AT THE NEXUS OF Fear Horror AND Terror

CONTEMPORARY READINGS

Joseph H. Campos II
Catalin Ghita

At the Nexus of Fear, Horror and Terror

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The Evil Hub
'Fear, Horror and Terror'

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At the Nexus of Fear, Horror and Terror:

Contemporary Readings

Edited by

Joseph H. Campos II and Catalin Ghita

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Introduction:
At the Nexus of Fear, Horror and Terror: Contemporary Readings

Joseph H. Campos II and Catalin Ghita

At the end of the 6th Global Conference: Fear, Horror, and Terror at Mansfield College, Oxford, many ideas were developed that focused on the ways in which the various papers presented/represented a specific framing of fear, horror and terror. Specifically, Beth Kattelman commented on the ways on which the papers all dealt with the major themes of witnessing and framing. Based on this concept of witnessing and framing, this proceedings collection is designed in a way that enhances the 'specific focus' of each section of the conference and how the papers reveal the witnessing, framing, or both, of fear, horror and terror. When addressing the visible and invisible fear, horror and terror we must ask ourselves what is it that we are encouraged to see, what the processes of image production are and what powers underlie the image. The production of image, both visible and invisible, is a privileged space where the state, world order, security issues, military engagements, social issues and ideas are managed through a specific discourse - identified by tone, language, vocabulary, and symbolic images - produced by a specific historical, socio-political, cultural, racial, religious, and geographical context. Within this discursive space, a variety of ideas - both the action and the concept - are consistently managed. It is politicised and made instrumental even whilst eliding and obscuring important determining contexts. This discursive space is also an ideological space that refigures and represents specific ideas within a managed conceptualisation that affirms authority.

Based on a Foucauldian assumption that power and knowledge are directly related, the relationship between power and knowledge is one where power is able to produce knowledge. This is the Janus-faced aspect of the political whereby power and knowledge are intertwined parts of the same process, intersecting at points and everywhere present. Thus, this conference proceedings will attempt to examine the ways in which fear, horror and terror are intertwined in the production of power and knowledge through what is made visible and what is kept invisible.

The conference proceedings will selectively, but faithfully follow the conference progression from opening, power, reading, shadowing, embodied fiction, responses, experiences, as the succession provides a complete framework for how to comprehend the chapters presented in a cohesive manner and reveals how chapters from each section speak to the juxtaposition of visible and invisible fear, horror and terror.

Opening Fear, Horror and Terror

Beth A. Kattelman's 'Still Scary after All These Years: Gothic Tropes in Stephen Mallatratt's *The Woman in Black*' plays on the idea of performance and

the visible and invisible fear in *The Woman in Black*, a Gothic thriller adapted from Susan Hill's popular book. Kattelman addresses both the novel's and play's subtle use of the technique of narrative framing in order to set up their respective, yet very different, twist endings. In the novel we learn that the woman in black did indeed exact her revenge against Arthur Kipps, years after he returned home, by causing the death of his wife and infant son; in the play Mallatratt sets up a very different turn. Although the stage reenactment of Kipps' story is supposedly taking place years after he has said farewell to *Eel Marsh* house, the woman does indeed make several appearances during the production, despite the fact that she does not appear in the cast list. The combination of the effective use of Gothic tropes, the foregrounding of the attraction/repulsion element elucidated by Kristeva's notion of the abject and the simple theatricality and cleverness of Stephen Mallatratt's stage adaptation have made *The Woman in Black* a favourite among theatregoers for more than two decades. The play lends itself to a deeper reading of the visible and invisible.

The reading of the visible and invisible continues with Katherine Bowers' 'The Fear Factor: Exploiting the Gothic in Turgenev's Early Sketches' explores the Gothic elements in *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, taking its cue from distinguished scholars, such as Jane Costlow and Mark Simpson. She proves that, although the Gothic canon in Russian literature is, for obvious reasons, considerably smaller than its Western counterpart, it is no less valuable and worthy of critical attention. The social hints which underlie Turgenev's narrative in the afore-mentioned sketches are interpreted by Bowers in terms of an indomitable critique of Russian feudalism.

The Power of Fear and Terror

The indomitable critique of Russian feudalism lends itself to the fight for religious freedom in Vijay Prakash Singh's 'The Iron Heel of Chinese Hegemony: Tibetan Rebels on the Sacred Path.' Singh's work is an emotional plea for religious freedom, defending human dignity in the face of extremely adverse political circumstances. Singh documents the tragedy of Tibetans, monks and laypeople alike, who have been forced to abandon their ancient way of life by the invading Chinese troops, and furnishes sufficient evident in support of his indictment. The figures presented by the author speak for themselves.

The adverse circumstances explored that produce fear, horror and terror is intensified in Lily Halpert Zamir's 'Cries from Hell: Holocaust Literature between Testimony and Documentation.' Zamir addresses the delicate boundaries of Holocaust literature between literary testimony and historical documentation, through Imre Kertész's masterpiece, *Fatelessness*. This work explores the nature of fear and the performance of stories to make that which is visible, invisible and that which is invisible, visible through a specific production of identity and belonging. Specifically, Zamir's work on Holocaust literature is an appropriate blending of

fear being mobilised. What is interesting about her work is how the specific stories of the Holocaust are disappearing because those who bared witness to the Holocaust are passing away.

Reading Fear and Terror

The power of memory is translated to power of rhetoric in Franziska Edler's 'Fear and Horror in Pierre Corneille's *Médée*: The Power of Rhetoric to Incite Emotion in the French Tragedy of the 17th Century' focuses on one of the most famous theatre examples of French neo-classicism. Edler identifies and analyses the relationship between emotion and rhetoric, as the latter informs and enhances the effects of the former. Edler also demonstrates that interest in Corneille should not be the privilege of 17th-century scholars: the passion for his study should be shared by every inquisitive philologist, eager to uncover the universal pattern of aestheticised fear.

The enhancement of emotion is witnessed political uprisings that is addressed in Catalin Ghita's 'An Example of Romanian Terror Fiction: Aestheticism and Social Criticism in Mircea Eliade's *Miss Christina*.' *Miss Christina* lends a strong voice to the horror and fear as a state of revulsion and revolution. *Miss Christina* uses powerful symbolism in a modern expression of an ancient myth and is seen in how Eliade's novel establishes a turning point in the development of Romanian fantastic fiction in general and terror fiction in particular. *Miss Christina* focuses on the resistance to the manifestations of vampirism, in and around a Danubian country mansion. The supernatural phenomenon is read in terms of a symbolic uprising of the destitute people, who take revenge upon their aristocratic masters by witnessing the burning, and therefore the cleansing, of the seat of evil.

Shadowing Fear and Terror

The symbolic reading in Ghita's work is reworked in both Sabrina Zerar's 'The Fear of Sexuality in Traditional Kabyle Society: A Cultural Anthropology Study' and Madelein Fourie's and Stella Potgieter's 'Fear and Terror: A Pastoral Hermeneutic Dialogue within the South African Context.' They are significant contributions on the part of scholars based in Africa. Zerar's approach is at once psychological and anthropological, drawing on resources offered by older researchers, such as Leo Frobenius, and more recent ones, such as Malek Chebel or Camille Lacoste Dujardin. Zerar's discourse is centred on the refined representations of fearful characters in Kabyle folklore (stories and legends). Fourie's and Potgieter's approach is hermeneutic, adding a pastoral perspective to the general pattern of interpretation. Fourie and Potgieter blend the general idea of Christian pastorate with the particular idea of personal experience, in the attempt to furnish a convincing picture of the existential questions which are posed in the wake of traumatic events.

Fear and Horror Embodied in Fiction

The questions raised in traumatic events are especially revealed in the nature of fiction. Gen'ichiro Itakura's 'Representing the Pain of Others: Pat Barker's *Double Vision*' starts from Susan Sontag's phrase, 'the pain of others,' and examines the ethical questions which underlie Barker's novel. It is a meditation on the horrors of terrorism and war, particularly relevant as the global news networks have quickly transformed them into information material, in the absence of any humanistic ethos. The narrative is ultimately rich in suggestions.

Both Milan Miljković's 'The House That Virus Built: Tracing the Changes of Spatial and Corporeal Setting in the Novel *Rabies* by Borislav Pekić' and Uroš Tomić's 'The Wolf-Man's Dilemma: Exploring the Nature of the Contemporary Werewolf in Literature' are appropriate additions to reflect the ways in the visible and invisible interact in the production of Fear, Horror and Terror. 'The House That Virus Built' expands the discussion to address the concept of transversal spaces and the simultaneous hyper legality and lack of legality in those spaces and what that means to interpretation and re-presentation of fear, horror, and terror. It is also a valuable critique of Borislav Pekić's famous novel, *Rabies*, which, along with *Atlantis* and *1999*, make up an almost universally-acclaimed dystopian trilogy. 'The Wolf-Man's Dilemma' presents a counter point by discussing the dual faces of fear, horror and terror - the primal, animal, uncontrolled nature versus the struggle to maintain the nurtured, statist controls. It is also a valuable addition to the critique of feminine horror, for it centres on works penned by three women authors, of different literary calibre: from the classy Angela Carter to the elegant Anne Rice and the popular Stephenie Meyer.

Responses to Fear, Horror and Terror

The struggle between natural fear and controlled state of security is exposed in Magdalena Hodalska's 'Marketing of Horror: Media Coverage of a Family Drama' as it convincingly deconstructs a recent tragedy which occurred in a provincial town in Poland. By making use of various techniques of media discourse analysis, Hodalska exposes the marketing of horror, the transformation of a local, albeit tragic, event into a drama of national proportions by the mass media. Hodalska also narrates the circumstances of the accidental death of a baby girl and its subsequent cover-up by her irresponsible parents which are gradually uncovered by a patient private detective, who is also converted into an iconic character by the news-hungry television stations and tabloids.

Katharina Donn's 'Witnessing Terror: Graphic Responses to 9/11' continues the thought of manufactured drama as it provides a discussion into the nature of the sublime within fear, horror and terror and how that translates into a discussion on individual trauma and national trauma within the context of the spiral of signification. Her emphasis on graphic responses also shows the role of the imagination of the reader in the creation of visible and invisible interpretations of

fear, horror and terror. This is an interesting aspect of fear, horror and terror and reveals the power that 'reader' has in the creation of specific manifestations. Donn focuses on the disarticulatory impact of trauma that has been its hallmark since Pierre Janet's distinction between narrative and traumatic memories. Its repercussions, however, go far beyond this individual pathology and make trauma a cultural paradigm. Donn then goes on to explore the concerns with the role of the superhero as witness of terror. Donn uses Simon Cooper and Paul Atkinson to stress how the superhero becomes a 'transcendent witness' who unifies superheroes and humans alike in their response of strength and heroism.

Doreen Triebel's 'Manipulating Empathic Responses in Horror Fiction' pits older studies against more recent ones, all in the attempt to evince that empathy may well be a mechanism able to provoke emotional responses in the reader. Her carefully constructed argument on the manner of reader manipulation exerted by various horror fiction authors is then applied to Bram Stoker and to his iconic novel, *Dracula*.

Fictional Experiences of Fear and Horror

Last but certainly not least, Agnieszka Styła's 'Blinded by Fear: Shifts of Perception in the Selected Stories of Ambrose Bierce' concentrates on the common feature of all stories penned by Bierce, be they horror, war or tall tales: the omnipresent idea of death. She then analyses a few paradigmatic narrative plots in which death is inextricably mixed with an all-too-human emotion, fear of the unknown.

The multiplicity of viewpoints afforded by the diverse readings and cultural backgrounds of the authors (who are specialists in literature, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, politology etc.) is overwhelming and the range of knowledge required to master these fields is simply superhuman, so our task, as editors, has merely consisted in allowing the critical voices to speak in harmony. This is an e-book at the nexus of the ideas of fear, horror and terror, targeted at a 21st-century scholarly audience.

Part 1

Opening Fear, Horror and Terror

Still Scary after All These Years: Gothic Tropes in Stephen Mallatratt's *The Woman in Black*

Beth A. Kattelman

Abstract

Stephen Mallatratt's play, *The Woman in Black*, a Gothic thriller adapted from Susan Hill's popular book, has the distinction of being the second-longest-running, non-musical production on London's West End, having run continuously since 1989. There has been little exploration, however, of the elements that have made both the novel and the stage production so successful. This chapter explores the popularity of *The Woman in Black* by examining how Gothic tropes are employed in the book and in the stage production. In her novel, Susan Hill takes advantage of familiar themes such as darkness, isolation, revenge, death, the afterlife, and the descent into madness. *The Woman in Black* also works on a thematic level because it deals with loss. Here, the power of the story can be explained by looking to Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject. Kristeva explains that confrontation with the abject - something that must be 'expelled' or 'thrown off' - creates an ambiguity that threatens the categories upon which we base our identities as human beings, thus bringing about feelings of fear, horror or dread. The novel also uses an effective, first-person framing device in which a character narrates his story, thus allowing for a mixing of subjective and objective points of view. Stephen Mallatratt's play also uses Gothic tropes, but strips the story of the realistic settings while still managing to maintain the atmospheric trappings. He also uses a framing device - one that is very different from the one used in the book, yet still quite effective. Both the novel and the play use narrative framing in order to set up their respective, yet very different, twist endings. All of these elements combine to make both the book and the stage production scary, and have contributed to their extended popularity.

Key Words: Gothic, abject, dread, uncanny, ghost, spectre, scary, theatre, Susan Hill, Stephen Mallatratt.

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1. Introduction

Stephen Mallatratt's play, *The Woman in Black*, a Gothic thriller adapted from Susan Hill's popular book, has the distinction of being the second-longest-running, non-musical production on London's West End. The record for the longest run is firmly held by Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* which has been playing on the West End continuously since 1952. *The Woman in Black* arrived on the West End in January 1989, opening at the Lyric Hammersmith before transferring to The Strand and The Playhouse. On June 7, 1989 it moved to the Fortune Theatre where

it has continued to thrill audiences ever since. Described as 'spine-tingling,' and 'terrifying,' it is an effective piece of theatre that has played to over seven million people to date, yet, due to an academic bias against the exploration of popular productions, *The Woman in Black* has received little attention from theatre theorists or historians. As Alan Woods notes in his article on 'Emphasizing the Avant-Garde,' the history of twentieth-century theatre has most often been recorded as 'a series of avant-garde movements,' thus causing theatre historians and theorists to ignore the more conventional forms of theatre and to explore instead the new manifestations of the art form.[1] Thus, *The Woman in Black* has been overlooked. It does not receive a mention in the volume of *The Cambridge History of British Theatre* (2004) which covers British theatre of the twentieth century, and it does not appear in Theodore Shank's 1994 volume devoted to *Contemporary British Theatre*.

The success of the stage play, *The Woman in Black* is unusual in today's theatrical world. As the public increasingly turns to television, film and online video for entertainment, many theatrical productions cannot draw the audiences needed to sustain an extended run, especially if they do not feature dazzling special effects. *The Woman in Black* is not a spectacle-filled example of the theatrical art; rather, it relies on many simple, conventional elements to create its theatrical magic. The novel uses many familiar Gothic tropes to create suspense and tension, and these tropes have been effectively adapted by Stephen Mallatratt in his stage version of the text. It is an example of a theatrical piece that 'works,' thus, the central question of my investigation is, 'How have the Gothic tropes of Susan Hill's novel been employed to create this effective and frightening stage play?'

2. The Book

Susan Hill's novel tells the story of Arthur Kipps, a young solicitor who is sent to settle the estate of Mrs. Alice Drablow, a reclusive widow who has recently passed away. In order to complete his task Kipps must first travel to the small town of Crythin Gifford where he is to represent his firm at the funeral. He must also spend some time going through papers at Mrs. Drablow's isolated estate, Eel Marsh House, a sinister-looking place that is situated a few miles outside of the town. The sole land access to the house is via a thin causeway that is only passable during low tide. When the tide is in, the causeway is covered by water and the house is cut off from the mainland. While on his assignment Kipps encounters a malicious presence that manifests in the form of a mysterious spectral figure - the woman in black. He first sees her while attending Mrs. Drablow's funeral, although on this encounter he assumes that she is just a woman who is in very ill health:

> [Although I did not stare, even the swift glance I took of the
> woman showed me enough to recognize that she was suffering

from some terrible wasting disease, for not only was she
extremely pale, even more than a contrast with the blackness of
her garments could account for, but the skin and, it seemed, only
the thinnest layer of flesh was tautly stretched and strained across
her bones, so that it gleamed with a curious, blue-white sheen,
and her eyes seemed sunken back into her head.[2]

After the funeral, Kipps tries to seek out the poor woman, but she is nowhere to
be found. Later, while at Eel Marsh, Kipps once again encounters the woman in
black lurking in the run-down cemetery that sits at the estate's edge. Eventually,
Kipps experiences many unusual and unsettling things at Eel Marsh. Strange
sounds emanate from a securely-locked room; a door that Kipps has been unable to
budge is found standing open; an empty rocking chair inexplicably begins rocking.
And most distressing of all, one day, while wandering the grounds during a thick
fog he hears the horrific sound of a pony and trap falling off of the causeway and
into the marsh. He can hear the screams of the horse and riders as they are sucked
into the water and silenced by death. What disturbs Kipps most, however, is that he
is certain that some of the screams are those of a young child. As the strange events
multiply, Kipps becomes obsessed with trying to unravel the story of Eel Marsh
House and of the woman in black. When he tries to discuss the strange events with
the townspeople of Crythin Gifford, however, he finds that they are unwilling. It is
from Mrs. Alice Drablow's private papers that Kipps eventually pieces together the
tragedy that has seemingly brought about the haunting. Within the papers, Kipps
discovers that the woman in black is the ghost of Jennet Humfrye, sister to Mrs.
Alice Drablow. Years earlier Humfrye had born a son out of wedlock, an untenable
situation for an aristocratic young girl of those days, so she was forced to give the
boy to her the sister. The Drablows would occasionally allow Humfrye to visit her
son, Nathaniel, but only under the strict edict that she was not to disclose her
relationship to him. She agreed, but the arrangement caused her much anguish and
distress. One day, when Nathaniel was six years old, he was drowned in a horrible
accident when the pony and trap in which he was riding slid off the causeway into
the marsh. Humfrye never forgave the Drablows for the death of her son, and she
vowed vengeance on them and on the townspeople of Crythin Gifford. Humfrye
died from a horrible wasting disease twelve years later, but has continued her
vendetta from beyond the grave. As one of the locals tells Kipps, 'whenever she
has been seen ... in some violent or dreadful circumstance a child has died.'[3]
According to Susan Hill, the tenaciousness of Humfrye's hatred is part of what
makes the novel so gripping:

> A fictional ghost has to have a raison d'etre otherwise it is
> pointless and a pointless ghost is the stuff of all the boring stories
> about veiled ladies endlessly drifting through walls and headless

horsemen…for no good reason, to no purpose. My ghost cannot let go of her grief or her desire for revenge, she has to go on extracting it… [4]

Even after Kipps returns home, the woman takes her revenge upon him by causing the death of his young wife and infant son. Since then Kipps has remarried and has become stepfather to his new wife's children, yet he has not been able to move past the haunting events and tragedy caused by the woman in black.

3. Gothic Tropes and the Abject

So why does *The Woman in Black* resonate with readers? For one thing, it effectively employs familiar Gothic tropes and conventions such as darkness, isolation, revenge, death, the afterlife, the descent into madness. The story is set in an isolated location, and filled with lush descriptions of eerie settings such as a run-down graveyard, a sinister house, a fog-choked causeway; and it employs the narrative framing device of having Kipps tell his story several years after it has taken place in hopes that he might exorcise his horrific memories. The use of a narrative frame is common in Gothic tales as it allows for the story to be filtered through a character's mind, thus opening the door for the mixing of subjective and objective reality. The technique adds an expressionistic element that contributes to the tension between natural and supernatural explanations and helps to obscure the border between fantasy and reality. [5]

The Woman in Black is also effective on a thematic level because it deals with loss. Here the power of the story can be explained by looking to Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject. In her influential essay, 'The Powers of Horror,' Kristeva explores how horror is brought about by an encounter with the abject, a concept which means something that must be 'expelled' or 'thrown off' in order for a human being to maintain a cohesive subjectivity. Kristeva explains that we first encounter the abject at birth when we are momentarily both inside and outside of the mother's body at the same time. Prior to that moment we have literally been a part of the mother, but after birth we must abject the mother in order to form a unified, objective identity as a human being. Although we must try to push the mother away, we are also still drawn to her. Thus, we become caught in an ambiguous situation that is an integral part of the human condition. As Gothic theorist, Steven Bruhm, notes:

> We come then not to be mere victims of the last object - the mother - but active agents in the expulsion of that mother. We are creatures of conflicted desires, locked in an uncanny push-me-pull-you that propels us toward the very objects we fear and to fear the very objects toward which we are propelled. We must

bond with our parents, but not too much; we must distance ourselves from our parents, but not too much.[6]

The abject confronts us with ambiguity and threatens the concepts upon which we base our identity as human beings; but our relationship with the mother is not the only situation that brings about this ambiguity. Confrontation with anything that causes us to question the borders that help us to organize and categorize our world brings about terror and dread. We are both repulsed and fascinated by things that represent a violation of those borders: me versus you, inside the body versus outside the body, life versus death. The object that Kristeva describes as the 'utmost of abjection,' for example, is the cadaver, because it forces us to confront the borders of our own existence:

> The corpse ... is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object. Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us. It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite.[7]

It is this fascination with the abject that is at the heart of *The Woman in Black's* popularity. The dialectic of attraction-repulsion is strongly at work in Hill's novel. In fact, it comes up in numerous passages where Kipps' describes his emotional response to the woman in black. In one particularly pointed description he directly acknowledges that she is a liminal figure whose appearance creates psychological distress because she forces an encounter with something that lies at the border of understanding:

> I was trying to make light of something that we both knew was gravely serious, trying to dismiss as insignificant, and perhaps even nonexistent, something that affected us both as deeply as any other experience we had undergone in our lives, for it took us to the very edge of the horizon where life and death meet together.[8]

The encounter with the abject is a common theme in all Gothic texts because they deal with those macabre moments in life when a character is emotionally torn asunder. Through her skillful use of the concept of abjection, Hill animates the very best of the Gothic genre and gives readers a satisfying experience, one that has made *The Woman in Black* a longstanding favorite.

4. The Play

While Susan Hill's novel is full of detailed descriptions of locations and characters, Stephen Mallatratt's adaptation for the stage strips the story of the realistic settings while still managing to maintain the atmospheric trappings. The stage production is a 'bare-bones' affair featuring only two actors who recreate the story of Kipps' encounters with the woman in black in an attempt to assuage his tormented memory of the incidents. This framing device works in a similar way to that which is employed in the novel as it allows for the mixing of fantasy and reality. The conceit of the play is that Kipps has already written the story and has hired a young actor to perform it, in hopes that this ritual will exorcise the demons and allow Kipps to purge his painful memories. Thus, the Actor whom Kipps has hired ends up representing Kipps in the play-within-a-play, while Kipps portrays all of the other characters in the story. The two men reenact Kipps' story using only a minimum of props. The stage is almost bare except for a door frame and a few items that appear to be properties from previous productions. An upstage area that is separated from the audience by a gauzy scrim also contains what at first appears to be theatrical clutter. With strategic lighting, however, this cluttered area transforms into a graveyard and a nursery as the play progresses. It is the simplicity of the play that provides its power. The play relies upon the actors' ability to tell a powerful story. It is reminiscent of a ghost story told around the fire.

In addition to enhancing the storytelling aspect of the play, the sparse stage also allows the production team to carefully direct the audience's focus. Subtle changes in light and shadow can be controlled so that what is concealed can be revealed at precisely the right moment. In the script, Stephen Mallatratt's 'Adaptor's Note' directly addresses the importance of this visual control, 'Darkness is a powerful ally of terror, something glimpsed in a corner is far more frightening than if it's fully observed. Sets work best when they accommodate this - when things unknown might be in places unseen.'[9]

The stage adaptation of *The Woman in Black* works on both a psychological level and an aversive reflex level. The narrative is effective on a psychological level because it presents the audience with an intriguing puzzle and complex characters; and the production works on a reflexive level because it sometimes brings the autonomic nervous-system into play by activating a startle response. A complex, atmospheric sound design helps the audience to imagine the various settings of the story, and it also creates some unnerving moments when the audience is jarred with loud sound effects. Using the startle effect alone, however, is not enough to sustain a popular and long-running production. In order to attain a truly popular production that receives not only great word-of-mouth, but also repeat attendance and critical praise, a play must also have a good story. On this account, *The Woman in Black* delivers. As Susanna Clap observes, 'Like all really good ghost stories *The Woman in Black* is grounded not in horror but in human pain and loss.'[10]

Both the novel and the play use the technique of narrative framing in order to set up their respective, yet very different, twist endings. In the novel we learn that the woman in black did indeed exact her revenge against Arthur Kipps years after he returned home by causing the death of his wife and infant son; in the play Mallatratt sets up a very different turn. Although the stage reenactment of Kipps' story is supposedly taking place years after he has said farewell to Eel Marsh house, the woman does indeed make several appearances during the production, despite the fact that she does not appear in the cast list. This conceit allows Mallatratt to set up the clever twist ending that only works in the stage version of the story. By not listing the performer playing the woman in black in the program, the production conflates the spectral character in the play with an actual specter. The audience sees a performer who, according to the established conventions of the theatre, should not appear. Thus, when it is revealed in the final moment of the play that only the Actor has seen the specter while Kipps has not, the audience realizes that the woman has been exacting her curse upon the young performer; and she has simultaneously been exacting it upon us. The implication is that the young performer has been cursed and so have we. His child is now doomed, and perhaps our children are as well.

5. Conclusion

The combination of the effective use of Gothic tropes, the foregrounding of the attraction/repulsion element elucidated by Kristeva's notion of the abject and the simple theatricality and cleverness of Stephen Mallatratt's stage adaptation have made *The Woman in Black* a favorite among theatregoers for more than two decades. And Susan Hill's clever story still continues to fascinate. A new film version was released by CBS Films this year (2012), and the West End production continues to pull in audiences. *The Woman in Black* is an effective novel that presents the best a Gothic story has to offer, and it has been transformed into a play which proves that some good, old-fashioned storytelling, coupled with the judicious use of theatrical effects can be downright scary. As the theatre critic for the *Daily Telegraph* says, *The Woman in Black* is 'one of the most brilliantly effective spine-chillers you will ever encounter.'[11] *The Woman in Black* has managed to consistently frighten audiences for more than two decades. It is still scary after all these years.

Notes

[1] Alan Woods, 'Emphasizing the Avant-Garde: An Exploration in Theatre Historiography', in *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance*, eds. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 166.

[2] Susan Hill, *The Woman in Black: A Ghost Story* (New York: Vintage, 1983), 44-45.

[3] Ibid., 153.

[4] Susan Hill, *The Woman in Black: Education Pack*, ed. Mark Palmer, accessed March 15, 2012, http://www.thewomaninblack.com/connectwp/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/06/wib_pack.pdf, 15.

[5] Julia Briggs, 'The Ghost Story', in *A Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 125.

[6] Steven Bruhm 'The Contemporary Gothic: Why We Need It', in *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 266.

[7] Julia Kristeva, 'Powers of Horror: Approaching Abjection', trans. Leon Roudiez, in *The Portable Kristeva*, ed. Oliver Kelly (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 232.

[8] Hill, *The Woman in Black: A Ghost Story*, 90.

[9] Stephen Mallatratt, 'Adaptor's Note', *The Woman in Black: A Ghost Play* (Acting Edition)*, by Stephen Mallatratt and Susan Hill (New York: Samuel French, 1989).

[10] Susanna, Clapp, 'The Woman in Black; The Mousetrap; Blood Brothers: Review', *The Observer*, 7 January 2012, accessed March 13, 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2012/jan/08/mousetrap-woman-black-blood-brothers-review.

[11] Charles Spencer, 'A Chiller to Cherish', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 3 September 2002, 20.

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The Fear Factor: Exploiting the Gothic in Turgenev's Early Sketches

Katherine Bowers

Abstract:
When we think of Gothic literature, we think of it as Terry Castle has described it, 'A decadent late 18th century taste for things gloomy, macabre, and medieval.'[1] This definition seems nearly opposed to the goals of the naturalist school, but closer examination of the Gothic's function reveals the genre's versatility. While Realist works of the 1840s claim to portray life with verisimilitude, the landscape details often have oddly Gothic features: from gloomy woods and misty canals that evoke dread to tenements and rundown villages that resemble the anxiety-filled dwellings of Gothic lore. The use of the Gothic in this manner in the works of Dickens, Balzac, and others of the period is well documented. Although the Russian Gothic canon is small, relative to Western European Gothic literature, the same Gothic motifs and tropes appear in Russian works of the 1840s, used in the same way. Reading Ivan Turgenev's *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*,[2] however, the few Gothic elements that are present seem at odds with the work as a whole. They are strikingly different from the narrator's usual descriptive style, and stand out from the melodic flow of the sketches, drawing the reader's attention and, also, adding an undercurrent of fear to the works. Several scholars, including Jane Costlow and Mark Simpson, have addressed the Gothic moments in these tales,[3] but without coming to any conclusion about why these elements are present or how they function throughout the sketches. Examining these elements, I argue that Turgenev's use of them is meant to build up an atmosphere of fear for his reader, exploiting the Gothic's power to underscore social transgression and create a powerful indictment of Russia's feudal system.

Key Words: Gothic, Russian, fear, anxiety, Turgenev, landscape, Realism, narration.

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The Gothic movement swept literate Russia following the 1792 publication of Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* in Russian translation. While the number of canonically Gothic works by Russian writers remains small, Gothic novels from abroad were in great demand, their popularity peaking in the 1820s and 30s. The 1840s, was a decade of transition as writers like Dickens and Balzac influenced a general shift away from the Romantic fantastic in favour of depictions of life more grounded in reality. These works of the 1840s partly represent the efforts of authors to work out new literary techniques to conform to a new aesthetic: to represent life with verisimilitude. Elizabeth Cheresh Allen, analysing the narration

in *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, could be writing about any author of the 1840s when she notes

> [Turgenev's narrator] is not merely hunting for game, or even simply hunting for new experiences, but … hunting for a manner of *narrating*, that is, for a way to comprehend and communicate those experiences.[4]

One manner of narrating that was utilised during this time by writers like Turgenev, Balzac, Dickens, and others was the Gothic mode.

Frequently described as Terry Castle succinctly typifies it, 'A decadent late 18th century taste for things gloomy, macabre, and medieval,'[5] the Gothic immediately evokes the dark, creepy locales of Ann Radcliffe's or Matthew Lewis's novels, as well as their resident ghosts or unsolved murders. While this definition seems nearly opposed to the goals of the naturalist school, closer examination of the Gothic's function reveals the genre's versatility. While Gothic fiction is best known for its spooky conventions (ruined castles, dark graveyards and mausoleums, medieval prisons, cobwebs, veils, etc.), it is particularly identified by its reliance on three definitive elements. These are the solution of a mystery shapes the narrative; a transgression or broken taboo plays a major role in the work's plot; and the work seems preoccupied with the depiction of psychologies such as fear, terror, anxiety, and dread.

The reader of the 1840s, already attuned to cues from the popular Gothic fiction of the time, was equally able to recognise Gothic generic markers planted in non-Gothic texts. These markers evoked the trappings of the genre: secrets, mysteries, transgressions. The associations of the Gothic, in turn, led the reader of the time to examine texts more closely, looking for the underlying mystery suggested by such elements. In addition, the feelings of panic, fear, dread, and horror that the Gothic aroused were useful in lending a specific atmosphere to settings likely unfamiliar to the reader like isolated peasant communities. In short, the burgeoning ideological project of literary critical Realism nicely accommodated the pseudo-psychological impulses of the Gothic.

In Ivan Turgenev's *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, the evocation of a Gothic landscape is striking precisely because it is so unexpected. During its serial publication in the journal *The Contemporary* between 1847 and 1850, the work was met with great critical acclaim, especially by Belinsky and his circle, who saw in it a new voice for the sociological Realist movement. Turgenev's depictions celebrate the natural beauty of the Russian countryside, and the work is equal parts lyric effusions describing landscapes and sociological narrative on the characters encountered by the narrator in his travels. There are only a few Gothic moments in the entire cycle, and they seem at odds with the narrator's usual descriptive tone. These intervals serve an important function in the context of the sketches, however

and demonstrate how writers used Gothic conventions to create a new, Realist aesthetic.

'Bezhin Meadow,'[6] for example, begins with a description emphasizing the beauty of certain natural elements: a meditation on the sun rising from behind a cloud, a comparison of clouds in a blue sky to islands in a flooded river, and a description of sunset.[7] As night falls and the narrator realises that he is lost, however, the description of the surrounding landscape becomes less lyric and more harsh

> I saw completely different places which were unknown to me. At my feet there stretched a narrow valley; directly ahead of me rose, like a steep wall, a dense aspen wood.[8]

In addition to feeling physically trapped by the topography of this place, the narrator's feelings about its individual natural elements also change: 'The tall, thick grass on the floor of the valley was all wet and shone white like a smooth tablecloth; it felt clammy and horrible to walk through.'[9] As the narrator becomes increasingly uncomfortable in the setting, the night noises that seem so explicable and usual in other stories, such as those of birds calling or bats crying, become 'mysterious.' The entire landscape is transformed by the narrator's feelings:

> Meanwhile, night was approaching and rose around me like a thunder cloud; it was, as if, in company with the evening mists, darkness rose on every side and even poured down from the sky […] Everything quickly grew silent and dark; only quail gave occasional cries. A small night bird, which hurried low and soundlessly along on its soft wings, almost collided with me and plunged off in terror […] It was only with difficulty that I could make out distant objects. All around me the field glimmered faintly; beyond it, coming closer each moment, the sullen murk loomed in huge clouds.[10]

The transformation itself is not unexpected as the narrator's feelings and moods constantly shape the landscape in the *Sketches*. Turgenev uses this device to influence the feelings of his reader here as well: as the narrator feels lost and frightened, so, too, the reader, used to picking up on Gothic cues in popular fiction to understand setting or atmosphere, begins to feel anxious for the narrator. The terrified animals, sudden surrounding darkness and looming 'sullen murk' all promote this heightened anxiety, in both the reader and the narrator.

