--a ghastly ululation that revolted me almost as poignantly as its noxious cause--I beheld in full, frightful vividness the inconceivable, indescribable, and unmentionable monstrosity which had by its simple appearance changed a merry company to a herd of delirious fugitives. . . . I became suddenly and agonizingly aware of the nearness of the carrion thing, whose hideous hollow breathing I half fancied I could hear . . . when in one cataclysmic second of cosmic nighmarishness and hellish accident my fingers touched the rotting outstretched paw of the monster beneath the golden arch.[1]

The final element used by Lovecraft to emphasize the Outsider's unearthliness (and to implicitly justify the narrative's 'diagonal', serpentine approach) is forgetfulness: the moment we become 'aware' we lose our associative memory, become speechless, and the tiny cosmic puncture is again permanently sealed:

[1] Ibid., p.111.

> But in the cosmos there is balm as well as bitterness, and that balm is nepenthe. In the supreme horror of that second I forgot what had horrified me . . . yet in my new wildness and freedom I almost welcome the bitterness of alienage.
>
> For although nepenthe has calmed me, I know always that I am an outsider; a stranger in this century and among those who are still men. This I have known ever since I stretched out my fingers to the abomination within that great gilded frame; stretched out my fingers and touched a cold and unyielding surface of polished glass.[1]

In contrast to this type of technique, a direct assertion merely conveys the feeling of frustration inherent in the failure to communicate: "The Thing can not be described--there is no language for such abysms of shrieking and immemorial lunacy, such eldritch contradictions of all matter, force, and cosmic order."[2] Milton's description of Death in Paradise Lost[3] also stresses the negative existence of the being:

> The other shape,

[1] Ibid., p.113.

[2] Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," p.31.

[3] John Milton, Paradise Lost ed. by Merrit Y. Hughes, (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1962).

If shape it might be call'd that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd,
For each seem'd either (1. 666-670.)

This applies eventually to Satan. From the left side of his head erupts Sin, in whom "[his] perfect image viewing" (2. 764.) he conceives Death--who eventually rapes his mother Sin, consolidating the negative Trinity of Satan's nature. The description of the Gulf between Hell and Heaven merely emphasizes the same inability to potentially perceive it--and describe it:

Illimitable Ocean without bound,
Without dimension, where length, breadth, and higth,
And time and place are lost. (2. 892-4.)

Harlan Ellison's slippery devils, appearing and disappearing in confusing style, are also indescribable: "Who are you? . . . The little man shimmered, and changed form. Norman shrieked. The form shimmered again, became the little old man. 'Will you settle for what I'm showing you?'"[1]

In spite of the artistic difficulties inherent in describing supernatural beings, our imagination is inspired with, at least, the suggestion of their non-experiential existence by the negative appeal to the senses. The

[1]H. Ellison, "The Place with No Name," in Deathbird Stories, p.217.

characters in the different narratives are also approached through the senses. Wilcox, the sculptor in "The Call of Cthulhu," like Roderick Usher, Hamlet, Ambrosio the Monk and Melmoth the Wanderer, is "physically hypersensitive."[1] The senses are best manipulated when free of conscious control, as they are during sleep. Wilcox's heightened sensitivity makes him even more receptive to the influences of the Great Old Ones, who "spoke to the sensitive among them by molding their dreams." ("Call of Cthulhu," p.18.) Satan's first contact with Eve is also through a dream:

> Squat like a Toad, close to the ear of Eve;
> Assaying by his Devilish art to reach
> The Organs of her Fancy, and with them forge
> Illusions as he list, Phantasms and Dreams, (4. 800-4.)

It is interesting to note that Satan's invasion of Eden is highlighted by three main metamorphoses which, symbolically, correspond to the main three stages in the evolution from water to land. Although Satan's first metamorphosis is into a bird, the cormorant is a sea-bird: this is a very felicitous image, since it accounts both for Satan's flight through the vast spaces surrounding the World, and for his journey through the boundless Ocean of the Gulf between Heaven and Hell. His next

[1] Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," p.4.

metamorphosis into a toad is also a very apt image. Although it would be difficult to determine whether Milton was familiar with the reproductive behaviour of these amphibians (and if he had read the works of medieval naturalists, such as Albertus Magnus' De Animalibus, it is quite probable that he was) it is of some interest to us that toads, usually land animals, revert to an aquatic environment and mode of life only when they breed. Now Eve's account of her 'birth' (perhaps the source for the Monster's description of his own 'awakening' in Shelley's Frankenstein) begins with her perception of a "murmuring sound/ Of waters", (4. 453-4.), and culminates when (like Shelley's Monster) she beholds her image, wishfully reflected on the surface of the lake. (4. 456-469.) Satan's image of a toad during his first contact with Eve is therefore very appropriate; since it figuratively breeds his chaotic, watery essence with the pure, fresh, but also watery 'original tendency' of Eve.

Satan's third metamorphosis, into a snake, completes the process of evolution from water to land (Eden, the World); but his conquest remains a slippery cling, not a firm foothold. Snakes are notorious for their zig-zag, meandering motion. Their locomotory mechanism retains the waving reflexes of fish, and their slithers are only the modified scales of the bony-fish. Some stalking, predatory animals have retained this wavering rhythm, obvious

in the sinuous, languorous cadence of the felines--the only other animals mentioned by name into which Satan momentarily metamorphoses. But this atavistic link to its nebulous, watery past is the serpent's weakest point. As country folk indicate, the best way to escape from a viper is by darting directly away from it: in its attempt to follow through the direct, sudden motion, it will unwittingly straighten up lengthwise, snap and break its back. Legends, fables, and similar homespun knowledge, derived from the fear and disgust provoked by the physical and behavioural peculiarities of amphibians and reptiles, were undoubtedly a strong determinant factor in the evolution of ancient dragon mythologies. The most famous of Lovecraft's Great Old Ones, Cthulhu, "dweller in hidden R'lyeh deep in the sea;" and other lesser deities, such as Dagon, "ruler of the Deep Ones, dwellers of the ocean depths allied to Cthulhu," and Yig, "the prototype of Quetzalcoatl,"[1] are all variations of the archetypal Bug-Eyed-Monsters. Cthulhu's appearances and disappearances usually take place near bodies of water. Invariably, our fascination with the amphibian ability to alternate between the obscure medium of water and the clear air of our solid land, blinds us to the basic fact that this ability is rather a deficiency

[1]August Derleth, "The Cthulhu Mythos," in Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos, vol. 1, pp. viii, ix.

to adapt to either way of life; that the amphibians (and to a large extent, the reptiles, the bulk of which species is extinct) are literally stranded on the shore-line between the two worlds; and that, as Milton probably realized when he decided to depict Satan as a toad (and by association ourselves as well), they must re-enter the murky world of water they strive to escape, in order to breed, and in order to survive.

The suggestion of sexual intercourse by way of the dream, resulting in the conception of "Illusions," mirrors Satan's own conception of Sin and Death and implies that the self-replicating code for the mutation into a different state of reality has been successfully grafted on Eve. Like Wilcox, she has been approached by a force from beyond and become the "force from outside that must serve to liberate Their Bodies."[1] Satan, like the Great Old Ones, has to be freed; to 'reproduce' or to be allowed entrance like Dracula in order to become effective. But to breed, it is not enough to be courted and persuaded: we must also give our consent (which Eve has not formally done). This consent, whereby we accept the terms of the contract, must be consumated by our plunge into the pool of darkness of the extraordinary. This is true of Faustus' surrender ("write a deed of gift with thine own blood,/ For

[1]Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," p.18.

that security craves Lucifer." [5. 36-7.]),[1] and of Ambrosio's acceptance of Matilda's terms: "'I yield!' he cried, dashing the mirror upon the ground; 'Matilda, I follow you! Do with me what you will!'"[2]

Maturin's Melmoth, the Devil's agent, announces his presence with "sweet and mysterious sounds," and even though he is "independent of time and place," he cannot go against the will of his intended victims, but must win their agreement: "'Escape--escape for your life,' cried the tempter; 'break forth into life, liberty and sanity. . . . 'There is the door, and the key is my hand. Choose--choose!'"[3] One of his main instruments of persuasion is dreams: "I know not, Sir, nor is it a problem to be solved by human intellect, whether this inscrutable being had not the power to influence my dreams, and dictate to a tempting demon the images which had driven me to fling myself at his feet for hope and safety." (Melmoth, p.237.)

The most immediate reaction elicited by a contact with the supernatural is horror. From the subtle fears

[1] Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus ed. by John D. Jump, (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1962).

[2] M.G. Lewis, The Monk (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1929), p.216.

[3] C.R. Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 43, 44, 58.

caused by the suggestion of universal insecurity and ignorance that we examined in the previous categories, to the physical fear of pain and death depicted in The Monk and Melmoth the Wanderer, the horror of the supernatural is what makes the most profound impact on the characters in the text.