Further on in the passage, the narrator looks to his hunting dog for comfort, but even this familiar creature serves only to discomfit him

> I felt ill at ease in front of her and strode wildly forward, as if I
> had suddenly realized which way to go, circled the knoll and
> found myself in a shallow hollow which had been plowed over.
> A strange feeling took possession of me. The hollow had the
> almost exact appearance of a cauldron with sloping sides.
> Several large upright stones stood in the floor of the hollow - it
> seemed as if they had crept down to that spot for some
> mysterious consultation - and the hollow itself was so still and
> silent, the sky above it so flat and dismal that my heart shrank
> within me.[11]

The narrator's impression that the landscape is involved in some kind of dark
meeting is clearly a product of the fear he feels. The passage serves to emphasise
further the Gothic elements above, and to distance this unfamiliar landscape from
the objective, known landscape described at the beginning of the story. This part of
the sketch, however, is mainly introductory. The narrator's experiences lost in the
wood frame the core of the sketch.

The main narrative thread of 'Bezhin Meadow' follows the experiences of the
narrator as he spends the night near a group of peasant boys that he overhears
exchanging scary stories around a campfire.[12] As the narrator listens to the boys,
he tells their stories back to his reader verbatim, evoking each of their voices, and
also their system of beliefs, heavily based on folklore. Mark Simpson argues that
one of the boys, Pavel, acts as a Gothic hero, 'a kind of Melmoth, a sign of the
dangers inherent in skepticism.'[13] 'Only the Gothic hero,' Simpson notes, 'aims to
explain the many unknowns and the many fears which confront us.'[14] While
Simpson's reading identifies this boy as a Gothic hero, the narrator, as voyeuristic
observer, more directly embodies this role. It is the narrator who gives context to
Pavel's words, and also to the beliefs of the boys. It is the narrator who gives the
piece its atmosphere. And it is the narrator who, ultimately, gives the sketch its
fatalistic connotations in describing the untimely death of the same Pavel.

In most of the other sketches, Turgenev depicts death, danger, and other events
that one would expect to be conflated with Gothic anxiety as simple matters of
fact; these extraordinary moments are just another aspect of life. For example, in
the story 'Death,'[15] a contractor's death is described and compared to the death of
a forest. Both events are seen as 'natural,' even though the contractor dies as a
result of an untimely accident. Similarly, in 'My Neighbour Radilov,'[16] the titular
character describes his wife's death in minute detail. The abject image of flies
walking over her open eyes should horrify, but the narrator remains impassive.
Whereas Turgenev takes care to underscore the ordinariness of death elsewhere, in
'Bezhin Meadow' he accentuates its mystery and extraordinariness. Although
peasants in other sketches accept death as simply a part of life, in 'Bezhin
Meadow' the peasants are portrayed as being more deeply spiritual: they do not see

death as an end, but they also do not fully understand it. Their *dvoeverie* - i.e., mixture of folkloric and religious beliefs - helps them explain the unknown and irrational aspects of life, as the boys demonstrate with their stories.

Turgenev, seeking to describe the entire world of the peasants, cannot omit an element as important as their belief system, but seems to want to couch it in terms that his educated readership can understand without passing judgment. To this end, he makes use of Gothic motifs. The irrational fears of the narrator, lost in the woods at night, precede the irrational fears of the boys that prompt their stories about foretold deaths, ghosts, and place spirits. Because Turgenev knows that his readership is familiar with the conventions of the Gothic and its typical means of depicting fear and anxiety, he makes use of certain trappings of the genre to communicate the complex beliefs of the peasants about death and afterlife to his readers. This technique, in turn, provides Turgenev's reader with a more complete and sympathetic understanding of the society and belief system of the lower classes.

Another sketch in the collection evokes the Gothic in a similar way: the story 'Loner.'[17] The story is set apart from others like 'Forest and Steppe,'[18] in which storms are portrayed simply as natural phenomena to be enjoyed, by the early description of a fierce gathering storm

> A thunderstorm was threatening. Straight ahead an enormous lilac cloud rose slowly beyond the forest and long grey lengths of cloud hung above me and stretched towards me. The willows rustled and murmured in alarm. The muggy heat was suddenly replaced by moist cool air and the shadows thickened […] A strong wind suddenly began roaring on high, the trees began thrashing about, huge raindrops started pounding sharply on the leaves and splashing over them, lightning flashed and thunder exploded […] [S]uddenly by the light of a lightning flash I thought I saw a tall figure on the road. I began looking intently in that direction and saw that the figure had literally sprung from the earth just beside my droshky.[19]

The violence of the storm in this description has two functions: it terrorises both the narrator ('long grey lengths of cloud hung above me and stretched towards me') and the landscape itself ('willows rustled and murmured in alarm'), and it introduces the forester, called 'Biriuk,' or 'lone wolf.'

Jane Costlow identifies 'Loner' as a quintessentially Gothic tale, pointing to this passage as an initial indicator to the reader that the Gothic is at work: '[Here] Turgenev takes the gothic as his point of departure - working from the almost hackneyed landscape of the opening to the more complex moral structure of the ending.'[20] Costlow's interprets this Gothic scene through Slavic folklore,

identifying Biriuk as a throwback to figures such as the *leshii*, the often-violent spirit of the forest. According to Costlow, this allusion implies that 'the order of modernity is always threatening to slip back into an anarchic and violent past, in which passions - rather than reason - rule the day.'[21] While Costlow's reading of the text highlights elements that are clearly at work here - for example, the underlying violence that Biriuk symbolises in his role as forest regulator - it does not fully explain why this description constitutes a use of the Gothic. After all, violence and justice are themes that run throughout Russian folklore - from the legend of the *bannik*, the bath house spirit, who, when angered, steams offenders to death, or flays them alive with his claws, to the *polevik*, the field spirit, who punishes those who sleep in the fields by giving them diseases or trampling them with his horse.

Essentially 'Loner' is a story that describes an untenable cycle of transgression, a definitive element of the Gothic at work. Biriuk is a loner because he is of the peasant class, but sides with his master when carrying out his job. In punishing and reporting those who illegally fell wood, he threatens the peasants who live nearby in abject poverty. However, if the forester sympathises with the peasants, his peer group, he shirks his responsibility towards his master. Ostracised either way, Biriuk himself becomes a symbol of the transgressions of society against the lower classes. He represents both the oppressive policies of the upper classes and the harsh social conditions that require him to injure his own people simply to assure the livelihood of his small family.

The initial landscape description serves to underscore this cycle for the reader. The threat felt by both the narrator and the 'alarmed' willows sets the stage for Biriuk's entrance, evoking the Gothic in such a way that the reader is prompted to associate the dark heroes of the genre - Melmoth or Matthew Lewis's monk Ambrosio - who appear in similar fashion with the forester. Biriuk, appearing suddenly as though conjured from the threatening storm, is thus wrapped in an aura of unnatural and transgressive events from the very outset of the sketch. 'Loner,' in this sense, serves not only as a meditation on the violence that is inherent in the feudal system of the countryside, but also as a means of underscoring specific problems within the system. By using Gothic indicators to alert his reader to the sketch's underlying genre, Turgenev covertly suggests that the system his narrator encounters here is morally wrong. These Gothic elements provoke a strong reaction from the reader attuned to them, and thus Turgenev is better able to convey his social view, although the sketch itself is merely a description of the encounter between the forester and the narrator.

Turgenev's use of the Gothic is deliberate and intended to manipulate his reader's reactions. Christopher Ely notes that '[h]uman perception of nature is not direct and unmediated; it is not "natural" […] perceptions of the natural world are culturally constructed,'[22] a useful idea to bear in mind while reading these texts. Understanding this concept, early Realists depicting the countryside sought new

modes of description to shape or influence their readership's perception of the ideologies underlying their works. The Gothic takes its descriptive cues from the anxieties and fears of its protagonists and is typically linked to a very specific landscape characterised by crumbling castles, gloomy forests, wildernesses and oppressive mountains. While, as Fred Botting describes, 'a gloomy forest or dark labyrinth […] became a site of nocturnal corruption and violence, a locus of real horror,'[23] these locales were also used as reflectors of the corruption, violence, and horror already present in society.

Writers like Turgenev who focused on the Russian countryside, strove to find ways to depict landscape without relying on 'picturesque' models. For them Gothic descriptions provided a tool to play off of the assumptions of the reader and, in so doing, establish a certain perspective from which to understand characters or situations. In accommodating the hyperbolic language and extreme moods of the Gothic in their writing, authors like Turgenev changed the basic setting and array of conventions, effectively translating the genre not only into the Russian literary language, but, more importantly, into the Realist ideology. In using Gothic tropes to describe the Russian countryside, Turgenev's narrator invokes an established genre and its associations of transgression, highlighting the psychological and sociological implications of a landscape that is much more than a simple depiction of trees and fields.

Notes

[1] Terry Castle, 'Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho', in *Boss Ladies, Watch Out! Essays on Women, Sex and Writing* (London: Routledge, 2002), 56.
[2] Ivan Turgenev, *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, trans. by Richard Freeborn (London: Penguin Group, 1967).
[3] Mark S. Simpson, *The Russian Gothic Novel and Its British Antecedents* (Bloomington: Slavica, 1986), 85-88.; Jane Costlow, 'Who Holds the Axe? Violence and Peasants in Nineteenth-Century Russian Depictions of the Forest', *Slavic Review* 68 (2009): 10-30.
[4] Elizabeth Cheresh Allen, *Beyond Realism: Turgenev's Poetics of Secular Salvation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 140-141.
[5] Castle, 'Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho', 56.
[6] Turgenev, *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, 99-121.
[7] Ibid., 99-100.
[8] Ibid., 100.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., 101.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 102-119.

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[13] Simpson, *The Russian Gothic Novel*, 87.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Turgenev, *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, 217-231.
[16] Ibid., 62-70.
[17] Ibid., 173-182.
[18] Ibid., 383-391.
[19] Ibid., 173.
[20] Costlow, 'Who Holds the Axe', 18.
[21] Ibid., 19.
[22] Christopher Ely, *This Meager Nature: Landscape and National Identity in Imperial Russia* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), 9.
[23] Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 2006), 11.

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Part 2

The Power of Fear and Terror

The Iron Heel of Chinese Hegemony: Tibetan Rebels on the Sacred Path

Vijay Prakash Singh

Abstract

The phenomena of fear, horror and terror manifests in any political situation that involves repression, coercion, emotional or physical torture. One of the contexts of fear in our times is the hegemony of a country over another culturally distinct region through territorial annexation. A classic example is the annexation of Tibet by China in 1950. With 1.2 million Tibetan's killed and 6000 monasteries destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, one of the worst crises faced by the monks and nuns who live under the shadow of Chinese surveillance. The aim of this chapter is to show how fear and horror are a way of life for Tibetan monks and nuns through both specific case studies and an overview of the crisis in the monastic community. The nuns and monks live under peril of their lives if they question or defy Chinese dictates. They cannot practice their religious rituals or worship the Dalai Lama without intrusion from the Chinese. They are constantly questioned and ordered to denounce the Dalai Lama. If they resist, they are expelled from the monasteries. 'Patriotic education' campaigns coerce the nuns to learn by rote certain pamphlets which reinforce the idea of allegiance to the Chinese state. According to the Tibet Information Network, 'nuns are singled out for special treatment.' They are branded with electric batons, burnt with cigarette butts, dogs are set upon them or they are sexually abused. For decades, silence has served as a strategic response to the operation of fear, horror and terror in the Tibetan monastic community. However, of late, the fortitude and resilience of these monks and nuns has begun to succumb to a self-destructive reaction; the desperate act of suicide. It is no surprise that after decades of such abuse nuns and monks should react to physical and emotional torture in the only way that seems meaningful to them, which is suicide. While silence serves as a strategic response to Chinese brutalities, suicide by immolation becomes a sacrificial reaction to fear and horror. This chapter shows the ways in which Chinese hegemony operates to instill fear in the lives of Tibetan ascetics and how the monastic community reacts to such coercion through the weapons of silence or suicide.

Key Words: Coercion, hegemony, monastic, allegiance, immolations, sacrificial.

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Patrick French, in his monumental book *Tibet, Tibet: The Personal History of a Lost Land*, captures the essence of Tibet:

> Tibet was as far as you could go. It was a harsh, remote, untouched land outside time and geography, where ideas could be projected and dreams could be lived, a high plateau the size of western Europe, the most mountainous country on earth, a place …where perceptions of space and distance altered, a land of blue sheep, blood pheasants and barking deer, ringed by snow peaks and impassable high-altitude deserts, dropping to fields of jasmine, sky-blue poppies, apricot orchards, incandescent turquoise lakes and hillsides of juniper; a place of serenity, where the enlightened chose to return after death and reincarnate themselves.[1]

Unfortunately this idyllic land has since centuries lived under the shadow of its greater and more powerful neighbour, China. It was in 1950 that the prophetic doom that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had envisaged for Tibet if - as he warned- it did not strengthen her position came true. Writing in his book, *Last Testament*, the Dalai Lama had predicted as early as 1932 that unless Tibet made efforts to safeguard itself against the impending onslaught of the Chinese, destruction and havoc would be wreaked upon the land:

> It will not be long before we find the red onslaught at our own front door. It is only a matter of time … and when it happens we must be ready to defend ourselves. Otherwise our spiritual and cultural traditions will be completely eradicated. Monasteries will be looted and destroyed and the monks and nuns killed or chased away … We will become like slaves to our conquerors … and the days and nights will pass slowly and with great suffering and terror.[2]

Unfortunately, the Dalai Lama's prophecy became a reality in year. The Chinese Red Guards took over Tibet and despite Tibet's appeals to the United Nations, China succeeded in annexing and subjecting an old and unique culture. Despite lack of any international support, the Tibetan people rose in protest in 1959, after suffering nine years of cunning entrenchment in Tibet by China. From 1949 to 1959, within the space of a decade, 87,000 Tibetans had been killed and during the six decades of its occupation, 1.2 million Tibetans have been killed. 342,000 Tibetans have died due to starvation in Chinese communes during the Cultural Revolution, 92000 were subjected to public disgrace in *thamzing* or what was called struggle sessions and 173,000 died in prison. The statistics have scant value until we remind ourselves that these large numbers of people were in no way provoking or confronting the Chinese army let alone rebelling against them. They were people who belonged to a different culture and tradition and their difference

became a cause of animosity and aggression for the Chinese. Fosco Maraini writes, year: 'In the Tibetans the Chinese found the most repulsive, the least malleable of barbarians, the ones most entrenched in their original conceptions of the world, of society, of life; therefore the repression was the greater, all the more terrible and enraged.'[3] The Chinese then launched into their agenda of repression of the Tibetan people. Their religious rights were usurped, their culture came under attack and their distinct identity as a community became dominated by the Chinese. As Maraini writes, after the initial years of civility, the Chinese 'lapsed into mind-boggling savagery with surprise attacks, vendettas, destruction, torture, brutality of every sort perpetrated by all sides.'[4] After the Tibetan uprising of 1959 the Chinese began to quell all rebellion in Lhasa. Cannon and machine guns were used. 12,000 people were killed. Houses, cattle and lands were confiscated and tens of thousands of Tibetans sought refuge in India, Bhutan and Nepal. The economy of Tibet, fragile as it was owing to a pastoral, nomadic way of life and a non-existent agricultural or industrial infra-structure became even more impoverished owing to exploitation of natural resources by way of mineral depletion and deforestation.

China usurped a pastoral and nomadic region where religion and its rituals were a way of life. Since then through the six decades of Chinese rule, the worst period was that of the Cultural Revolution, with an agenda to eliminate the traditional culture of China and Tibet which it had annexed to its own sovereign control and territory. The idea was to destroy the religious way of life since religion and all the institutions that represented it were against the principles of Communism. As a result, 6000 monasteries were destroyed. The desecration of these monasteries is a whole saga of barbaric recklessness. Priceless statues of the Buddha were smashed or loaded into trucks and their gold was melted. Devout Tibetans were coerced under peril of their lives to participate in these wanton acts of destruction. Centuries of precious heritage manifest in architecture, paintings, idols and other sacred relics were destroyed with these monasteries. Patrick French documents through the narrative of Pema, the destruction of the Jokhang, the Lhasa temple associated with the origin of Buddhism in Tibet because it housed a statue of the Buddha established in the 8th century by Princess Wenchen, the Chinese Buddhist queen of Tsong-san-Gampo, Tibet's ruler at the time. The Jokhang is located so centrally in Lhasa that praying or circumambulating it is considered to bring merit as with the holiest shrines of Buddhism. Describing the insane vandalism of one of Tibet's holiest shrines in 1967, Patrick French writes:

> As the size of the crowd grew, several statues were taken from the outer precincts of the Jokhang and smashed by Red guards. Many of the older Tibetans became hysterical, and the atmosphere grew more intense. The weather was very hot. Red guards climbed up onto the buildings around the Barkhor and ripped down prayer flags and threw statues from a window. As

news of the destruction spread, Tibetan households in the area
began to hide and bury their smaller statues, and to smash the
larger ones for self-protection, or throw them into the Kyichu
River.[5]

While many of the statues were smashed, several precious ones were smuggled to
Beijing and sent to the international market via Hong-Kong to be bought by
'wealthy Tibetophiles in Europe and America.'[6] In fact, under the guise of
communist ideology, many of the mob 'were only interested in stripping the gold
and extracting the jewels that studded the deities.'[7] To add fuel to the fire, the
desecration was recorded by photographers who were encouraging the mob. While
mobs were being kept at bay many anti-social elements, both Chinese and Tibetans
began to pour in to ransack and desecrate Lhasa's most historical temple, the
Jokhang.

Many of the conscientious Tibetans who participated in this senseless act of
vandalism, like Pema, a woman whom French personally spoke to, broke down
while narrating these events to him. Pema was 'frightened of the possible karmic
effect of her actions.' She quoted another Tibetan who says 'It was the Chinese
who killed the sheep, but we were the ones who skinned and gutted it.'[8]

If there was rampant destruction of Buddhist temples and monasteries, the men
and women who were the life and breath of the religious life - the nuns and monks-
suffered a worse ordeal. As sentient beings the disgrace and tortures that they were
subjected to is one of the horrific sagas of inhumanity that the world has ever
known. While temples and monasteries were indiscriminately destroyed and
ransacked, nuns and monks bore the brunt of Chinese repugnance of religion and
the monastic order. French writes: 'The ordinary monks were disrobed and sent
back to their villages. They were forced to marry. Some took their lives rather than
break their religious vows.'[9] Nyima, a young nun whom French secretly met for
fear of being found out by the guards who kept constant surveillance on the
activities of the foreigners, told him that if she were found talking to him she
would be taken to prison on charge of 'endangering state security,' instigating to
split the country and undermine national unification' or 'attempting to subvert the
political power of the state and overthrow the socialist system.'[10]

Claire Scobie, year, writes: 'seen as part of the feudal system monks and nuns
were particularly singled out for persecution at that time' (*that is during the
cultural revolution*)' 'subjected to acts of unspeakable cruelty, beatings and
humiliation. Lamas were paraded through the streets wearing a dunce cap and then
sent to harsh labour camps; nuns were forced to have sex with monks in public
places.'[11] French, year, discusses how Communist work teams lined up monks and
nuns and forced the monks to choose the nuns for sexual liaisons. 'Monasteries
were left in charge of people who had "illicit relations," went with prostitutes,
drank excessively and took other such unscrupulous actions…and unscrupulously

engaged in liaisons with women within the monasteries…'[12] The irony was that much of this persecution was carried out by Tibetans themselves under peril of their lives. French writes: 'Paper scriptures were used as fertilizer, and prayer books were made into shoes. Statues of the Buddha were looted.' Due to this rampant decimation, 'the sweet dew for 'teaching, debating and writing' and 'listening, thinking and contemplating'[13] had completely dried up. In fact, nuns were grossly condemned for the spiritual life they lived since such a life was considered socially unproductive and thereby useless. They were condemned as pigs, who did nothing but lived off the lay people.

The most revealing and painful account of what it was to be a monk in Chinese occupied Tibet during the cultural revolution and after and of the horrible brutalities of Chinese prisons can be found in Palden Gyatso's *The Autobiography of a Monk*. That the Venerable Palden Gyatso survived the macabre tortures of the several Chinese prisons that he was periodically shuttled through to tell his story is in itself a miracle. The heart-rending saga of pain and suffering that he went through would have broken any other man physically and emotionally, but the strength of his loyalty to the ideal of a free Tibet and his quiet and unrelenting sense of outrage at Chinese atrocities helped to keep alive the flame of life within him so that even when at times he suffered excruciating physical torture his spirit of resolve and fortitude remained unshaken. This book is an awesome testimony to the resilience of the human spirit.

It is while he was in Drepung that the Chinese occupied Tibet and all the monks ran away from the monastery. Palden stayed with his old and infirm teacher until he too escaped to his village Panam where together they sought shelter in Palden's childhood monastery. Gadong Palden was arrested on charges that his teacher Gyen Rigzin Tenpa was an Indian spy, a charge which Palden did not admit to because it was false. Palden was imprisoned and from 1960 a period of inhuman torture, hard labour and starvation began for him. Palden Gyatso suffered far more than those who conformed to the terror tactics of the Chinese by confessing to crimes that they did not even have any idea of. Gyatso writes: 'Interrogations and *thamzings* were a test of nerves between the interrogator and prisoner.'[14] He refused throughout the thirty years of his imprisonment to accept that he had done any wrong. The question of a confession did not arise for him. His responses remained laconic and minimal and very often he gave his view dauntlessly which only provoked the Chinese. The more Palden refused to yield to the terror tactics of the Chinese, the more he was singled out for brutal torture. He describes his first episode of torture in which he refused to denounce his teacher Gyen Rinzin as a spy:

> The guards held my arms behind my back, then tied them with a rope, then threw the end of the rope over a wooden beam. They pulled down the rope, hoisting my arms up, wrenching them

> from my sockets. I screamed. I began to urinate uncontrollably.
> And I could no longer hear anything beyond my own screaming
> and the thuds of the guard's fists landing on my body.[15]

The torture was unrelenting .The questioning was repeated .The same details of his life-history were detailed by Gyatso, again and again. When he did not relent, the torture was repeated (repetition of both 'relent' and 'repeat;' perhaps a couple of synonyms would be in order). Yet his spirit did not succumb. He writes, year,: 'I had nothing to confess. And no amount of beating could induce me to implicate Gyen Rigzin Tampa in these preposterous accusations.'[16] As a result, he was sentenced to seven years in prison where he was subjected to hard labour.

The reinforcement of the communist ideology during the Cultural Revolution was like a farce, a theatre of the macabre. Coercive confessions and torture tactics exercised through starvation, leg and hand shackles, denial of medical attention and the relentless espionage system whereby Tibetans themselves were used to keep an eye on their fellow Tibetans and report any misdemeanour or surreptitious conversation were all meant to break down the Tibetan spirit .The idea was to win them over to the idea of the Chinese motherland and to go a step farther and develop feelings of loyalty and allegiance to the Chinese state while denouncing the old Tibetan feudal order. It reflects the worst kind of myopia and imbecilic (a rather strong word!) make believe on the part of the Chinese to indulge in communist and nationalistic propaganda through brutal coercion. The result of such banality and the farce that it perpetrated was only fear or a sense of intense repulsion and outrage. While fear led to conformity, outrage led to defiance. While hundreds of monks and nuns throughout this horribly macabre period of recent Tibetan history would have yielded to coercion out of fear, there were those like the undaunted Palden Gyatso who bravely confessed to acts that affirmed their loyalty to Tibet. In what must be one of the most brutal accounts of torture inflicted upon a monk because he confessed to putting up posters calling for Tibetan independence, Gyatso describes how an electric baton was used all over his body as if it were a toy. As if this were not enough, the baton was inserted into his mouth again and again until he 'felt as though my body were being torn apart.'[17] In the face of brutal torture, many of the young prisoners were unyielding. Palden Gyatso affirms the power of defiance. He writes:

> It was a battle of wills. For those who use brute force, there is
> nothing more insulting than a victim's refusal to acknowledge
> their power. The human body can bear immeasurable pain and
> yet recover. Wounds can heal. But once your spirit is broken,
> everything falls apart. So we did not allow ourselves to feel
> dejected. We drew strength from our convictions and, above all,

from our belief that we were fighting for justice and for the freedom of our country.[18]

Yet, like many ordinary men and women, Tibetan nuns and monks have been expressing their sense of horror at the lives they have been made to live in increasingly aggressive ways such as chanting slogans for a Free Tibet, pasting posters about the horrors of the cultural revolution or, in an act of blind desperation, committing suicide. Suicide is an act of self-destruction which is horrible (again, a rather strong adjective!) no matter what the context may be, but suicide by self-immolation is an act so macabre, that it haunts the witness. The series of self-immolations started by a Kirti monastery monk named Tapey, who self-immolated in 2009, continue unabated. In his mid-twenties, Tapey was shot by security personnel when he set himself on fire as a form of protest. According to eye-witnesses, he carried a picture of the Dalai Lama and shouted slogans until the People's Armed Police (PAP) personnel opened fire and he fell to the ground. 38 Tibetans have self-immolated since February 2009, of which 7 are monks from Kirti monastery, while 8 were former monks at Kirti monastery and 2 of the 38 were nuns were from Mame Dechen Chokorling nunnery in Ngaba. 36 of these 38 immolations have occurred since March 2011, which goes to show how pent-up anger among the Tibetans is rising until it might reach a feverish pitch of self-abandon. It is also a threat for the Chinese authorities, since it shows that they are losing control over the increasing tendency of suicides.

The increasing frequency of suicides during the last three years points to the simmering *Angst* that the young members of the monastic community feel about their condition. A perturbing question is why do men and women trained through spiritual indoctrination and practice succumb to such a drastic option as suicide when forbearance and reconciliation would have served them better. There is an obvious paradox about ascetics committing such an act of self-destruction. According to Topden Tsering, 'if the self-immolations carry any religious connotation, it is the concept of *Lu ski Chonme Phul wa* (offering one's body as a flame). By turning themselves into human bonfires, these courageous protestors shed light on the suffering of the larger Tibetan population under the heel of tyrannical Chinese rule, and gave that suffering a visible, visceral manifestation.'[19]

Tsering points out that while the Chinese execute punitive measures for other forms of dissent like demonstrations, pamphleteering and sticking posters, the irrevocability of suicide, he says, deprives them of the power of punishment so that, in suicide, the Tibetan holds a power over his/her adversary. As Tsering writes, 'Self-immolation, on the other hand, grants protestors greater control over their bodies, and a precious finality to their expression of resistance. One burn (shouldn't there be a final 's' here?), one dies, refusing tormentors any claim over one's body. It amounts to unequivocal rejection of the oppressor state.'[20]

Tibetan suicides, on the other hand, are a reaction to fear, a manifest victimisation to Chinese hegemony. While the victim escapes persecution and draws notice, he/she actually weakens the cause because by dying there is no way he/she can support the resistance to the persecution that has victimised him/her. His/her death in fact tightens the hegemony which led him/her to suicide and only makes the condition of the community worse. (Perhaps it would be easier to use their, them etc. instead)

Palden Gyatso recalls how, during his three decades of tortuous incarceration, many prisoners committed suicide. While some thought they were cowards, there were those who thought self-destruction in the face of unbearable despair was an act of courage. While the paradox about suicide is that the act of relinquishing life against the indefatigable spirit of survival demands courage, the survival spirit is far more heroic in nature since it is man's way of fighting back against adverse circumstances. Palden Gyatso reinforces the power of survival when he writes: 'As a Buddhist monk I was brought up to regard human life as the most precious thing in the world, and I found strength in the desire to show my tormentors that they had not beaten me, that I still had the courage to live.'[21]

The Dalai Lama's words on suicide are a call to restraint, hope and sanity. On suicide, he says: 'Generally speaking, anyone who commits suicide is eliminating any possible solution to his or her problem. Even if one has encountered nothing but difficulties until that point, this is no proof that someday one will not find the means to resolve things.'[22]

Notes

[1] Patrick French, *Tibet, Tibet: A History of a Lost Land* (London: Harper Collins 2003), 19.

[2] Thomas Laird, *The Story of Tibet/Conversations with the Dalai Lama* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 282.

[3] Fosco Maraini, *Secret Tibet*, trans. Eric Mosbacher and Guido Waldman (London: The Harvill Press, 2002), 373.

[4] Ibid., 363.

[5] French, *Tibet, Tibet*, 198.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 199.

[8] Ibid., 200.

[9] Ibid., 45.

[10] Ibid., 81.

[11] Claire Scobie, *Last Seen in Lhasa: The Story of an Extraordinary Friendship in Modern Tibet* (London: Rider, 2006), 53.

[12] French, *Tibet, Tibet*, 64-65.

[13] Ibid., 65.
[14] Palden Gyatso, *Autobiography of a Tibetan Monk* (New York: Grove Press, 1997), 116.
[15] Ibid., 68.
[16] Ibid., 75.
[17] Ibid., 195.
[18] Ibid., 213.
[19] Topden Tsering, 'Tibet Burning', *Himalmag*, accessed April 5, 2012, http://himalmag.com/component/content/article/5044-tibet-burning-html, 3.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Gyatso, *Autobiography of a Tibetan Monk*, 117.
[22] Dalai Lama, *Daily Advice from the Heart*, ed. Richard Matthieu, trans. Dominique Messent (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2003), 219.

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Cries from Hell: Holocaust Literature between Testimony and Documentation

Lily Halpert Zamir

Abstract

Most Holocaust literature is written by people who suffered Nazi persecution and survived the Holocaust or perceive themselves as witnesses to it, such as Imre Kertész, Primo Levi, Danilo Kiš, Elie Wiesel and others. The core of their writing is based on their personal experience, but they also see themselves as testifying on behalf of the victims and echoing their cries from the inferno. For this purpose, they developed a unique terminology to describe deportation, persecution, death, hunger, terror, fear and extermination by the Nazis. Holocaust literature as testimony is clearly distinct from authentic historical documentation. Testimony, on the one hand, relies on human memory and therefore its objective value is limited. On the other hand, not only does it allow us to reconstruct the events as facts but it also reveals the authentic human experience underpinning historical documentation. 'What is the meaning of six million dead,' asked the Serbian Jewish writer Danilo Kiš, 'without knowing the individual victim, his name, his face and his life story?' This chapter will focus on the delicate boundaries of Holocaust literature between literary testimony and historical documentation, as demonstrated in Imre Kertész's masterpiece, *Fatelessness*.[1] This autobiographical novel by a Hungarian Jew who received the 2002 Nobel Prize for literature will be used as a case study for literature as testimony from the hell of Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Zeitz, to which Kertész was deported as a 15-year-old boy.

Key Words: Holocaust, Holocaust literature, testimony, documentation, witness, work camps, concentration camps, death-camps, Hungarian Jews, Nazis.

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Holocaust literature shifts between history and fiction, a flexible bridge between events described in documentation and recorded in survivors' testimony. History focuses on major events and large numbers, while literature underscores the story of the individual in a manner mandated by Judaism, the *mitzvah* (duty) of remembering, transmitted from individual to collective memory by the personal story.

In this chapter, I claim that in *Fatelessness*, the events, characters and landscapes are evoked like cries from the writer's personal hell, from his individual memory to the collective memory of the reader, through the literary mediation of a distinct historical genre: Holocaust literature.

Hungarian Marxist critic György Lukács considers every written work to be historical, telling us not only about the period described but also, primarily, about

the period of the creator and his conception of the period he writes about. In *Fatelessness*, this approach is of particular significance, as the story, with its autobiographical cues, tells us not only about the Holocaust of Budapest and Hungarian Jewry but also about the writer's feelings and views at the time he wrote the book.

Gershon Shaked claims that works in this genre generally proceed within a given historical text,[2] in which the writer has to take the reader's implied knowledge and feelings about the Holocaust into account. The historical events that led to the Holocaust were shaped by the mythic thinking of the Germans, who were its chief perpetrators, but the moment it began to occur, 'it became a myth in itself, a martyrological myth,'[3] in which there is no doubt as to who is the victim and who is the victimizer. Moreover, those who were rescued from martyrdom will naturally suffer intense feelings of guilt.

At the unique conclusion of his story, Kertész challenges the martyrological approach to the Holocaust and the clichés that declare it to have ended when liberation occurred at the end of the Second World War. He insists on demonstrating that, for its survivors, the Holocaust continued thereafter as well. Obviously, this is a philosophical/literary/moral claim and not a historical one. For the historian, an event begins and ends at specific times. Documentation has precise dates, numbers, places and names, but testimony can play with time and tell a story from the end to the beginning, as Danilo Kiš did, for example, in *Hourglass* (1983), that recounts the story of the Holocaust of the Jews of Vivodina and the story of the author's family in a letter that was sent but never reached its destination (because the addressees were slaughtered at Auschwitz before they received it).

Fatelessness challenges human memory and raises substantive issues, such as cultural solidarity, identification with the victim or the aggressor, interest in the 'juicy' aspects of survivors' stories and lack of concern with the subjective truth of the survivor as an individual, who remembers that even in Auschwitz there were moments of joy.

This chapters proposes a thematic analysis of *Fatelessness*, as cries from hell, identifying the historical and fictional elements that establish the genre.

The novel's historical infrastructure and chronology are determined according to the narrator's conception of time. The story is constructed as a dual linear continuum, fictional and non-fictional - historical, that focus on the event itself - the expulsion. It begins with a description of the last day before Gyuri's father is conscripted to the infamous Labour Brigades, knowing he has little chance of returning. The novel concludes with his liberation from Buchenwald and the hero's meandering through the streets of Budapest, those very same streets that he walked before boarding the bus to work from where he is snatched.

The extra fictional continuum - Hungary from summer 1944 to spring 1945 - conforms with the fictional continuum that concentrates on the story of the hero,

his family, the local Jewish community and his friends. This facilitates perception of fiction as reality and shifts the plot from testimony towards documentation. The connection between the historical infrastructure and the narrative tale (fact and fiction) engenders credibility that originates in the reader's previous knowledge.

The heroes represent outlooks that typify the period and society in which they live. Gyuri and his friends proceed through a plot reminiscent of a Passion Play, that Christian ritual in which a familiar myth determines the equally familiar Stations of the Cross. In the book, as in the Passion, the stations lead the characters to crucifixion/annihilation [at Auschwitz].

The first station is life at home: Gyuri's father is forced to hand over his shop and property to his Hungarian Christian bookkeeper and lumberyard manager, Mr. Sütő, who feigns humility and loyalty but later will take possession of the assets and wife of the Jew deported to a labor camp. At the second, the hero is imprinted as a Jew and thus condemned to death. The third station is incarceration and arrival at Auschwitz - and all that happens en route. Auschwitz is the fourth station, at which he is forced to decide whether to try and survive or give in and die. '… I could not fail to recognize within myself the furtive and yet… increasingly insistent voice of some muffled craving of sorts: I would like to live a little bit longer…'[4] The final station is the return home, confronting those who were not really aware or did not want to be aware of what he went through.

Literature as testimony accords present meaning to past events, from the points of view of addresser and addressee alike. As Danilo Kiš claims, literature must repair history. The gap between fact and fiction is narrowed by this technique and the story submitted as testimony acquires its reliability through a metaplot of familiar places and events in the story of the Holocaust of Hungarian Jewry.

The period's identifying marks are reconstructed by inclusion of local colour in the spirit of the times, relying on the factual historical infrastructure hinted at in the character's back stories. The Jews are represented by Gyuri's family, neighbors and comrades in suffering at the concentration and labor camps and the Hungarians by Mr. Sütő and the gendarmes. By contrast, the Germans are represented by camp commanders and functionaries and people from various countries that Gyuri encounters.

The historical and fictional elements establish the genre, wherein history and fiction interface, as demonstrated in several formative historical situations in the hero's odyssey until his liberation from Buchenwald and return to Budapest, the city of his birth.

The opening historical event is the enactment of *new anti-Jewish regulations in Hungary*, one of which decrees that the boy's father, along with thousands of other Hungarian men aged 16-60, is conscripted to labor service: 'I didn't go to school today. Or rather, I did go, but only to ask my class teacher's permission to take the day off… I told him my father had been called up for labor service…'[5]

'Because of the political situation, it was decided to engage all Jews who were not conscripted to the army into Labor Brigades.'[6]

The second regulation documented is the order to wear the yellow star: 'It was a clear, balmy morning… I was about to unbutton myself but then had second thoughts: it was possible that, light as the head breeze was, my coat lapel might flap back and cover up my yellow star, which would not have been in conformity with the regulations.'[7] The youngster talks about these events laconically, but this is a reliable historical report: 'On April 15, the order that Jews were to wear the yellow star was published.'[8]

The third regulation is the obligation to transfer Jewish businesses to non-Jewish ownership: '… he has been ordered to close the shop, since those who are not of pure blood are forbidden to engage in commerce.'[9]

The fourth regulation restricts freedom of movement for Jews: '… those with yellow stars are only permitted to show themselves on the street up to eight o'clock… I still climbed onto the rearmost platform of the last car of the streetcar as usual, in compliance with the pertinent regulation…'[10] 'Jews are forbidden to travel by train or streetcar.'[11] These edicts constitute a continuation of the three anti-Jewish laws passed in 1938 that adversely affected the finances, culture, livelihood and status of Hungarian Jews.

The deportation of Jews to Auschwitz is described in a spare and plastic manner: 'On the train, it was water that was missed most of all… Wherever I stepped, I would stumble over blankets, rucksacks… men, women and children…'[12]

The enterprise is supervised by members of the Jewish police and the Jewish Council, who wear armbands : 'The first dispatch set out for Auschwitz on April 24: The elderly, women and children crammed into freight cars at the height of summer, 80 people to a car'[13] (sequence of tenses in all these cases).

The Auschwitz death camp is described in brief language, but the accuracy of the details may be validated by the dry, precise documentation of the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*.

Out of the turmoil, that appears in much of the testimony, Gyuri identifies the 'Canada Commandos' (work groups responsible for intake, who strip the trains and passengers of goods, especially food, coins, jewelry and gold teeth). 'Their faces did not exactly inspire confidence either: jug ears, prominent noses, sunken, beady eyes with a crafty gleam. Quite like Jews in every respect…'[14] But it is precisely these reviled Jews, whose description appears to have been taken from an Anti-Semitic film, who attempt to save the lives of the youngsters, because they know that youngsters under 16 are sent straight to the gas chambers. That is why they whisper *zechtzen* (Yiddish: sixteen) to everyone. The youngster, who was not party to the secret, asks one of the men '*Warum*?' [German: Why?]. The man responds: '*Vilst du arbeten?*' [Yiddish: Do you want to work?], that under local realities means 'Do you want to live?' The boy answers with characteristic naïveté:

'*Natürlich* [German: Of course]… that was, after all, my reason for coming…'[15] They also advise him, impetuously but decisively: '"… *jeder arbeiten, nist kai mide, nist kai krenk*…" [Yiddish (Hungarian orthography): Everyone work, no being tired, no being sick].'[16] And this is fateful advice, as afterwards comes the doctor's examination, that determines who will work/live and who will die.

Those able to work are sent to shower and shave every hair from their heads and bodies. They then proceed to the bunks, situated in a fenced, closed-off area: '… a blurred and confused jumble of new courtyards, new barbed-wire gates, barbed-wire meshes, fences opening and closing.'[17]

The daily routine at Auschwitz is described through the eyes of the youngster. 'At the very beginning, I still considered myself to be what I might call a sort of guest in captivity-very pardonably and, when it comes down to it, in full accordance with the propensity to delusion that we all share and which is thus, I suppose, ultimately part of human nature...' The camp is surrounded by 'barbed-wire fences-electrically charged… a rumor had gone around… "We'll soon be getting some hot soup… a thick slab of bread and… a blob of… margarine…"'[18]

'An electrified fence four meters high surrounded the two wings of Auschwitz 1 and Auschwitz 2…'[19]

The long-term inmates have numbers tattooed on their forearms that they call, ironically, 'celestial telephone numbers.'[20]

The daily routine is monotonous but known in advance: '… two trips a day to the latrines, in the morning coupled with that to the washroom barracks… the issuing of rations, roll call in the evening, and… the bits of news… that was a day's agenda.'[21]

After Auschwitz, our hero arrives in Buchenwald:

> "There were not sixty of us now, but eighty… Here too there was a slop bucket, here too we were hot, and here too we were thirsty … We arrived at Buchenwald likewise in the morning, in clear, sunny weather. The railway station here, after Auschwitz at any rate, struck one as no more than a sort of cozy country halt. The reception alone was less cordial, for the doors were dragged aside by soldiers… I just watched the expeditiousness, the methodical precision, with which it was all accomplished. A few brusque barks… a few whip cracks…"[22]

We find the following documentation concerning the Buchenwald labor camp: 'One of the largest concentration camps in Germany… After January 18, 1945, on the evacuation of Auschwitz, thousands of Jewish prisoners were brought there as forced laborers.'[23]

Buchenwald, one of the largest camps in Germany, has about 130 auxiliary and external camps. Gyuri is sent to one of them, Zeitz. 'I could see straightaway that

this time I had arrived at what was no more than some kind of small, mediocre, out-of-the-way, so to say rural concentration camp. It would have been pointless looking for a bathhouse or even a crematorium here.'[24] There is considerable irony in this last comment, that demonstrates the hero's internalisation of concentration camp life and jargon.

Life in Zeitz is difficult, the food scarce and the work horrendous, but the people are extraordinary. The Hungarian group develops community life and solidarity and Bandi Citrom becomes Gyuri's guardian angel.

Worst of all are the 'punishment squads,' to which people suspected of belonging to the left, disturbing the peace and guilty of violations of discipline are sent. These are 'suicide squads' that handle such missions as removing mines. Their jobs are documented as 'compelling Jewish inmates to perform special technical tasks in areas in which loss of life was great'[25] and their chances of returning alive are slim.

The much-anticipated liberation from Buchenwald in April 1945 is described in a minor tone, like the other events in the book. The climax is not the very idea of liberation but the announcement telling 'inmates of the camp to stay awake… because they were going to start cooking a strong goulash soup…'[26]

The return home, to Budapest, is described sparingly, in a pointed encounter with the indifference expressed by a family and community that has lived its life virtually undisturbed: 'I reached home at roughly the same time of year as when I had left it. Certainly, the woods all around had already long turned green, grass had sprouted over the great pits of corpses…'[27] The language of the narrative in this lean introduction contrasts the physical landscape of spring, implied by the return home, with the emotional human landscape, the mighty pain, the horrendous trauma that has not yet been fully processed, reflected in the great pits filled with corpses. The pits may be covered with grass, but beneath all the green, death still prevails.

The first station on Gyuri's path is Nefelejcs [Hungarian: Forget-me-not (flower)] Road, where his friend Bandi Citrom lived, but he is unable tell Bandi's mother and sister the truth: '…a slight elderly woman in a dark dress and headscarf emerged from the gloom of the hallway… "I'm looking for Bandi Citrom," to which she… said… "Come back some other time; maybe in a few days…" She also wanted to know, "Are there still any Hungarians out there?" so I replied, "Sure, plenty of them... they are only now starting to return."'[28]

He proceeds to the train station and boards a streetcar for his home, where the first shock awaits him in his confrontation with the alienation and indifference of those around him. He has no money to buy a ticket and the conductor is ready to kick him off. '"If you don't buy a ticket, you'll have to get off," he declared. I told him my leg was hurting…'[29]

Return to the street and home that he left on the morning he was snatched from the bus on his way to work is a harsh and bitter experience. He stops at the door of

'Uncle Fleischmann' to gain his bearings in the new realities: '…other people really were now living in our apartment…' His stepmother is now living with Mr. Sütő and his father 'passed away…in a German camp.'[30] By contrast, his biological mother 'was alive and well, she had come by the house only a couple of months ago…'[31] They talk for a while and Gyuri asks a disconcerting question: 'I asked… what they had done during those "hard times." Their answer is almost as laconic as the questions: 'Errm… we lived… We tried to survive…'[32]

Gyuri begs them to 'try and understand, impossible to take everything away from me, impossible for me to be neither winner nor loser… neither the cause nor the effect of anything; they should try to see, I almost pleaded, that I could not swallow that idiotic bitterness, that I should merely be innocent…'[33]

Hatred and anger expressed by the outside world, that went on living, is a characteristic motif in many Holocaust survivors' stories. By contrast, Kertész concludes his book and begins his life as a free man with a different motif:

> "Everything came back to mind… those whose only recognition would come in this reckoning, the fact that I was here: Bandi Citrom, Pyetchka, Bohoosh, the doctor, and all the rest… this is precisely the crux of it: I am here… and keeping a watch on me on my journey, like some inescapable trap, I already know there will be happiness."[34]

Conclusions

The Holocaust is a kind of cognitive dissonance and one way of coping with it, like cries from hell, is through the mediation of literature as testimony, that unrolls it as a dynamic fabric between the boundaries of history and fiction.

Notes

[1] Imre Kertesz, *Fatelessness*, English translation by Tim Wilkinson (New York: Random House, 1975/2004).

[2] Gershon Shaked, *Holocaust Literature Here and Now* (Tel Aviv: Zmora Bitan, 1993), 95. [Hebrew]

[3] Ibid.

[4] Kertesz, *Fatelessness*, 189.

[5] Ibid., 3.

[6] Theodor Lavi and Nathaniel Katzburg, eds., *Pinkas haKehillot* (*Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities from Their Founding until after the Holocaust*)*: Hungary*, 105.

[7] Kertesz, *Fatelessness*, 6.

[8] Lavi and Katzburg, *Pinkas haKehillot*, 112.

9   Ibid., 29.
10 Kertesz, *Fatelessness*, 31-32.
11 Lavi and Katzburg, *Pinkas haKehillot*, 112.
12 Kertesz, *Fatelessness*, 58-59.
13 Lavi and Katzburg, *Pinkas haKehillot*, 112.
14 Kertesz, *Fatelessness*, 78.
15 Ibid., 79.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., 99.
18 Ibid., 102-105.
19 Israel Gutman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, Vol. 2: Hungary* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990), 53. [Hebrew]
20 Kertesz, *Fatelessness*, 107.
21 Ibid., 118.
22 Ibid., 121.
23 Gutman, *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, 156.
24 Kertesz, *Fatelessness*, 128.
25 Lavi and Katzburg, *Pinkas haKehillot*, 106.
26 Kertesz, *Fatelessness*, 236.
27 Ibid., 237.
28 Ibid., 245.
29 Ibid., 245-246.
30 Ibid., 254.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 256-257.
33 Ibid., 260-261.
34 Ibid., 261-262.

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Part 3

Reading Fear and Terror

Fear and Horror in Pierre Corneille's *Médée*: The Power of Rhetoric to Incite Emotion in the French Tragedy of the 17th Century

Franziska Edler

Abstract

Taking a close look at French 17th century tragedy works such as Pierre Corneille's *Médée,* the readers often find themselves faced with terrifying scenarios of blood, poison, fire and death caused by witches and sorcerers. Considering the ancient witch Médée as an example who is obsessed by the idea of avenging herself on her husband Jason and his new wife Créuse leads to the essential question: how exactly are fear and horror produced in drama? Dealing with ancient witches and their abuse of dark magic the procedure becomes visible. Due to her relationship with deities, Médée is able to set a whole kingdom on fire but this relationship as such is not sufficient to cause this sea of flames: Médée makes use of a specific language creating magical effects and thus the illusion of an almighty witch that spreads fear and terror. By evoking gods and cursing her victims she gets in contact with mythical monsters of the Underworld whose powers she concentrates through specific speech acts so that she can abuse them for her cruel revenge. In view of Médée's orders (which are part of the witch's characteristic speech acts), even the venomous animals do not dare to refuse their duties: in her indirect characterisation, Médée's servant describes the Nature as powerless towards Médée's charms, which causes fear in both the characters of the tragedy and in the reader and spectator. Therefore, focusing on rhetorical patterns in tragedy will illuminate the creation of magical effects and their power of influence on the recipient, with both aspects being of the utmost importance for understanding the French classical drama.

Key Words: Médée, magic, speech acts, rhetoric of emotions.

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1. Introduction

Dealing with magic and fear caused by supernatural forces, scholars usually focus on results of magical events, for example the transformation of human beings into animals performed by the witch Circe. Of course these events might cause fear in the literary characters, as well as suspense for readers and spectators, because they suggest unique strength and power. Whereas scholars often only describe and refer to these results of such magical events, I will focus on the rhetorical patterns that are not only a precondition for the realisation of magical events, but also frighten literary characters and involve the readers and spectators in the plot. This

use of specific rhetorical patterns allows describing the creation of illusions of power and horror as a result of magical acts.

Rhetorical patterns in the French tragedy of the 17th century are of the utmost importance for the production of emotions, especially hatred and fear. Talking of rhetoric, we will make a difference between three types: firstly, we will consider the rhetoric of emotions used by Pierre Corneille in order to frighten the characters of the play on the one hand and to create suspense and involve readers and spectators on the other. Secondly, we will examine specific speech acts through which Medée forces the Underworld and humans to obey her. Thirdly, we will explain in how far rhetoric may be considered as magic.

2. Médée and the Power of Words

Pierre Corneille's tragedy, *Médée*, may serve as an example of a play that illuminates the power of words. From the beginning, his central figure, Médée, seeks to become an almighty witch spreading fear and horror. These emotions are fostered by her commanding speech:

> Et vous, troupe savante en mille barbaries,
> Filles de l'Achéron, Pestes, Larves, Furies,
> Noires Sœurs, si jamais notre commerce étroit
> Sur vous et vos serpents me donna quelque droit,
> Sortez de vos cachots avec les mêmes flammes
> Et les mêmes tourments dont vous gênez les âmes.
> Laissez-les quelque temps reposer dans leurs fers,
> Pour mieux agir pour moi faites trêve aux Enfers,
> Et m'apportez du fond des antres de Mégère
> La mort de ma rivale et celle de son père, […][1]

On the level of rhetoric of emotions, the *vous* placed at the beginning of the verse emphasises Médée's servants, the 'troupe savante en mille barbaries.' Readers and spectators are involved because they want to know what this troupe consists of. The following accumulation of her servants' names, the 'Filles de l'Achéron, Pestes, Larves, Furies' and 'Noires Sœurs' creates the impression of both power and horror - an impression which is intensified by the rhyme scheme 'barbaries – Furies,' which explains the servants' activities.

However, Médée is able not only to communicate but also to give orders to the habitants of the Underworld. Considering the second type of rhetoric, the speech acts, we can see that orders like *sortez, laissez-les* are one of her main speech acts to command her servants. When Médée describes their servants' 'activities,' her imagery and detailed description as well as the lexical field related to cruelty anticipate at the same time the witch's dark magic and the cruel end of the play. Consequently, the literary characters fear her: the monsters are in command of

snakes and flames as Médée and they torture the souls of criminals. The result of her pact with these monsters is also evoked by Médée herself: the death of Jason's new wife, Créuse, and King Créon.

Médée's hatred towards the latter is expressed in her hyperbolic appeal for the Sun God's help: she is not satisfied with the support of the Underworld, but also wants Sol to help her avenge her, which shows her power over both Heaven and the Underworld:[2]

> Ce n'est plus vous, Enfers, qu'ici je sollicite,
> Vos feux sont impuissants pour ce que je médite.
> Auteur de ma naissance, aussi bien que du jour
> Qu'à regret tu dépars à ce fatal séjour,
> Soleil, qui vois l'affront qu'on va faire à ta race,
> Donne-moi tes chevaux à conduire en ta place,
> Accorde cette grâce à mon désir bouillant.
> Je veux choir sur Corinthe avec ton char brûlant.[3]

Taking this speech as an example, one will find typical rhetorical patterns. First off, Médée addresses directly the Underworld in the use of *Enfers*. Furthermore, she influences the Underworld *and* Heaven in order to become an almighty princess. Therefore, she needs the Sun God's help whom she begs to give her his chariot. In fact, begging is another typical speech act used by Médée, which shows that her power also depends on the support of other deities. She then describes herself as being led by her *désir bouillant* (burning desire), being thus unpredictable and dangerous. The word burning has a double meaning here: on the one hand, her desire for revenge is considered immeasurable; on the other hand her cruel plan is anticipated because her victims Créuse and Créon will die in a sea of flames. As she is obsessed by hatred and revenge, the literary characters fear her. It is also exciting to see how Médée's unrestrained behaviour, her *hybris*, is reflected in her way of speaking, that is to say she describes herself and her victims by using terms related to fire.

However, it is not only the witch who spreads fear by evoking Heaven and Underworld via commandments and begging. Médée's servant Nérine assumes the role of a spectator while the witch practices her dark magic and describes her power. At this moment, she might serve as a model for the recipient, who takes himself the role of Nérine and sees through her eyes - and possibly shares her fear when she utters:

> Seule égale à soi-même en sa vaste fureur
> Ses projets les plus doux me font trembler d'horreur,
> Sa vengeance à la main, elle n'a qu'à résoudre,
> Un mot du haut des Cieux fait descendre le foudre,

Les mers pour noyer tout n'attendent que sa loi,
La terre offre à s'ouvrir sous le Palais du Roi,
L'air tient les vents tous prêts à suivre sa colère,
Tant la nature esclave a peur de lui déplaire:
Et si ce n'est assez de tous les éléments,
Les Enfers vont sortir à ses commandements.[4]

Nérine herself fears Médée's project; she even trembles when she thinks of her plans. However, she does not only name her own emotions, but at the same time also informs the readers and spectators how to feel. When she describes Médée and her influence on nature, the witch's power seems complete: the Sun God and the Underworld obey her, as does nature. In other words all of the elements are directly named in order both to create this impression of complete power - and to increase the fear. Nérine thus explains that nobody is equal to her and her *vaste fureur*. In fact, *fureur*, *colère* and vengeance are characteristic of both Médée and the leitmotifs intrinsic to Corneille's play, which are regularly repeated to illuminate Médée's *hybris*, to make her enemies fear her and to arouse the readers' and spectators' suspense. The following verses present a scenario of horror when Nérine describes the elements' forces that could immediately destroy Créon's palace, if Médée wished them to do so. The impression of immediacy and imminent danger is intensified by Nérine's explanation of the simplicity with which Médée can destroy everything: one *mot,* her *loi*, her *commandements* are sufficient for causing the end of Créon, his palace and his daughter. This simplicity is emphasised by the position of the speech acts within the verses: they are named at the beginning or the end of a verse. In fact, these positions are especially important in the alexandrine because the words that we can find there are especially accentuated. Consequently, this example suggests how mighty Médée's words are. She appears invincible because even the elements are afraid of her. To emphasise their fear, Nérine describes their servility: Heaven will give Médée his lightning, and Sea will drown everything suddenly, if Médée orders it to do so, Earth will swallow King Créon's palace and Air will serve her with its winds. The accumulation of the elements is part of a hypotypose that fulfils the function of intensifying, exaggerating and showing Médée's power and *hybris* via descriptions that present concrete images. However, Médée's *hybris* is insatiable, and the imminent scenario of horror is intensified, because even the Underworlds' creatures will crawl out to light, if Médée forces them - as if the destruction of the world by the elements was not sufficient. In fact, this augmentation of horror is typical of the witch, who constantly maintains and intensifies the atmosphere of fear.

3. Corneille's Poetics of Horror

A central moment in the play regarding the production of fear can be found in Act 4:

> Mes maux dans ces poisons trouvent leur medicine,
> Vois combien de serpents à mon commandement
> D'Afrique jusqu'ici n'ont tardé qu'un moment,
> Et contraints d'obéir à mes clameurs funestes,
> Sur ce present fatal ont déchargé leurs pestes: […][5]

Firstly, the power of Médée's orders is emphasised again and even proved, as the witch is proud of presenting a crowd of snakes coming after only a moment to deliver their poisons after she has forced them. The success of her orders is emphasised by the double alliteration 'commandment - moment' and *clameurs funestes* - *pestes* at the end of the verses, which is especially accentuated. The order *vois* is directed both to the figure Nérine, who is frightened, and to readers and spectators who are demanded to actively take part in her power by seeing the results of it. The location of Africa as the continent from where these creatures came at the beginning of the verse arouses the readers' and spectators' excited expectation because this continent is considered as the home of the most dangerous and venomous animals since antiquity.[6] Once more the inferiority of nature is emphasised, because the snakes are forced to obey Médée's mighty spells, her *clameurs funestes*. However, the witch is not satisfied with just naming a general crowd of snakes, but gives concrete examples and lets the recipients know their names. This method is effective because the creatures come from the Underworld and thus are the cruelest and most venomous snakes. They promise to elicit a horrific death scene for Créon and Créuse: by using *mille autres venins* (Act IV, I, v. 997) made of Hydra's and Nessus's blood, Python's tongue, a harpy's feather, burning woods of Phaeton and Phlegeton and Volcan's bulls, she will torture them to death. Even this extract discusses Médée's *hybris* because she is never satisfied; one vial of poison alone would have killed her victims. Yet, she claims in her own hyperbolic way she would even need thousands of poisons for her plans. This hyperbolic claim creates the illusion of a horrific and unimaginable scenario of torture, pain and death, since not only one deadly creature contributes its poison but several. In the context of creating illusions of horror and power, Corneille thus refers to a *poétique des Enfers*.[7] This poetics is especially impressive because of its imagery and detailed description.

In fact, the scenario caused by the poisons on Créuse's robe is one of fire and terrible agony, all of which is expressed and intensified through a specific way of narrating: the intensity and the slowness of agony are expressed through the many verses spoken by Créon. Médée does not grant Créuse and Créon a quick death, but her poison has the effect that both of them die slowly. Even their servants cannot

help them, just as the flames cannot be extinguished. Every time they try to do so, the pain for Créuse and Créon becomes even worse.

> Le poison à mon corps unit mes vêtements,
> Et ma peau qu'avec eux votre pitié m'arrache,
> Pour suivre votre main de mes os se détache.
> Voyez comme mon sang en coule en mille lieux,[8]
> […]

He names precisely the effect of the poison in a hyperbolic, fear induced way by remarking that his skin is dissolving and hanging from his bones. The demand to take part in this scenario is amplified by Créon's order *voyez*, which is directed to both his servants and the readers and spectators. His blood is being spilled but he still cannot die. After Créon's detailed description of his agony, he finally kills himself with his sword. Corneille's way of describing a human being's death is part of his poetics of Horror, which involves the readers and spectators more intensively in the plot and induces fear to the characters of the play. In fact, Créon's description of his own death is another example for an effective hypotypose providing them with vivid images.

4. Language: A Deathly Weapon and Means of Creating Illusions

The analysis of Médée's communication with the supernatural forces in order to dominate Nature and to avenge her thus shows that her mightiest weapon is language. Not only is she a mighty orator, but her whole character is one of a specific rhetoric:[9] at the level of the rhetoric of emotions we have seen that accumulations, lexical fields related to fire and cruelty, *hypotypose*, hyperbole, examples and the repetition of leitmotifs are characteristic for her and necessary for the realisation of magical events. Furthermore, the position of the most meaningful words in the verses and the rhyme scheme contribute to her characterisation. At the level of speech acts, we have seen that Médée uses orders, incantations and begging, in which we find the apostrophe. This weapon used by Médée exercises power over nature and arouse the readers' and spectators' suspense. In fact, Médée's speeches are not only rich in rhetorical devices, but also evoke vivid images of the supernatural, e.g. the Underworlds' spirits and monsters. These images are necessary to make the readers and spectators assess her power, so that Médée has to create and pronounce speeches characterised by powerful evocation, by means of which she causes the illusion of her being the mightiest witch of the world.[10] Mentioning or hearing the name of Médée is already sufficient to evoke the supernatural and the concerned characters' fear.[11]

When her servant, Nérine, for example talks of her fear of Médée's incantations, she provides the readers and spectators with an even more concrete idea of her power than a visible scenario of horror probably would.[12] Illusions are

created when Médée makes use of her rhetoric, which confronts them with supernatural forces and the Underworld. The supernatural is present when she speaks her magic words[13] and makes readers and spectators believe that she is able to evoke ghosts and monsters from the Underworld. Therefore, we can say that Médée's power and also her magic are products of language. In this respect, we can define magic especially as the totality of clearly organised words and rhetorical devices giving detailed and imagery descriptions, combined in specific speech acts which create illusions. It is true that magical effects are also performed by objects like the robe that causes a sea of flames, although the robe itself does not speak of course. However, we should consider that the robe is so dangerous because it contains many poisons - poisons that a crowd of snakes and monsters delivered because Médée forced them to by using incantations and orders, that is to say her specific rhetoric. Consequently, rhetorical patterns are a precondition for the realisation of magical effects, even if the effects are not always realised directly after using these patterns. The magician in the French tragedy of the 17th century thus shows the readers and spectators images of the supernatural by making use of a magical rhetoric that allows the creation of it.[14]

5. The Other Side of Magic: Powerless Women and Mothers

However, although Médée is a mighty orator, she does not completely achieve her aims.[15] She has killed Créon and Créuse and punished Jason by killing her sons, but in the end she is still the lonely and abandoned woman for whom there is no place where she is welcome. Apart from this, she cannot live without exercising magic, because she is forced to use it by external circumstances:[16]

> Si je vous ai servi, tout ce que j'en souhaite
> C'est de trouver chez vous une sûre retraite,
> Où de mes ennemis menaces ni présents
> Ne puissent plus troubler le repos de mes ans.
> Non pas que je les craigne, eux et toute la terre
> À leur confusion me livreraient la guerre,
> Mais je hais ce désordre, et n'aime pas à voir
> Qu'il me faille pour vivre user de mon savoir.[17]

In fact, Médée admits her real aims that neither appear exaggerated nor are motivated by hatred or revenge. She just wants to live in peace without caring about her enemies. By mentioning her age, she almost appears as an old woman, being weak and sick of life and its difficulties. Médée also mentions a leitmotif that is attached to her character: the *désordre*. On the one hand, she is the personification of disorder in the world because of her use of magical rhetoric. On the other hand, the disorder is not limited to the destructive effects of her power,

but it is also typical of her emotional state. Her violent love for Jason and pain force her to use dark magic, so that finally Médée seems powerless.

Consequently, there is an obvious imbalance between her rhetorical and thus magical power on the one hand and her powerlessness concerning her excessive emotions like love and violent pain on the other. In fact, this imbalance is not only characteristic of Médée, but also of other witches in the French tragedy of the 17th century. Thomas Corneille's witch Circé is rejected by the Sea God Glaucus and thus becomes a mighty orator in order to avenge herself. She threatens Glaucus by showing him animals that she has transformed and orders Earth to open, but suddenly notices that her rhetorical power does not exceed Glaucus's power. In spite of her powerful rhetoric, she cannot frighten him. That is why she abuses her rhetorical power to invoke spirits, so that she can poison her rival Scylla who Glaucus feels drawn to. However, in the end Circé shares Médée's fate, because she is still lonely and hated by Glaucus. Thus, Thomas Corneille's tragedy also shows the imbalance between the witch's rhetorical power and her powerlessness towards her emotions and her fate.

This imbalance is even split up in Jean de la Péruses's tragedy: although his Médée is able to kill Créon and Créuse by means of dark magic too, her use of rhetoric creates sympathy rather than fear because she nearly only claims her fate instead of giving orders to nature and invoking spirits and monsters from the Underworld. Therefore, de la Péruse's Médée is almost a witch without magical power, so that both her rhetoric and her handling of her violent pain show her general powerlessness.

6. Summary

Considering this, the multiple importance of rhetoric to the French tragedy of the 17th century can be summarised as follows: firstly, it is the magicians' essential trait of character. Secondly, it is highly effective to create magical effects in the tragedy as well as in the readers and spectators, who are confronted with the supernatural; rhetoric in this respect is magic. Thirdly, by showing vivid images of the supernatural and its power, rhetoric makes the literary characters fear Médée and arouses the readers' and spectators' suspense. Fourthly, we have seen that the magical orators are in fact powerful by their speeches, but the imbalance between this power and the powerlessness toward fate and emotion is maintained.

Notes

[1] Pierre Corneille, *Médée*, v. 205-214.
[2] Aurore Guitierrez-Laffond, 'Théâtre et Magie dans la Littérature Dramatique du XVIIe Siècle en France' (PhD diss., Université de Toulouse Le Mirail, 1998), 94.
[3] Pierre Corneille, *Médée*, v. 253-260.

[4] Ibid., v. 711-720.
[5] Ibid., v. 986-990.
[6] Frederick M. Ahl, *Lucan: An Introduction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1976), 270.
[7] Marc Fumaroli, *Héros et Orateurs: Rhétorique et Dramaturgie Cornéliennes* (Genève: DROZ, 1990), 343.
[8] Pierre Corneille, *Médée*, v. 1380-1383.
[9] Noémie Courtès, *L'Écriture de L'enchantement: Magie et Magiciens dans la Littérature Française du XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Éditions Champion, 2004), 583-584 AND 587.
[10] Ibid., 584.
[11] Ibid., 559.
[12] Ibid., 588.
[13] Ibid., 589-591.
[14] Ibid., 568-569.
[15] Ibid., 545.
[16] Helga Zsak, 'La Médée de Corneille, Première Furie Vindicative', *Revue d'Études Françaises* 7 (2002): 191.
[18] Pierre Corneille, *Médée*, v. 1269-1276.

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An Example of Romanian Terror Fiction: Aestheticism and Social Criticism in Mircea Eliade's *Miss Christina*

Catalin Ghita

Abstract

My chapter[1] aims to provide an analysis of Mircea Eliade's short novel, *Miss Christina*. Since no studies published in English have dealt explicitly with the theme of Romanian terror fiction, I first intend to offer a theoretical basis for my investigation. Starting from Ann Radcliffe's distinction between the concepts of 'terror' and 'horror,' I move on to point out that the background of the novel constitutes its author's version of what I call 'Romanian Gothic.' This implies a specific setting and a number of topographical details contributing to and enhancing the psychological effects of the fictional atmosphere, which is predicated upon tropes of verisimilitude. After presenting the plot, I shall offer two possible interpretative approaches to the novel. The first approach is aesthetic: I read the relationship between Egor and Christina, the helpless man and the potent vampire, in terms of a reversed Pygmalionism, wherein the artist is devoured by his work of art. The reversal of roles is multilevelled: the traditional terror scheme which deploys male figures as aggressors and female figures as victims is pulverised by Eliade's narrative recasting. The second approach is social: the resistance to the manifestations of vampirism in and around a Danubian country mansion can be read in terms of a symbolic uprising of the destitute people, who take revenge upon their aristocratic masters by witnessing the burning, and therefore the cleansing, of the seat of evil. Additionally, and in lieu of a conclusion, I shall point out several literary connections which may be established between *Miss Christina* and the European tradition. Therefore, my interpretation attempts to provide both an account of Eliade's atmospheric vampire story and a number of theoretical tools which may pave the way for a more systematic approach to Romanian terror fiction.

Key Words: Terror, Romanian fiction, Romanian Gothic, female vampire, aestheticism, social criticism, literary connections.

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1. Theoretical Background

Mircea Eliade (1907-1986) is one of the most important Romanian authors of the twentieth century. After pursuing his studies at the Universities of Bucharest and Calcutta, he went to Paris and thence to Chicago, where he became a renowned specialist in the history of religions. His long and fruitful literary career spanned more than six decades and his works have been translated into several languages. Significantly enough for scholars interested in the relationship between the concept

of 'terror' and its aesthetic realisation in fiction, Eliade's prose was often overtly fantastic and, at times, even terrifying. A brilliant case in point is represented by his 1936-short novel, *Miss Christina*, which deeply surprised the Romanian public at the time. As such, I shall focus on the symbolism which imbues this piece of fiction.