The Martians in War of the Worlds are depicted in vaguely vampiric, or demonic terms in their motivation to invade Earth. Wells' plausible explanation is that their planet is dead, inhospitable, hellish: "that last stage of exhaustion, which to us is still incredibly remote, has become a present-day problem for the inhabitants of Mars. The immediate pressure of necessity has brightened their intellects, enlarged their powers, and hardened their hearts. And looking across space with instruments, and intelligences such as we have scarcely dreamed of, they see . . . a morning star of hope, our own warmer planet."[1] Fleeing in horror, they meet with more of the same in their encounter with life on Earth. And when they start dying, a maddened curate who believes that Judgement Day has come, exclaims: "Killed! How can God's ministers be killed?" (War of the Worlds, p.303.)

Damon Knight's "The last Word," illustrates the same concept. The narrator is a spokesman for the devils that

[1]Wells, War of the Worlds, p.215.

have invaded Earth. Their problem is that as they cause men to destroy themselves through wars, the groups that are left cling again together, like drops of mercury, forming small compounds of humanity that are more difficult to separate than the former, larger ones: "my final war would have to be fought with weapons so devastating, so unprecedentedly awful, that man would never recover from it."[1] Eventually, only a man and a woman are left: "I found them alive and healthy, for the time being, on a crag that overhung the radioactive ocean. They were inside a transparent dome, or field of force, that kept out the contaminated air . . . like two white mice in a cage." ("Last Word," p.195.) The devil, assured of his absolute victory, comments on their newest, fancy weapon. They tell him it is a weapon for peace, and he answers that, being the last ones alive, they have no chance to survive. They smile at him:

> "This isn't just a machine to generate a force field," she said.
>
> "No?" I asked. "What else?"
>
> "It's a time machine," the man said.
>
> "We're going back," the woman whispered, "to the beginning."
>
> Back. To the beginning, to start all over.

[1]Damon Knight, "The Last Word," in The Best of Damon Knight (New York: Pocket Books, 1976), p.194.

Without me.

The woman said, "You've won Armageddon, but you've lost Earth."

I knew the answer to that, of course, but she was a woman and had the last word.

I gestured toward the purple darkness outside.

"Lost Earth? What do you call this?"

She poised her hand on the switch.

"Hell," she said.

And I have remembered her voice, through ten thousand lonely years.[1]

Cthulhu's devotees, the "Eskimo wizards" and "Louisiana swamp-priests," seem to be bound to their cult by a hypnotic horror, presumably produced by their first contact with the Great Old Ones. Ambrosio, as Matilda tells him, is also bound to his God by fear: "'tis not respect for God which restrains you, but the terror of his vengeance!"[2] In Melmoth the Wanderer, Maturin constantly reminds us that horror is the prime mover behind every religion. When Melmoth attempts to pervert Immalee, in the Tale of the Indians, he provides her with a telescope with which she can watch the Indian shore from her island. He manages to make her witness a diversity of horrors forming part of the

[1]Ibid., p.197.

[2]Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer, p.214.

different religious ceremonies--until she herself experiences some horror. Maturin's imagery is often overly explicit, but also impressive. His description of the moving palace of the Juggernaut, like an immense Religious Machine, dragged by thousands and crushing thousands of human bodies, suggests the tremendous power that can be generated by the horror of the supernatural:

> Close to this fearful scene came on a pageant, whose splendor made a brilliant and terrible contrast to the loathsome and withering desolation of animal and intellectual life, amid which its pomp came towering, and sparkling, and trembling on. An enormous fabric, more resembling a moving palace than a triumphal car, supported the enshrined image of Juggernaut, and was dragged forward by the united strength of a thousand human bodies, priests, victims, brahmins, faqueers and all. In spite of this huge force, the impulse was so unequal, that the whole edifice rocked and tottered from time to time, and this singular union of instability and splendour, of trembling decadence and terrific glory, gave a faithful image of the meretricious exterior, and internal hollowness, of idolatrous religion. As the procession moved on, sparkling amid desolation, and triumphant amid death, multitudes rushed forward from time to time, to prostrate themselves under the wheels of the

> enormous machine, which crushed them to atoms in a moment, and passed on;--others cut themselves with knives and lancets after their manner, and not believing themselves worthy to perish beneath the wheels of the idol's chariot, sought to propitiate him by dying the tracks of those wheels with their blood...[1]

Even after Melmoth's victims are subjected to the extremes of physical and mental torture, their horror of forsaking God is even greater. Melmoth tortures the Spaniard in a dream:

> The next moment I was chained to my chair again, --the fires were lit, the bells rang out, the litanies were sung;--my feet were scorched to a cinder,--my muscles cracked, my blood and marrow hissed, my flesh consumed like shrinking leather,--the bones of my legs hung two black withering and moveless sticks in the ascending blaze;--it ascended, caught my hair, --I was crowned with fire,--my head was a ball of molten metal, my eyes flashed and melted in their sockets;--I opened my mouth, it drank fire,--I closed it, the fire was within." (Melmoth, p.236.)

Buth when Melmoth proposes to him the same 'incommunicable condition' that Stanton had refused amidst the similarly brutal tortures of the mad-house, the Spaniard

[1] Ibid., pp. 292-3.

declines and immediately seeks confession: "I knelt down before a priest, and confided to him that tremendous secret, which according to the rules of the Catholic church, can never be disclosed by the confessor but to the Pope."[1]

Ambrosio hesitates several times before giving in to Lucifer's conditions: "I will not doom myself to endless torments; I will not give up my hopes of being one day pardoned." Only when he abandons reason, and, "worked up to frenzy by the urgent danger"[2] (the Inquisition is outside, getting ready to 'question' his dealings with the devil), gives up his only hope of salvation, does he sign the devil's contract:

> 'You have summoned me', said the fiend. 'Are you determined to be wise? Will you accept my conditions? You know them already . . .
>
> 'I must--Fate urges me--I accept your conditions.'
>
> 'Sign the partchment', replied the demon, in an exulting tone.
>
> The contract and the bloody pen still lay upon the table. Ambrosio drew near it. He prepared to sign his name. A moment's reflection made him hesitate.
>
> 'Hark!' cried the tempter; 'they come--be quick. Sign the partchment, and I bear you from hence this

[1] Ibid., p.237.

[2] Lewis, The Monk, pp. 349, 352.

moment.'

. . . . . .

'Take it!' said the God-abandoned man. 'Now then, save me! snatch me from hence!'

'Hold! Do you freely and absolutely renounce your Creator and His Son?'

'I do! I do!'

'Do you make your soul over to me for ever?'

'For ever!'

'Without reserve or subterfuge? without future appeal to the Divine Mercy?'

The last chain fell from the door of the prison. The key was heard turning in the lock. Already the iron door grated heavily upon its rusty hinges.

'I am yours for ever, and irrevocably!' cried the monk, wild with terror; 'I abandon all claim to salvation. I own no power but yours. Hark! hark! they come! Oh, save me! bear me away!' . . .

The monk, supported by his infernal guide, traversed the air with the rapidity of an arrow, and a few moments placed him upon a precipice's brink, the steepest in Sierra Morena.

. . . . . .

'Whither have you brought me?' said the monk at length, in a hollow, trembling voice. 'Why am I placed in this melancholy scene? Bear me from it quickly!'

Carry me to Matilda!' . . .

'Know, vain man! that I long have marked you for my prey: I watched the movements of your heart; I saw that you were virtuous from vanity, not principle; and I seized the fit moment of seduction. I observed your blind idolatry of the Madonna's picture. I bade a subordinate but crafty spirit assume a similar form, and you eagerly yielded to the blandishments of Matilda. Your pride was gratified by her flattery; your lust only needed an opportunity to break forth; you ran into the snare blindly, and scrupled not to commit a crime which you blamed in another with unfeeling severity. It was I who threw Matilda in your way; It was I who caused the dagger to be given you which pierced your sister's bosom, and it was I who warned Elvira in dreams of your designs upon her daughter, and thus, by preventing your profiting by her sleep, compelled you to add rape as well as incest to the catalogue of your crimes. Hear, hear, Ambrosio! Had you resisted me one minute longer, you had saved your body and soul. The guards whom you heard at your prison-door came to signify your pardon. . . .

As he said this, darting his talons into the monk's shaven crown, he sprang with him from the rock. The caves and mountains rang with Ambrosio's shrieks. The demon continued to soar aloft, till reaching a

dreadful height, he released the sufferer. Headlong fell the monk through the airy waste: the sharp point of rock received him, and he rolled from precipice to precipice, till, bruised and mangled, he rested on the river's banks. Instantly a violent storm arose: the winds in fury rent up rocks and forests: the sky was now black with clouds, now sheeted with fire: the rain fell in torrents; it swelled the stream; the waves overflowed their banks; they reached the spot where Ambrosio lay; and, when they abated, carried with them into the river the corpse of the despairing monk.[1]

Ambrosio's ambivalence before and after meeting Matilda ("the subordinate but crafty spirit"), between humility and pride, reason and emotion ("Religion cannot boast Ambrosio's equal!" [p.27]), is similar to that of Faustus throughout his dealings with the devils. Immediately after signing Lucifer's contract, he argues fatuously with Mephostophilis about the existence of Hell:

Fau. I think hell's a fable.

Meph. Ay, think so still, till experience change thy mind.

Fau. Why, dost thou think that Faustus shall be damn'd?

Meph. Ay, of necessity, for here's the scroll
In which thou hast given thy soul to Lucifer.

Fau. Ay, and body too; but what of that?

[1] Ibid., pp. 351-5.

Think'st thou that Faustus is so fond to imagine
That after this life there is any pain?
No, these are trifles and mere old wives' tales.
Meph. But I am an instance to prove the contrary,
For I tell thee I am damn'd and now in hell.
Fau. Nay, and this be hell, I'll willingly be damn'd:
What, sleeping, eating, walking, and disputing!
(5. 128-140.)

All the individuals that Melmoth fails to pervert (the Spaniard, Stanton, Immalee, Elinor, Isidora) are of average intelligence and ambition. On the other hand, Melmoth himself (the only character in the book who signs the contract), Faustus, and Ambrosio are exceptionally ambitious, of superior intellect and passion:

> The clergy-man confessed to Elinor that he had been acquainted with an Irishman by the name of Melmoth, whose various erudition, profound intellect, and intense appetency for information, had interested him so deeply as to lead to a perfect intimacy between them. . . . And he added, that he felt his companion Melmoth was irrevocably attached to the study of that art which is held in just abomination by all 'who name the name of Christ.' The power of the intellectual vessel was too great for the narrow seas where it was coasting--it longed to set out in a voyage of discovery--in other words, Melmoth attached himself to those

> impostors, or worse, who promised him the knowledge and the power of the future world--on conditions that are unutterable.[1]

In his attempt to pass his contract with the devil on to Isidora, he seduces her, and makes her pregnant, before her marriage to the haughty, aristocratic Montilla. Isidora is torn between her fate at the hands of her future husband, and her fate with Melmoth. Eventually she avoids both, but Melmoth contrives to place her in the hands of the Inquisition. Throughout all her misfortunes she clings to a vision of immortal hope, that she wishes also for their child:

> Thus solemnly adjured, however, Melmoth promised that the child should be baptized; and added, with an expression which Isidora's delight at this concession did not give her time to understand, that it should be a Christian as far as the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic church could make it one. . . . Isidora still repeated her solemn request that her child, if it survived her, should be baptised. To this he assented; and added, with a sarcastic and appalling levity,--'And a Mahometan, if you should change your mind,--or any other mythology you please to adopt.'
>
> . . . . . .

[1] Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer, pp. 498-9.

> 'Listen,' repeated Isidora. . . . Promise me, at least, that you will lead your child to my tomb-stone, --that you will suffer it to read the inscription that tells I died in the faith of Christ, and the hope of immortality.[1]

In Rosemary's Baby, Guy's ambitious and egotistical personality is in marked contrast to Rosemary's domestic and sentimental character. Terry, the homeless girl who presumably kills herself to avoid her fate with the Castavets, or else is killed because she won't cooperate, had, from a worldly point of view, much to gain from her association with them. Similarly in The Exorcist, it is father Karras' superior intellect and passion that lead him into troubling exchanges with the devil. Merrin's direct, simple approach is basically the opposite: "especially important is the warning to avoid conversations with the demon;" "do not listen to anything he says. The demon is a liar. He will lie to confuse us; but he will also mix lies with the truth to attack us. The attack is psychological, Damien. And powerful."[2] Lucifer's parting revelation to Ambrosio, that he had been pardoned, is obviously a lie; but its effect on Ambrosio is devastating.

Milton's Satan is an excellent subject for the study

[1] Ibid., pp.512-14.

[2] W.P. Blatty, The Exorcist (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), pp. 353-4.

of absolute horror. He exhibits the ambivalence between opposites that characterizes those who, breaking out of a pattern of continuity, or norm, enter into a state where no such existence is possible, and that is usually identified as evil. From this point of view he serves a double purpose: first, he is the Christian devil, and as such his genesis, and that of absolute evil are open to exploration; at another level, he can be seen as an Ambrosio, or a Faustus, himself victim to that spirit of perverseness that Poe, LeFanu, and others, invariably correlate with horror. The 'conflict of identity' with which we ended the last category lies at the center of Satan's personality.

Satan experiences horror and becomes horror itself as 'absolute evil' through a discontinuous process of awareness that defies logic. In his address to the Sun, the systematic analysis of the circumstances leading to his act of rebellion--an analysis that shows Satan as the philosopher, the systematic thinker--is abruptly demolished by an emotional conclusion. (This sudden transition from reason to emotion illustrates Satan's inability to sustain a continuous pattern of thought--unlike the narrator in "The Maelström"--and thus the ambivalence that characterizes him.) After acknowledging that he is God's creature, "whom he created what I was," (4. 43.) Satan implies that he may have been aroused by something akin to Poe's spirit of perverseness by bluntly stating that "all his good prov'd

ill in me,/ And brought but malice." (4. 48-9.) His acute understanding of how, what to him is a "debt immense of endless gratitude,/ So burdensome," (4. 52-3.) is only a 'burdensome debt' if he wants it to be one, begins deteriorating when he makes the illogical decision (an emotional response) to choose an imaginary event as the next item to be analyzed: "O had his powerful Destiny ordain'd/ Me some inferior Angel." (4. 58-9.) The logical conclusion to the next (also unnecessary) comparison, between himself and "other Powers as great," that something must have happened to whoever does not "stand unshak'n, from within/ Or from without, to all temptations arm'd," (4. 64-65.) seems to escape Satan, who resorts instead to an outburst of bitter passion and despair.

Of course, either he does not realize, or refuses to admit that something within him (i.e., himself) has already made a choice. But then, it would be impossible for Satan to examine his behaviour lucidly, since this would require him to give up that sense of himself that, because of his break with God, he believes to be his own creation. From this point of view, Satan's cries of self-hate and despair are not only, like Faustus' in his final soliloquy, an expression of the horror that he has become, but an expression of his new reality. The relish with which he curses himself is the proclamation of his pride in choosing to be other than he was--something new, of his own making. Of

course, allied to this is the complete horror of remembering something of what he was, but of not knowing what he has created for himself. Like the toad, halfway out of the water, striving to conquer the land, but forced to rush back into the pool; and like Dracula, rushing at dusk into the consecrated earth within his coffin, and out at dawn to breed on the innocent and the pure, Satan rushes, excitedly about, tittering on the slender thread connecting the edges of both worlds. Faced with the false alternative of forever dwelling on the past or of repenting (which at this point would certainly be "submission," a new invention), he takes the only choice that his new, amphibious personality leaves him: to remain stranded on the brackish tide of constant opposition to what for him is now the past.

Because of, or together with his breakdown of reason, Satan deludes himself constantly. He sees himself as a victim, given no choice between dignity or revolt, and this provides him with a motive with which to impart reality to a situation that, by its genesis, can only exist in that it refuses to exist.

Faustus' final soliloquy is not really 'Faustus's' but Marlowe's--on Faustus' condition. Like Lovecraft's manipulation of the narrative-camera in "The Outsider," where we get the whole picture even though the Outsider doesn't, here Marlowe uses Faustus as the dramatis-persona, so that the reader sees Faustus in ways he cannot see

himself. Milton's treatment of Satan is truer to the devil's nature, and therefore much more confusing and perplexing for the reader. Without a very close re-reading of Satan's address to the Sun, he emerges as a courageous, indomitable character--which he isn't.

Faustus' final soliloquy is a meditation on horror systematically developed along the lines of Poe's "A Descent into the Maelström," where through the use of the imagination, memory and will, he is absorbed by the supernatural. Nearly all of the elements of absolute horror we have mentioned, plus those in the other categories are included in the soliloquy. From the opening lines, life and death are contrasted; life (happiness) and damnation (horror) are also contrasted; and the ephemeral nature of 'time' on Earth is contrasted to the 'eternal' quality of time in Hell (supernatural domain). This is done in two short lines: "Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,/ And then thou must be damn'd perpetually." (9. 134-5.)