Firstly, I need to shed light on a few semantic aspects in relation to the seminal concepts of 'terror' and 'horror,' which are widely used by scholars of various fields of study, but seldom explained satisfactorily. In addition to offering a valuable synthetic tool for my literary analysis, this brief explanation will concomitantly clarify why, in the case of Eliade's *Miss Christina*, I speak of an example of Romanian 'terror,' rather than 'horror,' fiction. Afterwards, I shall move on to the exegesis proper.

Although he does not differentiate between the two terms, Edmund Burke is the first philosopher who formulates original considerations concerning 'terror,' which he links to the emergence of the sublime. In his very influential essay, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Burke evinces the subtle continuum marked by fear of pain and pain itself, which become the obverse and reverse of the same aesthetic 'coin,' i.e. the sublime: 'For fear being an apprehension of pain or death, it operates in a manner that resembles actual pain. Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too ...'[2] Anna Laetitia Aikin (later, Barbauld) moves along similar intellectual lines. In her ambitious short essay, 'On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror' (1773), she emphasises the paradoxical effects of witnessing a terrifying spectacle: 'The pain of suspense, and the irresistible desire of satisfying curiosity ... will account for our eagerness to go quite through an adventure, though we suffer actual pain ...'[3]

Inspired, up to a certain point, by Burke, Ann Radcliffe is the first author able to draw a clear, distinct line between 'terror' and 'horror,' simultaneously allowing the former a loftier position. In her well-known short essay, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry' (1826), a work set in a dialogical pattern, one of the characters, Mr W - (Willoughton), says to his companion, Mr S - (Simpson): 'Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them.'[4] The former concept thus carries positive connotations, whilst the latter is construed in negative terms.

Now I may define the two ideas myself, albeit tentatively (a grain of salt is always welcome). *As a refining of fear, 'terror' constitutes a multifocal aesthetic emotion, whose main feature is the state of anxiety, brought about by a well-balanced series of artistic elements: plot, atmosphere, characters. As an intensification of fear, 'horror' represents a unifocal aesthetic emotion, whose main feature is the state of revulsion, brought about by the paroxistical development of the afore-mentioned artistic elements.* I speak of 'terror,' rather

than 'horror,' in the case of Eliade's *Miss Christina* for the main reason that *the plot seems to provoke anxiety, not revulsion*. The main element contributing to this effect is, without any doubt, narrative atmosphere. Jack Sullivan's comprehensive *Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural* defines atmosphere as 'the unity of style and sensibility that conjures a mood, environment, or powerful thought.'[5] It is my opinion that, in order for a narrative to appear terrifying, its atmosphere should exude danger by making use of a minimum of external ingredients, this representing, if you will, a sort of an Occam's razor applied to fantastic literature.

2. Romanian Gothic

Miss Christina was hastily written and published at the end of the year 1936. It constitutes a continuation of the two 'social frescoes of naturalistic technique,'[6] *The Return from Heaven* and *The Hooligans*, published in 1934 and 1935 respectively. Eliade's foremost biographer, the historian Florin Turcanu,[7] synthetically emphasizes that '*Miss Christina* describes the terrifying eruption into everyday reality of a fantastic, parallel universe, evoked by Romanian peasants' mythology and beliefs.'[8] In his turn, Richard Reschika notes that 'the folkloristic background is constituted by different Romanian myths of unredeemed creatures and very dark vampires who stalk between the worlds, between the here and the beyond.'[9] The most striking feature of the novel is its central character: a brutally assassinated aristocrat, Christina, who turns into a vampire and haunts the living whilst seeking their love.

In relation to the medieval perception of the bloodthirsty *revenants* in Europe, Laurence A. Rickels notes: 'The vampire was by definition a dead person who, since not eligible for proper Christian burial in hallowed ground, was on the rebound.'[10] Thus frustrated, the ghoul would react violently and seek revenge, just as Eliade's fictional heroine, Christina. In his turn, professor Matei Calinescu mentions the conventionalism of the novel's theme, but finds remarkable 'its author's capacity to exploit, in a subtle and often unexpectedly effective manner, the conventions of a literary genre whose traditions are rooted in the interest in the aesthetics of terror.'[11] Calinescu obviously refers to Horace Walpole, whose preface to the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), explaining the blending of two types of romance, ancient and modern, became a landmark in the revival of the Gothic in England and, subsequently, on the rest of the continent. I believe that Eliade's novel also marks an important event in the development of fantastic literature in Romania; therefore, I shall try to argue that *Miss Christina* epitomises the main features of what one may consider to be a native version of the Gothic genre, which I have labelled 'Romanian Gothic.'

Up until the first half of the twentieth century, Gothic fiction had not found too many enthusiastic followers in Romanian literature, but, before surfacing in a fully fledged manner in the works of Mircea Eliade and Cezar Petrescu (1892-1961,

among others, author of a highly exciting and subtly ironic novella, *Aranka, the Spirit of the Lakes*, published in 1929), it could be detected at least sporadically in the short stories of such classics as Ion Luca Caragiale (1850-1912) and Ioan Slavici (1848-1925). Caragiale's *A Torch for Easter* (1889) and *During the War* (1898) and Slavici's *The Mill of Luck and Plenty* (1881) share a refined poetics of atmosphere, articulated around several descriptive and characterologic *topoi* which, although technically not faithful to reality itself, nevertheless generate an acute impression of verisimilitude. As concerns the setting, I should definitely mention the isolated house or manor, built in a native style, and the ominous presence of a Carpathian or Danubian landscape, hosting a horde of strange plants and animals, all of them deeply rooted in Romanian folklore. The chief leitmotifs regarding the construction of characters revolve around the estranged and psychosis-prone proprietor (usually, but not exclusively, an inn-keeper), the violent visitor or customer, the eccentric, if not downright mad, domestic, the weak wife/mother and a host of minor characters (students, lawyers, various other visitors), whose role is that of emphasising the ascendance of real over imaginary life (the main character is usually the victim of a nervous breakdown, which severs his hitherto lucid relationship with reality). Although not terrifying in themselves (i.e. in narrative isolation), when combined all these vivid features manage to instill in the reader a distinct feeling of refined fear, of anxiety. Romanian Gothic represents, therefore, more than a rehashing of old Gothic themes. Rather, it seeks to reinvigorate the genre by injecting it with autochthonous, readily identifiable elements, thereby adding to the plausibility of the terror plot.

Miss Christina retains from the above listed features of Romanian Gothic several defining items: the isolated country manor, erected in the eerie Danube Plains, the bizarre domestics, the neurotic hosts, the protagonist whose state of mind becomes increasingly erratic and his more down-to-earth sidekick, whose role, though minor by comparison, helps to establish the mental balance of the hero etc. Certainly, the most complex character of the novel is its eponymous hero, Christina. Eliade proves that the vampire can be not only an agent of destruction and ontological corruption, but also a vehicle carrying an essentially incommunicable and ungraspable sense of transcendence, a reification of 'the beyond.'

3. Plot

Once the more general lines of interpretation have been established, I may proceed to present the plot of the novel. Divided into nineteen chapters,[12] *Miss Christina* narrates a series of strange events occurring in and around a mansion in the Danube Plains, inhabited by the aristocratic clan Moscu (that, significantly enough, is entirely devoid of male representatives). Two guests, Egor Paschievici, a painter, and Nazarie, a professor of history, are invited to spend some time in the country. Mrs Moscu is still disturbed by the gruesome death of her sister, Christina,

killed by a mob during the 1907-peasant uprising. However, it does not take long for the reader to discover that Christina comes back from the grave in the shape of a bloodthirsty vampire, to stalk the living. Her elder niece, Sanda, is attacked first, but shortly thereafter, Simina, Sanda's younger sister, falls a prey to the ghoul's powerful magnetism. Nature itself seems to be contaminated by the terror of vampirism, for mosquitoes, as insectivorous heralds of the bloodsuckers, are also prevailing. Afterwards, the whole rural microcosm, with its apparently immutable laws, crumbles: the servants are unable to overcome their fear and flee the mansion, never to return.

There are three men who remain within the premises: the painter, the professor and a certain Panaitescu. None is courageous enough to confront the danger which is lurking in the shadows, and that is why each of them instinctively expects the other two to offer help. Finally, Christina and Egor are brought together by a sexually charged encounter[13] in the former's bedroom, where the latter accidentally drops a lit lamp onto the floor, which instantly catches fire. Alerted by the furious flames, the peasants hurry to the mansion, in a scene seemingly inspired by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Eliade's narrative closes with a thrilling scene, in which Egor, helped by Nazarie, finds the vampire's secret tomb (hidden in the cellar) and exacts his long-awaited revenge by driving an iron stake through Christina's chest. (The whole scene may be discussed in relation to the striking finale of F. Marion Crawford's short story *For the Blood is the Life*,[14] in which an Italian priest and his unusual aide, Antonio, similarly destroy a powerful incubus, whose name is also Cristina.) Once the vampire has been slain, the fire grows stronger. Professor Doina Rusti opines that 'the image suggests the hypnotic trance engulfing the hero, overcome by distress and then by the curse of solitude.'[15] Christina's two nieces, Sanda and Simina, die too: the verdict of the narrative is epitomised by a far-reaching, mysterious voice which laments the decline and fall of an old, patrician family.

4. Aestheticism, Social Criticism and Possible Literary Connections

Eliade's novel affords at least two distinct readings (any alert and astute philologist may readily discover several other interpretations), one being essentially aesthetic, the other - essentially social. Allow me to start with the former.

Transcending their ontological boundaries, defined, respectively, in terms of life and neither-life-nor-death, the painter Egor and Christina instrumentalize a vampirical relationship similar to that of the artist and his work of art. It is a fascinating case of reversed Pygmalionism, as the painter's masterpiece first becomes autonomous, then more powerful than her creator and finally able to devour him. Obssessed with her iconic figuration as revealed by a portrait previously drawn by an unnamed master, Egor too intends to draw a picture of Miss Christina, who, as a fearsome *revenant*, becomes the archetypal mark of the

artist's sexuality, the stark projection of his onirical unconscious. The destruction of her (older) portrait in the novel's penultimate chapter is an attempt, on the part of the exasperated painter, to exorcise his model, whose attraction he cannot resist. Even the traditional role distribution, which casts males as agents and females as patients, is pulverised by Eliade's ingenious plot, whereby Christina clearly dominates Egor.

The latter reading turns the novel into one of the subtlest expressions of social criticism of the inter-war age, at least within the confined scope of Romanian literature. Speaking from a *Produktionsästhetik* angle (which is the German term for the study, *inter alia*, of the work of art in the making), professor Ilina Gregori finds it likely that Eliade's stay in Berlin, in August 1936, played an important part in the elaboration of the novel. The frightening sight of the Nazi capital, juxtaposed against Romanian acts of violence, such as the assassination of the premier I. G. Duca, may have fed 'Eliade's imagination during the two trance-like weeks during which *Miss Christina* was written.'[16] Eliade's novel constitutes a fresco of the demise of aristocracy, which becomes all the more transparent as set against the rise of the destitute. Moreover, the burning of the Moscu residence, although not provoked, but merely witnessed and tacitly accepted, by the enraged peasant mob solidifies a transparent symbolism of the lower classes taking revenge on the upper classes.

Beyond all these possible interpretations, one must bear in mind that *Miss Christina* is firstly and finally a vampire story, and therefore linked to the literary imaginary of this ghoul. In lieu of a conclusion, I find it useful to provide a few instances of discourse which may facilitate an intertextual approach to Eliade's novel. The fact that its author chooses a female, rather than a male, vampire naturally points to Graeco-Roman Antiquity. Brian J. Frost points out that, 'in the Classical World, the demonic vampire was nearly always of the feminine gender,'[17] and provides as examples the Greek Empusae (furry creatures, in fact, demigoddesses controlled by Hecate) and the Roman Lamia (a shape-changing, child-eating monster).

Romanticism, as a literary age obsessed with vampires, also springs to mind. Eliade borrows several romantic *topoi* and weaves them into the decadent fabric of his plot. Beyond Mihai Eminescu's overt influence,[18] Miss Christina's figure is indebted, at least partially, to John Keats's *Lamia* (Eliade was, throughout his long life, preoccupied with ophiormophic symbolism) and to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Christabel*. The latter contains, in nuce, even the relationship established between the vampire and her protegée: Coleridge's original couple, Geraldine-Christabel, becomes, in Eliade's hermeneutic translation, the couple Christina-Simina. *Sturm und Drang*, Germany's indigenous example of pre-romanticism, is also a case in point. Jörg Waltje quotes three poems which came to play a capital role in the Gothic tradition and, later, in English romanticism: Heinrich Ossenfelder's *Der Vampir*, Gottfried August Bürger's *Lenore* and Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Die*

Braut von Korinth. It seems plausible that, well-versed in German literature and philosophy, Eliade was aware of these.

Finally, the decadent tradition, with its roots deeply thrust into the romantic imaginary, may too have played an important role in the making of *Miss Christina*. Sheridan LeFanu's *Carmilla*, 'the first really successful vampire story,'[19] according to Robert F. Geary, is the strongest possible source of inspiration, to which one might add Aleksey Tolstoy's *Amena* and Théophile Gautier's *Clarimonde*. All of these writings portray female vampires, commonly associated with elegant seduction.

Miss Christina is a modern expression of an ancient myth, replete with powerful symbolism. Eliade's novel constitutes a turning point in the development of Romanian fantastic fiction in general and terror fiction in particular. Had it been translated into English shortly after its publication, the spellbinding story of the decadent, aristocratic female vampire may have earned its deserved place among the true gems of the genre.

Notes

[1] This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/89/1.5/S/61968, Project ID61968 (2009), co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 - 2013.

[2] Edmund Burke, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, gen. ed. Paul Langford, Volume 1: The Early Writings, eds. T.O. McLoughlin and James T. Boulton, text. Ed. for the writings William B. Todd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 230.

[3] Anna Laetitia Aiken, 'On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror', in David Sandner, *Fantastic Literature: A Critical Reader* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 32.

[4] Ann Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', in David Sandner, *Fantastic Literature: A Critical Reader* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 47.

[5] Jack Sullivan, ed., *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural*, with an introduction by Jacques Barzun (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986), 15.

[6] Ioan Petru Culianu, *Mircea Eliade*, trans. Florin Chiritescu and Dan Petrescu (Bucharest: Nemira, 1998), 230.

[7] All translations from Romanian into English are mine.

[8] Florin Turcanu, *Mircea Eliade: Prizonierul Istoriei*, trans. Monica Anghel and Dragos Dodu, foreword by Zoe Petre (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007), 333.

[9] Richard Reschika, *Introducere in Opera lui Mircea Eliade*, trans. Viorica Niscov (Bucharest: Saeculum I.O., 2000), 99.

[10] Laurence A. Rickels, *The Vampire Lectures* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 2.

[11] Matei Calinescu, *Despre Ioan P. Culianu si Mircea Eliade. Amintiri, Lecturi, Reflectii* (Iasi: Polirom, 2002), 127.

[12] Nineteen plays a mystical role in Eliade's numerological imagination. For instance, in 1980, he published a short novel on a fantastic theme, titled *Nineteen Roses*.

[13] This pattern seems to confirm James B. Twitchell's established paradigm, which contrasts male vampires' narratives, as fables of domination, against female vampires' narratives, as fables of seduction. For more details, see Twitchell, *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1981), 39. Bearing in mind this significant difference, I have deliberately avoided discussing *Miss Christina* in relation to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

[14] For additional details concerning the plot of this American *Rahmenerzählung*, see Don D'Ammassa, *Encyclopedia of Fantasy and Horror Fiction* (New York: Checkmarck Books, 2006), 119.

[15] Doina Rusti, *Dictionar de Simboluri din Opera lui Mircea Eliade* (Bucharest: Coresi, 1998), 63.

[16] Ilina Gregori, *Studii Literare: Eminescu la Berlin. Mircea Eliade: Trei Analize* (Bucharest: Ed. Fundatiei Culturale Romane, 2002), 143.

[17] Brian J. Frost, *The Monster with a Thousand Faces: Guises of the Vampire in Myth and Literature* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1989), 6.

[18] The late romantic poet Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889) is arguably the most important author in the history of Romanian literature.

[19] Robert F. Geary, '*Carmilla* and the Gothic Legacy: Victorian Transformations of Supernatural Horror', in *The Blood is the Life: Vampires in Literature*, eds. Leonard G. Heldreth and Mary Pharr (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999), 19.

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Part 4

Shadowing Fear and Terror

The Fear of Sexuality in Traditional Kabyle Society: A Cultural Anthropology Study

Sabrina Zerar

Abstract
The following chapter addresses the issue of fear of sexuality as reflected in traditional Kabyle society with particular reference to folktales, myths and love poetry. The emphasis falls on the manner Kabyle males manipulate this fear to impose their domination and its redeployment by females in their attempt to overturn their subjugation. The approach takes its bearings mostly from cultural anthropology.

Key Words: Fear, sexuality, traditional Kabyle culture, family romance.

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1. Introduction

Studies of the functions of sexual fear in traditional Kabyle culture are scarce, even if there is a consensus among scholars about the significant role it plays in social relations. To date, only Tassadit Yacine-Titouh and Camille Lacoste-Dujardin have raised the issue of sexual fear with reference to Kabyle gender power relations.[1] However, the general scope of their investigations into how the Kabyles live with their various fears has not allowed them to accord sexual fear full attention. Bettelheim has already demonstrated that fairytales and to some extent myths constitute a discursive site wherein oedipal conflicts and related sexual fears are played out and resolved.[2] I shall follow in his footsteps by taking Kabyle folktales, myths and love poetry as a window through which one can have an overview of the fear of sexuality in traditional Kabyle society. However, being aware that the notion of family is conceived differently across cultures and that the related family romance is inflected accordingly, I shall enlarge Bettelheim's psychoanalytic perspective by supplementing it with insights from cultural anthropology, taking my cue from Clifford Geertz's remark that '[n]ot only ideas, but emotions too are cultural artifacts in man.'[3] As a cultural artifact, the emotion of sexual fear in Kabyle folktales cannot be simply circumscribed to the private or domestic sphere of life since it also encroaches on the public sphere of activities that it shapes through more complex notions like shame, honour, and manliness.

2. Male Fears of Female Sexuality

Sexual fear in traditional Kabyle culture is expressed from both male and female points of view. The male point of view finds expression mostly in myths whereas the female one is embodied in the folktales proper. These two points of view enter into a dialectic relationship. While the myths create the fear of female

sexuality in order to impose patriarchal domination over Kabyle females, the female folktales redeploy the same gendered fear with the double purpose of reminding Kabyle males of female power and the pathological consequences that male sexual myths may bring on their progeny. In other words, Kabyle women retaliate by making the sexual fears that male mythic imagination generates look aggressively real. To the 'symbolic violence' exercised by the male sexual myths women respond with a counter-symbolic violence through an appropriation of the fear system, while simultaneously underlining its pathological effects on male children, who constitute the patriarchal capital.[4]

Though Kabyle mythic narratives are dimly remembered today, they can help draw the contours of the family romance at the origin of sexual fear in traditional Kabyle culture. From one of these myths, we learn that the Kabyle Adam and Eve give birth in the depths of the earth to 50 boys and 50 girls. At puberty, they are sent by their parents in opposite directions to emerge out of different earth holes into the open air. The 50 girls live apart as Amazons, but one day they engage the boys in a barely disguised sexual battle during which each of the girl Amazons throws down to the ground a chosen male partner, tears his clothes out, pulls out his genital organ, and pushes it into hers as sexual desire overwhelms both contestants. Giving in to sexual pleasure, the Amazons accept the boys' suggestion to live as husband and wife. However, once established as families, the initial gender power relations are reversed. The women are told that '[it] is not fair for a woman to lie down on a man! Henceforward, when we make love, it is we men, who will sit on you, women, in order for us to become your masters.'[5] The one woman who does not comply is discursively banished to the social margins as an anthropophagous monster called *Teryel*.

Several implications can be drawn from this foundation myth about the creation of the Kabyle family as a fundamental social unit. One of these implications is that the aim of sexuality is procreation and not simple pleasure. The second is that female sexuality is unruly, and so must be policed by taming the woman's body to put it in the service of man, and thus annul the havoc it may cause to the social fabric. The main social distinction instituted by the myth is the distinction between dominating males and dominated females expressed in crude sexual language. The third implication is that women must be confined in the domestic sphere of activity. The fourth and last implication is that the type of preferred sexual union is that between cousins, whether paternal or maternal, since as the myth makes it clear, the 50 boys and 50 girls are siblings. The second chthonic birth makes their kinship relationships distant enough to allow their sexual union.

Arguably, then, this myth supports the picture that ethnologists like Tillion and Chebel (1975) have drawn of the Kabyle family and society.[6] The former, speaking about the Mediterranean societies, refers to them as the 'republic of cousins.' The latter refers to the 'spirit of seraglio' that predominates in North African societies to which the Kabyles belong. Apart from the mythic narrative

above, there are other Kabyle myths that corroborate these two researchers' conclusions. In one of these, we are told the story of how women lost political power as the result of a primordial mistake committed by the First Mother of the World, who at old age breaks wind on a pile of wood, thus causing havoc for the magical working of the world and creating social dissention by mixing tongues among the Kabyle people. The myth concludes with the handing of political power to elderly males, a supposedly moderate power exercised through village councils. This symbolic violence strangely reminds us of how fears and terrors in our contemporary world are sometimes manipulated to establish reactionary political measures limiting our natural freedoms and civil liberties. The sole difference in our mythic cases is that the fear that is harnessed for legitimising the patriarchal system has a sexual character in the sense that it is discursively retraced to the excessive nature of female sexuality and the sexual pollution of a woman past bearing age.

Though the Kabyle male fear of female sexuality is rendered visible mostly in the myths, its specter sometimes pops up even in the folktales that are largely the domain of women. In this respect, the 'Story of the Young Man Who Studied the Science of Women' can be regarded as the most representative folktale in the Kabyle repertoire.[7] It recounts the story of sexual coming-of-age among the Kabyles. At adulthood, a son thinking that he has acquired the necessary skills to start a family of his own informs his father of his wish to get married. To this, the father responds with these ponderous words: 'You haven't yet learned the science of women, learn it and come back, and then I shall marry you off.' The science of women is the science of female sexuality that the son has to master before being able to establish a family. So in obedience to his father's command, the son goes on a quest for this knowledge, which he starts with a symbolic fight with a married woman he meets in a fountain. Among other sexual innuendoes, he boasts that he is the source of the very water that she is drawing. Offended by his boasting, the woman invites him to her home to make him undergo the most fearful experiences of his life. She first cries thief to crowd in on him the whole village only to hide him enrolled in a straw mat. Later, when her hunter husband comes back home at sundown she urges him to shoot at the straw mat standing against a wall, deflecting the shot in the last minute to spare the life of this sexually naive man.

The man continues to be submitted to similar harrowing experiences for five other days to learn the hard way the lesson that women have the power of life and death over males, and that until the latter acquire the skill to control the supposedly unruly nature of females, they cannot get married without being exposed to all sorts of dishonour. The tale closes with the homecoming of the man whose credentials in the science of women now permits him not only to have a wife but to lord it over the whole household at the death of his father. This folktale shows to what extent the Kabyle man fears the loss of honour at the basis of which is the fear of sexually 'unruly' women. Female sexuality is an asset when it is under

man's control but it can easily turn into a liability to the honour of the family if it is not properly contained. In traditional Kabyle society wherein 'there are no rich or poor,' honour is the one possession or capital that needs to be treasured unless one wants to be exposed to a sure social death. In *The Poor Man's Son*, Feraoun expresses this concern with social consequences of an unbridled female sexuality by saying that 'We [Kabyles] fear isolation like death.'[8] Evidently, the surest way to have this fear come true is to give free reign to female sexuality.

3. Women's Response to the Kabyle Male's Sexual Fears

When Kabyle women take their turn to spin their tales, they do not seek to assuage the sexual fears of their male counterparts as natural fears. On the contrary, they exacerbate them to make them sound more real. This policy of counter-terror or counter-symbolic violence can be easily seen in the resurgence of *Teryel* and *Setut* (witch in Kabyle language), in women's folktales after being mythically banished to the monstrous evil space of the forest. In women's tales, *Setut* is often represented as the agent who sends young male heroes on perilous adventures by challenging them to prove their virility and to rehabilitate the honour of their families in face of the abduction of their sisters by ogres. On crossing the fringes of the habitable social space of the village, it is *Teryel* who often waits for them to involve them in a life-and-death struggle. What a Kabyle remembers of the terrible material presence of this female monster in the folktales after everything else has vanished from memory is her formulaic threat issued to the protagonists: 'I shall eat you, and the ground on which you tread.' By this women signify that children and land, the two things that constitute man's wealth in traditional Kabyle culture, must always be feared for because women have the capacity to withhold or take them back from their male counterparts. Obviously, if Kabyle males seek to administer their domestic and public lives through the manipulation of sexual fear, the women respond to them by reminding them that their wealth is in their hands.

However, female folktales do not simply play up the fear that men have developed about female sexuality, they also emphasise the pathological effect of the established fear system with which males prop up their patriarchal regime. Particularly remarkable in these folktales is the huge number of stepmothers that populate them in comparison with other folktales from the rest of the world. Admittedly, this number can be sociologically accounted for in terms of the high death rate among traditional Kabyle women exhausted by repeated births, hard work and a poor diet. The psychoanalytic interpretation developed by Bettelheim about the mother-child relation in folktales may also partly explain the appearance of stepmothers in these folktales. Indeed, Bettelheim's analysis reveals to what extent stepmothers, witches, and other female representations of fear are inversed images of the good mother. While the former deploy fear to bully the child to abandon the oral and anal modes of life, the children keep or interiorise the fond memories of the latter. However, the excessive number of stepmothers and the high

degree of their ferocity in Kabyle folktales can be considered as a pathological symptom pointing to the difficulty in solving oedipal crises in the Kabyle family romance.

The analysis of the folktales shows that Kabyle children are plagued by oedipal refusal. For example, in one of these folktales entitled 'The Ungrateful Mother' the youngest son (Amazoz in Kabyle) in a family of seven half-brothers refuses his father's order to kill his mother.[9] Instead of committing matricide as his half-brothers did in order to prove their paternal legitimacy to their father, Amzoz flees with his mother to the forest wherein he kills 88 ogres, and deeply wounds one of them. After hiding their corpses in one of the rooms of the ogres' house, he invites his mother to settle in it as their new home. One day, during his absence, Amazoz's mother discovers the wounded ogre in the closed chamber where her son stocked the other ogres' corpses. As she is healing his wounds, she gradually falls in love with him. However, the ogre is afraid to show himself in the presence of Amazoz who still thinks that all the ogres are dead. So, the mother decides to eliminate her son to live more fully her love affair with the ogre. Every sundown, when her son comes back from hunting, she starts weeping and telling him that she fears for her life because she can see that his physical strength has declined. This makes her feel no longer secure. In order to help her cast out her fears, the protagonist accepts his mother's suggestion of showing his force by being tied up and trying to break loose. The last test to which she submits him turns out to be fatal for him. Strung up with a rope made of woman's hair (a symbol for female sexuality), Amazoz is unable to snap it up. It is then that the mother reveals up her murderous intent by calling in the hiding ogre to finish off the work. At the hesitation of the ogre-lover in front of the still feared captive, the mother hacks him up and invites the ogre to feast on his flesh. She packs his bones on a donkey which she orders to carry to Teryel's domicile. The latter calls him back to life by sprinkling them with her milk.

The above folktale lays bare the split image of the mother that Bettelheim has identified as a major psychic mechanism which regulates the passage from one stage of sexual development to another in fairy tales. In this tale, we are witness to a fearful switch of identities with the good mother turning out into a fearful murderess, a Delilah of a kind, and the female anthropophagous monster, *Teryel*, into a redemptive figure. This folktale provides a Kabyle version of the Oedipus complex wherein the pathological relationship between mother and son makes short shrift of the fear of castration experienced in classic forms of this psychological complex. Not only does Amazoz ignore his father's call for the sublimation of the sexual desire for the mother, he also kills him in the mirror figure of the ogres. The perversion of the mother-son relationship is such that the resuscitated Amazoz comes back home to his mother even after her infanticide. Sparing his mother out of love and killing the ogre-lover, the hero embarks on a quest during which he saves a girl from offered as a sacrifice to a *Thalafsa*, a

fountain hydra with seven heads, which demands an annual propitiation in exchange of water. He gets married to this virgin, who turns out to be a princess. Suddenly the mother reappears on the scene to beg her daughter-in-law to spend the first wedding night with the bridegroom. This time she poisons her son with the venom that she extracted from the dead hydra left behind at the fountain. As a climax to this highly embedded folktale, the son's dogs dig their master's corpse out of the grave to lick up it clean of the poison, at which the hero is miraculously brought back to life. This time the son reacts by wreaking vengeance on his mother's body.

One has to put this folktale turned into a horror story within the traditional Kabyle culture to seize its full implications. One point worth underling is that in this culture, it is the mother who is in charge of finding a wife for her son at marriage age. The fear of losing her son often leads her to make the daughter-in-law swear the oath that she 'will not take her place in her son's heart.' At the same time, the mother often reminds her son that if she bore with his father and his family until marriageable age, it is mainly out of her love for him. Thus, the male Kabyle grows up with the feeling that he owes a permanent debt of love to his mother. This often develops into a guilt complex whenever he feels a sexual urge towards the other sex. It is such cultural elements that create the fearful complications of the oedipal crisis plaguing the man-child hero and his emasculating phallic mother in folktales. As the following female love poem illustrates, women often satirise those males who '[d]uring the day attend to [their] business/ And during the night sleep at [their] mother's house.'[10] Another love poem laughs at their timidity in front of female sex imagined   as a 'toothed' sex:

> The mill that scissors have cut/It has beautiful toothed wheels/That drives crazy the grindstone/I have contracted a tasteless marriage/Every day I try to stir up his sexual passions/ For two years now: Is that not enough? /One day I have shown aggression to him/ He cries out: Mother! /But auntie, I swear I did nothing.[11]

4. Conclusion

It follows from the above discussion that contrary to what Freud tells us in his exploration of fear, sexual fear in traditional Kabyle culture is rehearsed in a communicable narrative form not in order to be dispelled but to be used and abused in a sexual politics of terror across gender lines.[12] The sexual fear system fulfills the function of regulating socio-political life in general, and gender power relations in particular.

Notes

[1] Tassadit Yacine-Titouh, 'Anthropologie de la Peur', in *Amour, Phantasmes et Sociétés en Afrique du Nord et au Sahara*, ed. Tassadit Yacine-Titouh (Paris: L'Harmattan-Awal, 1992); Camille Lacoste-Dujardin, *La Vaillance des Femmes: Les Relations entre Femmes et Hommes de Kabylie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008).

[2] Bruno Bettelheim, *Psychanalyse des Contes de Fées*, trans. Théo Carlier (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1976).

[3] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 80-81.

[4] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Power*, trans. Raymond Gino and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[5] Leo Frobenius, '*Les Premiers Parents du Monde et la Version Simplifiée du Mythe des Amazones*', in *Contes Kabyles, Tome I : Sagesse*, Leo Frobenius, trans. Fetta Mokran, (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1996), 32.

[6] Germaine Tillion, *Le Harem des Cousins* (Paris : Editions du Seuil, 1966); Malek Chebel, *L'esprit du Sérail: Mythes et Pratiques Sexuels au Maghreb* (Paris: Editions Payot, 1995).

[7] Auguste Moulieras, *Légendes et Contes Merveilleux de la Grande Kabylie*, 2 Vol. (Paris: Leroux, 1893- 1898), 148-157.

[8] Mouloud Feraoun (1950), *The Poor Man's Son*, trans. Lucy R. McNair (Charlotte Ville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 7.

[9] Leo Frobenius, 'La Mère Ingrate', in *Contes Kabyles, Tome II : Le Monstrueux*, Leo Frobenius, trans. Fetta Mokran (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1996), 92-102.

[10] Tassadit Yacine, *L'Izli ou L'amour Chanté en Kabyle* (Alger: Bouchène-Awal, 1990), 87.

[11] Ibid., 99.

[12] Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, 24 Vols. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953), 1-64.

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Fear and Terror: A Pastoral Hermeneutic Dialogue within the South African Context

Madelein Fourie and Stella Potgieter

Abstract

This research aims to shed light on the experience of fear in the South African context from a pastoral perspective. A hermeneutic approach implies a narrative look at the reality of fear and terror. The study is concerned with the blending of an overall horizon of context, time, place and tradition within the Christian tradition of adjustment. This involves an inter-subjective blending of horizons where each horizon supposes a story with further implications for a continuous narrative process. The hermeneutic nature is not exclusively limited to the pastorate, but is relevant to theology as a whole. It emphasises the process of human interpretation by investigating existential themes. In this process the voices of two therapists and other persons who experienced fear can be heard in a participatory capacity. The pastorate aims to address life's questions sensibly and from a Christian perspective. Therefore the design of pastoral care is closely linked to human existential questions. The human quest for meaning usually touches on three questions which necessitate investigation, namely the fear of isolation, rejection and death; the struggle with guilt and sense of guilt; and the experience of despair and senselessness. These existential questions often appear after traumatic events with destructive consequences. A narrative process involves looking for God's presence in human stories in order to come to a sensible understanding.

Key Words: Fear, pastoral care, hermeneutic approach, South African context, narrative process, existential questions, promissiotherapy, hope.

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1. Introduction

Human beings live by stories and are essentially composers of stories. Anderson and Reese (1999) underline this by saying, 'seeing our lives as stories, rather as an unrelated series of random events, increases the possibility for having in our lives what we find in the best of stories significant, purposeful action.'[1] This is the reason why the traumatised individual seeks to add sense and meaning in each new situation occurring in life in order to live with hope. The design of pastoral care is related to the problem of human existence which arises from traumatic events entailing fear and terror. Thus, crime, specifically the consequences of violent crime, is the focus of this particular contribution. The voices of two therapists and persons who experienced fear can be heard, taking part in this conversation.