Then Faustus pictures himself as an untouchable object, like an incandescent, white-hot excrement that is rejected by God and by the elements of nature: he calls on time to stop (lines 136-143) but time keeps running on: "The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike;" he wants to fly up to God, but is pulled down (line 145); he looks up towards God, but his wrath, like a mirror, inspires him with renewed horror; and he calls upon

"mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me," (line 152) but they recoil from him; he will bury himself in the earth, but it also rejects him: "Earth, gape! O, no, it will not harbour me." (Line 156.) He is rejected by the swirling images of his meditation, but absorbed within the maelstrom of supernatural horror. In utter despair he calls upon his astronomical powers in images, again, of revulsion:

> You stars that reign'd at my nativity,
> Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
> Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist
> Into the entrails of yon laboring cloud,
> That, when you vomit forth into the air,
> My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths,
> So that my soul may but ascend to heaven.
>
> (9. 157-163.)

But his horror of the supernatural absolute throws him again and again at God's feet:

> O God,
> If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
> Yet for Christ's sake, whose blood hath ransom'd me,
> Impose some end to my incessant pain;
> Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
> A hundred thousand, and at last be saved.
> O, no end is limited to damned souls.
>
> (9. 165-171.)

Implicitly, imagistically, after all the wished-for

metamorphoses he has evoked, he wishes yet for another one, this time into an animal:

> Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
> Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
> Ah, Pythagoras' metempsychosis, were that true,
> This soul should fly from me and I be chang'd
> Unto some brutish beast: all beasts are happy,
> For when they die
> Their souls are soon dissolv'd in elements;
> But mine must live still to be plagued in hell.
>
> (9. 172-9.)

Then come the conclusions, the resolutions, the curses proclaiming his new, Satanic identity:

> Curs'd be the parents that engender'd me!
> No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer
> That hath depriv'd thee of the joys of heaven.
>
> (9. 180-2.)

The last two lines before the devils enter are the epitome of pathos: Faustus loses all control of his senses, urinates symbolically in his pants and wants to dissolve himself into a double image of humility and grandeur, the ocean:

> O soul, be chang'd into little water drops,
> And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found.
>
> (9. 185-6.)

The intriguing question, how did Satan's self-temptation

come about, is partly answered throughout the poem by the references to his loss of identity, or, to be more exact, to the loss of his previous identity. For instance, the phrase "if they at least/ Are his created," (9. 146-7.) is both an indication of Satan's stupidity and of his constant negation of God, and therefore, of his own origin. At some point--like Jekyll, the Monster, Frankenstein, or the Time Traveller--he must have questioned the concept of conventional reality that he shared with the rest of the angels; and at the precise moment that he became aware of himself, the subject, in the act of questioning himself, the object (using Frye's terminology, falling from a world of 'vision' into a world of 'sight'), a profound feeling of horror must have ensued from the realization that, like a man between two mirrors, apart from himself in the act of questioning there was no other answer. This must have given Satan the feeling of having created something new, himself in the act of questioning; and from that point on, like the Outsider recoiling in horror from his image in the mirror, and like the Frankenstein-Monster conflict of two scorpions in a bottle, any consideration of that first step must have brought on the feeling of horror that accompanied his invention--effectively projecting him into the even lower world of 'memory' (what Frye calls the "unreal world of reflection and abstract ideas."), and blocking any further recourse to reason.

When we refer to 'reason', we mean the total, undifferentiated activity of the mind; including both the liberated vision of the conscious imagination, and the inductive and deductive knowledge derived from experience. What, according to Frye, Blake derisively called the 'ratio', the "sum of experiences common to normal minds,"[1] has nothing to do with our concept of reason. While it may be useful to speak momentarily, and figuratively, about certain assumed qualities of the mind, like thought and imagination, it is highly retrograde and sordid to deliberately chop the mind into a set of isolated qualities, and to hang them on particular individuals (like 'normal' or 'genial') as we might hang oranges, pears and apples on the branches of a plastic tree. This is precisely what Satan makes of himself: a grotesque and sterile contrivance, without identity and without real life. The same is true of Frankenstein and the Monster: eventually the fruits will wither and die; but since the tree is not real, it must be again artificially replenished--or left bare, impotent and ugly, brooding on the unfairness of its maker.

The allegedly unnecessary deterioration of Satan's personality (for which Milton often has been unduly criticized), is nothing more than the inescapable conclusion

[1]Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p.21.

to his process of metamorphosis within a state of horror that started with 'unconscious' pain. Satan first suffered pain (knew it, literally, as a thought) when he conceived Sin in his initial confrontation with God:

> In bold conspiracy against Heav'n's King,
> All on a sudden miserable pain
> Surpris'd thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
> In darkness (2. 751-3.)

Satan first experienced pain in battle, as Raphael tells us, at the hands of Michael. (Again, the emphasis between 'knowing' and 'experiencing'.)

> but the sword
> Of Michael from the Armory of God
> Was giv'n him temper'd so, that neither keen
> Nor solid might resist that edge: it met
> The sword of Satan with steep force to smite
> Descending, and in half cut sheer, nor stay'd,
> But with swift wheel reverse, deep ent'ring shear'd
> All his right side; then Satan first knew pain,
> And writh'd him to and fro convolv'd (6. 320-8.)

This second 'knowing' is experiential; the first one, the assertive one, is non-experiential. Again, the difference between the metaphysical--habitual and extra-ordinary--and dramatic elements, here used to convey the tension between one state of reality (abstract) and another (concrete). Like Lovecraft's Outsider, Satan can never

reconcile his sense of new freedom with the acute pain that it embraces.

Later, when he is pursued by the Son, the Messiah's face acts like a mirror, reflecting the horror on the faces of the fleeing angels:

> So spake the Son, and into terror chang'd
> His count'nance too severe to be beheld
> And full of wrath bent on his Enemies (6. 824-6.)

Similarly, when the wall of Heaven opens and they are thrown into the Deep, they are surrounded by the horror they carry with them: "the monstrous sight/ Struck them with horror backward, but far worse/ Urg'd them behind;" (6. 862-4.) until finally they fall into their own horror, becoming hell itself:

> Hell heard th' unsufferable noise, Hell saw
> Heav'n ruining from Heav'n, and would have fled
> Affrighted (6. 867-9.)

Several (chronollogically) subsequent references to Satan's state of mind emphasize the horror of his situation:

> horror and doubt distract
> His troubl'd thoughts, and from the bottom stir
> The Hell within him, for within him Hell
> He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
> One step no more than from himself can fly
> By change of place. (4. 18-23.)

As we mentioned above, Eve's dream prepares the ground

(and sensitizes the reader) for Satan's direct temptation, in the same way way that Satan's probable preoccupation with himself ("this is servitude . . . / Thyself not free, but to thyself entrall'd." [6. 180-1]) preceded his actual confrontation with God. Similarly, a feeling of horror accompanies her dream: "mee damp horror chill'd;" (5. 65.) and her remark, "but O how glad I wak'd/ To find this but a dream," (5. 92-3.) sounds somehow false, hollow, especially since the dream ends while Eve is in "high exaltation." (5. 90.) Here Milton is using Eve as a dramatis-persona, so that her assertion is valid merely in the 'imaginative' sense of the 'ideal' Eve; but as a propia-persona for the reader (her child), the dramatic elements of the narrative invite us to make these distinctions. Eve knows how she must react, but does not react according to how she feels. As Mephostophilis tells Faustus, there is a great difference between 'knowing' and experiencing. Adam speaks about evil in an impersonal, dispassionate manner, different from Eve's even though he says the dream affects him equally. However, after he experiences evil, there is a strong measure of horror attached that drastically alters his personality:

> Astonied stood and Blank, while horror chill
> Ran through his veins, and all his joints relax'd
>
> (9. 890-1.)

Like Satan ("Torment within me, as from the hateful

siege/ Of Contraries." [9. 121-2.]), Adam becomes prey to the characteristic ambivalence towards reality that makes him see everything in opposites: "O miserable of happy! is this the end/ Of this new glorious world;" (10. 720-1.) and is subsequently tormented by his conscience:

> O Conscience, into what Abyss of fears
> And horrors hast thou driv'n me; out of which
> I find no way, from deep to deeper plung'd!
> (10. 842-4.)

Like Usher, his perception is filtered through horror:

> dreadful gloom,
> Which to his evil conscience represented
> All things with double terror (10. 848-50.)

The cause of Satan's fall, as well as that of Eve, Adam, Faustus, Ambrosio and other 'fallen' characters such as Jekyll, Francis Leicester, and even Justice Wargrave, is that they let go of 'reason' and became overcome by 'emotion' at the crucial moment of choice. But this letting go of 'reason' is not simply a <u>temporary</u> loss of the mental faculties--overpowered by the hormonal and sympathetic discharges of basic emotions; it can be more accurately described as the literal <u>dissolution</u> of the mind; instantly replaced by a disorganized heap of individual elements who find themselves trapped within a dark and mysterious world, with only a few rudimentary, taxic reflexes to alter

their random behaviour. Adding to our suggestion about Satan's, and a fortiori, Eve's and Adam's moment of 'self-questioning', or 'emancipation', it is possible that the deadly weight of self-responsibility (labor) they immediately acquired--and just as immediately 'rejected'--was the life-giving, mind-ordering demon which once reigned harmoniously within, suddenly stripped of its vitality (its dynamic structure) and exposed naked into a Monster of impotence and irresponsible tyranny. Like the toad and his aquatic ritual, and like Frankenstein's Creature clamoring for a mate, this titanic child wanders erratically in search of--something that he hates because he does not have--his lost responsibility, his lost world. The nocturnal elements within our mind, like bats sealed in a cave, follow the echo of his curses which, like those of a raving Polyphêmos, never cease.

The Time Traveller's theory, that our consciousness (demon) is the only measure of time (the element that Faustus more than anything else wants to eradicate), is quite relevant in this respect, since this means that we are only subject to our wills, as exercised through the light of reason, and not to any arbitrary condition of the moment, which is the province of passion and emotion. Raphael's parting advice to Adam and Eve runs along the same lines:

take heed lest Passion sway
Thy Judgment to do aught, which else free Will

Would not admit;

. . . . . .

to stand or fall

Free in thine own arbitrement it lies. (8. 635-41.)

In Paradise Lost, the tremendous dislocation of time and spatial perspective to which the reader is exposed serves the same purpose of the time-machine concept. Time, we are repeatedly told (implicitly), can be manipulated at will if one transcends the limitations of the senses (the tools of our rejected demon). The unlimited vision of the narrator, who can easily differentiate between the position of the reader, his position and that of the characters in the story, in time and space, both in history and in the poem, is contrasted to the disoriented perception of Satan and to the similarly confused picture of the events that the reader is deliberately forced into:

And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on Thrones;
Though of their Names in heav'nly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and ras'd
By thir Rebellion, from the Books of Life.
Nor had they yet among the Sons of Eve
Got them new Names, till wand'ring O'er the Earth,
Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
By falsities and lies the greatest part
Of Mankind they corrupted to forsake
God thir Creator, and th' invisible

Glory of him that made them (1. 359-370.)

In the above, relatively short passage, we are first made to look back to the time before Satan's fall ("erst in Heaven") from the frame of reference of the time after the Fall in history, which is the now of the poem at this point. In the next three lines (361-3) this past time in history is emphasized to be the now of the poem. The temporal frame changes again over the next five lines (364-9): it brings us back to the now of hell with a negative projection into the historical future ("Nor had they yet among the Sons of Eve/ Got them new Names"), it carries us into the historical future ("till wand'ring o'er the Earth"), it mixes all frames of reference in a time-implicit--time-independent phrase ("Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man"), and finally brings us back from the far-distant future of history (367-9) to the nearer future of creation ("th' invisible/ Glory of him that made them").

A state of horror is reached when, confronted by a new 'awareness' of reality (the reflection of our self in the form of an exteriorized demon), we fail to re-adapt, to identify this new shape our consciousness has evolved, and rejecting it, become trapped in its orbit. This Monster pulling us in frigid embrace towards the center of his sterile nature; drawing us into a whirlwind of time and space, forces us to follow the wild inclinations of his dissociated Will, that, perversely, has become our Master.

IV. CRITICAL DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The absence of a unified theory of literature, encompassing textual, historical, structural and other kinds of literary criticism must either be attributed to our ignorance about the existence of universal literary patterns, or to the absence of such patterns in literature. But even if 'laws' do exist that once discovered would enable us to predict with certainty the development of general literary trends, and even of specific modes and genres, it is often suggested that the inconsequential nature of the relationship between textual criticism--the basic tool of any type of criticism--and literature is such that we would never find them: "when the critic has said everything in his power about a literary text, he has still said nothing; for the very existence of literature implies that it cannot be replaced by non-literature."[1] While this may simply appear to be a distinction between literature and criticism, it implies that criticism is related to literature in the same way that literature is related to life: only in that without the one the other could not

[1] Tzevetan Todorov, The Fantastic (London: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), p.23.

exist. As Massey puts it, "no matter how far back we stand from a work to describe it, we must first have entered it in order to experience it; and participation refutes explanation." Accordingly, he defines literature as "that moment in experience from which the observer cannot stand aside in order to explain it; it is defined by the reader's, and a fortiori the critic's, involvement."[1]

If we apply this same formula of individuality to the relationship between life and literature itself, we arrive at an artistic 'paradox' where the impossible becomes possible merely because it exists: "either what we say is actually here, in which case there is no room for literature; or else there is room for literature, in which case there is no longer anything to say."[2]

Since this dialectic emerges as a universal quality of literature, we might approach it as a theoretical ground rule on which definitions and categories of literature may be based. Consequently, any definition directly based on this dialectic will not only incorporate the paradox but will also feed directly on all its implications about the functions of that aspect of literature being defined, and about its relationship to all other literary phenomena.

[1] I. Massey, The Gaping Pig (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976), p.57.

[2] Todorov, The Fantastic, p.175.

One such direct approach is illustrated by Ketterer's definition of apocalyptic literature: "Apocalyptic literature is concerned with the creation of other worlds which exist, on the literal level, in a credible relationship (whether on the basis of rational extrapolation and analogy or of religious belief) with the 'real' world, thereby causing a metaphorical destruction of that 'real' world in the reader's head."[1] If we trim this definition to its central juxtaposition of the "other worlds" against the "'real' world," we see that it expresses both the dialectic within literature--congruent to the tension of opposites in life--and the conflict between literature (the literal creation of "other worlds") and life (the 'real' world).

The functions of the phenomenon of horror in a text exhibit this double address: its internal structure--what Todorov refers to as the syntactic and semantic aspects--is made up of the juxtaposition of two alternatives: the habitual ('real' world) and the extraordinary ('other' world) which are presented to the characters in the text. Its dynamic structure--what Todorov refers to as the pragmatic function[2]--is again dependent on the same two alternatives, but this time in relation to the reader:

[1]D. Ketterer, New Worlds for Old (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1974), p.13.

[2]Todorov, The Fantastic, pp. 20, 92.

against his 'real' world (life), he is offered the choice between the characters' own 'real' world (the habitual elements in the text) and also the characters' 'other world' alternative (the extraordinary elements in the text).

It is a matter of subjective choice whether we identify a literary phenomenon as horrific on the basis of its internal structure or its pragmatic function. We might always indicate that, independent of the reader, the internal structure denotes the potential for horror in the text.

These alternatives--what we referred to as the metaphysical elements in the text--in conjuction with the characters' reaction to them--the dramatic elements in the text--are two of the elements necessary for the creation of the phenomenon of horror. However, it is a third element--the characters' type of reaction--that will ultimately allow for the development of this phenomenon: horror exists only if the characters' reaction to the extraordinary, even momentarily, is one of rejection of the apocalyptic experience, i.e., the exchange of their 'real' world for the 'other' world. This condition does not exclude the work itself from the enlarged definition of apocalyptic literature. Often, the transition between the two states of awareness forming the apocalyptic experience is effected through a state of horror.

The difference between the horrific and other literary phenomena that depart from strictly mimetic modes is both obvious and subtle. Initially we realize that the horrific, the fantastic, the absurd and other modes are different from one another because the terms we use to designate them evoke different feelings; but when we attempt to distinguish them at the level of literary definitions, they all seem closely related because, potentially, they all share elements of the extraordinary. Therefore, any operative differences between any two of them must be based on different combinations, or interactions, of those (extraordinary) elements, and other (non-extraordinary) elements in the text, and their effect on either the characters in the text, or the reader, or both.

Todorov's definition of the fantastic is similar to our definition of the horrific in that both are dependent on a condition: "the fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event."[1] The operative word is "hesitation" in the same way that the operative word in our definition is rejection. Ketterer's definition of apocalyptic literature is similarly dependent on a condition, of 'change' or 'transformation'. His definition of the apocalyptic imagination makes this even more explicit:

[1] Ibid., p.25.