2. Relevance

South Africa is regarded as one of the most violent countries in the world, with a high crime rate.[2] Statistics on daily violent crimes disguise the true reality concerning violent events. It camouflages, abstracts and reduces events without articulating the seriousness thereof.[3] The extent and depth of suffering, sorrow and disruption caused by violence and crimes are not mirrored in statistics.[4] This is emphasised by the following,

> Here in South Africa we literally feel as if we are living in a hailstorm. Although we may not be directly affected by violent crime we hear and read about it daily … [and] … although we want to safeguard ourselves against it, we live in the expectation of being hit by the hailstones some time or other. And if I have already been affected by violence my wounds are repeatedly torn open again by the trauma which afflicts others.[5]

Most serious crimes in South Africa includes violent crimes such as murder, attempted murder, robbery, robbery with aggravating circumstances, arson, injury to property, vehicle hijacking, assault, assault with the intention to cause serious bodily harm, rape and family violence.[6] In the last decade, South Africa witnessed an increase in vocal opposition to crime. There were statements made, working groups were established and proposals to combat crime were submitted.[7] The Department of Safety and Security's National Crime Prevention Strategy points out that, 'crime casts fear into the hearts of South Africans from all walks of life and prevents them from taking their rightful place in the development and growth of our country.'[8] According to Du Toit crime is 'not only an everyday reality affecting many people's lives in South Africa, it also concerns the very structure of South African society…'[9] Pastoral care envisages a change in the traumatised human being with a view to a life that will bring hope in the face of disruption, several dysfunctions, traumatic events, the experience of pain and fear of death.[10]

3. A Pastoral View

The pastoral approach lies within the contours of practical theology. Pastoral care aims at linking the concept of God with real human experiences so that existential sense may be discovered.[11] The duty of the pastorate is to aid people in placing personal stories within the framework of the Christian story.[12] Pastoral care wants to develop the theological lens focused on understanding humans with an effective pastoral response as its outcome.[13]

Pastoral involvement is a hermeneutic adventure, according to Riet Bons-Storm, because the process of understanding is not only a learned skill but also entails an event.[14] True understanding calls for involvement and involvement leads to understanding.

4. Pastoral Care as a Hermeneutic Matter

In the broadest sense the hermeneutic concerns the art and the science of interpretation.[15] Hermeneutics operates within the assumption that to understand involves a basic characteristic and structure of human existence.[16] Riet Bons-Storm attaches meaning to hermeneutics as 'the concepts of specifically human reality (for) the reality to which people have tried to give meaning, that they have "regulated."'[17] Hans-Georg Gadamer regards it as 'seeks to throw light on the fundamental conditions that underlie the phenomenon of understanding in all its modes.'[18]

Where initially hermeneutics was only involved with the interpretation of texts, it was later expanded to the 'interpretation of other kinds of "texts" or phenomena, like spoken words, gestures, activity, historical and social phenomena.'[19] The purpose with this hermeneutic understanding is the discovery of contexts for the sake of realising the giving of meaning as an outcome.[20]

5. Pastoral Care in Narrative Articulation

The narrative is an extension of the hermeneutic.[21] It looks from a hermeneutical perspective and attempts to explain what happens in a pastoral meeting.[22] In the narrative approach, one is concerned with conversation and communication which amount to exchanging stories.[23] The narrative offers the individual the opportunity 'to rehearse potential solutions until they achieve insight and new direction.'[24] Change takes place when a story is restructured, by retelling and re-interpretation until it opens up the road to new insights, followed by change.[25] The story itself therefore is the agent of change and 'allows people to bridge the gap between what is and what should be.'[26]

Within pastoral counselling a narrative approach has the effect that story telling and listening to stories have to be illuminated in the light of the Story of the Gospel.[27] It is in this process that a fusion has to take place between the story of God and the story of a human being in order to create a new story in which hope and promise of the gospel are components that have a part.

From the narrative emphasis in pastoral care, the pastor takes the position of one who does not know.[28] In this respect, the pastor can only act as a guide who assists the client in the process of setting up new possibilities. It also is an intersubjective approach where the pastor and the client both take part as subjects in the conversation. The pastor in the not-knowing position no longer is the specialist, the 'expert' with all the knowledge.[29] In this conversation of mutual exchange both pastor and client contribute to the process.

This research chooses for the 'approach of narrative conversation' proposed by Julian Müller, a South African practical theologian.[30] This approach attempts to facilitate the rewriting of a clients' life-story. In Section 7, the two pastoral therapists intend to demonstrate the 'approach of narrative conversation' by using two case studies. Persons affected by the experience of fear conveyed their stories

during the pastoral therapeutic dialogue. The outcome may differ from individual to individual and has a direct influence on the way life is consequently lived. Their discourses on fear will be portrayed in the verbatim conversations.

6. Promissiotherapy: Experiencing Hope

Hope is a new condition of existence, a different attitude towards life, a realistic horizon of reference and pattern of thought. Hope should form a part of a person's responsibility to choose and should be coupled with relationships which communicate security, sensitivity, care, comfort and understanding. Hope should create an outlook of anticipating behaviour for the future. It becomes a part of a person's orientation towards life - a consequence of the quality of people's lives.[31]

In situations of crime, what happened cannot be taken away. What can happen is to help the persons exorcise the trauma and thus develop their potential coping skills and hope for the future. In so doing people usually gain strength, competence esteem and hope to cope with future crises.[32] In the South African context, it is the practical theologian Daniël Louw who has made a substantial contribution to pastoral theology and introduced promissiotherapy.

Promissiotherapy is linked to God's faith and promises and means communicating the promises of God's faithfulness to clients for their better understanding of the presence of God and to stimulate hope.[33] Promissiotherapy is hope therapy for those looking for sense in life.[34] Without hope a person can experience despair, convinced that everything is senseless. Despair is a condition of doubting one's existence, a sense of meaninglessness and no future, as a consequence of the lack of security in life.[35] It gives rise to feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, failure, self-doubt and self-pity. The person construes a life that is bad and a gloomy future.[36]

Daniël Louw describes hope as the oxygen of the soul. He is of the opinion that hope is 'the periscope of a soul' by means of which one can look around the cul-de-sac of life (the dead end syndrome of a trauma) to be able to see the promise for life.[37] In this connection he also remarks, 'It is not a case of where there is life, there is hope, but of where there is hope, there is life.'[38]

7. The Approach of Narrative Conversation and Promissiotherapy

The pastoral hermeneutic conversation focuses on the story of the client in order to reconstruct the story through retelling and reinterpretation. The interpretation of life events is essential as it provides the traumatised individual with the opportunity to gain skills in life management.[39]

My own story (Madelein) as well as the story of one of Stella's clients, Susan will be told.

The 'approach of narrative conversation' consists of five movements which provide a framework for the therapist to give structure to the conversation and include the following:

7.1 First Movement: The Distress Narrative

It is vital that the therapist hears the emergency story in order to ascertain what gave rise to the distress. Therefore attention should first and foremost be paid to 'storytelling.'[40]

Madelein: Around ten to five on the last Sunday morning of September 2007 I became aware of heavy footsteps in the hallway. I immediately thought: it is too heavy to belong to my children. Just then two dark figures appeared in the doorway. The second person pointed a gun at us. I lay perfectly still and pretended to be asleep - with open eyes. Two thoughts entered my mind: 1) these people are not from our country, and 2) if I cry out or get hysterical now - my children are asleep down the hall, back the way they came... They slowly scanned the room, and then the first person signalled to the one with the gun that they should move back down the hall.

I woke my husband with a firm grip and urgently whispered that there were intruders in our house. We phoned our neighbours, asking them to press the panic button on their alarm system. In the meantime my husband had taken out the hunting rifle and walked down the hall. The next moment I heard the awful sound of a pistol firing and my husband's return fire. Such a terribly loud sound in a long, closed hallway...

Susan: Susan and Koos (her husband) lived a normal life on their small farm. Their cat, Karools, was supremely intelligent: he used to jump up to reach the door handle and frequently opened the door in this way.

One night, between sleeping and waking, Susan heard Karools at their bedroom door. She waited for him to enter the room and curl up at her feet. Dozing off, she again heard something at the door, and, forcing one eye open, saw a silhouette in the doorway.

The next moment unexpected rifle-fire shattered the darkness in the room. Terrified, she instinctively rolled from the bed, thinking that her husband had been shot. She lay very still and heard the intruders leaving the house. Somebody softly touched her - it was Koos. They were both surprised at being alive.

Koos quickly opened the safe and got their rifle out. The intruders wanted to make sure that Susan and Koos were dead and fired from outside the window too. Koos returned fire.

7.2 The Second Movement: The Past Story

One's distress story is often embedded in other stories. The past story goes further than the distress story and can shed light on the distress situation.[41]

Susan and I are in the privileged position that up to these awful incidents we had never been exposed to any form of extreme violence.

7.3 The Third Movement: The Hidden Future Story

People look at the future through the lens of the past. Therefore the future image is sometimes out of focus. By reformulating and reconstructing past perceptions an image of the future can be created which will form the basis for change in the now.[42]

Madelein: This is where you realise - You have a life before a violent attack and a different life thereafter…

Three months later the physical symptoms started showing. My hair started falling out in clumps. Along with that I developed a rare condition called a classical migraine with a neurological aura, a condition which mimics stroke.

After such a life intervention you look differently at your surroundings, the people around you, your street, shopping centre, the people waiting to pick up their children from school and sporting events…

My past perception on safety changed - the new hidden future story regarding security looks different.

Susan fell into despair and general 'futurelessness' - no vision of the future existed, which provided an explanation for the mindset of hopelessness which prevailed. She experienced anxiety when thinking about the future. I (Stella) asked her about her future and she replied:

> When we look at statistics, there is no future in this country. I never think about the future! Since the incident I think it's useless to think of tomorrow. What may happen tomorrow may be worse than what happened in the past. The future is unpredictable.

7.4 The Fourth Movement: Restructuring the Past Story

The individual is guided on the way of interpreting what had happened, what is currently happening and what might still happen, in order to formulate a retold past story.[43]

Madelein: The golden thread throughout my story is this: grace!

I realised that, though the attack was extremely violent, a great deal of grace was present that day.

1. Not one of use - neither me nor my husband, nor our children, not even our dog, was hurt - we were not shot, held prisoner or raped.
2. My children were fast asleep during these violent events.
3. The support of our family, neighbours, community and

reverend was invaluable to us.
4.   Because of my profession fellow pastoral therapists gave me the opportunity to tell and retell my story of fear and terror.

A Bible text which we will always remember is: Psalm 37:3-5: Trust in the Lord and do good, dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your life to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this…

In contrast to Madelein, Susan had not future vision. One day, therefore, I (Stella) asked her: 'Susan, I keep wondering… Did I hear correctly - the intruders fired at you with an R4 rifle? You said it kept going on and on. You described the long tongues of flame that came towards you. You said that the wall and the bed were full of holes. Why, do you think, did not one single bullet hit you or Koos?'

Susan sat for a long time and then burst into tears. For the first time she realized that 'Someone' had been present that night. This can be described as an epiphany in her story.

7.5. The Fifth Movement: Reconstruction – Imagining a New Story

The client now has the opportunity to talk about his or her dreams for the future. In this way the future story naturally takes form and new future stories are created.[44]

In this movement promissiotherapy can help shift the focus back to the God of blessings rather than the blessings of God, which implies that the will of God cannot be normatively pinned down by the person in need, but that the believer caught in the situation can also find hope in God.

For Susan that moment was when she woke up one morning with the realisation that the past had to be put behind her and that she needed to look to the future and move on. She realised that she could not continue being suspicious of everybody she came across every day. She realised that God had been with her on that fatal night and that He was still walking along with her. She also realised that she was wasting time in waiting for the next violent incident to happen, but that she could rather use the time to wait on Him.

Madelein: I realised that I couldn't allow my life to be intimidated by strangers who defamed our privacy. I cannot allow my joy to be stolen. I realised that God's grace is immense!

Today my life is different - I am always aware of safety - open doors - and I intensely dislike loud noises…

But my future story is one of hope! I'm moving into the future filled with hope, because my security and faith is in God and He gives me assurance and the promise: He will provide!

8. Concluding Remark

In South Africa, many people are affected by crime. We, as pastoral therapists, aim to address life's questions sensibly, from a Christian perspective. By means of a pastoral narrative dialogue we will continue to guide people to the throne of God, and ask on their behalf for what they are perhaps too tired to ask. We believe that the stories of fear and horror can be reconstructed into testimonies of meaning and hope.

Notes

[1] Keith R. Anderson and Randy Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring. A Guide for Seeking and Giving Direction* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1999), 144.

[2] C. F. C. Coetzee, 'Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa and the Role of Church and Theology', *In die Skriflig* 38 (2004): 333-348; Annelize Endres and Yolanda Dreyer, 'Akute Trauma, en Rudolf Otto se Godsdiens-Psigologiese Teorie as Middel tot Genesing', *Hervormende Teologiese Studies* 65 (2009): 264-269.

[3] C. S. De Beer, 'Filosfiese Besinning oor Geweld: Uitdagings aan Informatiseringstrategieë. Supplement: Die Verskynsel van Geweld: Besinning, Analyses, Oplossings', *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe* 7 (2007): 3-27.

[4] Endres and Dreyer, 'Akute Trauma', 264.

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[10] Daniël J. Louw, *Pastoraat as Vertolking en Ontmoeting* (Wellington: Lux Verbi BM, 1999), 426.

[11] Ibid., 3.

[12] Donald Capps, *The Poet's Gift: Toward the Renewal of Pastoral Care* (Kentucky: Westminister, 1993), 1.

[13] Andrew D. Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counselling* (Louisville: Westeminister John Knox Press, 1995), 2.

[14] Riet Bons-Storm, *Hoe Gaat het Met Jou? Pastoraat als Komen tot Verstaan* (Kampen: Kok, 1989), 85.

[15] Julian C. Müller, *Om tot Verhaal te Kom: Pastorale Gesinsterapie* (Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, 1996), 10.

[16] Daniël J. Louw, 'The Paradigmatic Revolution in Practical and Pastoral Theology: From Metaphysics (Sub-Stantial Thinking) to Empirism (Experential Thinking); from Teism to Theopaschitism (Hermeneutical Thinking)', *Practical Theology in South-Africa* 18 (2003): 33-58.

[17] Bons-Storm, *Hoe Gaat het Met Jou?*, 85.

[18] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), xi.

[19] Müller, *Om tot Verhaal te Kom*, 10.

[20] Ibid., 8-12; Louw, *Pastoraat as Vertolking en Ontmoeting*, 22-23.

[21] Müller, *Om tot Verhaal te Kom*, 19.

[22] R. Ruard Ganzevoort, and J. Visser, *Zorg Voor het Verhaal: Achtergrond, Method en Inhou van Pastorale Begeleiding* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2007), 100.

[23] Julian C. Müller, *Reis-Geselskap: Die Kuns van Verhalende Pastorale Gesprekvoering* (Wellington: Lux Verbi BM, 2000), 70.

[24] Stephen S. Pearce, *Flash of Insight: Metaphor and Narrative Therapy* (Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon, 1996), xviii.

[25] Müller, *Om tot Verhaal te Kom*, 102.

[26] Pearce, *Flash of Insight*, xiii.

[27] Louw, *Pastoraat as Vertolking en Ontmoeting*, 23.

[28] E. Kotzé and D. J. Kotzé, 'Social Construction as a Postmodern Discourse: An Epistemology for Conversational Therapeutic Practice', *Acta Theologica* 17(1997): 27-50.

[29] J. Dill and D. J. Kotzé, 'Verkenning van 'n Postmoderne Epistemologiese Konteks vir die Praktiese Teologie', *Acta Theologica* 17 (1997): 1-26.

[30] Müller, *Reis-Geselskap*, 70-103.

[31] Louw, *Pastoraat as Vertolking en Ontmoeting*, 528; Daniël J. Louw, 'Die Christelike Hoop', in *Deur Trauma, Boek 4*, ed. Maretha Maartens (Pretoria: Lapa Uitgewers, 2006a), 19-21.

[32] Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 35.

[33] Louw, *Pastoraat as Vertolking en Ontmoeting*, 426-427.

[34] Ibid., 14.

[35] Ibid., 525.

[36] Annamarie De Beer, 'Promissioterapie by Vroue na die Verlies van 'n Eggenoot: 'n Pastoraal-Narratiewe Studie' (PhD. Diss., University of the Free State, 2009), 117.
[37] Daniël J. Louw, 'Sonder Hoop is jy 'n lyk in 'n Lykswa', in *Deur Trauma, Boek 4*, ed. Maretha Maartens (Pretoria: Lapa Uitgewers, 2006c), 16-17.
[38] Louw, 'Die Christelike Hoop', 20.
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[40] Müller, *Reis-Geselskap*, 74.
[41] Ibid., 72.
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[43] Müller, *Reis-Geselskap*, 73.
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Madelein Fourie is a pastoral therapist and postdoctoral associate who sees life as a pilgrimage. This is the kind of journeying that marks just this move from mindless to mindful, soulless to soulful travel.

Stella Potgieter is a committed pastoral therapist. She believes there are a few thing that are as dangerous as an irrational past, there are few thing as dangerous as a past that is not understand or worse a forgotten past.

Part 5

Fear and Horror Embodied in Fiction

Representing the Pain of Others: Pat Barker's *Double Vision*

Gen'ichiro Itakura

Abstract

This chapter explores ethical questions posed in Pat Barker's *Double Vision* about representations of the 'disasters of war,' particularly the 'pain of others,' against the backdrop of the shifting post-9/11 media landscape. Indeed, the novel evokes a different sensation of horror from the one to which *we* - those constantly exposed to narratives transmitted by mostly US - or European-based global news networks - have been habituated through the repeated images of the Twin Towers collapsing. Barker represents atrocities committed by humans on other humans in more graphic forms and with more immediacy (e.g., bodies hitting the ground in New York, the severed head of a Serbian child in Bosnia), sometimes self-consciously *à la* Goya - the painter that influences both of the novel's two protagonists, Kate Frobishner and Stephen Sharkey. More importantly, Barker directs our attention to the monstrosity of journalists/artists as well. Stephen is terrified by a photo of a dead girl which Ben, Kate's late husband, took in Bosnia. As he correctly observes, the girl was 'doubly violated' - first by the offender(s) and second by Ben, who rearranged the victim's clothes after her death apparently to produce a maximum shock value. This not only constitutes a poignant critique of a typically postmodernist assumption that reality is nothing more than a spectacle, but it also points to ill-concealed desires for power and manipulation that the reader surely finds within Ben, within Peter (Kate's mysterious assistant), and even within Stephen himself. In this way, Barker undermines *our* privileged status as a viewer/reader ('we are not accomplices to what caused the suffering'), which Susan Sontag condemns as a false proclamation of innocence, and destabilises the post-9/11 'affective structure' in which, according to Judith Butler, *we* are infallibly 'righteous.'

Key Words: Pat Barker, Susan Sontag, Judith Butler, Francisco Goya, Jean Baudrillard, terror, violence, Yugoslav Wars, 9/11, photojournalism.

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> That the atrocities perpetrated by the French soldiers in Spain didn't happen exactly as pictured - say, that the victim didn't look just so, that it didn't happen next to a tree - hardly disqualifies *The Disasters of War*. Goya's images are a synthesis. They claim: things *like* this happened. In contrast, a single photograph or filmstrip claims to represent exactly what was before the camera's lens.[1]

Susan Sontag's observation provides insight into the two ethical questions posed in Pat Barker's *Double Vision*: how much immediacy is considered appropriate for, and how much creativity or unfaithfulness is allowed in the representation of the 'disasters of war,' particularly the 'pain of others,' against the backdrop of the shifting post-9/11 media landscape. Like Goya, Barker is committed to artistic representation, not testimony or faithful reproduction of images before her. By contrast, both Stephen Sharkey, one of Barker's protagonists, and his friend, Ben Frobishner, work in journalism. Unlike an artist or novelist, they are widely expected to report events truthfully - now without being too 'distasteful'[2] - even though that goal has rarely been attained in reality. This is further complicated by the fact that those two characters are often driven by quintessentially masculine, self-righteous manipulative desires. By exposing the two male journalists' dishonesty, Barker interrogates at once the ethics of representation of violence and the highly gendered landscape in which journalism, as wells as her fiction, is created and consumed.

In this chapter, I would like to explore the two ethical questions about the representation of the 'pain of others' and its significance for post-9/11 readers. Firstly, I will analyse Barker's almost 'graphic' representations of violence in order to see how she destabilises the readers habituated to a set of mind-numbing images of terror through the media. Secondly, I will move on to the issue of creativity and/or unfaithfulness. Indeed, Barker is poised on a precarious fulcrum between the journalist self (critique of Ben's dishonesty) and the artist self (knowledge that she has yet to create a fiction out of the real historical events, just like Ben). Finally, I would like to conclude by considering how these questions are related to her critique of residual patriarchal ideology in the 21st century.[3]

1. '*No se Puede Mirar*'

In *Double Vision*, Barker not only creates a gothic atmosphere but also challenges our sensibility about representations of violence. Indeed, the novel's gothic qualities are underlined by the presence of Peter Wingrave, a sinister-looking young assistant to Kate Frobishner, the widowed sculptor. The daemonic image of him 'wielding a scythe,' as well as his apparently criminal and miserable past, helps generate a dark, 'gothic' atmosphere.[4] Barker is not the kind of writer who shies away from violence. In the *Regeneration* trilogy, she explores 'men's world' of war. In *Border Crossing*, she features a child-murderer named Danny Miller, who probably assumes a new identity as Peter Wingrave.[5] However, the representation of violence in *Double Vision* is more crude and disturbing, particularly because she explores highly politicised events like the Yugoslav Wars, Slobodan Milosevic's war crimes, the 9/11 terror attacks and the operations in Afghanistan.

Stephen's experience of 9/11 appears as that of something tangible being reduced to stylised moving pictures by the media.

> When he closed his eyes, Stephen's brain filled with images of
> shocked people covered in plaster dust. Grey dust blocking his
> nostrils, caking his eyelids. Gritty on the floor of the hotel lobby,
> trampled up the stairs and along the corridor to his room, where
> the television screen domesticated the roar and tumult, the dust,
> the debris, the cries, the thud of bodies hitting the ground,
> reduced all this to silent images, played and replayed, and played
> again in a vain attempt to make the day's events credible: the
> visual equivalent of what you heard repetitively on the street:
> *Christ, Holy shit, Oh my God*.[6]

This may not seem as visually shocking or sensational as the oft–repeated images
of the aeroplanes hitting the Twin Towers, to which we have been habitually
exposed. The story which we could make out of those images and sounds above is
that of chaos and countless deaths that are beyond anyone's comprehension, not a
set of narratives widely circulated by US- or European-based global news networks
- family tragedies, fire-fighters' courage or all those stories to which chaotic events
are reduced or domesticated. This does not seem particularly sensational, but it is
rather disturbing, considering the fact that no such images appeared in quality
papers except in one edition of New York's *Daily News* (which showed a picture of
a severed hand).[7] By bringing something that can be considered superfluous,
Barker implicitly challenges a series of dominant narratives of 9/11 which,
according to Judith Butler, is circulated 'in order to sustain the affective structure
in which we are, on the one hand, victimized and, on the other, engaged in a
righteous cause of rooting out terror.'[8]

 Barker's rebelliousness is also seen in the episode where Stephen suddenly
leaves England to attend the International Criminal Tribunal for the former
Yugoslavia. No longer a reporter for a newspaper, he does not have to travel to The
Hague - a move that almost forcibly diverts our attention from the main storyline.[9]
By risking the narrative economy, she directs our attention to her experimentation
in this episode. The prosecuting counsel produces a photo of the 'decomposing
head of a young man' who had been allegedly tortured before he died, whereas
Milosevic, in his turn, shows a photo of the 'severed head of a Serbian child.'[10]
Even the disasters and the grotesque reality of war are easily transformed into
ready-made narratives often used as propaganda.

> Then the child vanished and was replaced by carbonized corpses
> in a railway carriage, baked faces set in lipless grins, leaning
> towards the windows as if waving goodbye to friends and family
> on the platform.
>
> None of this had been visible at the time. Not even to the pilots

who dropped the bombs, still less to the audience watching Pentagon briefings on television in their living rooms. ... Doubly screened from reality, the audience watched, yawned, scratched and finally switched channels. Who could blame them? War had gone back to being sepia tinted. Sanitized. Nothing as vulgar as blood was ever allowed to appear.

And all the while, under the little spurts of brown dust, this. A child torn to pieces. Human bodies baked like dog turds in the sun.[11]

Stephen is apparently frustrated with the politicisation of the disasters of war, but he eschews a political debate and critiques the kind of representation that he calls 'sanitisation.' Indeed, this sort of 'sanitisation' of war corresponds to our demand for a sanitised representation of war or what Baudrillard calls the 'aphrodisiac spice of multiplication of fakes and hallucination of violence.'[12] Like Baudrillard, Barker could have made Stephen more explicitly criticise this 'sanitisation' that provides us with 'the pleasure in our indifference and in our irresponsibility.'[13] But instead, she provides an almost apocalyptic representation of grim reality in the following paragraph. To critique the mainstream media's 'sanitisation,' we may need a certain level of 'gritty' realism, but not such a nauseating image as a child torn to pieces and human bodies reduced to the condition of dogs' excrements. This is clearly meant to give a shock value to the readers habituated to the 'sanitised' images.

Barker's assault on our sensibility is reinforced by Stephen's association of 9/11 with Goya's *The Disasters of War*. Stephen tells Kate about his dilemma 'between wanting to show the truth, and yet being sceptical about what the effects of showing it are going to be.'[14] Despite this, Stephen - by extension, Barker - chooses to 'show.' At times, Barker actually shows those atrocities with excessive immediacy. This constitutes the novel's Goyaesque moments. Stephen speculates briefly on Goya's love for 'freak' shows and circuses, but this points to his freedom from 'good taste,' social decorum and conventional ways of representations.[15] About Goya's freedom of style, Georges Bataille argues:

Elle est *libre*, on n'en peut concevoir de plus libre, et sa liberté est celle d'éveiller un peu plus à ce qui donne de l'angoisse, à ce que l'on a la force de vivre d'aucune façon. [His style is free, and we cannot imagine anything freer than this. That is the freedom to wake up a little more to what causes anxiety or what we don't have the power to survive in any way. - My translation.][16]

Barker may not be as 'free' as Goya or Bataille, but she liberates herself, though

temporarily, from the convention of representation of violence. But her rebellion warrants a close analysis, because particularly after 9/11, certain forms of violence and certain forms of grieving are obliterated from the media.[17] By so doing, Barker challenges this culture of politicised spectacle.

2. *'Esto es Peor'*

Interestingly, Barker not only calls into question our ways of seeing and representing atrocities, but also critically analyses our gaze on 'the pain of others' to expose male protagonists' - as well as our own - desire for control. Ben's morally suspicious act, Peter's writing, as well as his cross-dressing, and Stephen's manipulativeness represent male desires for power and control over women. This does not necessarily solely mean an indictment of the residue of patriarchal ideology, because Barker's text occasionally directs our attention to a fearful similarity between the artist's - and the journalist's - gaze and her own, i.e., at times those three exceedingly 'masculine' characters appear as a stand-in for Barker herself.

One of the most shocking moments in Stephen's flashback is Ben's photograph of a dead girl. As Stephen's photographer friend and Kate's late-husband, Ben appears at first as a victim of a tragic accident. He does not try to fabricate a fact. Nevertheless his apparently innocuous act reveals a desire for control we all have in common:

> Obviously Ben had gone back the next morning, early, before the police arrived, to get this photograph. He'd restored her skirt to its original position, up round her waist. It was shocking. Stephen was shocked on her behalf to see her exposed like this, though, ethically, Ben had done nothing wrong. He hadn't staged the photograph. He'd simply restored the corpse to its original state. And yet it was difficult not to feel that the girl, spreadeagled like that, had been violated twice.[18]

Stephen feels the girl 'violated twice' because Ben rearranges the dead girl's skirt and exposes her thighs so that his photograph can produce a maximum shock value for its viewers. It is true that, like many good journalists and war–zone photographer, he just tries to report those cruelties he has witnessed, most likely out of righteous indignation. However, he not only disturbs our morality by exposing the victim's body, but also revises history for his own ends by negating Stephen's act of kindness, as he pulls down her skirt as if to ensure that she had a dignified death.[19] Ben's act, as well as his photograph, directs our attention to the girl's helplessness and her feminine body and thereby endorses male fantasy in which women, like the dead girl, are perfectly under men's control and exposed to their gaze.[20]

This desire for control can be seen in other male characters. Stephen is a typical womaniser, very manipulative but on a socially acceptable level; but Peter arguably goes beyond the bounds of social respectability. He killed a woman in the past. Hired as an assistant to Kate, he legally breaks in her workplace and wanders around in her clothes.[21] By so doing, he manages to terrorise her.[22] Surprisingly, he is less likely a pathological transvestite than a manipulative man. Asked to read and comment on Peter's short stories, Stephen finds himself morally disturbed:

> *Christ*. Stephen put the book down. That was one story he wouldn't be reading twice. Again the emphasis on female helplessness, the detailed observation that always implied empathy, and yet, somehow, mysteriously failed to deliver it. The stories kept slipping into sympathy with the predatory behaviour they attempted to analyse. There was no moral centre. That was Stephen's final verdict, and it was this ambiguity in the narrator's attitude to predator and prey, rather than the actual events, that made the stories so unsettling.[23]

As Stephen correctly points out, Peter's writing strongly suggests his innate manipulativeness. He would exploit women most likely without any feelings of guilt. Unlike Alfred Hitchcock's Norman Bates, another infamous fictional transvestite, Peter does not display a strong emotional attachment to the mother or any woman. Indeed, he lacks normal empathy for others, regardless of their sex. He only empathises with those predatory fictional characters he creates - or the projection of his sadistic self. His self-identification with the male predator and justification of control over 'helpless' women, the latter of which is associated later in the novel with his equation of the ideal woman with a doll,[24] are comparable to symptoms of narcissism or a pathological condition characterised by the excessive investment of libidinal energy in the ego.[25]

Significantly, this male desire for control is critically analysed not merely to indict patriarchal ideology but also to reconsider the ethics of writing or a creative artist's manipulativeness. After an initial shock of seeing Peter in her clothes, Kate speculates on where this fear comes from:

> She felt a spasm of revulsion, not from him but from herself, as if he had indeed succeeded in stealing her identity. It was easy to believe that what she'd seen in the studio, through the crack in the door, was a deranged double, a creature that in its insanity and incompetence revealed the truth about her.[26]

Needless to say, this accounts for the traumatising effect of Peter's behaviour on Kate. However, this also implies that, perhaps unwittingly, he parodies her

narcissistic artist self. Making no secret of her lack of belief, Kate considers a statue of Jesus Christ as just another male nude and embarks on a new representation of Christ as a young man who has risen vigorously from the dead.[27] In other words, she prioritises her pursuit of her own artistic end rather than contributing to the local church or religious community. Her artistic pursuit is by nature autoerotic inasmuch as it helps her increase self-esteem and fantasise about her omnipotence. To put it the other way round, the common critique of masculinity is merely a pretext for writing on this moral anxiety about predatory aspects of artists.

3. Conclusion

Closely looked at, Barker's *Double Vision* reveals the artist's struggle for freedom and ethical dilemma in the representation of violence. In the post-9/11 politicised culture, the artist is confronted with the pressure for 'sanitisation' or worse, obliteration. Only when this artist lets go of those fetters, can s/he be truly sincere to her- or himself as well as the subject of his or her work. Even so, the artist is likely tormented by the thought that s/he might be undertaking the creative work only for narcissistic self-gratification and therefore exploiting others without feeling any remorse. This male desire for control over women - ill-concealed beneath Ben's photograph, Stephen's womanising and Peter's aberrant behaviour - is actually replaced with the author's narcissistic desire for control. Considering the significance of the artist's 'freedom,' we can safely conclude that this autoerotic aggressivity can be sublimated when the artist - like Goya - wakes up to the others' agony or, to borrow Butler's phrase, 'the precariousness of the Other's life.'[28]

Notes

[1] Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2004), 42.

[2] For the demand of 'good taste' in the post-9/11 journalism, see Ibid., 61.

[3] This does not necessarily mean that Barker is an exemplarily feminist. Her critique of such ideologies most likely comes from her interest in marginalised people. See Sharon Moniteith, *Pat Barker* (London: Northcote House, 2002), 14; Sarah C. E. Ross, 'Regeneration, Redemption, Resurrection: Pat Barker and the Problem of Evil', *The Contemporary British Novel*, eds. James Acheson and Sarah C. E. Ross (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 131-132.

[4] Pat Barker, *Double Vision* (London: Hamilton, 2003), 19.

[5] A few reviewers and critics argue that Barker explores the theme of evil through Danny Miller/Peter Wingrave, a young man who killed a wealthy elderly woman in his childhood. See Ross, 'Regeneration, Redemption, Resurrection: Pat Barker and the Problem of Evil', 138-139; Elaine Shawalter, 'Inner Vision', *The Guardian* (23 August 2003), paragraph 10.

[6] Barker, *Double Vision*, 96-97.

[7] Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 61.

[8] Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004), 6.

[9] Neil Gordon, 'Something Not Quite Right', *The New York Times* (14 December 2003), paragraph 16.

[10] Barker, *Double Vision*, 130.

[11] Ibid., 130-131.

[12] Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, trans. Paul Patton (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 75.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Barker, *Double Vision*, 119.

[15] Ibid., 195.

[16] Georges Bataille, 'Goya', in *Œuvres Complètes: Articles I, 1944-1949* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 310.

[17] Butler, *Precarious Life*, 37-38.

[18] Barker, *Double Vision*, 121.

[19] Ibid., 52.

[20] Ben's act of photographing the dead girl also reminds us of a dehumanising aspect of photography, as it turns people into lifeless objects. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1979), 14-15.

[21] Barker, *Double Vision*, 177.

[22] Ibid., 178-179.

[23] Barker, *Double Vision*, 164.

[24] Ibid., 288.

[25] Sigmund Freud, 'On Narcissism: An Introduction', in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Angela Richards and trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991): 88-89.

[26] Barker, *Double Vision*, 179.

[27] Ibid., 9 and 66.

[28] Butler, *Precarious Life*, 139.

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The House That Virus Built: Tracing the Changes of Spatial and Corporeal Setting in the Novel *Rabies* by Borislav Pekić

Milan Miljković

Abstract
In 1983, Borislav Pekić, one of the pre-eminent authors of contemporary Serbian literature then living in London, published a novel entitled *Rabies*, the first part of his dystopian *Anthropological Trilogy*, which narrates the story of a rabies epidemic breaking out at London's Heathrow Airport. Combining the narrative procedures of science fiction and detective novels, Borislav Pekić presents an allegorical and horrific view of the modern civilisation, and its logocentric and technological impact on the world of nature. This chapter strives to investigate effects and implications of radical transformations within the novel's setting (Heathrow airport), from the outset of the epidemic to its apocalyptic finale, both at the level of plot development and the gradual increase of the readers' and characters' feelings of instinctive terror. While at the beginning of the novel the airport represents a modern world of order and reason, geometrically precise and seemingly deprived of irrational dimensions, the terrifically swift epidemic of the mutant Rhabdovirus distorts and disassembles the familiar images of the airport, similarly to the virus conquering and disintegrating parts of the human body. Following the triangle - body of the mutant virus, infected human body and body of Heathrow Airport - this chapter will analyse, from the perspectives of representational theory and critical discourse analysis, the dynamics of the collapse in spatial and corporeal boundaries in order to test one of the novel's dystopian ideas: that the outcome of limitless technological progress could only be horror, embodied in the construct with the intelligence of a man and the vitality of a virus.

Key Words: Science fiction, spatiality, body, fear, apocalypse, dystopian novel, critical discourse analysis.

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In 1983, Borislav Pekić, one of the pre-eminent authors of contemporary Serbian literature, published a novel entitled *Rabies*, the first part of his dystopian *Anthropological Trilogy*, which narrates the story of a rabies epidemic breaking out at London's Heathrow Airport. On one hand, the significance of Pekić's novel lies in the fact that it is one of the first novels in Serbian literature which explores the topic of a catastrophe caused by a disease, while on the other hand it could be regarded as part of the longer tradition in world literature, in which the images of disease and horrifying epidemics serve not only as the means of initiating the narrative flow, or presenting an apocalyptic setting, but also as features that

constitute profound discussions on the issues of human corporeality, diseased body, civilised order and human nature in a more general sense.

Having in mind Susan Sontag's claim (in her book *Disease as a Metaphor*) that disease, metaphorically, has a very wide sociological and cultural importance because every historical period has its own idiosyncratic and 'chosen' disease, it could be maintained that Pekić's novel strives to present an anthropological study on the modern man and his society's illusions and misconceptions. Unlike tuberculosis, which was particularly 'exploited' in the previous centuries, the 20th and 21st century are culturally recognisable for the wide use of imagery related to different types of potentially very dangerous viruses (influenza, swine flu, bird flu, AIDS...). The depth of human fear caused by the idea of a virus threat can be explained by referring to the striking yet deceptive contrast between the physical dimensions and powers of men and viruses.

Even though the novel's title bears the name of the disease, it is the virus that is the center of Pekić's philosophical and narrative attention, and the effects and consequences of the deteriorating body state caused by this small microorganism, which cannot be perceived without the aid of scientific tools. As Zorica Đergović Joksimović states, 'the virus is only a catalyst of the *rabies* that is already present in ourselves, secretly prepared and ready to, once awaken, drag us towards disaster.'[1] The apocalyptic and biblical aura of the novel's atmosphere is stressed very early on, at the beginning of the novel, as the reader is directly addressed by several quasi-documentary quotes, supposedly written in different historical periods. One of them is an extract from the work of professor Frederick Lieberman,[2] an excerpt constructed as a scientific discourse, emotionally flat, explaining the nature of the virus, its evolution and body:

> The Virus is the most perfect creature in the universe. Its biological organization is nothing less than a machine for producing life in its purest sense. The virus is the apex of natural creative evolution.
>
> The apex of the artificial creative evolution is - an intelligent virus. A product to take on the form of a human being and the nature of the virus, the vitality of the virus and the intelligence of the human being.
>
> The symbiosis of the virus divested of aimlessness and the man freed from limitations would rule the nature, to which both serve only as organic fertilizer.[3]

Thus, at the very opening of the novel, an omnipotent narrator strives to instigate a sense of fear and uneasiness in the reader by giving an authoritative,

technological description of the virus's body and its nature. This text is presented in a manner which leaves no doubt in regard to the truthfulness of natural and biological facts, while at the same time the idea of the symbiosis between the human being and the virus distorts our traditional perception of the boundaries that divide these respective bodies as profoundly different entities. Furthermore, since the body of the virus is compared to a machine, to a product or a consequence of human progress, professor's Lieberman's description implies that there is an essential sense of absolute inversion in the order of things - creating a world wherein people are deprived of their idea of control and superiority. But, having in mind that Lieberman's diabolical and Faust-like medical practice perceives the body only as genetic material, Lieberman's world view eventually fails at the end of the novel, together with the conventional and humanistic approach of traditional medicine, which attempts to save the human body and separate it from the virus.

Pekić's narrator condemns all his characters to death, elaborating the idea that human civilisation is trapped within the cyclical mode of suffering and despair. This sense is also emphasised by introducing various passages from the Book of Revelation, which anticipate the coming of the Beast. And, at the end of the novel, the whole community of infected people, who has turned into ghastly animalistic creatures, shows the reverse, dystopian image of our contemporary civilisation, and its obsession with healthy, good-looking and almost perfect bodies, which are continuously being projected through various media in contemporary culture. The only two characters who survive the catastrophe are Sharon, the dog that will probably carry the *Rhabdovirus* to London, and Gabriel. Gabriel is essentially a projection of a heavenly creature, a guardian angel, but, importantly, after the Heathrow apocalypse, the narrator loses all faith, failing to believe that God sends his angels to look out for this world.

Considering the previously mentioned similarity between the human existence and that of the virus, it is important to emphasise that the virus is personified as a self-aware and aggressive being that has a very powerful and destructive body. Its travels in the natural world are paralleled to those made by man at the level of human existence on Earth. While man travels and conquers the planet and the natural environment (for example, the jungles of the Amazon), the virus has its own environment - the human body and its central nervous system - to conquer.

> Its cosmic ports will be the Nervus Sciaticus, the Ammon's horn, Cerebellum, Hyppocampus, the salivary gland. Its transgalactic freeway - the spinal cord. Its destination - the brain. Everywhere it reaches the worlds will transform within a cataclysm more terrifying than any earthquake to shake the Planet since Genesis. Everywhere it travels it will deliver fear, hate, rage to those unlucky enough not to go instantly insane from Its touch. The

insane will be granted the knowledge whose terrible nature no
one will ever be able to glean.[4]

The above mentioned inversion and parallel - the human inner neurological and
physiological world representing a vast universe for the virus - is employed at the
beginning of the novel not just to destabilise the reader's sense of safety and
security but also to underline the idea that body boundaries are fluid,
interchangeable and easily broken; which in turn creates a strong feeling of horror
in the reader, as the order of things is suspended and it is impossible to predict the
final outcome. And when the narrator describes the devastating effects of the
Rhabdovirus, he also shows how fragile the border between the human body and
psyche actually is. By destroying the physiological foundation of the human being,
the virus incurs an experience or a sense of madness. This newly acquired
madness, however, is not a mere negation of the mind or the body, but a highly
specific product of the mind and the body interconnected and deconstructed, within
the world of traditional binary oppositions.

After the narrator introduced the terrifying facts about and the mythical, almost
inevitable and apocalyptic qualities of the virus, the reader is given a plain map of
the airport, before the plot revolving around the rabies epidemic even starts.
Heathrow airport, presented graphically in the novel through a range of
architectural illustrations or sketches, which are placed at the opening of various
chapters, symbolically refers to the world of human culture and civilization[5].
Before the epidemic breaks out, the mathematical and architectural orders of lines
and the structure of various airport departments, rooms and spaces, serve as a
means of representing a setting for the technological body, encompassing alienated
exteriors which regulate the flow of the passengers' bodies, in order to prevent
their potential conflicting interactions and close physical encounters. As a product
of the human need to organise and cluster social realities, the airport is effectively
employed within the novel to represent the whole process of micro-evolution or
instances of decay within the social order. After the rabies outbreak, the virus will
wipe away any individual identity from the characters in the novel, turning them
into an almost shapeless community which implicitly offers a critical view on the
nature of democracy and dictatorship. What used to be one of the most organized
airports in the world becomes, towards the end of the novel, one of the most
authoritarian quarantines, resembling some of the modern concentration camps
from recent European history (both German Nazi camps and Russian gulags.)

Due to the rabies epidemic, the world of the airport becomes a metaphor of the
world in general, while the human body itself turns into a symbolic battleground
wherein various forces struggle in an attempt to answer the question of what the
consequences of human and technological progress are. In regard to technological
and scientific progress, it seems that Pekić's narrator intentionally uses the diction

and emotionally detached vocabulary of science when he describes the way in which the virus exists and how it occupies the human cells.

> In laboratory conditions, the penetration of the virus into the cell and the fusion of its sheath with the plasmatic and vacuolar cell membranes are remarkably fast. It takes several seconds for the virus to inhabit the cell so fully that it cannot be removed by multiple washings nor overcome by the host's antibody organization… The virus moves towards the central nervous system and the brain, towards the nerve and centripetally… is replicated in the muscle, the neighbouring tissue or the nerve at the locus of original infection but can remain inert for months before it starts its journey towards the brain.[6]

What was predominantly viewed or perceived as the site of health becomes the site of cold-blooded, heartless destruction. This stylistic register, dense in terms of scientific vernacular and structure, effectively evokes the feeling of terror in the reader because it places them in the role of a helpless victim, a passive witness, or a body that is openly displayed and laid out for ultimate and inevitable destruction. When the virus enters the human body, it gradually cancels all known boundaries (at the psychological, neurological, cellular or general corporal level) while the infected person loses all individual traits. According to Zorica Đergović Joksimović, 'the infected becomes diseased, untouchable and tabooed,'[7] an idea also elaborated in Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror*.

When confronted with an image of a diseased body, or a dead body, one experiences a strong feeling of alienation, terror and fear, because the image of a dead body is something that cannot be easily discarded; we cannot be protected from the threat that is incorporated in the image of the body occupied by a disease. It seems that only the character of David Leverquine attempts to record objectively all the events and happenings at the airport, taking on the role of a witness: 'I have a mission. I am the EYE and the EAR. I am the WITNESS.'[8]

Due to the speed at which the rabies epidemic spreads, its unimaginable effects and consequences, the individual characters of the novel show a certain paradox. When the human body starts to lose its socially, politically and ideologically determined and constructed boundaries and begins to show a greater resemblance to the animal world, this is the moment when bodies start to intertwine to become one carnivalesque and grotesque entity. The system of inner psychological control, of fear and repression caves in, and the bodies can transform themselves into one big body, a diseased but also released one, which is particularly present in one of the stages of the disease, the acute stage, described by the infected people as the stage of pleasure and ecstasy.

> The reaction overlapped with the cases of standard rabies and nothing would have been unusual about it had the same diseased persons not had, during their lucid intervals, and in the acute neurological, active phase that to us, observing it, appeared terrible with its convulsions, aggressive madness, hallucinations and destructive force, a completely different understanding of it. They did not go into details, they could not remember anything specific, but the state itself, while they were suffering it, had for the majority of them been remarkably pleasant. They did not recall it as pleasant; they felt it as such, although it had passed, as when one feels the phantom limb that no longer exists.[9]

The comparison with the medical phenomenon of the 'phantom limb' is employed in order to stretch fully the notion of the human body, or to blur its boundaries and place it within the newly established community wherein people are depersonalised; the spirit of collectivism is gradually articulated. Nevertheless, even this spirit will eventually erode, due to the final erasure of all human rights and freedoms. This erosion of all cognitive and moral structures is perfectly embodied in one of the most impressive and emotionally charged scenes of the novel, which is found in chapter 5, 'Paralysis.' By this point, almost everyone at the airport is sick or dead, but the police major Lawford, known as 'the Iron Heel,' stands in front of the caged crowd, a leather dog muzzle over his face, calling them his respectful pack of dogs.

The whole process of disintegration at various levels (airport interiors, human body, social institutions, norms and conventions) is also employed as one of the principles of the novel's composition/decomposition. According to the six degrees (Incubation, Prodroma, Acute, Furious, Paralysis and Coma) of the progressive development of rabies, the novel itself is composed of six greater parts. And even though it seems to be very precisely composed and organised, Pekić's *Rabies* also significantly 'suffers' from the process of disintegration at the genre level.

Because, if one is to connect the concept of genre with the metaphors of body and disease, then, by employing diverse genre traditions and techniques attempts to enlarge the entity of his own novel, Borislav Pekić turns it into a grotesque novelistic body, which cannot be determined or classified. The novel's genre ambivalence and its length were perhaps some of the reasons why Borislav Pekić never succeeded in finding a publisher for the novel in the English - speaking world. It was simply too large (over 550 densely printed pages) and in terms of genre too varied and unmarketable. Furthermore, the whole novel is presented in the form of a 'found manuscript' which has then been adapted and edited for publishing. Therefore, by using this familiar documentary technique, Borislav Pekić goes even further in confusing his readers, presenting them with an open, fragmented manuscript, a narrative located somewhere between fiction and reality,

or fiction and faction. In this light, the whole text can be seen to appear infected and diseased, since it offers no closure and no clear beginning, nor even a precisely determined authorship. Therefore, this novel, full of citations, quotes and intertextual references, continually shifts between categories of parable, hyperbole, metaphor or allegory, causing constant unease, and a sense of both empirical and metaphysical distress within the reader, thus leading to the ultimate sharing of the disorientating experience depicted within the work itself.

The ultimate intensity of the existential fear is achieved at the end by naming the last chapter 'Incubation,' as a repetition of the first chapter title, and by quoting the famous ending of Camus's novel *The Plague*.

> He knew that this happy crowd was unaware of something that one can read in books, which is that the plague bacillus never dies or vanishes entirely, that it can remain dormant for dozens of years in furniture or clothing, that it waits patiently in bedrooms, cellars, trunks, handkerchiefs and old papers, and that perhaps the day will come when, for the instruction or misfortune of mankind, the plague will rouse its rats and send them to die in some well-contented city.[10]

Notes

[1] Zorica Đergović Joksimović, 'Telo pod Opsadom: *Besnilo* Borislava Pekića', in *Telo u Slovenskoj Futurofantastici*, ed. Dejan Ajdačić (Beograd: SlovoSlavia, 2011), 191.

[2] The name of professor Lieberman is also part of Pekić's intertextual reference to one of the characters in the novel *Boys from Brasil* (1976). In Pekić's novel, Lieberman is a doctor, obsessed with a Nazi-equation which implies that only health and healthy body are appropriate conditions for the healthy and developed society. He is the one who made the mutant virus and released it.

[3] Borislav Pekić, *Besnilo* (Beograd: Večernje novosti, 2008), 9.

[4] Ibid., 12.

[5] Nevertheless, the airport is also an essential symbol of modern civilisation, of its speed, inter-connectivity and pride. Therefore, when the airport structure collapses, that collapse signifies the weakness of the human need for hierarchy.

[6] Pekić, *Besnilo*, 189.

[7] Đergović Joksimović, 'Telo pod Opsadom: *Besnilo* Borislava Pekića', 191.

[8] Pekić, *Besnilo*, 367.

[9] Ibid., 368.

[10] Albert Camus, *The Plague*, trans. Robin Buss (London: Penguin Classics, 2002), 237-238.

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The Wolf-Man's Dilemma: Exploring the Nature of the Contemporary Werewolf in Literature

Uroš Tomić

Abstract

One of the oldest recorded and most enduring myths of our cultures is the duality of human nature, as comprising the animalistic and the civilised - that of the wolf-man. The last thirty years have witnessed a surge of contemporary representations of werewolves in literature and film, often shifting or transforming the focal points of understanding and interpretation of their nature. This chapter will strive to explore, from the perspectives of genre theory and narratology, to what extent the notions of werewolves deviate from the traditionally binary model of representation, and to investigate the idea of the wolf-man as the locus for projecting concepts of virility within the psychoanalytical framework. Issues of duality, morality, sexuality and body will be analysed in a range of works, focusing on the treatment of these by three authors: Angela Carter, belonging to the critically acclaimed magic realism, Anne Rice, an immensely popular author of contemplative horror and Christian literature, and Stephenie Meyer, whose Twilight saga has become a global phenomenon of the 21st century. Combining the commercial response of readership with the application of the theory of implied reader, my chapter will attempt to discover the nature of the psychological, gender, social and moral profile of the subject formed through these narratives. This in turn might indicate a return of sorts to conservativism and the traditional understanding of the social roles, which is essentially opposed to the original concept of the werewolf as a threat to the idea of civilisation.

Key Words: Werewolf, genre theory, psychoanalysis, reader-response criticism, duality, morality, sexuality, body.

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The myth of the wolf-man, popularly known in contemporary culture as the werewolf or lycanthrope, is one of the oldest and most widespread concepts in civilisation, mapping and exploring the essential dualism extant within the human being, between the primal and often unconscious urges and the nurtured and groomed cultural qualities of the civilised man. The concept is symbolically represented in the form of a shape-shifting man-beast, and the drama of this duality has been given added intensity due to various and often gruesomely detailed depictions of the very act of the transformational process in folk legends and traditional texts, and through polarising the two shapes in terms of moral absolutes of good and evil.

The archetypal power of the myth is reflected in its potency in contemporary culture, it being almost as omnipresent (especially within the horror genre) as that of the vampire. This chapter strives to illuminate to what extent the basic and more significantly, the subversive, potential of this ancient dilemma is or is not being utilised in popular culture, through referring to works of the so-called high and genre literature, namely those of Angela Carter, Anne Rice and Stephenie Meyer. It attempts to show how certain elements of the myth's content are variously being emphasised, cancelled or simplified in accordance to mass and stereotyped representations, or through serving specific authorial intentions, and how pre-defined readers' expectations can influence this process.

The three authors to be analysed have each worked within a specific cultural matrix and according to the rules of established expectation that characterises it. Angela Carter's short stories and novels function most frequently in the highly exclusive world of the so-called high literature, aimed at the *discerning* reader - *the Intellectual*. This allows the author to move without compromise within a relatively unrestricted space of cultural expression, not bound by popular demand for simplified signifier or abridged metaphor; in effect this has enabled Carter to structure her authorial intentions according to far less demanding fixtures of style and moral acceptability, and to utilise the myth of the wolf-man freely, so as to achieve a very specific and idiosyncratic aim. It could be argued that such writing is most liberally conducive to experimentation within a culture. In fact, the more expressive and imaginative the author belonging to this stratum of literary output, the broader the horizon of expectations, the more acceptable the freedom of artistic expression, and the more exclusive the group. Readers' expectations and the 'rules of the game' drastically change, however, within the realm of genre literature, to which in various degrees both Anne Rice and Stephenie Meyer belong.

Anne Rice is predominantly known for her best-selling *Vampire Chronicles*, a ten novel saga universally acclaimed both for its poetic style and for the contemplative nature of the prose, as well as a series of novels based on Christian faith and exploring the childhood and youth of 'Christ the Lord.' A deeply religious person, Rice has, however, recently chosen to step out of the organised Christian religion due to its staid and unforgiving attitude towards homosexuals, wishing to show her support of this marginalised group to which her son also belongs. This significant and well publicised detail of her biography undoubtedly and necessarily defines her readership and their expectations much more sharply, which in turn might be shape her own authorial response in forging new works. *Wolf Gift* is the latest, and most pertinent, example, notable not only for the complete change of thematic direction, but also for the inclusion of elements that have always been part of her work now broken through a radically different prism, and for its ending openly inviting the reader to expect a sequel.

Lastly, Stephenie Meyer's work, together with J. K. Rowling's, constitutes *the* literary and cultural phenomenon of the 21st century. Having in mind that S. Meyer

sold over 115 million copies of the *Twilight* saga, and influenced countless numbers of teenagers and adolescents the world over, one could claim that her work functions within the most rigidly determined fixtures of genre writing. The readers' expectations are so precisely defined as to virtually demand specific events be incorporated into her authorial selection, regardless of her personal decision as the author. (A pertinent example is the very minor character of Brie Tanner, whose demise has provoked such an outrage of popular demand that Stephenie Meyer has published a separate novella featuring this character as the protagonist in order to appease her fans.) What room is there left then for authorial creativity, in such circumstances? How is this creativity influenced, consciously or unconsciously? The answers to these questions will determine greatly the way the author utilises the myths she has chosen to incorporate into her work.

Within the short story collection *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), Angela Carter utilises the traditional form of fairy tale and folk legend to investigate the contemporary attitudes to the concepts of gender identity and the position women can attain in a male-dominated society. She delves into a range of folktales, most of which featuring humans in various animal forms: a tiger, a lion, a tomcat, and (in several stories) the wolf. With two notable exceptions (in the stories *The Werewolf* and *Wolf-Alice*), these animal forms are all assumed by men, and they tend to represent the stance of power and strength. Angela Carter's proposed reading of these characters varies, however; in certain instances of her story *The Company of Wolves*, in which masculinity is represented as predatory and the shape of the wolf serves to emphasise the animalistic and utilitarian nature of the male.

The female experience, although bound 'within the invisible pentacle of her own virginity,'[1] however, has a subtle and most subversive way of erupting into the story's reality in the form of a female child, armed and knowing, slicing the wolf's paw off, or a young girl who has sacrificed her red shawl to the fire in order to appease the wolf through her sexuality. For, although 'the wolf is carnivore incarnate,'[2] Carter also reminds us that 'wolves are less brave than they seem.'[3] She offers the possibility of battling the wolf-man through adopting the tactics of subterfuge, sexual manipulation and betrayal, in a darkly cynical inversion of the sins women are habitually accused of. The wolf-men of her stories, most dangerous when hairy on the inside, and interested only in the rending of female flesh, are also unwitting victims of their animalistic side, which they cannot control, nor achieve grace through expiation of their evil. Women, then, in Carter's stories, by choosing to be 'nobody's meat,'[4] perform a dual function of liberating themselves and offering the same possibility to the weaker sex. She even offers an explanation of sorts:

> grace could not come to the wolf from its own despair, only
> through some external mediator, so that, sometimes, the beast

will look as if he half welcomes the knife that dispatches him.[5]
The owners of the knives in Angela Carter's stories, unsurprisingly, are the women.

The sexuality of the wolf-man body within her work is often expanded into the grotesque, focusing on the torso and genital area as the exaggerated source of often ambiguous power, dominance and virility. The male body is a map of inconsistencies: 'his nipples are ripe and dark as poison fruit but he's so thin you could count the ribs under his skin,'[6] indicating both the inherently and darkly sexual nature of the wolf-man, and his state of perpetual hunger. The authorial metanarrative cry of: 'His genitals, huge. Ah! Huge'[7] as the wolf-man reveals his naked self to the ancient grandmother, who then dies of fright at the sight of it invokes an almost Rabelaisian caricature of the power the image of the male body is generally being ascribed in modern culture. Angela Carter thus divests the horror of this patriarchal image of its potency for confirmation of the male superiority paradigm and offers a critical and satirical counterpoint to it. Having chosen to adopt sharp, and often scabrous, humour as her own authorial weapon of choice, Carter easily assumes the role of the all-knowing advisor, a topos of folktales, in warning women:

> Before he can become a wolf, the lycanthrope strips stark naked.
> If you spy a naked man among the pines, you must run as if the
> Devil were after you.[8] For naked men in forests can never be up
> to any good.

This sentiment is immediately brought into question when the splendidly muscular, appealingly sweaty and perfectly toned naked body of the teenage werewolf Jacob Black is glimpsed in the forests of the state of Washington in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga. The Native American wolf-men of these four novels belong to a brotherhood of protectors of the sacred grounds often endangered by wandering hordes of vampires. This ancient order is almost exclusively composed of male members, born as ordinary boys who then experience a terrifying and painful change into shape-shifters as they reach adolescence. The reader's entry into this world is offered through the perspective of the sixteen year old Bella, who unwittingly becomes the human part of a tense triangle whose other members are the aforementioned Jacob and the lustrous vampire Edward Cullen.

Aimed at teenage and predominantly female audience, the *Twilight* saga utilises two of the most enduring myths to perpetuate the image of the perfect man - experienced here in the polar opposites of the two male protagonists who in fact combine into a single desirable model of masculinity. Jacob is the son of the land and of the people, he is good with his hands and, though hardly able to articulate

his emotions, he feels them poignantly. The aloof Edward, on the other hand, is eternally young in body but as wise and educated as his real age might indicate. He is eloquent and tender, but incredibly strong and able to control his terrible and dangerous urges. Where Jacob's body is the embodiment of the *Men's Health* cover page ideal and harks back to the beefcake images of the 1950's (and is only too well visualised in the film versions of the books), Edward's translucent and pallid lankiness hiding superhuman abilities invokes the Byronic template of the romantic, tortured, poetic soul. (Significantly, their shifted forms are not explicitly investigated, beyond the generally stereotyped images - thus, for example, the hairiness of the man is being essentially negated in the almost purely wolf-like form of the beast, mirroring the current popular trends of the hairless male beauty ideal.) The wolf-man and the vampire are thereby essentially intertwined into forming the male absolute. The world-wide division of the fans of the saga into Team Jacob or Team Edward, favouring one or the other is thereby divested of any real potentiality for true opposition, and is more a matter of personal cultural leaning created by various popular influences.

Importantly, Stephenie Meyer's werewolves are also expurgated versions of their ancient counterparts. Their nature is revealed as essentially meek and friendly, they are the protectors of the humans and their only natural enemies are the vampires. They have, in fact, come into existence only to serve one purpose - to maintain balance in nature. Although similar visions of the werewolf's purpose have already been utilised in contemporary literature (notably in Whitley Strieber's novel *The Wolfen*), the significant departure is that Meyer's treatment of the mythic figure relinquishes all attempts at producing the effect of horror or terror, thereby also cancelling the essential emotional investment of the reader in the tragic, irreversible and uncontrollable change to occur in such characters. Meyer's werewolf has no designs on innocent females, except those of amorous nature when in human form. He is also not morally tortured into accepting the animal in himself, as the novels posit the necessity for such changes in terms of societal benefits, and cancel out the traditional multi-faceted and two-sided nature of the wolf-man curse, opting instead to use the mythical duality only as a device to further the plot and bring the relationship between Bella and Edward into sharper focus. In today's world of charged ethnic relations, it is also worth considering the question of the presumed and ever more frequently ingrained political correctness within popular culture - would a text connecting members of a Native American tribe with vicious violence or images of brutal corporeal transformation run the risk of being taken as racist? Does cancelling the negative pole of the scale allow for a more acceptable worldview? When approached from this perspective, the *Twilight* saga readily reveals its traditional roots in the predominantly white and patriarchal cult of beauty, health and heterosexual normalcy, thus showing a serious cultural one-sidedness that essentially perpetuates models of binary opposition.

Anne Rice's novel *Wolf Gift* also brings the question of the wolf-man into close relation with the societal concerns, but from a crucially different perspective. Traditionally, the protagonist, the tall and handsome Reuben, nicknamed 'Sunshine Boy,' a journalist with a bright future and a rich family, having been bitten by a werewolf, finds himself going through the terrifying but exhilarating change, which entails the augmentation of his natural abilities and features, combined with an array of new, preternatural ones (superhuman strength, moving at incredible speed and with perfect precision, etc.). The element of the ecstatic is emphasised within the change:

> There was a limitless reservoir of heat inside of him, and now it
> broke out on the surface of his skin as if every hair follicle on his
> body was expanding. He'd never felt such exquisite throbbing
> pleasure, such raw, divine pleasure.[9]

Ultimately the process of form shifting is described as an 'orgasmic frenzy,'[10] indicating what can be read as a sense of impropriety at the core of the process. The positioning of the main character as the centre of a predominantly moral struggle in the search for the deeper meaning of his shape-shifting contributes to the novel's concept of reconfiguring the werewolf myth into an essentially Christian allegory of a man's struggle to do good and resist his bodily urges, or if not capable to do so, utilise them for the best. The change of form in Rice's version of the story is most often provoked by a specific alarm call - the wolf-man becomes supernaturally attuned to the victimisation of the weak in the hands of the corrupt, and is pushed into his animal form in order to punish the evildoers. The animalistic thrill of the kill and the ripping apart of human flesh are crucially structured in the novel against the profoundly humanistic urge to use this immense power to prevent evil from being done. The body corrupted by sin is being torn apart through an almost ritualistic process and by a ritually created beast, which invokes the religious traditions of sin eaters, thus leaving only the element of the wolf-man's involuntary enjoyment in the action as morally questionable.

The novel, thus offers a three-layered notion of victimhood: the initial attack against the protagonist leaves him with a 'gift' of terrible and terrifying potency, creating an inverse version of a Christ-like figure who morally and emotionally suffers through the corruption of his own flesh and soul, and attempts to earn redemption through committing his sins with an expiatory purpose. The attacks on the innocent by the evil are openly structured to mirror the fate of the marginalised and the rejected within society: lone or loose women, kidnapped children, the tortured elderly, and homosexuals. Therefore, the destructive and horrible vengeance performed by the wolf-man upon the evildoers offers even them the chance of being redeemed through suffering.

Anne Rice could therefore be seen to utilise the myth in order to affirm the essential redemptive power of Christianity through reconstituting the wolf-man as the bearer of the patriarchal protective principle, similarly to the aims attributed to the werewolf tribe in the *Twilight* saga. However, the significant difference lies in the fact that she invests her protagonist with the necessary burden of an almost philosophical yet profoundly religious ethical dilemma.

These three instances of contemporary utilisation of the ancient myth clearly show this: the werewolf is a shape-shifter, but so is apparently its legend. If it can serve as the foundation for a feminist fantasy of female dominance, or the battleground of morality against sin, and even as a space for refreshing teenage sources for identification and assignation, its archetypal potency has not abated. Why some gods die while other survive may be a question for the philosophy of religion, but the survival and remythologisation of legends are within the domain of cultural investigation, and in today's world as it is, one question begs further consideration: can the popularity of mythical matrices and their various contemporary incarnations serve us to form a certain safety surrogate within a globalised culture that is characterised by real, unmitigated, brutal violence?

Notes

[1] Angela Carter, *Burning Your Boats: Collected Stories* (London: Vintage, 2006), 215.
[2] Ibid., 212.
[3] Ibid., 211.
[4] Ibid., 219.
[5] Ibid., 214.
[6] Ibid., 217.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 214.
[9] Anne Rice, *The Wolf Gift* (Borzoi Books, Alfred A. Knopf), 142.
[10] Ibid., 144.

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Part 6

Responses to Fear, Horror and Terror

Marketing of Horror: Media Coverage of a Family Drama

Magdalena Hodalska

Abstract
On January 24, 2012, a young mother of a 6-month-old daughter is found unconscious on a pavement. Her pram is empty, there is no trace of the child. The woman cries: Someone kidnapped my baby! A nationwide search begins. The media report it day and night, calling for clues and witnesses of the crime. A climate of horror and fear blankets the small town of Sosnowiec, Poland. People participate in a family drama. After 10 days, the mother shows the place where she's buried her daughter. She confesses the girl died when she had slipped from her mother's hands and hit its head on the floor. The mother was so scared that she hid the baby's body under stones in a park and then orchestrated the kidnapping. She lied out of fear. People are shocked. A victim turns into a villain. The media websites reach records in popularity (visitors, e-mails, impressions). Marketing of horror is fuelled by emotions. The case study represents everything: hope and despair, sympathy, solidarity (at the beginning) and love, finally dread, disgust and loathing demonstrated in the media. This chapter discusses the marketing of horror by exploring the role of the media in reporting tragedy and shaping negative emotions. The content analysis of press reports, websites and special editions of TV programmes was conducted to investigate the dynamics of horror reported by the journalists, the changing images of fear. The chapter focuses on a family drama that could happen anywhere. Horror is not only the domain of fiction, literature and films. It sometimes makes headlines, changing the lives of our next-door neighbours, ordinary people like that loving couple from the little town in the south of Poland.

Key Words: Fear, horror, family drama, baby abduction, accident, emotions, media, marketing.

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On the cold and frosty evening of January 24, 2012, a young woman is found lying unconscious on a pavement in a housing estate in the middle of the city. Her pram, standing next to her is empty, there is no trace of a child. 'Where is she?,' 'Someone kidnapped my baby!'[1] weeping and struggling, the woman is begging the doctors and police officers to look for her 6-month-old daughter[2] Madeleine. Immediately a nationwide search begins. A climate of horror and fear blankets the small town of Sosnowiec, Poland. This is the first act of a drama, which involved thousands of people, stirring emotions and becoming a media frenzy. The so-called 'Maddie's case' still holds the attention of the audience, ensuring bigger circulation and higher ratings.

This chapter discusses the marketing of horror, by exploring the role of media in reporting tragedy and shaping negative emotions. The content analysis of press reports, websites and special editions of TV programmes was conducted to investigate the dynamics of horror reported by the journalists, the changing images of fear. I will juxtapose the reporters' accounts with the websites' comments[3] made by the readers and the viewers, who fervently expressed their opinions, to show how easily the crowd of anonymous Internet users shifts from love to hatred.

I will look closely at the role of media and the other actors of this tragedy - the baby's parents: Kate, aged 22, and Bartholomew, aged 23, and a private detective, who solved the mystery - presenting the family drama the way it was presented to the public. With the same dynamic and the same questions we asked ourselves, feeling solidarity, distrust, anger, while reading, watching and getting involved in the following acts of the drama.

1. ACT I: Love, Compassion, Solidarity, Help, Fear

On the evening news the police and reporters called for any clues or witnesses of the kidnapping, and the father appealed for help on Facebook. Internet users expressed their solidarity and tried to comfort the parents: 'Hold on, beloved ones, God won't let anything bad happen to her.'[4] Soon the appeals for help were on every news and social media website, organised groups of Internauts printed and posted leaflets with Maddie's picture. The photos were almost everywhere: on pillars, bus stops, stores, airports, etc. A reward was being offered by the police and private individuals, who mobilised others through social media.