"the apocalyptic imagination may finally be defined in terms of its philosophical preoccupation with that moment of juxtaposition and consequent transformation or transfiguration when an old world of mind discovers a believable new world of mind, which either nullifies and destroys the old system entirely or, less likely, makes it part of a larger design."[1]

Massey's ideas in The Gaping Pig about metamorphic phenomena are also dependent on a specific condition governing the interactions between a character and various metaphysical elements. He never makes it quite clear, however, and some of his comments might even seem to negate it: "I am inclined to think that the search for a single cause, motivation or function in literary metamorphosis is finally unprofitable." (p.3.) But from the opening sentences in the book and in most of his qualified statements on specific instances of metamorphoses, the same motif, or operative mechanism is present: "metamorphosis is a morbid subject . . . it is a critique of language . . . from beyond the point where language has been forced on one;" (p.1.) "the examples of literary metamorphosis with which I have been concerned were not generated from a happy source . . . but they do express involuted, frequently defiant attitudes that come as a protest in defeat, at the conclusion of a process of evolution rather than somewhere

[1]Ketterer, New Worlds for Old, p.13.

along the growth stages of a psyche." Obviously, metamorphic phenomena, like horror phenomena, are characterized by a dramatic confrontation between two different states of reality: "metamorphosis is typically violent and flies in the face of reason." As such, they must occur somewhere within the scope of an apocalyptic experience; but, like horror phenomena, metamorphoses seem to require a rejection of that experience: "although metamorphosis has to do with change, it tends to settle in the moments of arrest rather than development. Even when it expresses a positive choice, it is a choice between difficult alternatives: usually a desperate choice."[1]

Whereas horror phenomena tend to embrace all three functions of a text (the pragmatic, the syntactical, and the semantic[1]), metamorphic phenomena seem to be limited to its internal structure. Not only do they seem to be independent of its pragmatic function (its dynamic structure), but they thrive on the reader's frustrated attempt to extract meaning from their internal structure. This inscrutable, hermetic quality, is what makes metamorphic phenomena the stock-in-trade of the horrific. In turn, apocalyptic literature feeds directly on horror phenomena

[1]Massey, The Gaping Pig, pp. 1-2, 17, 2.

[2]See Todorov's discussion on the 'general theory of signs', in p.92 of The Fantastic.

in order to emphasize, or impress upon the individual (character, reader), that whatever concept it promotes is indeed new and of transcendental import.

For instance, in Paradise Lost, taking into account our speculative analysis of Satan's crucial realization of his state of questioning, or in other words, his awareness of having the choice of either turning the new experience into more glory for his Creator--the initial step into the successful apocalyptic experience--or retaining the new 'identity' (of incessant questioning, i.e., ignorance) that he believes to have created on his own--the rejection of the apocalyptic experience--all three literary phenomena occur. His metamorphosis from an Angel into a Devil is enclosed within the phenomenon of horror resulting from his confrontation with a new awareness of reality; and the phenomenon of horror is, in turn enclosed within the two alternatives that the apocalyptic development in Paradise Lost offers. His metamorphoses into a cormorant, a toad, and finally a snake (a sea-bird, an amphibian, and a reptile), emphasize his new "defiant attitude . . . as a protest in defeat;" his "desperate choice" between "difficult alternatives;" and his obscure, hermetic, neither-fish-nor-fowl existence regarding both his self-awareness, and the reader's inability to identify it. In contrast, while Adam and Eve are also placed in a state of horror, they do not undergo a radical metamorphosis in Massey's sense of the term because they are

finally reconciled to the apocalyptic experience of their "new world of mind."

If we apply the formal definitions (of the literary functions) of metamorphic, horrific, and apocalyptic phenomena to the overall (internal and pragmatic) structure of Paradise Lost, it becomes obvious why the Fall is depicted as a felix culpa. The cloud of horror shrouding Adam and Eve's transgression, and their ejection from Paradise, will cast a long, but temporary shadow on them and their descendants. From the point of view of the apocalyptic function of horror phenomena, this is merely the shadow from the Cross marking the boundaries between two worlds of being. Eventually it will fade in the distance. The Angel created by God becomes a creature of chaos, from where he emerges into a toad, and then, clinging desperately to a last gasp of air, into a snake. From the point of view of the semantic function ("the relation of signs with what they designate, with their reference"[1]) of metamorphic phenomena ("the conclusion of a process of evolution," "settl[ing] in the moments of arrest"[2]), these metamorphoses, like Jekyll's and Leicester's, may be seen to herald Satan's 'death'. The great tragic irony in Satan's temptation of Eve, is that in the process he loses the only thing he has

[1]Ibid., p.92.

[2]Massey, The Gaping Pig, p.2.

left--his pride. From this point of view Satan need not exist anymore: he is (unwittingly) rendered obsolete by the new creature, an incredibly voracious phagocyte who also ingests all his corollary attributes (Sin and Death); and who is given the power to transform his original 'delusion', his state of incessant questioning, into an imaginative faculty allowing it to rise back into the Heavenly Paradise he has vacated. Using Ketterer's terminology, Adam and Eve's "old world of mind," their 'lost' happiness, "becomes part of a larger design."

The critical weakness resulting from not adhering to some sort of specific standards, or operative hierarchies, in our theoretical approaches to these literary phenomena is apparent in Rabkin's study of the fantastic.[1] His definition of the fantastic, like Todorov's, and like the definitions of other related modes, is based on a condition expressed by the operative word 'reversal': "the truly fantastic occurs when the ground rules of a narrative are forced to make a 180° reversal, when prevailing perspectives are directly contradicted." (Fantastic in Literature, p.12.) The major weakness in his definition is that it lacks all reference to any specific elements that may form part of a narrative. What are the ground

[1]E.S. Rabkin, The Fantastic in Literature (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976).

rules of a narrative? Obviously all the elements are, in their individual functions, ground rules; and, for instance, a certain character's gradual change of social status, from poverty to riches, while taking him through a '180° reversal' in his economic condition cannot be considered fantastic. Even though Rabkin is aware of "the very real problems of knowing narrative ground rules," the ambiguous meaning of his operative word 'reversal' is a further weakness in his definition of the fantastic. His addition to the definition of two "signals of the fantastic:" "a character's astonishment and the statements of the narrator,"[1] does not improve it significantly. The 'statements of the narrator' are difficult to interpret, because very often, as we saw in Lovecraft's "The Outsider," Poe's "A Descent into the Maelström," and in Milton's Paradise Lost, the narrator may be there to deliberately mislead us; or else, the narrator does not know himself what is happening between the reader and the book. The narrator, in short, is simply another character in the text. The characters in the text are themselves symbols, at the mercy of the dramatic development in the text. What they may express at one point must be measured in relation to their circumstances. To isolate a character and endow him with an extra-textual reality of our own choice

[1] Ibid., p.17.

merely to satisfy our critical assumptions, goes against the nature of literature, and against the nature of textual criticism. For instance, in the case of the Alice books, it can be argued that Rabkin's definition fails to account for the fantastic in them. The concept of reversal, no matter how it is approached, must include a certain sense of change, or transformation, conveyed through some sort of climax in the narrative. In the Alice books this does not take place. In other words, the lack of instances of 'real experience' on which a change can be effected is the only ground rule present. Massey calls this total detachment of language from experience the "antimetamorphic principle." Each minute change in Alice is nothing more than a point on a continuous line, denoting, as Massey puts it, a "certain entropy or movement towards stasis."[1] The same argument can be applied to Alice's expressions of astonishment. Mere "Ah!'s" and "Well!'s" do not express the astonishment that would signal the fantastic. In their meek and incessant repetition they denote the contrary: a total lack of astonishment. Without genuine change there cannot be genuine astonishment.

In the case of Childhood's End, his definition of the fantastic proves again inadequate. In order to

[1] Massey, The Gaping Pig, pp. 94, 95.

demonstrate a 'reversal' in the narrative, Rabkin attempts to show the transition from a 'scientific' to a 'spiritual' perspective: "Science is clearly central to this novel. The basis of the story is modern Darwinian evolution. The Overlords are nursemaids for the human race. . . . The relation between the Overlords and Homo sapiens is explained at length in terms of Darwinian evolution."[1] First, there is nothing scientific about the use of words like 'species' or 'evolution'; e.g., 'The evolution of the portrait's final appearance, with its jagged indentations, vicious cuts and desperate, ambiguous outline, suggests that this representative of a classic species of subjective expressionism belongs with the best of Munch, Ops, and even Bonny Calavera.' Second, either the whole of Childhood's End must be considered in a very speculative sense, 'scientific'; or else it must be considered independent of science. As Rabkin himself shows, the Overlords are 'spiritual' or 'supernatural' agents; and their use (and Clarke's) of the word 'evolution' is purely figurative. The children, mysteriously, horribly for the parents, metamorphose into an apparently successful 'ideal concept' of cosmic essence; they do not 'mutate' (as Rabkin argues[2]) in the scientific sense of the word. If scientific

[1]Rabkin, The Fantastic in Literature, p. 128.

[2]Ibid., p.131.

analogies are considered purely scientific first, and purely spiritual later, the only condition such a 'reversal' illustrates is one of critical inconsistency.

Again, Rabkin places I, Robot at the lowest level of the fantastic because, according to him, it shows little reversal in its ground rules. However, it could be argued that each separate anecdote manages to turn on its head one of the Three Laws of Robotics, or one of their corollaries; building towards a gradual, and perhaps implicit, overturn of the initial situation where men laid down the laws of robotics, and towards a new, and totally contradictory situation where robots become the lawmakers of the human race.

Todorov's condition of 'hesitation' is much more adaptable to Childhood's End and I, Robot. As he accurately observes, the fantastic is dependent on a momentary state of awareness: "the fantastic therefore leads a life full of dangers, and may evaporate at any moment;" "there is no reason not to think of the fantastic as an evanescent genre."[1] For instance, it could be safely argued that in Childhood's End, I, Robot, and other fantastic works such as Beckford's Vathek, the phenomenon of the fantastic, the feeling of fantasy, is gradually replaced by the phenomenon of horror as either some characters in the text

[1]Todorov, The Fantastic, pp. 41, 42.

(the parents, the reporter, Vathek) or the reader, or both, are made to react, more or less passionately, to the gradual threat exerted on their experience by the increasingly uncompromising 'fantasy' (the extraordinary). When the children's 'dreams' become the only possible alternative to continuity; when the chilling prospect of having the world controlled by an inhuman, man-made 'perfect' entity becomes fact; when the subterraneous, dead world of the Giaour (the infernal halls of Eblis) embraces Vathek's jolly, careless personality and literally buries him alive; when the individual is forced into a one-way alternative--horror sparks alive; the friction turning the 'real', habitual, now beyond-recovery experience into pain and death.

Our definition of the horrific subordinates the literary phenomenon to a condition, rejection, which gravitates half way between the elements of the habitual and the extraordinary; Todorov's definition of the fantastic is balanced on the word hesitation, and in this manner the marvelous might be qualified by the operative word 'acceptance' (of extraordinary events). On the other hand, the absurd could be achieved through the rejection of familiar elements when there is no other alternative present in the text, as in works about alienation from familiar surroundings; or through the lack of reaction, or indifference about the presence of extraordinary elements in conflict

with the habitual. Surrealistic literature, of which Alice is a classic example, is characterized by action without the alternative to experience; action without change: "words prevent real things from being carried out: or they introduce the possibility of irrational sequences . . . that effectually block real change."[1] The only alternative to experience becomes then the language itself, streaming incessantly on and on, like the brooding reminiscences of a paralyzed man.

As the dynamic structure, or pragmatic function of a text becomes dominant over its internal functions, we obtain works where language becomes increasingly subordinate to 'meaning', and that tend to embrace the whole of the apocalyptic experience. As a result they are more accessible to the reader's discrimination, and usually, sometimes in spite of the writer's intentions, a universal consensus may be reached on whether the didactic, moralistic, or religious quality of their elements is their foremost achievement. All the modes we have mentioned are usually found in this kind of works, the writer using them purposely in different parts of the narrative, or piling them together in multi-symbolic structures such as we find in Paradise Lost. Some modes, if not all, are inextricably connected: pastoral, as we have seen, is often needed to

[1]Massey, The Gaping Pig, p.89.

heighten the horror of the same, or an adjacent situation. This then leads us to view the whole situation as satirical; and thus, we assume that a moral is attached to the story; from which we conclude that the aim of the book is didactic. And if any cosmological elements are present, we might even consider it religious--or political. In some cases the work may concentrate on one mode only--horror, or pastoral, or fantasy. But when we start digging into elements responsible for the development of the phenomenon, we can usually string out all the rest. Witness Poe's superficially inconsequential "A Descent into the Maelström," or Spinrad's 'comical' "Subjectivity,"

Since all these categories deal with change or lack of change, it is easy to see how a critical study of any of them may lead us to suggest that all literature is, in a general sense, impervious to critical evaluations. But while literature cannot be subordinated to criticism, criticism needs no apologies for establishing its own rules and using literature in the same way that literature uses life.

The phenomenon of horror can be seen in this respect as a form of the internal criticism present in literature itself. Symbolically, it shows the writer on the threshold of major advances in his art. Perhaps because it specializes in examining the moment of frustration, when embarked on the discovery of a new world he is already far from home,

but nowhere else, it is often mistaken for an evasion of 'reality', an escape from communication, and relegated to the ranks of poor or inconsequential literature. The bizarre descriptions of the situations and events that form the elements of some horror phenomena are often erroneously attributed to the writer's lack of control over his conscious awareness of reality. Massey's observation that metamorphosis is a "critique of language" is also applicable to horror. The condition of literary criticism, precarious enough as it is, can do without statements such as the following: "although horror tales are very often written round one particular obsession of which the author was unable to rid himself, the rest of his personality may be perfectly healthy."[1] Witness the horror-story writer in "The Space Eaters:" is his 'obsession' visionary, or is it pathological?:

> He had . . . a wildly imaginative nature held in restraint by a skeptical and truly extraordinary intellect. . . . "I can't do it," he said. "I should have to invent a new language. . . . If I could only convey it in a sentence somehow--the strange crawling of its fleshless spirit!". . . . "But you can't honestly believe in such nonsense!" I exclaimed.

[1] P. Penzoldt, The Supernatural in Fiction (London: Peter Nevill, 1952), p.147.

"Of course not!" He shook his head and laughed. "You know damn well I'm too profoundly skeptical to believe in anything. I have merely outlined a poet's reaction to the universe."[1]

When pressed for further explanations, he goes on to compare his interests to those of a mathematician, someone who, like the Time Traveller, is bent on the search for other dimensions: "I know a mathematician who swears that he once saw the sixth dimension in a wild flight into the sublime skies of the differential calculus."[2]

What then is the function of horror from the point of view of the reader? Does he participate in the writer's attempted adventures into the realms of the unknown, and does he therefore gain something from that sustained feeling of frustration that the attempt brings about? Here, the congruence between literature and life is manifest. If insecurity, anxiety, fear creep in because the extraordinary (a murder, a disappearance, a betrayal) has occurred, it indicates that our sense of reality did not account for these things; that our connection with our 'real' world has been severed; and that our familiar, reassuring sense of reality has deceived us. We trusted it implicitly

[1]F.B. Long, "The Space Eaters," in Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos vol. 1, pp. 101-102.

[2]Ibid., p.105.

as an essentially unaltering truth, something that could accomodate everything. But as the horror-story writer realizes about language, it does not. Horror in literature tells us that we derive security from things that should not offer us security. When these things change, becoming dangerous in the process, we experience horror. In Poe's "The Maelstrom," the narrator finds the thread of vision that eventually leads him out of the whirlpool by realizing first that the 'objects' which according to his experience should sink first, are, time after time, proving him wrong. The narrator in Paradise Lost uses the same technique with the reader, forcing us to identify with Satan because the dramatic elements through which he is portrayed are easily accomodated within our own experience. The use of 'time' in the poem is another way of making us reflect on the need for an unravelling guiding principle--here the assertive language of the narrator.

As we saw in the attempts of different writers at describing supernatural, or unearthly beings, we are first frustrated in our dependence on the senses. Here, Ketterer's emphasis on 'the reader's head' as the battleground for the apocalyptic experience is very significant. Given that our adaptation to change must somehow involve a psychological or spiritual transformation; and given that our only way of knowing is through the senses, how can we bridge this gap between the universe and our minds except through a

transformation of the senses? Thus the violence inherent in horror is aimed first at the senses; "each time I dip a living creature into the bath of burning pain, I say, this time I will make a rational creature of my own."[1] There must be pain, as Moreau tells us, and as another of Ellison's deities, Paingod, eventually finds out. In a story reminiscent of Christ's incarnation, a young God takes up the form of a man in order to understand his role of Paingod, and hence, the purpose of pain. He is initially resolved to do as other Paingods had done before him: to terminate his role, thus putting an end to pain in the universe. But when he returns and is questioned by the Ethos, he vows never to abandon his status of Paingod: "I know that pain is the most important thing in the universe. Greater than survival, greater than love, greater even than the beauty it brings about."[2] Through pain, unknown to him in human terms before, he had discovered the joy of knowing it brought along.

Horror in literature does not make the reader feel pain, of course; but it may do the next best thing: shock him, or revolt him. This effect on the reader may sometimes be measured by the effect that a similar situation may have on a character in the text. The impact on Immalee's

[1]Wells, The Island of Dr. Moreau, in Works, vol. 2, pp. 98-99.

[2]Ellison, "Paingod," in Deathbird Stories, p.236.

mind of Melmoth's descriptions of mothers tearing up their new-born infants, and of old men being thrown into crocodile-infested waters, is an indication of the impact that those and other descriptions in the book may have on the reader's mind:

> She attempted to enlarge her comprehension, by observing the animal world. A young loxis had fallen dead from its pendent nest; and Immalee, looking into the aperture which that intelligent bird forms at the lower extremity of the nest to secure it from birds of prey, perceived the old ones with fire-flies in their small beaks, their young one lying dead before them. At this sight Immalee burst into tears.--"Ah! you cannot weep," she said, "what an advantage I have over you! You eat, though your young one, your own one, is dead; but could I ever drink of the milk of the cocoa, if he could no longer taste it? I begin to comprehend what [Melmoth] said--to think, then, is to suffer--and a world of thought must be a world of pain! But how delicious are these tears! Formerly I wept for pleasure--but there is a pain sweeter than pleasure, that I never felt till I beheld him. Oh! who would not think, to have the joy of tears?[1]

[1]Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer, p.288.