The Internet declarations of help were followed by those filled with fear: 'Every mother should have pepper spray in her bag.'[5] The next day young mothers arranged in pairs or walked in groups.[6] A psychosis of fear blanketed the town. Bartholomew said his wife was attacked by a hooded man.

The media business knows that we all have a 'pleasurable fascination with crime,'[7] as Elihu Katz stated. Koetsenruijter and Vanderveen argued that crime stories do not only give information about specific incidents of crime, but they also provide an explanatory framework on how to make sense of everyday life.[8] The ways media use rhetorical devices to report crime and the way a society gives meaning to it can be described in terms of framing.

My study is in line with the framing theory, founded by Erving Goffman, and skillfully developed by the Dutch scholars. Koetsenruijter and Vanderveen have considered frames as the means that media use to construct the picture of victims and offenders.[9] According to Goffman, 'schemata of interpretation' allow individuals or groups 'to perceive, identify, and label'[10] events, thus rendering meaning, organising experiences and guiding actions. 'By using specific rhetorical devices (frames) we are encouraged to interpret words, phrases, or visual images, as well as stories in general, in a specific way.'[11] I will show what (rhetorical)

means the media used in 'Maddie's case' to construct guilt and innocence and how quickly the frames changed.

Tabloids framed the tragedy as a mushy love story, presenting Kate and Bart *as lovebirds*, living in tenderness and harmony. They met in church, he was an altar boy, she served the mass. Their first date in Church, catholic congregation, photos showing them in the frame of innocence: they are holding hands, hugging, posing next to the crib… Bart and Kate were portrayed as a loving couple and that offered all the possibilities for identification. This is how framing works.

'Such a serene and loving family,'[12] their neighbours recalled. The mawkish narrative of domestic life soon changed into a narrative of crime.[13] Three days after the abduction Kate appealed to the kidnapper: 'Give me back my Maddie. After all she was our pearl.'[14]

2. ACT II: Distrust, Doubts, Suspicion

A private detective, Krzysztof Rutkowski, hired by Bart's parents, entered the stage. The detective was known for many conflicts with the police and his controversial methods, which sometimes proved efficient. He knew the media and cooperated with a tabloid. Soon he fed the press with the identikit of a hooded man, who supposedly abducted the child. During a press conference Maddie's family appealed for help. In every TV studio there was a constant rotation of experts on criminology, psychology, etc. The atmosphere of fear and suspicion winded up. There were more and more doubts.

Telefear[15] always has the same characteristics: for several days the viewers 'spent inordinate amounts of time becoming experts' on police investigation and baby abduction issues, 'using the remote control to go from one channel to another, picking up the latest developments, criticizing the talking heads.'[16]

The Internet users led their own inquiry. Readers, viewers, and watchers 'have a new sense of empowerment,' because the Internet enables consumers to express their opinions and immediately expect a response, 'instead of being mere passive receivers, they can participate, (…) at the click of the send button.'[17] News consumers use media websites as platforms for the most outrageous views.

Crime news helps us to establish our ideas about what is normal or deviant and this could explain our fascination with crime stories, according to Ettema and Glasser: 'Every time we read or see news about crime we establish our norms; thus, crime news also functions as a mean of establishing coherence in society or within groups in that society.'[18] Individuals reaffirm their membership of society by what is called by Durkheim 'episodes of shared outrage.'[19] The audience reaction to 'Maddie's case' is a striking example of such shared outrage.

In a TV programme, Kate kept saying: 'Maddie was so confident, she was so cheerful.' The fact that she used the past tense was pointed out by the viewers: 'She knows.'[20] One tabloid asked on the front page: 'What secret is she hiding?'[21] There were no secrets on the Internet. Before the girl's disappearance her father

used to share his life copiously on Facebook. Now FB fans shared their suspicions which were soon reported by the press. 'Bart is fascinated with horrors & thrillers, he stated that on his FB Profile, next to a photo taken in a cemetery: The man is wearing a *black coat and holding* Death's *Scythe*.'[22] The tabloids presented their wedding photos: Kate and Bart posing with weapons.[23]

Seven days ago Bart was holding his baby, now he is holding a Scythe / a gun. There could not be a more direct signal of a changing frame. Koetsenruijter and Vanderveen called this frame 'The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing.'[24] The visual and verbal devices change to reinforce the idea that the victims are indeed the villains.

Keep turning the pages or visiting different websites and you would see Bart sitting on a grave, goggling. The caption read: 'Lycans - vampires are nothing compared to us.' This heading made a super new version of the story: the father secretly murdered the child, believing that this would change him into werewolf.[25] This was the readers' story, they asked: 'Lycans? Who are they?'[26] Lycans, vampires, wedding photos with guns, cemetery casting with a death scythe, horror - those are the verbal and visual means used to construct the picture of villains in the frame of guilt.

According to Koetsenruijter and Vanderveen, these simple contrasts - victim and offender, baby and scythe - 'make a storyline clear' and help media consumers to define general ideas about good and evil.[27] People can easily identify with the victim (or the mourning family) and contrast themselves with the offenders.[28] Their reactions can take different forms, 'attitudes to punishment and sentencing decisions'[29] among others. The change of frame is followed by the violent shift of emotions.

3. ACT III: Shock

Shortly before midnight (February 2nd) Rutkowski informed the media that Maddie was dead, and her mother indicated the place, where she had buried the body. According to Kate, it was supposed to be laid under the tree by the riverbank. There the detective awaited the police and journalists. He gave them a tape with the recorded confession of Kate. The mother was taken into custody, but there was still no trace of the infant's body. The police search lasted for another 24 hours, while viewers 'joined the presenters in dismay.'[30]

A commercial news channel TVN 24 in a special edition of a morning programme presented footage filmed by the detective, who used a hidden camera (he got from the tabloid) to record the confession of Kate. The mother was sobbing: 'We have this high doorstep in the bedroom. I was going out, she was in a blanket, in all this…' - 'She slipped from your hands?' - asked the detective. Kate only confirmed, nodding her head: 'I even don't know when. The blanket was so slippery.'[31]

'The woman's description is very drastic, that's why we have decided to show only 15 seconds,'[32] this is how TVN explained their outrageous decision to

broadcast the material meant for a prosecutor. They did not have to show this video. It had no news value, but 'a sense of looking through a keyhole.'[33] Although the reporting of crime involves situations that 'may be seen as invading an individual's privacy,'[34] nevertheless when the reporters enter the intimate sphere, the audience experience something similar to pornography (of suffering, grief, etc.). Russel calls to mind that the picture which creates in the beholder the feeling of 'here I should not be,' ought never to be taken.[35] But even if it has been taken, it certainly should not be broadcast on a morning show!

The words would suffice. The information itself was so gruesome, there was no need to zoom in on the woman's tears. The commercial news channel is a part of the entertainment industry, paying its way 'through selling advertising, not selling the news,'[36] but emotions appealing to a large audience. By showing this video, TVN24 committed a glaring abuse of Maddie's family and Kate herself. After their morning show, the detective had no compunction against broadcasting it during the live press conference before the cameras of every Polish TV station. The footage was on every channel, every hour on the hour we watched the sobbing mother.

Later that day, TVN reporters accused the detective of immoral behavior, arguing it was unethical that he recorded Kate's confession on the hidden camera. 'But you were the first to put it on the air!'[37] - was his reaction. At that time most of the media acted like tabloid papers.

After another 24 hours, Kate showed the real place where she had buried her baby daughter. In a corner of a ruined building in a municipal park, the police found the infant's body, hidden under stones and leaves and covered by snow.

'How can a mother leave her baby's body like garbage?!'[38] asked the shocked Internauts. 'I'm watching and I'm weeping ☹ Poor little thing, and a "mother" I wish all the worst… Those fake tears? What was all that for? How could you kill your own baby?;/;/.'[39] Sadness mixed up with indignation.

4. ACT IV: Anger, Fury, Hatred, Revenge, Contempt, Lynch

Very quickly shock and disbelief turned into anger and fury: 'Perfidious liars and I felt so sorry for them once.'[40] Internauts engulfed in self-pity: 'I feel sorry for all those people who devotedly engaged in searching.'[41] One tabloid's front page had the headline: 'You deceived us all! What kind of mother are you?!'[42] The deceived readers and their ego were far more important than the confirmed information about the child's death.

The atmosphere of a lynch mob dominated the Internet forums: Death for death!!!. Next to the insults and abuses - 'carcass once called a mother'[43] - in the comments one can read the thirst for vengeance and the demand of a penalty: 'Hang her!'[44]

Newspapers wrote about the threats of mob law.[45] The media fanned the flames, and even if some reporters tried to put out emotions, the Internauts refused any explanations: 'Requiem for the little soul of Madzia (*), and her rag of a

mother should freeze over there, I would pour the water over her myself.'[46] The most terrifying were the comments, in which tenderness and faith mixed up with loathing and hatred, like: 'the soul of little Maddie will be peaceful, when her mother ends up in hell where she belongs.'[47] *Public centurions*[48] had no mercy, no limits, no shame of hatred.

Internauts claimed they had the right to feel anger, because they had been involved in searching and help. The reporters claimed they were not feeding on human suffering, because they had been invited by Maddie's family to participate in the drama. The cameras were rolling, showing the place where the police found the infant's body. From the early morning hours, people brought flowers, teddy bears, dolls and candles there. Touching scenes came as no surprise. After all TV makes heavy use of melodramatic cypher (empty pram, tearful lullaby) in its representations of reality: 'It recounts events as tales between forces of good and evil.'[49] This time a tale of horror became a story of a contemporary Medea.

As Nicola Goc stated, mothers have been receiving bad press since mythological Medea killed her children.[50] 'Maddie's case' is another high profile narrative of the evil Medea. In the frame of guilt Kate was portrayed as a selfish, depressive psychopath. Her neighbours recalled: 'she wanted to get rid of the child.'[51]

5. ACT V. Grief and Anger

Dolls, candles, flowers piled up in the park, that became a stage for a morality play, allowing people crowding there to express their grief and anger in front of the camera. Every TV station had its broadcasting car parked next to the ruins covered with toys, which resembled a spontaneously founded shrine. Short pieces of poetry could be found among teddy bears and Maddie's photos. Love (and hatred) Cards saying: 'This is the place, where Maddie was buried, killed by her own mother;'[52] or 'I loved you, mummy, and you killed me and left me like a piece of garbage.'[53]

Bartholomew declared he knew nothing about the accident, but he never stopped loving Kate. Reporters asked: 'What did you tell your wife? What will you tell her?,' inviting us again to gaze at private, intimate pain. The pornography of suffering turned to the pornography of grief.

Kate was still in custody when hundreds came to the funeral of her daughter. During the ceremony the mourners were taking photos of the bereaved family - the most recognisable family in Poland at that time.

It may come as no surprise in a world of mediated voyeurism, where we get our pleasure from watching other people's lives. As Clay Calvert said, this is one of the social forces fuelling voyeurism.[54]

6. Act VI. Curiosity/ Voyeurism

Kate was released (although the inquiry still went on), the couple left their hometown. The detective offered them his flat, but still remained the main source

of information, regularly giving the press something new to print. The magazines wrote about Kate's suicidal attempts and psychiatric observation. The tabloids offered a detailed newsletter about Kate & Bart changing images (new haircuts), their shopping lists and romantic candlelit dinners. The main characters of this necro-show seemed to like it. Posing at a conference, Kate asked the photojournalists to wait until she applied lipstick.[55]

Kate and Bart have become celebrities, or more precisely: celetoids, enjoying a hyper-visibility in the tabloids.[56] According to Daniel Boorstin, celebrities are the human pseudo-events, made by all of us, who willingly read about them, who like to see them on television, and talk about them to our friends.[57]

Maddie's parents, captured in the voyeur's gaze, have become something like public property. We say 'Kate' and 'Bart' as if they were our relatives, 'Kate & Bart,' like 'Bonnie & Clyde.' The tabloids have special links on their websites: 'see, what's new at Maddie's parents,'[58] sounds similar to 'see, what's new at Big Brother's house,' and is reminiscent of the poetics of reality shows.

We can observe, how this crime story 'transmutes into new kinds of stories, into mass-produced entertainment.'[59] Kate & Bart appeared on a very popular talk show, to speak about their feelings and how much they miss their baby, especially during the evening bathing time.[60] The book about Kate's life 'Forgive me. Faith, Hope, Love'[61] sells well, offering the readers color and emotions of somebody else's life. The film about the 'Maddie's case', entitled 'Branded,'[62] will surely receive a lot of attention in the media, which played a significant role in dramatising the drama. It seems like a never-ending story, evoking the most primitive of our fears.

People felt deceived by Kate's lies, but also by the media frames they had believed in. The change of frame was followed by the violent shift of sentiments. The marketing of horror is fuelled by emotions. When the spiral of emotions winds up, the demons - *slumbering* in the pit of new media - wake up, revealing many faces of fear.

Notes

[1] PG, 'Someone stole Maddie', *Super Express*, 26 January 2012, 6.

[2] Witold Gałązka, 'Seven Days without Her', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 1 February 2012, 16.

[3] All the comments, quoted in the chapter, are excerpted from the Internet forums on the media websites: 'TVN24.pl' (television), http://www.tvn24.pl/wideo/z-anteny/detektyw-rutkowski-o-odnalezieniu-pakunku-w-sosnowcu-tvn24,306657.html, 'Onet.pl' (news website) http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/sprawa-madzi,temat.html, 'YouTube', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Odjpz1akZDQ,

'Fakt.pl'   (tabloid),   http://www.fakt.pl/tag/artykuly/tag.asp?Strona=2&tag=polroczna-Madzia. All accessed May 30, 2012.

[4] Ewa, 'Fakt.pl' (26 January 2012).

[5] MatkaPolka, 'Fakt.pl' (26 January 2012).

[6] Jacek Madeja, 'If She Went Out in the Street Here, They Would Harm Her', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 3 February 2012, 6.

[7] Elihu Katz, 'What Makes Crime News', *Media, Culture and Society* 9 (1987): 57.

[8] Willem Koetsenruijter and Gabry Vanderveen, 'The Popular Virgin and the Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: A Case Study of the Imaging of Victims and Offenders', in *Bending Opinion: Essays on Persuasion in the Public Domain*, edS. Ton van Haaften, Henrike Jansen, Jaap de Jong and Willem Koetsenruijter (Amsterdam: Leiden University Press, 2011), 241.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 21.

[11] Koetsenruijter and Vanderveen, 'Popular Virgin and Wolf in Sheep's Clothing', 241.

[12] Evening news programme *Fakty* TVN, 27 January 2012.

[13] As it is in every good True Crime Story, see: Anita Biressi, *Crime, Fear, and the Law in True Crime Stories* (Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 19.

[14] Evening news programme *Fakty* TVN, 29 January 2012.

[15] Thomas L. Dumm, 'Telefear: Watching War News', in *Politics of Everyday Fear*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 307-331.

[16] Ibid., 325.

[17] Nick Russell, *Morals and the Media: Ethics in Canadian Journalism* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 213.

[18] Koetsenruijter and Vanderveen, 'Popular Virgin and Wolf in Sheep's Clothing', 247.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Anonymous, 'TVN24.pl' (27 January 2012).

[21] *Fakt*, 29 January 2012, 1.

[22] Gałązka, 'Seven Days without Her', 16.

[23] Bart later explained that he had been a member of a history reconstruction group, but no one cared to listen.

[24] Koetsenruijter and Vanderveen, 'Popular Virgin and Wolf in Sheep's Clothing', 251.

[25] Gałązka, 'Seven Days without Her', 16.

[26] Anonymous, 'TVN24.pl' (31 January 2012).

[27] Koetsenruijter and Vanderveen, 'Popular Virgin and Wolf in Sheep's Clothing', 249.

[28] Ibid., 251.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Deborah Jermyn, *Crime Watching: Investigating Real Crime TV* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 145.

[31] Morning show, TVN 24, 3 February 2012.

[32] Ibid.

[33] See: Russell, *Morals and Media*, 146.

[34] Ibid., 141.

[35] Ibid., 146.

[36] Ibid., 19.

[37] News programme *Fakty po Faktach* TVN, 4 February 2012.

[38] bajadera18, 'TVN24.pl' (4 February 2012).

[39] TheNikal, 'YouTube', (4 February 2012).

[40] Anonymous, 'TVN24.pl' (4 February 2012).

[41] niuniaNJ, 'YouTube' (4 February 2012).

[42] Super Express, 4 February 2012, 1.

[43] WASYL1479, 'YouTube' (5 February 2012).

[44] Monia1, 'YouTube' (5 February 2012).

[45] Madeja, 'They Would Harm Her', 6.

[46] Isabel, 'YouTube' (6 February 2012).

[47] Margaretka, 'YouTube' (6 February 2012).

[48] Biressi, *Crime, Fear, and the Law in True Crime Stories*, 88.

[49] Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries; Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 49-50.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Renata Cius, 'She Didn't Want That Child', *Fakt*, 7 February 2012, 5.

[52] Małgorzata Święchowicz, 'A Quiet Girl', *Wprost*, 13 February 2012, 21.

[53] Anna Szulc, 'There's No Mercy for the Monster', *Wprost*, 26 February 2012, 34.

[54] Clay Calvert, *Voyeur Nation: Media, Privacy, and Peering in Modern Culture* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2004), 74.

[55] Martyna Bunda, 'The Mother and Her Other Roles', *Polityka*, 11 April 2012, 25.

[56] The term was coined by Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktions Books, 2001).

[57] David Schmid, *Natural Born Celebrities: Serial Killers in American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 20.

[58] For ex. *Super Express* tabloid website, http://www.se.pl/rodzice-madzi,119145/.

[59] Biressi, *Crime, Fear, and the Law in True Crime Stories*, 21.

[60] TV talk show *Rozmowy w Toku* TVN, 29 March 2012.

[61] Izabela Bartosz, *Wybaczcie Mi: Wiara, Nadzieja, Miłość* (Warszawa: G+J, 2012), a book written by a journalist Izabela Bartosz strongly criticised by her colleagues and branded *hyena*.
[62] *Napiętnowani*, a film produced by detective K. Rutkowski.

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Witnessing Terror: Graphic Responses to 9/11

Katharina Donn

Abstract
One of the most shocking instances of large-scale terrorism in recent history, and, simultaneously, the one most immediately distributed by a global media culture, the attacks on September 11th, 2001 necessitate considering anew the ethics of witnessing such events. How can cultural expressions which respond to such an act of terror - traumatic as it is to the individuals directly involved, but moreover firmly embedded into a discourse of national trauma on a more collective scale - be assessed as regards the role of the witness, the construction of alterity, and their underlying aesthetic and ethical stance in relation to broader socio-cultural and political discourses about the attacks? In my chapter, I propose to approach this problem through the prism of cartoons and sequential art. Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* exemplarises one tendency here that foregrounds the generic potential of the graphic format to provide a specific meta-discursive space for reassembling meaning and identity, in ways anticipated in models of cultural ecology and a politicised aesthetic. The experience of 9/11 leaves a shattering impact in these visually hybrid and intertextually charged cartoon panels; through this collapse, though, a form of witnessing emerges which meta-fictionally reflects on the limits of representing experiences of terror, re-evaluates prior certainties, and provides a position that re-integrates emotional upheaval and critical distance in the perspective of the traumatised author-protagonist. Other responses in the form of cartoons, and notably superhero comics such as the *The Amazing Spiderman* 9/11 special edition, form a contrastive foil to this self-reflexive approach in that they do not so much acknowledge as displace the repercussions of the experience of terror. By sublimating it into an unspeakable beyond, the rhetoric of heroism, unity and strength surfaces and forms a turn towards redemption after the initial shock, which is further enforced by a clear construct of the terrorists' absolute alterity.

Key Words: 9/11, cultural and individual trauma, identity and alterity, ethics of witnessing, cartoons.

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1. Introduction

The terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, seemed to occur on two simultaneous levels from the moment the first plane hit its target: first, inescapably, their impact on the reality of early-morning Manhattan, Washington and Pennsylvania, causing the death and injury of thousands, left an even greater number of eyewitnesses and rescue workers traumatised; on a different - and more

global - scale, though, 9/11 became the epitome of the ways in which large-scale terrorism becomes entangled in mass media cultures. It is conspicuous to note that both forms of witnessing, seeing with one's own eyes and the television spectacle, failed to provide the dumbfounded New Yorkers with any conceptual frame to absorb what they saw:

> Like many others, I went inside to turn on the television, trying to find sense in what I was seeing. I could not assimilate it, either live or on TV. As in a sports stadium, I watched both at the same time.[1]

Taken from the very first moments of shock, this two-fold perspective on the 9/11 terrorist attacks offers a prism for the events' threatening double-fold potential to become a trauma in the individual mind, and to impact decisively on the cultural and political environment - in short, to turn into an individual trauma as well as its more hazily defined cultural counterpart. In the following, I will explore the ways in which a very specific form of cultural expression, namely the graphic genres, react to this double challenge and the issues raised by discourses of trauma, such as the failure of understanding, the collapse and reconstructions of identity and alterity, and question in particular the aesthetics and ethics of artistic representation this provokes. Moreover, though, I will focus on the processes of negotiating the meaning of these attacks on a socio-political and cultural level into which these cartoons enter, and which form the core of the dynamics of cultural trauma as understood here. With two very distinct examples as my starting point – Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*, and J. Michael Straczynski's *The Amazing Spiderman*, I will attempt to show how these can either become a meta-discursive space of re-assembling meaning and identity after the impact of trauma, or embark on the opposite path and tie into narratives of redemption, of heroism and catharsis. Both cases, therefore, are exemplary of the different stances such graphic modes might take in the context of terrorism and trauma, and each is a representation of a highly pervasive, but mutually contradictory, strand of remembering 9/11, as they foreground the easily marginalised potential of the imaginative sphere to engage in processes of remembering and constitution of meaning in the aftermath of terror and loss.

2. Trauma and the Sphere of the Aesthetic: Imaginative Approaches to 9/11

When Derrida observes about the convention to name the attacks on September 11 2001 by the bare date, 9/11, that 'the fact that we perhaps have no concept and no meaning available to us to name in any other way this "thing" that has just happened, this supposed "event"'[2] he expresses exactly the disarticulatory impact of trauma that has been its hallmark since Pierre Janet's distinction between narrative and traumatic memories.[3] Trauma, defined in its most sober clinical

form, is commonly understood as an event, either experienced or witnessed, that involves the occurrence of death or an immediate threat to one's psychical or physical integrity, and leaves the victim in a condition of intense helplessness and distress, often suffering intrusive and uncontrollable recollections.[4] Its repercussions, however, go far beyond this individual pathology and make trauma a cultural paradigm. Compellingly formulated by Lyotard as 'un état de mort dans la vie de l'ésprit'[5] the incommensurate shock and numbing force of trauma have since become the central crux for any thought interested in the relation between individual trauma and artistic (or other) cultural expression.

However, in a contemporary context it appears highly dubious whether this state of shocked silence really is adequate, be it as analogy or ethical imperative, in a cultural context teeming with narratives of trauma and terror - or on a more fundamental level, to which extent the individual pathology can at all be drawn on to explain the dynamics of cultural trauma, as has been frequently taken for granted ever since Sigmund Freud's rewriting of the history of Judaism according to the psychoanalytical logic of repression and return.[6] In contrast to such models, I suggest to complement certain analogous manifestations on a broader collective level, such as shock, displacement and the crumbling of a previously fixed cultural identity, by acknowledging one crucial difference: cultural trauma is, like cultural memory, an exteriorised phenomenon and thus manifests itself also in what Alexander terms a 'spiral of signification'[7] in which the events' symbolic impact takes effect on top of the actual damage and suffering caused; its nature as a cultural trauma, therefore, is subject to negotiations and conflicts in the public sphere and the media which enter into a struggle over the adequate form of remembering and affective stance to be adopted. The dynamics of cultural trauma are part of the exteriorised, cultural processes of remembering in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks; the responses of shock, fear or outrage become, on this cultural level, deeply intertwined with political power relations, ideological discourses and media imagery; it becomes a discourse in addition to its pathological impact, so that typical elements of trauma - be it the impression of unspeakability or the desire for redemption - are not only symptoms, but also part of a rhetoric that may be dependent on political motivations or group interests.

Imaginative forms of expression, be they literary or graphic, enter into such processes of negotiating meaningful attribution. While they explore individual suffering and the fundamental question of the representability of trauma, they can therefore also engage in the dynamics of cultural trauma in a meaningful way, and allow to specify the cultural significance of the aesthetic sphere - as conceptualised, for instance, by Hubert Zapf in his model of cultural ecology or Isobel Armstrong's *The Radical Aesthetic* - for the context of terror and trauma. Despite differences in detail and methodological approach, both authors agree that the aesthetic sphere in general terms in Armstrong's model, or the literary more specifically in Zapf's, is culturally empowering in that it allows for creative

experiment and renewal without being bound to the pragmatic conventions of everyday discourse; within the often simultaneously highly emotional, and rigid, discourses of cultural trauma, each author accentuates aspects which appear particularly productive here. Armstrong, by emphasising the tolerance of difference and non-closure as well as the social and political nature of such creative struggles for re-assessment and knowledge, helps to understand the aesthetic as a form of thinking rather than a detached privilege, and foregrounds the importance of experiment and play which especially after 9/11 appear in striking contrast to the allegedly unquestionable patriotism and shock engendered by the attacks. Zapf, on the other hand, opens the view onto the culturally marginalised, on alterity, which literature gives voice to and re-integrates into a more multidimensional model of cultural reality.[8]

The traumatised inability to grasp 9/11 therefore gives way not to definition and closure, but transforms into a multilayered process; Instead of providing solace; 'the work of fiction cauterizes the wound with uncomfortable questions and unflinching reflection'[9] Ulrich Baer writes in his introduction to a collection of short stories, and it is this potential that I will explore in the following from the perspective of cartoons and comix.

3. 9/11 as Cultural Trauma? *The Amazing Spiderman* and Narratives of Redemption

In the culture of mourning and memory that emerged after the attacks in 2001, there has been one tendency which proved very pervasive and which, moreover, sheds light on the ways in which 9/11 was negotiated within discourses of cultural trauma.

> The attacks of September 11, 2001, changed our world forever,
> and they brought loss and grief on a scale we had never known.
> But the aftermath of the attacks also revealed stories of heroism
> and sacrifice that inspired us all.[10]

The experience of terrorism, as this quote demonstrates in exemplary manner, was converted from the shock and horror prevailing in the immediate aftermath into an occasion of renewed strength and unity. That this, to many, seemed more a postulate than a description of the national mood is plausible enough, but what this displacement of the actually newly revealed vulnerability into an almost cathartic moment shows is the closeness of a great part of the 'official' 9/11 discourse to the so-called 'narratives of redemption'[11]; these in LaCapra's definition, form a specific response to cultural trauma in that they affirm excess instead of critical thought or emotional complexity, and tend to move events terror into the proximity of the sublime.

The implications of this become manifest when considering shortly one mainstream graphic response to 9/11, namely J. Michael Straczynski's *The Amazing Spiderman*. In a linear narrative typical for the genre of superhero comics, but conspicuous for its formal coherence when regarded from the perspective of trauma literature, Spiderman moves through the immediate aftermath of 9/11 in Manhattan in a couple of clear stages: at first the moment of shock registers, in which the quandary of the superhero cartoon as response to terror becomes immediately obvious; as the scene of destruction, Ground Zero, is not out of place in such a cartoon at all, there is need for text to mimic typical trauma discourse in a simplified form, namely the collapse of understanding - 'Some things are beyond words. Beyond Comprehension' - that develops from a spontaneous impression on this first page into an ethical imperative in the course of the novel. The cartoon continues to depict scenes of rescue and grief, and eventually arrives at its central conclusion: the superheroes bow to the allegedly even greater heroic powers of the humans living through this catastrophe, to 'You, the heroes of this moment, chosen out of history,' who turn away in unity from the scene of destruction to face the reader with looks of determination and earnestness.

One central observation to be made from this concerns the role of the superhero as witness of terror, as Cooper and Atkinson point out in their insightful analysis; he becomes a 'transcendent witness'[12] who, speaking always in the first form plural, unifies superheroes and humans alike in their one response of strength and heroism, already merging with preparations for war; what is thus implicitly excluded are the individual differences in a prolonged work of mourning, to an extent that marks a traumatised collapse as weakness. While the unity of response here therefore relies on an exclusive logic, the more explicit construction of alterity, concerning the terrorists, equally feeds on the conventions of the genre. In the binary opposition between 'madmen' and sane humanity, underlined by imageries of light and darkness, the dichotomies on which of terrorism feeds and the conventional dichotomies of the superhero comic mutually reinforce each other, and lead towards closure and the preclusion of differing reflection or affect. The superhero comic as response to terror therefore proves to deny the space of experiment, contradiction and integration of contraries which models of a culturally committed aesthetic postulate, and manifests a different approach towards representing terror: as fear, shock and loss engender strength and hope, 9/11 is acknowledged as cultural trauma but interpreted in a way which hinders the traumatic fragmentation of meaning and identity from unfolding.

4. Counter-Narratives: Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*

Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* is, in effect, a counter-discourse both on a formal as well as on a discursive level to the cartoon just described, as it productively combines the emotional upheaval in the aftermath of the attacks and critical reflection. With its fragmented, oversized panels and disruptive

temporalities, it structurally mimics the pathology of trauma rather than the convention of the orderly boxes of comic books. Quite in contrast the cartoon just discussed, it emphasises the vulnerability and disorientation of the individual - here always with intra-generationally embedded - over the rhetoric of war and patriotism that are so prevalent in the above.

One pivotal image that recurs one each of the comix panels crystallises several important observations for our context here, namely the vision of the glowing WTC tower before collapse. 'Burned onto the insides of my eyelids'[13] and detached from the images spread in the media, this symbolises, first and foremost, the absolute subjectivity and individuality of trauma, that hauntingly returns and, through its insisting repetitions, pierces the linearity of time. This image also, however, plays with the complexity of meanings which might be attributed to such an initially incomprehensible event as it transforms from a mimetic depiction of the collapsing tower, to an ironic, visual analogy of a cigarette in the toxic smoke panel, or comes to symbolise the height of fall into economic difficulty. It is therefore precisely the complexity of meaning, which emerges in rather a riotous fashion from the panels in general as any centripetal core of what was previously taken for granted dissolves into the struggle to re-constitute identity and meaning.

This connection between individual trauma and associative richness is developed further on a more narrative level of these fantastically multilayered panels that is particularly relevant here, namely in the intertextuality of *In the Shadow of No Towers*. In the face of a disturbed national and urban imaginary in which the almost iconic images of the burning towers block out other tropes, Spiegelman experiments with ways in which such formats as historic cartoons can evaluate and constitute anew cultural expression. Striking, for instance, is the transformation of the anarchic but heart-warming Katzenjammer Kids into the 'Tower Twins.'[14] With the burning towers on their heads they lose their formerly cheerful natures and run screaming for help, only to end up with skulls for heads beneath smouldering ruins. The integration of these cartoons, in the end, turns out to be twofold: they provide a semiotic and iconographic system with which to approach the protagonist's trauma, but also strike a more wistful note - these figures are shocked out of innocence when confronted with global terrorism.

While such a fragmented, intertextual aesthetic is not out of order in trauma narratives in general, what particularly marks out Spiegelman's work is the fact that, while respecting and foregrounding trauma in its individual impact and representational force, it is also a snappy and ironic political satire on the political aftermath of the terrorist attacks. I would like to analyse this with an eye to the construction of identity and alterity suggested here, as this tends to be a major concern within the dynamics of cultural trauma in general and in the context of 9/11 is particularly controversial. In essence, and that is striking in 9/11 memory cultures, the line between self and other appears to blur here. 'Equally terrorized by Al-Qaeda and by his own Government,' the protagonist enters into a kind of

inverted relation to Arab culture, growing a beard in a way that in the aftermath of 9/11 was usually associated with Muslim fundamentalists - 'I grew a beard while Afghans were shaving of theirs.'[15] In a similar crossing of the boundaries constructed in post-9/11 political axis-of-evil rhetoric, it becomes clear in hindsight in the comic supplement that the struck 'Tower Twins,' hitherto icons of vulnerability and shock, in their earlier life as early-20th-century cartoon rascals count blowing up a podium on July 4th among their heroic deeds.

In these and many other respects, Spiegelman's cartoon panels prove a prime example of the meta-reflexive space for re-constituting the meaning and knowledge shattered with the Towers. As they insist on the complexity of meaning, and establish a network between the individual trauma, crises of cultural expression, and political satire, these comic panels counteract the redemptive approaches sketched above and dynamise thought in the face of large-scale violence. 9/11 here exerts a clearly traumatising impact, both on the individual and on the force of cultural expression - but it does so with a twist: neither reverting into the excesses of redemption, nor imploding into aesthetics of silence, *In the Shadow of No Towers* exteriorises the struggle for signification that marks the processes of cultural trauma.

5. Conclusion: Trauma and the Graphic Mode

The medium of graphic, sequential art therefore offers itself to highly different responses to the attacks on September 11th, 2001, but also provides insights into the relation of the medium to the representation of terror and trauma. While the orderly aesthetic employed in *The Amazing Spiderman* subsumes the experience of global terrorism into a comic book logic, such an integration into the generic conventions of the superhero cartoon necessarily falls short of voicing the complexity of contexts, underlying fears and confusion that the 9/11 attacks stirred up, and rather lends itself to the simplistic and slightly militaristic rhetoric usually associated with the so-called 'war on terror.' In contrast, it is through the subversion of genre and sequentiality that Spiegelman's outsized cartoon panels more productively engage with the contexts of terror and trauma. 'I never loved those arrogant boxes, but now I miss behind the rascals, icons of a more innocent age'[16] Spiegelman observes and thus summarises his approach: leaving behind traditional comic formats with the WTC towers, he adapts genre conventions to a trauma aesthetic of fragmentation and struggle for representation. Between the visual and the verbal, his cartoon interacts with the mediality of 9/11 memory culture and foreground the productivity of the comic book form as trauma literature: drawing on typical features of the cartoon such as emphasised by Will Eisner or William Kuskin, *In the Shadow of No Towers* emphasises the reader's imaginative involvement and brings to the surface the interplay of material and literary forms in a metafictionally critical way; reading the cartoon panels becomes an open,

conceptual activity that enters into the struggle for meaning and signification triggered by cultural trauma in a particularly engaging way.[17]

Notes

[1] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 237.