But, as Melmoth introduces her, through elaborate descriptions, and with the help of a telescope (symbol of the book and of Melmoth's supernatural eye) to more and more horrors, her attitude changes drastically; she starts becoming a 'thinking being': "but when she saw mothers cast their infants under the wheels of the car, and then turn to watch the wild and wanton dance of the Almahs, and appear, by their open lips and clapped hands to keep time to the sound of the silver bells that tinkled round their slight ankles, while their infants were writhing in their dying agony,--she dropt the telescope in horror, and exclaimed, 'The world that thinks does not feel. I never saw the rose kill the bud!';" "Immalee sunk on the earth at this spectacle, and clasping both hands over her eyes, remained speechless with grief and horror."[1]

Paradoxically, the same process that makes her discover the mechanism of thought, forces her to give it up, since the pain it brings about is intolerable. It then follows that the mechanism of horror is directly dependent on the intensity with which the reader might reject the interaction of the dramatic and metaphysical elements in the text. Since it is the extraordinary elements that set in motion the wheel of insecurity that eventually turns into horror,

[1]Ibid., pp. 93-4.

the reader may reject those elements particularly and freeze within the world of habitual things, defining his own elements of experience and destroying any possibility of any other experience coming his way. Thus the reader does violence to his imagination by denying it any thoughts other than a few programmed ones. Eventually, this may lead into a supression of the ability of the individual to choose, to exercise free will, which is Melmoth's criticism on the different religions, and civilization generally: "a world where the only study of the inhabitants is how to increase their own sufferings, and those of others, to the utmost possible degree; and, considering they have only had 4,000 years practice at the task, it must be allowed they are tolerable proficients."[1] The question is, if we need a guiding principle, why not eradicate any possibility of dissent, and make that guiding principle a conscious reality?

The four categories of horror illustrate this paradoxical relationship between increased consciousness and horror. The transition from the first to the fourth illustrates how an increasingly more explicit portrayal of the elements of the extraordinary results in a proportional dilation of the phenomenon of horror. This is directly related to an increase in the conscious approach to whatever is remote

[1] Ibid., p.300.

or alien in our minds (using Frye's terminology, passing from a 'world of memory' through a 'world of sight' into a 'world of vision'): from the troubled personality of a Justice Wargrave (1) we pass to the soul-searching personality of a Hamlet (2), to the physically dettached personality of a William Wilson (3a), to the uncontrollable personality of a Bertrand (3a-b), to the alien-controlled personality of a Frankenstein (3b), and to the supernatural-manipulated personality of a Faustus (4); the Unusual is dramatized (1), the Extraordinary becomes pervasive (2), the Non-human exhibits a more-real-than-human identity (3), and the Supernatural becomes the only way to articulate existence (4).

Horror in literature attempts to articulate our most recondite experiences (thoughts, visions, memories, desires); but when it encounters the Great Human Barrier--language, the highest monument to humanity--all it can show for its efforts is the clanking echo of heads knocking on walls.

The more adventurous horror phenomena exchange language for experience and attempt to explain language in terms of itself: the result is the hollow sound of disembodied voices. The more conscious the attempt at revealing the innermost spaces of the mind, the more it fails. The mythologies it creates, the 'worlds of vision' it inspires, are either instantly recognized by an individual--and therefore exposed as futile and repetitious, since 'what they say is

already there'--or need endless associative annotation (what they aspire to eradicate) to be appreciated. This crushing paradox is reflected in our attitudes towards learning, especially through academic study. It is a traditional naive condescension towards the studious, thinking individual that sees him trying to get a glimpse, through arduous work and incessant drudgery, of what he naturally grasps and takes for granted.

In the first category, the closest to purely mimetic literature in our survey, the extraordinary is merely a rumour, a murmured supposition skimming over the surface of the mind. In the second category we focus on the individual who stops to listen and becomes totally disoriented, trapped between the sirens' song and the incessant rhythm of life--day and night, birth and death, even his heart-beat echoing the conflict. In the third category the murmur has become a voice, a command; the shadows--the symbols--animated, more real than himself. The elementary qualities of human life--love, sex, social attitudes--under the light of this new, innocent consciousness, shatter into a thousand filaments of cruelty, fear, insecurity and corrupted animalism, surreptitiously held together by the human frame. The fourth category is even more horrible than the rest. Exhausted, we look to the universe beyond, to the stars and the Gods of a world we have invoked in order to balance out horror with hope. But our conscious

mind, piling horror upon horror, reveals that even in our most desperate attempts to raise ourselves out of the sewer, the rats have followed us into the new world. The revelatory attacks on the pride, cruelty, and anthropophagous obsessions of the different religions, and a fortiori of civilization generally, leave us with the feeling that we have been engendered out of the putrefaction of the mind. Self-critically, horror literature devours itself in its attempts at expressing the unexpressable. Is Conrad's exultation about Kurtz's 'summing-up' ("the horror! the horror!") a brutal twist of sarcasm? Can this be the expression of Marlow's "true stuff," "deliberate belief"?

The phenomenon of horror, achieved as we have seen through an increasingly more conscious portrayal of our spirit (the liberated demon), does rarely, if ever, lead us to the other side of the apocalyptic experience. Does the experience have to be catalyzed by an inhibition of conscious thought (the demon bound) to succeed? Ironically, this literary, systematic analysis of the mind, reveals only passions, emotions; reason at the mercy of momentary conditions that are buffeted by that which the discursive mind constantly minimizes. Not only does the conscious attempt at revealing the innermost spaces of the mind fail, but it rebounds against its own nature and tends to block any further attempts at exercising free thought.

Let us conclude by reviewing each of the four categories with this in mind: are the characters in the text free to choose from any number of alternatives; is the reader similarly allowed to think about the possibilities that the work may offer; and finally, what is the outcome of either being able to choose or not, in terms of the dramatic development in the text.

In the first category the characters have a choice, but at some point they become confused about whether what seems to be 'real' is actually 'real' or not. They call upon a discerning agent--the detective--who, through method (or as Nero Wolfe--the mind--constantly tells Archie Goodwin--the physical appendage--experience guided by the light of intelligence), finally arrives at the 'truth'. The other characters in the text are the reader's propia-persona: neither these characters nor the reader, we are told, are enlightened enough to exercise their ability to choose. They are totally dependent on the detective. The other individuals who exercise their ability to choose are the subversive agents who have set loose upon society the chain reaction resulting in horror. Their activities summon the detective, who, proving all-powerful in the strife, isolates one by one the elements camouflaging the villain, and finally absorbs the autonomous organ back within the human organism. The detective is autonomous himself, but on a much higher level than the villain: he not

only controls himself momentarily, but at all times. His strength is not only dependent on a sudden discharge, a sudden irritation triggering a change in action potential, but rhythmically exercised beyond conditions. In this sense he is the incarnation of Extraordinary Judgment, neither dissociating himself from the demon completely, nor binding him to his back, but embracing him with a terrible love, giving him a share of his own burden of Justice. In this ideal, highly imaginative sense, the demon becomes something quite different from either a Caliban or a Monster: the particular individual in the second category who thinks, and tries to establish his own guiding principle. He is our propia-persona, and thus the reader is also offered a choice. But as we see in Hamlet, The Turn of the Screw, and Heart of Darkness, while both the characters and the reader try to assume the role of the detective, both fail to disentangle themselves from language, or from the kaleidoscopical mirage of self-reflection, and the result is confusion. This particular individual personifies the frustrated attempt of horror in literature to explain life.

Since the individual cannot understand his demon, he decides to let him explain, and puts him on his own level of reality. Thus we pass on to the third category, where the illimitable choice of the protagonist (in the second category) is narrowed down to two drastic outlets:

to stay within the familiar, or to enter the extraordinary. Effectually, there is a choice with a condition: to penetrate the 'unknown' the protagonist (and by analogy, the reader) must first transcend the physical world of matter governed by the senses. With some rare exceptions (as in Conrad's highly fantastic tale, The Secret Sharer, where the rejection of the apocalyptic experience is so mild and short-lived as to be more of a hesitation), this is seldom accomplished. At the center of the transformation that the demon undergoes from a horror-persona to a horror-type, we have narratives like The Werewolf of Paris, "The Place with No Name," and Dracula, where an individual is chosen to undertake the voyage of discovery into the darkest realms of human nature, and who is killed after the news he has to tell reveal the frailty and turpitude of their habitual world. This is the horror of human love, and the horror-persona is the sacrificed Christ.

As the third category progresses from the horror persona to the horror-type, the character's (and the reader's) existence, or in other words, the quality of the reality of the individual is not only shown to be at the mercy of specific forces, social laws, or universal guiding principles, but is exposed as being only a momentary, ephemeral, limited condition, invariably subordinate to something that manifests itself through nature. At this

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