[2] Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas an Jacques Derrida* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2003), 86.

[3] Pierre Janet, *L'état Mental des Hystériques: Etudes sur Divers Symptomes Hystériques* (Ed. S. Nicolas. L'Harmattan, 1931), 81.

[4] American Psychiatric Association, ed, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2000), 463.

[5] Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger et «Les Juifs»* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1988), 51.

[6] Sigmund Freud, *Der Mann Moses und die Monotheistische Religion*, in *Sigmund Freud, Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Anna Freud, Bd. XVI (London: Imago, 1969)

[7] Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 12.

[8] Hubert Zapf, *Literatur als Kulturelle Ökologie: Zur Kulturellen Funktion Imaginativer Texte an Beispielen des Amerikanischen Romans* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002), and Isobel Armstrong, *The Radical Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

[9] Ulrich Baer, ed., *110 Stories. New York Writes after September 11* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 3.

[10] Allison Blais and Lynn Rasic, *A Place of Remembrance: Official Book of the September 11 Memorial* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2001), foreword by Michael Bloomberg.

[11] Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 155.

[12] Simon Cooper and Paul Atkinson, 'Graphic Implosion: Politics, Time, and Value in Post-9/11 Comics', in *Literature after 9/11*, eds. Ann Keniston and Joanne Follansbee Quinn (New York: Routledge, 2008), 61.

[13] Art Spiegelman, *In the Shadow of No Towers* (New York: Random House, 2004); Preface.

[14] Ibid., panel 5.

[15] Ibid., panel 2.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequentiality: Principles and Practices from the Legendary Cartoonist* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008); and William Kuskin, 'Introduction: Continuity in Literary Form and History', *English Language Notes* 46, No. 2 (2008): 5-17.

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Manipulating Empathic Responses in Horror Fiction

Doreen Triebel

Abstract

Horror fiction has enjoyed perpetual popularity for centuries and this genre is very likely to go on thriving for as much time to come. Possible reasons for the prevalence of these kinds of stories are, however, decidedly less uncontested. At the heart of horror fiction lies a double paradox: we take fright at something that is non-existent and we derive pleasure from descriptions and representations that are usually classified as repulsive. Several scholars, among them Walton[1] and Carroll,[2] have suggested that the first of these two phenomena can be accounted for by our capacity for make-believe or imagination. Thus, when we read horror stories, we never find ourselves in a state of real fright but willingly take part in a game of make-believe, which leads us to experience what Walton[3] has termed 'quasi-fear.' With this claim, however, make-believe theory rules out empathy as a possible mechanism responsible for the evocation of emotional responses in the reader and, as I will argue in my chapter, the reason for this is that the proponents of this theory are under the wrong assumption that empathy necessarily involves a loss of self-other distinctiveness. Yet, as numerous studies[4] have shown, this is by no means the case. Using Bram Stoker's classic story *Dracula* as an example, I will show how authors of horror fiction manipulate readers' empathic responses by various means, thereby inducing feelings of fear, horror, and terror. The second aspect of the paradox is closely associated with Aristotle's[5] or Hume's[6] discussions on tragic pleasure. While the former's solution was the idea of *catharsis*, the latter proposed that our aesthetic appreciation of the text outweighs negative emotions. I will, however, argue that the emotions induced by horror fiction can, under certain conditions, be directly enjoyable.

Key Words: Horror fiction, Dracula, paradox of horror, empathy.

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1. Paradox of Horror

The genre of horror fiction is apparently faced with a fundamental double paradox: we are frightened of something that does not exist and we seem to derive pleasure from descriptions that would under other circumstances be regarded as repulsive. In view particularly of the first paradox, Kendall Walton imagined the following thought experiment:

> Charles is watching a horror movie about a terrible green slime.
> He cringes in his seat as the slime oozes slowly but relentlessly
> over the earth destroying everything in its path. Soon a greasy

head emerges from the undulating mass, and two beady eyes roll around, finally fixing on the camera. The slime, picking up speed, oozes on a new course straight toward the viewers. Charles emits a shriek and clutches desperately at his chair. Afterwards, still shaken, Charles confesses that he was "terrified" of the slime. Was he?[7]

Walton's answer is not in the affirmative. He acknowledges that viewers and also readers can become affectively involved in a fictional story but he - as I think, erroneously - proposed that Charles is merely experiencing something he calls 'quasi-fear.'[8] Walton believes that because Charles is aware that the slime he sees on the screen is not real and cannot attack him, he does not develop tendencies to behave in any way as if the monstrous slime could harm him and from that Walton concludes that, despite his own assertions, Charles cannot be truly afraid of the slime. Gregory Currie argues along the same lines when he claims that the reader of a novel 'plays a game of make-believe [...]. He makes-believe that he is reading a true account of events, desiring certain outcomes as the story unfolds.'[9]

However, in order to determine whether Charles' response can be categorised as genuine fear, we first need to clarify what we define as an emotion. According to Brothers, emotions are 'means by which an animal or person appraises the significance of stimuli so as to prepare the body for an appropriate response.'[10] This definition implies that emotions consist of different components: a state of physiological arousal that can, in most cases, be traced back to the perception of a stimulus, the individual's evaluation of the arousal and the stimulus, followed by certain action tendencies. Since Walton agrees that monstrous entities in movies can evoke real physiological arousal, his points of critique are mainly concerned with the remaining components: the evaluation of the event and the behavioural tendency. Regarding the first point, he substitutes belief in the threatening entity with the concept of make-belief but in so doing he ignores many important aspects of our perception of fiction. Concerning the latter component, he denies that fiction can create action tendencies, which is, as I will argue, also not quite accurate.

The main shortcoming of Walton's thought experiment is that it lacks an essential element that influences Charles' response in a decisive way, namely the characters in the movie. I am not aware of any horror film or narrative that presents its audience with a horrid entity like the slime without also depicting the fearful response of one or more characters. Horror fiction however could not evoke the affective response that Charles experiences in Walton's example if it did not depict the emotional states of different characters towards the threatening entity. If we take into account the workings of sympathy - to feel for the characters - and, even more important in this context, of empathy - to feel with the characters -, we do not need to claim that Charles merely pretends to experience fear. Instead, we can acknowledge that he feels genuinely afraid, because when he takes fright at the

sight of the slime and clasps the arm rest of his chair, he shares the emotions of the characters for whom the fearsome creature does indeed pose a serious threat.

This leaves us with the second relevant component of Charles' fear - the action tendency. Walton's main objection in this case is that if Charles were really afraid, he would act accordingly: run out of the theatre, inform the police and attempt to save family or friends.[11] This argument suggests that Walton wrongly assumes that empathy necessarily implies a complete merging of the moviegoer or reader with the character they feel with. This, however, is by no means the case. Although empathy allows one to share another individual's cognitive and affective states, there is at no time a confusion between the self and the other. Self-awareness is a requirement for the working of our Theory of Mind and it does not preclude empathy. Quite the contrary, self-other distinction makes such an engagement with other people or characters possible in the first place. Only when we have a distinct notion of the boundaries between ourselves and others and are able to understand that other people might hold beliefs that are different from our own can we make assumptions concerning the mental states of others, which is essential for a feeling of empathy.[12] Numerous studies could not find support for the hypothesis that feeling with another individual is due to or necessarily brings about self-other merging.[13] The observation of fear in others can lead an individual to empathise with a character who deems him/herself in danger but the moviegoer or reader can still draw the boundary between the character and him/herself, which results in an awareness that the fear of this character does not necessarily indicate that their own life or health is threatened. In this way self-other distinction inhibits action such as fleeing or fighting. I use the term *inhibit* because especially horror films can cause visible physical reactions in the audience like screaming, clutching the armrest, or shrinking into the chair. This kind of behaviour suggests that the individual does actually develop behavioural tendencies but, because Charles' evaluation of his arousal and the stimulus leads to the awareness that there is no direct danger for his own life or well-being, the subsequent stages of the process are not executed. The inhibitory mechanism can serve to prevent Charles from acting on the mental states of the characters he empathises with and to respond with attempts to fight or to flee.

The distinction between self and other enables us to not only attribute mental states to people or characters but also to have our own thoughts while we do so. Readers/viewers are able to possess information that the character does not have and they may sometimes experience different desires with regard to the outcome of a narrative than particular characters but if we take into consideration that self-other distinction is an essential aspect of empathy, these findings do not, as Carroll assumes, contradict the idea that the audience shares the characters' emotions.[14] Narrative empathy can, thus, help to solve this first paradox of horror but in order to do so it is important to examine how the audience's empathic reaction can be manipulated by the text.

2. Empathic Responses to *Dracula*

With this purpose in mind I will now turn to *Dracula*. Bram Stoker's classic story is a highly effective example of horror fiction. He uses different techniques working on the level of narrative structure, characterisation and narrative situation in order to foster or preclude empathy. An important feature of the novel is that the story is told entirely through letters, journals, telegrams, memorandums or newspaper clippings. The fact that the occurrences are reported by many independent sources bestows a certain amount of verisimilitude on the events. This may indicate that Stoker hoped to achieve a stronger effect with his book, if he succeeded in convincing the audience that the events recounted in the novel actually took place or if he could at least prompt readers to suspend their disbelief. However, the fragmentary kaleidoscope of viewpoints might also reduce authenticity, because the individual reports are highly subjective, contain numerous gaps and are sometimes contradictory. There is no authorial voice that can offer the reader certainty about the events but, nevertheless, the narrative structure is very effective in making the audience experience the characters' anxiety and emotions of horror and terror. Although the fact that the characters have been able to put down their experiences in a diary implies that they must have survived, the novel is quite successful in making us oblivious to this logic. The epistolary form allows Stoker to present us with the internal perspective of not only one but of several characters in the story and frequent inside views have been found to promote empathic responses in the reader.[15] Thus, in choosing to give many of the characters a voice Stoker achieves a number of effects that promote the reader's empathy - giving the impression of verisimilitude, creating immediacy and allowing the audience inside views into several characters.

In the characters' first-person narratives we are directly presented with their mental states, which leads to great familiarity with the characters, their individual mental styles and the fears they harbour at particular moments but at the same time the narrative leaves plenty of gaps in between the journal entries or letters that the readers have to fill by inferring or simulating the characters' cognitions and emotions in their own minds. This effect is even heightened by the closure of a great number of journal entries showing the characters' apprehension or being suggestive of a dark foreboding. Quite frequently the reader has to wait for several pages or chapters to learn about the outcome of the situation. In the meantime, he is given ample opportunity to speculate about the characters' anxieties and their destinies. The readers are, thus, not just passive observers of the characters' fates. Instead they are prompted actively to feel the emotions of the characters. Very often the letters or journals also contain numerous gaps that force the reader actively to construct the characters' experiences and mental states in their own minds. *Dracula* is particularly successful in creating emotions of fear, horror or terror, because it is advantageously balanced in terms of the details it offers and the gaps it contains.

On the other hand, the accuracy with which the individual journal entries are written also contributes to our empathic response to the characters. In fact, many of the reports sound like recordings of the characters' immediate experiences rather than texts documented hours or sometimes days after the events. The journal entries contain a considerable amount of direct speech and usually present every detail of a dialogue - including excited repetitions of words, interjections or, in the case of the Dutchman Van Helsing, grammatical errors. This detailedness is very uncommon in diaries but depicting the characters' interactions in such a way heightens perceived veracity and immediacy, which makes it easier for the readers to simulate the characters' experiences in their minds. Stoker also uses technological advancements of the Victorian age like the phonograph to achieve the goal of more immediacy. Dr Seward uses this machine to keep his diary and the text does not only reproduce his words but also agitated stuttering and other means of extra-verbal communication captured by the phonograph, which, instead of just describing them, leads the reader to feel the character's emotions.

The journal entries are not only very detailed in their illustration of the characters' words but significantly also in the description of their body language and other physiological reactions. Right before Arthur drives the stake through Lucy's heart, '[h]e stepped forward […] bravely, though his hand trembled, and his face was as pale as snow'[16] and when Van Helsing starts to suspect that Mina has been bitten by the vampire, 'the Professor started and quivered. His face, however, grew grimmer and sterner still.'[17] Non-verbal behaviour in literature is a means of enabling the audience to use their Theory of Mind in order to make inferences about the characters' mental states. It does not serve to give us direct information about a character's thoughts and emotions; rather, it prompts us to simulate them in our own systems, which implies that they are far less detached from our own embodied cognitive processing than explicit information about the character's mental states would be. It has been shown that our Mirror Neuron System is involved when we perceive - visually or audibly - that another person or a literary character is performing an action, feels a sensation or experiences an emotion.[18] In this case, the same neural structures (or at least parts of them) that are active in the agent's brain also fire in the spectator or reader. Mirror Neurons can be regarded as the neural basis of empathy and in the context of literature they are particularly prone to be activated by descriptions of body language.

In addition to those characters whose voices dominate the narrative - Jonathan, Mina and Dr Seward - there are also those who are not or only very seldom granted the role of an I-narrator. The most notable of these is the titular character. In the first part of the novel, we learn about his atrocities from Harker's point of view. We are given rather detailed descriptions of the Count's outer appearance, his disturbing behaviour and some of his supernatural powers. We hear Dracula speak and get some information about his body language. In the remainder of the story, however, Dracula is remarkably absent. The parts of the novel that are set on

English soil weave a veil of mystery around the character and the novel's power to evoke fear in the audience is here largely dependent on their memory of the Count. Through Dracula's physical absence and the absence of inside views, which could allow us to get his account of the story, he is established as the unpredictable and uncontrollable other. The lack of information concerning his cognitions or his body language does not allow us to infer his mental states, which also precludes feelings of empathy or sympathy for this character. As he himself says to Jonathan, 'There is reason that all things are as they are, and did you see with my eyes and know with my knowledge, you would perhaps better understand.'[19] We are denied this understanding in the narrative. In contrast to some other gothic novels like Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the effect of *Dracula* depends on evoking fear in its readers and this is achieved primarily through prompting us to share the anxiety, horror or terror of some of the Count's opponents and by largely precluding sympathetic feelings for the titular character.

3. Paradox of Horror Revisited

This fear that is excited in the readers brings us back to the second paradox of horror fiction: Why do we seem to enjoy reading something that arouses emotions like fear, horror or terror? Despite its obvious usefulness in our survival, fear is widely regarded as negative and described as an emotion we usually try to avoid.[20] Nevertheless, horror fiction, whether in the form of print or film, enjoys an unbroken popularity. In order to find a solution to this problem we might draw a parallel to the genre of tragedy, which also generates feelings that are usually considered unpleasant. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle argues that, although the emotions generated by the literary work are not perceived as positive, the purification of the soul that is achieved in this process is experienced as pleasurable.[21] David Hume's solution to this paradox is to propose that our aesthetic recognition of artistic skill is capable of soothing or outweighing the unpleasant feelings that a tragic play, a painting or a narrative can bring about.[22]

Both arguments are unsatisfactory as explanations to the apparent paradox, because they merely circumvent the problem of emotions like fear. Furthermore, Aristotle's and Hume's theories are based on a false assumption regarding the nature of emotions. They presume that certain emotions like sadness or fear are inherently negative in all contexts and that people therefore attempt to avoid them whenever possible. This is, however, not necessarily the case. In fact, people sometimes derive pleasure from being scared (or, as one could add, from being angry, melancholic or from feeling a moderate amount of pain). Burke argues similarly when he points out that, 'terror is a passion which always produces delight when it does not press too closely.'[23] There are some people who willingly undertake dangerous activities like base-jumping, climbing high buildings or high-wire walking just because these activities involve a certain element of risk, which stimulates the body to produce adrenalin. Despite the general conviction that fear is

inherently negative, it can, in some situations, be cognitively satisfying. If we go back to the different components of an emotion,[24] we might say that the way a certain feeling is perceived does not depend on the physical arousal itself or on the action tendencies but, rather, on the individual's evaluation of the arousal and of the stimulus that caused this response. While it is true that in most cases arousal that fits the psycho-physiological pattern of fear is evaluated negatively, it is equally valid to assume that there are instances in which this arousal is accompanied by a positive evaluation and that in the latter case it can give pleasure to the perceiver. This applies for a large number or horror fiction aficionados or those who enjoy a tragedy with a sad ending and it allows the conclusion that there is no paradox in enjoying horror.

Notes

[1] Kendall Walton, 'Fearing Fiction', *The Journal of Philosophy* 75, No. 1 (1978): 5-27.

[2] Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[3] Walton, 'Fearing Fiction'.

[4] E.g. Daniel Sager Batson, Eric Garst, Misook Kang, Kostia Rubchinsky and Karen Dawson, 'Is Empathy-Induced Helping Due to Self-Other Merging?', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 73, No. 3 (1997): 495-509; Jean Decety and Philip L. Jackson, 'The Functional Architecture of Human Empathy', *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews* 3, No. 2 (2004): 71-100; and Martin Schulte-Rüther, Hans J. Markowitsch, Gereon R. Fink and Martina Piefke, 'Mirror Neuron and Theory of Mind Mechanisms Involved in Face-to-Face Interactions: A Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Approach to Empathy', *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 19, No. 8 (2007): 1354-1372.

[5] Samuel H. Butcher, ed. and trans., *The Poetics of Aristotle*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillian 1902).

[6] David Hume, 'Of Tragedy', *Four Dissertations* (London: A. Millar, 1757), 183-200.

[7] Walton, 'Fearing Fiction', 5.

[8] Ibid., 6.

[9] Currie, Gregory, *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 197.

[10] Leslie Brothers, 'Emotion and the Human Brain', *The MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences*, eds. Robert Wilson and Frank Keil (London and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 271-273.

[11] Walton, 'Fearing Fiction', 7.

[12] Cf. e.g. Decety and Jackson, 'Empathy'.

[13] Cf. Batson, et al., 'Is Empathy-Induced Helping Due to Self-Other Merging?'; Schulte-Rüther et al., 'Mirror Neuron' and Joshua May, 'Egoism, Empathy, and Self-Other Merging', *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 49 (2011): 25-39; but Robert R. Cialdini, Stephanie L. Brown, Brian P. Lewis, Carol Luce and Steven L. Neuberg, 'Reinterpreting the Empathy-Altruism Relationship: When One into One Equals Oneness', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 73, No. 3 (1997): 481-494.

[14] Cf. Amy Coplan, 'Empathic Engagement with Narrative Fictions', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 62, No. 2 (2004): 141-152.

[15] Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 96-99.

[16] Bram Stoker, *The New Annotated Dracula*, ed. Leslie S. Klinger (New York and London: Norton, 2008), 311.

[17] Ibid., 389.

[18] Vittorio Gallese and Alvin Goldman, 'Mirror Neurons and the Simulation Theory of Mind-Reading', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 12, No. 2 (1998): 493-501; Giacomo Rizzolatti and Craighero Laila, 'Mirror Neuron: A Neurological Approach to Empathy', *Neurobiology of Human Values*, eds. Jean-Pierre Changeux, Antonio R. Damasio, Wolf Singer and Yves Christen (Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer, 2005). and Keen, *Empathy*.

[19] Stoker, *Dracula*, 52.

[20] Cf. Gretchen M. Reevy (with the assistance of Yvette Malamud Ozer and Yuri Ito), *Encyclopedia of Emotion*, Volume 1 (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2010), 265. and Alina M. Andrie, 'Positive and Negative Emotions within the Organizational Context', *Global Journal of Human Social Science* 11, No. 9 (2011), accessed May 10, 2012, https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume11/4-Positive-And-Negative-Emotions-Within-The-Organizational-Context.pdf.

[21] Butcher, *Aristotle's Poetics*.

[22] Hume, 'Tragedy'.

[23] Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, with an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste and Several Other Additions (London: Thomas M'lean, 1823), 57.

[24] Cf. Brothers, 'Emotion and the Human Brain'.

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Part 7

Fictional Experiences of Fear and Horror

Blinded by Fear: Shifts of Perception in the Selected Stories of Ambrose Bierce

Agnieszka Styła

Abstract

Ambrose Bierce's stories are usually divided into three main categories: horror stories, war stories and tall tales. In all three groups can be found stories that depict some sort of fear, horror or terror. However, in the last group of stories, Bierce's satirical tone is most prominent and it considerably weakens 'the fear factor.' Therefore, none of the tall tales will be analysed in this chapter. I have chosen two horror stories and one war story. What is characteristic of Bierce's stories is their focus on death. In most of his stories, someone dies or has just died. A lot of these stories feature ghosts or dead bodies. It is not difficult to notice that fear in Bierce's works is generally connected with death. All the three stories I have chosen for this paper follow the same pattern - someone experiences fear and then dies. I hope to show that there is also another scheme Bierce applies. The key word for this scheme is 'seem;' things are not what they seem to be. The protagonists of all three stories suffer from some sort of distorted perception, and the reader is presented with a surprising dénouement, which shows that the fear was totally misplaced.

Key Words: Ambrose Bierce, fear, perception, misplaced, horror stories, war stories.

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1. 'The Death of Halpin Frayser'

It is very easy to perceive 'The Death of Halpin Frayser' as a gothic story, as the reader's perception is being manipulated from the first line. The text is preceded by an epigraph purportedly written by a sage named Hali. In this short fragment, he shares his knowledge about the existence of living corpses and their nature. Hali claims that zombies are always malicious creatures that have lost all the features and feelings they possessed in their human life and are only filled with hate towards humans. What follows this epigraph seems to confirm that 'The Death of Halpin Frayser' tells the story of a corpse coming to life and killing the protagonist.

The story begins 'one dark night'[1] in a forest enclosing a graveyard. Halpin Frayser, the protagonist of the story, has been hunting and got lost. He decides to rest and falls into uneasy sleep. In his dream, he is also wandering through the forest. This section of the text is filled with expressions that create an atmosphere of mystery and dread. Halpin Frayser discovers that the foliage and trees are covered with blood; he quickly feels that there is some threat lurking in the dark, 'a consciousness - a mysterious mental assurance of some overpowering presence - some supernatural malevolence.'[2] A premonition quickly turns into certainty as he suddenly confronts his dead mother. Then the narrator provides an account of his final moments and the reader witnesses the protagonist's confusion and disturbed state of mind quickly changing into overwhelming terror. Frayser stands petrified with fear when 'the apparition (...) regarding him with the mindless malevolence of a wild brute (...) thrust its hands forward and sprang upon him with appalling ferocity.'[3] Frayser fights for his life but the zombie is much stronger and strangles him.

The following section of the story presents the discovery of Frayser's body by a deputy sheriff and a detective from a nearby town, who are in pursuit of a criminal. At this moment it is very easy to fall into the trap Bierce has set for the reader. We have just witnessed Halpin Frayser's lost fight with a living corpse. The outcome is that Halpin Frayser turns into a corpse himself. However, the blood-stained forest where the zombie dwelt belongs to the oneiric reality created by Frayser's sleeping mind. To quote Francisco Goya: the sleep of reason produces monsters. This phrase can be applied to the story in two ways. The first, more obvious, is connected with Frayser falling asleep and letting his past sins, an incestuous relationships with his mother that eventually made Frayser kill his mother/lover, take the form of a nightmare. The other interpretation is proposed by Robert McLean. He suggests that the horror elements of this story are actually red herrings. In his opinion, 'The Death of Halpin Frayser' should be viewed as a crime story. The explanation he offers is that Halpin Frayser was actually killed by his father, Frayser senior, who, having disguised himself as a private detective, hunted his son in order to exact revenge for an incest and ensuing murder.

Therefore, if Halpin Frayser had not let his subconscious fears speak so loudly he may have noticed the real danger and avoided his demise.

In 'The Death of Halpin Frayser,' the narrator gives the reader a chance to discover the second layer of the story by placing clues in the text. 'The Man and the Snake' also describes an episode featuring an ominous creature that inspires fear and causes the protagonist's death. There is also a twist at the end of the story. However, the reader does not know where this fear comes from and why the protagonist is overwhelmed by it so easily. Bierce seems to prove that irrational fear can occur also in friendly, homely surroundings.

2. 'The Man and the Snake'

The story begins with Harker Brayton, the protagonist of 'The Man and the Snake,' studying the 'Marvells of Science.' The following sentence attracts his attention:

> It is of veritabyll report, and attested of so many that there be nowe of wyse and learned none to gaynsaye it, that ye serpent hys eye hath a magnetick propertie that whosoe falleth into its svasion is drawn forwards in despyte of his wille, and perisheth miserabyll ye creature hys byte. [4]

Harker Brayton, himself a scholar, dismisses this piece of wisdom as utter nonsense. He lowers the book to muse on the author's ignorance and his eyes catch two points of light under the bed. What he initially takes to be nails reflecting light are the eyes of a large serpent. The action of the story takes place in the house of Dr. Druring, a biologist and owner of a large collection of toads and snakes. The members of the Druring household are used to finding individual specimens outside the premises of the snakery; therefore Brayton is more irritated than shocked. However, the word 'fear' quickly appears in his thoughts. Brayton is not afraid of the reptile but of the fact that other people may think that he is. That is why he hesitates to call a servant who could dispose of the snake. This matter seems to occupy Brayton's mind more than the snake itself. Finally, he decides that he is brave enough to fob off any suspicion of cowardice and tries to get up and leave the room. At this moment, he notices that the snake's eyes are shining brighter than before, gleaming with malevolence. To his surprise, he also discovers that he has difficulties in moving. Interestingly, although he has just ridiculed the snake's hypnotic power, he immediately blames the snake for charming him. The man and the snake begin a kind of mental struggle. After a while, it becomes clear that the serpent will prevail. Harker Brayton finds himself on the floor in the most miserable condition: 'There was froth upon his lips; it dropped off in flakes. Strong convulsion ran through his body, making almost serpentile undulations. He bent himself at the waist, shifting his legs from side to side. And every movement left

him a little nearer to the snake.'[5] He is unable to break the eye contact with the reptile; his horror grows and culminates in a wild cry. Alerted by the noise, Dr. Druring rushes to his friend's room just to find Brayton dead. He also finds the cause of his death:

> He reached under the bed, pulled out the snake and flung it, still coiled, to the center of the room, whence with a harsh, shuffling sound it slid across the polished floor till stopped by the wall, where it lay without motion. It was a stuffed snake; its eyes were two shoes buttons.[6]

The very last sentence of the story reveals the twofold irony of the whole situation - Harker Brayton does not believe in the serpents' hypnotic powers, yet they bring about his death. What is more, the last sentence proves that he rightly ridiculed the 'Marvells of Science' - snakes do not have supernatural abilities. The conclusion is that Brayton gets himself killed by a power that does not exist.

When the narrator focuses on Harker Brayton, he restricts himself to a detailed description of the man's actions and emotions. There are no reasons to suspect that Brayton could be asleep, mad or drunk. Harker Brayton wrongly assesses the situation he has to face. It would have taken a second person to point out the discrepancy between Brayton's perception of reality and reality itself.

3. 'Tough Tussle'

In 'Tough Tussle,' the main protagonist is a soldier. The story takes place in a forest where a detachment of soldiers is stationed on guard. The soldiers are dispersed through the forest, and the reader observes the protagonist, Brainard Byring, on his appointed spot. The first thing the reader learns about Byring is that he possesses 'unusually acute sensibilities' and that he harbours extremely deep loathing towards the sight of a dead body. The narrator praises him for being extremely brave because, despite his fear of dead bodies, Byring does not try to avoid his soldierly duty of killing enemies.

I believe this remark to be rather ironic. Bierce shows the striking contrast between Byring's repulsion of the corpse and his complete indifference to the process of 'producing' dead bodies. In the following paragraphs, the narrator implies that for Byring there is no horror in the act of inflicting death upon a person. It is not the actual killing that Byring objects, but its grim result. To emphasise this ironic effect, Bierce shows how swiftly Byring assumes 'the killer mode:' 'Instinctively he adjusted the clasp of his sword-belt and laid hold of his pistol - again he was in a world of war, by occupation an assassin.'[7]

There is also another world presented in the story; a world which is not as familiar and 'friendly' as the world of war. Left alone in the world of nature, the forest, Byring feels very uncomfortable. The sounds of the forest at night make

him restless and distracted. He is even more startled when he discovers a corpse of a soldier under a nearby bush. Byring's perception of a dead body is rather peculiar. When he speaks or thinks about a corpse, his attitude is always negative. He shows no compassion towards the dead soldier; he does not even see the body as the human remains, it is always 'a damn thing.' Byring's aversion is so strong, that he seems to believe that human beings, including himself, have nothing to do with corpses. In Byring's eyes, corpses are malevolent creatures created by some mysterious and ominous force. Yet, he is unable to avert his eyes from the corpse; he studies it in a great detail and it fuels his fear even more. Being so focused on the dead soldier's body, Byring ignores his own. Unconsciously, he assumes an offensive position, 'crouching like a gladiator ready to spring at the throat of an antagonist.'[8] When Byring sees how ridiculous his actions are, he tries to laugh at himself. The sound he utters does not resemble human laughter at all. Hearing this 'unholy glee' makes Byring lose all his composure. He is convinced that the corpse, which he observed ceaselessly, moved. Possessed by the urge to protect himself from such dread, Byring attacks. At the moment when Byring charges at the dead soldier, the narrator changes his focus and gives an account of the skirmish that breaks out elsewhere. It is brief but quiet violent and hectic. We can assume that it parallels the fight of Brainard Byring. The reader does not know who has prevailed in the skirmish, but the narrator informs us that Byring has lost his battle miserably. Two fellow soldiers find him with his own sword pierced through his heart.

The narrator repeatedly calls Byring 'a brave and intelligent man,' but at the same time, he shows that Byring's actions result from a combination of cowardice and misdirected bravery. Byring has many logical explanations for his phobia, but they do not help him in the least to brace himself for the moment when his courage is put to the test. The contrast is too big to be accidental - again Bierce mocks the figure of a soldier. He also ridicules war and the civilisation that invented it and persistently continues this inglorious tradition. Byring is presented as a descendant of a certain race, and the reader is provided with its brief characteristic. This race, and Byring as its representative, has preserved the fear of corpses for centuries and learned to avoid them; but they still have not learned how to avoid situations that result in dead bodies appearing in multitudes.

It is easy to feel sympathetic toward Brainer Byring and perceive him as a fallen but virtuous soldier. Such an attitude is justified if we notice how persistently the narrator describes Byring as an innocent victim of the overwhelming forces of nature and war:

> But what would you have? Shall a man cope, single-handed, with
> so monstrous an alliance as that of night and solitude and silence
> and the dead - while an incalculable host of his own ancestors
> shriek into the ear of his spirit their coward counsel, sing their

doleful death-songs in his heart, and disarm his very blood of all its iron? The odds are too great - courage was not made for so rough use as that.[9]

However, Logan cautions the reader against ascribing Bierce mawkishness and sentimentality,[10] and reminds us that in his stories we often encounter 'masterly first person narrative couched in the third person.'[11] Therefore, this passage is not Bierce's exculpation, but Byring's excuse - Bierce tells us the reverse of what he actually thinks. Byring is not a blameless victim but a part of war machine. He does not see the dead body as a symbol of human life that was lost. Byring transfers the dead soldier to the realm of the uncanny and the ominous, and by doing so he creates for himself an additional and artificial foe: the battle which he loses. Should he have shown compassion and understanding, should he have understood his role in the process of war, he might have survived the night. Therefore, Bierce again makes his protagonist misjudge the situation. Byring should not be afraid of corpses, which are the effect of war, but of the cause, the war itself.

The possibility of avoiding the role of a victim is a characteristic shared by all the three stories. Bierce sets very strict boundaries or frames of reason and morality. Anyone who crosses these lines and lets instinct and emotions out of control ends dead. Halpin Frayser breaks the incest taboo and that makes him a murderer and a victim. Stupid pride and shallow rationality caused Bryton's death, and Byring's rather barbaric attitude - 'kill people and don't think about it' - is what ultimately decides his fate. In Bierce's work, human fear is, to a great extent, artificially produced by humans themselves. It is not a natural and spontaneous reaction to a real threat but it is somehow hidden inside human being and, given the slightest incentive, it grows rapidly, takes control and destroys its bearer.

Notes

[1] Ambrose Bierce, *The Complete Short Stories of Ambrose Bierce*, ed. Ernest Jerome Hopkins (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 59. All subsequent quotations are from this edition.
[2] Ibid., 65.
[3] Ibid., 61.
[4] Ibid., 81.
[5] Ibid., 86.
[6] Ibid., 87.
[7] Ibid., 300-301.
[8] Ibid., 302.
[9] Ibid., 303.

[10] Frank J. Logan, 'The Wry Seriousness of *Owl Creek Bridge*', *Critical Essays on Ambrose Bierce*, ed. Cathy N. Davidson (Boston: Hall, 1982), 199.
[11] Ibid., 199.

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AT THE NEXUS OF Fear Horror AND Terror

CONTEMPORARY READINGS

Based on the concept of witnessing and framing, this proceedings collection is designed in a way that enhances the 'Specific Focus' of each section of the conference and how the chapters reveal the witnessing and framing of fear, horror and terror. When addressing the visible and invisible fear, horror and terror we must ask ourselves what is it that we are encouraged to see what the processes of image production are and what powers underlie the image. The production of images, both visible and invisible, is a privileged space where the state, world order, security issues, military engagements, social issues and ideas are managed through a specific discourse - identified by tone, language, vocabulary, and symbolic images - produced by a specific historical, socio-political, cultural, racial, religious, and geographical context. Within this discursive space, a variety of ideas - both the action and the concept - are consistently managed.

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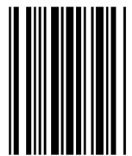
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