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İSTANBUL YENİ YÜZYIL ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI

THE POLITICS AND POETICS OF THE UNCANNY: MONSTROUS BODIES IN MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN* AND AHMED SAADAWI'S *FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD*

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İmzası

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, İngiliz yazar Mary Shelley tarafından 1818'de yazılan, Viktorya Dönemi'ne ait gotik ve korku yazınsal türlerindeki eserler arasında adını duyurmuş *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* isimli romana yönelik düşünsel ve tarihi bir çözümleme sunmaktadır. Eserin korku türündeki çağcıl bir yeniden aktarımı, Ahmed Saadawi'nin *Frankenstein in Baghdad* eserinde gözlemlenebilmektedir. Çalışma, Shelley'nin ve Sadaawi'nin eserlerindeki metinlerarası unsurlar ile ilişkilendirilmekte ve belli başlı kuramsal kavramlar çerçevesinde "canavar bedeni" öğesinin maddesel niteliklerini incelemektedir. Çağdaş okur için gerekli görülen korkunun gerilim aracı olarak kullanılmasına yönelik bu devingen yaklaşım, korku yöntemlerinin sahip oldukları özgün çekim gücünü ve canavar bedeninin bu iki eserde korkuyu üretiş biçimini ele almaktadır. Korku yazınsal türüne bakıldığında, okuyucunun korku duygusuna yansıyan canavar etkisinin daha iyi anlaşılması amacıyla "canavar bedeni" öğesine dikkat çekecek bir çözümsel çerçeve, psikopatoloji ile insan davranışı ve kültürü alanlarında başı çeken kuramcılar tarafından sunulmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın ana amacı, en temel insan duygularından birisi olan korkma dürtüsünü tetikleyen beden deformasyonu korkusuna ait önemli unsur ve motifleri incelemektir. Canavar, deforme olmuş çirkin bir varlık olmasıyla, okurda beden deformasyonu betimlemeleri yoluyla ürkü uyandıran bir araç olarak görülmektedir. Bu çalışma, Sigmund Freud'un *The Uncanny* isimli eseri ile Mark Fisher'ın "The Weird and the Eerie" denemesinin yanı sıra Michel Foucault tarafından "monster [canavar]" kavramı üzerine yapılan incelemelerde de yer aldığı gözlemlenen kavramları ve kuramsal dili inceleyerek amacını gerçekleştirmektedir.

Key words: Korku türü, canavar vücudu, The Uncanny, Frankenstein, Frankenstein in Baghdad

ABSTRACT

This study offers a speculative and historical analysis of one of the literary gothic and horror feats of the Victorian period. *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* is a famed novel written by English author, Mary Shelley, in 1818. Its modern retelling in the horror fiction genre is seen in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* by Ahmed Saadawi. It focuses upon the corporeal characteristics of the "monster body" within the framework of certain theoretical notions and is correlated with intertextual elements in both Shelley's and Saadawi's work. The dynamic approach to horror as a vehicle for release, deemed necessary for the modern reader, addresses the unique appeal of horror methods and the ways in which the monster body produces horror in both novels. The main theorists in the fields of psychopathology, and human behavior and culture, offer an analytical framework for putting the "monster body" in the spotlight to gain a better understanding of the monster's aura as reflected in the reader's fear when approaching works of literary horror. The primary objective of this study is to examine the key motives and elements of body horror that generate fear – one of the few truly basic human emotions. The monster is an ugly and deformed being and considered a catalyst that produces fear in the reader through the depiction of body horror. Investigating the concepts and theoretical jargon expressed in Sigmund Freud's "The Uncanny", Michel Foucault's "Monster", and Mark Fisher's "The Weird and the Eerie", this study pursues its objective.

Key Words: Horror fiction, Monster Body, Uncanny, Frankenstein, Frankenstein in Baghdad

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1: INTRODUCTION

The sight of blood to crowds begets the thirst of more,

As the first wine-cup leads to the long revel.

— Lord Byron

We make up horrors to help us cope with the real ones.

— Stephen King.

Can a writer from 18th century Britain and a 21st century Iraqi novelist express their fears and search for justice in the same language? In the case of Mary Shelley and Ahmed Saadawi, the answer is – yes. Through their exploration of a violent world, full of everyday horrors, cruelty, and intolerance, they arrive through varying ways at a similar understanding of the language of horror, one that seems almost universal to a modern reader. Their monsters are built from texts and borrowed flesh to embody the human fears of powerlessness and extinction in a mesmerizing way.

The current thesis is one of the early explorations of the 2013 retelling of the story of the reanimated monster created by Mary Shelley in 1818. Ahmed Saadawi has recontextualized the monster narrative and put it in modern-day Iraq to reflect and interplay with the very real horrors of the Middle East in the 21st century. The modern horror genre and its socio-historic connections play an important role in the understanding of the monsters in both texts. The thesis reaches back to the early days of the genre about two centuries ago and to even earlier days of horror motifs in religious texts and folk tales, with the aim of uncovering how the reader comes to face their own fears in safety and what he or she finds enjoyable in the visual representation of fright.

Traditionally, the Gothic and the horror genres are studied jointly as these genres are most efficient in reaching for the primordial emotion that is fright. Gothic literature came as a dark

antidote to the Romantic movement that also fed on intense emotions; only this time the pleasure is to be achieved through fear anxiety and vicarious pain. Thanks to Horace Walpole and his enchantment with the medieval castle as an actor in the story, the Gothic literary genre started to rise to prominence. The mixture of romance and drama comes in a depressing, overwhelming setting, reflecting the many dangers that swept 18th century readers off their feet. There are multiple explanations for this to be explored at length in this thesis.

One aspect, however, will serve as a beacon for this study: The Gothic genre interfered with the canons of the Enlightenment Age and drew the attention of the public to novel with scandalizing plots. It turned mainstream literature in England upside down. This widespread interest in experiencing the opposite of the limited range of strict values of the Age of Reason sprawled from literature into politics, philosophy, science, and communications across Europe. The weight of the transformative power of horror sparkled the study of the cultural and socio-political as well as the psychological aspects of horror wherein the reader and the interaction of the story and the human affect have become the core of these studies across disciplines.

It is not an easy task to draw boundaries across the genre of horror. The topics of the works of art in this genre go from curses and omens to haunted objects, cannibals and surgical experiments and deformed bodies. The horror genre isn't homogenous; it is often regarded as a body of subgenres such as fantasy, historical fiction, contemporary fiction, mystery, and science fiction. The form in which horror narratives come is multifaceted since they now come in graphic novels, literary texts of varying length, cinema, theater, etc.

However, the literary genre has defined the course of horror. Iconic Gothic novels such as *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole (1764), *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (1818), *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens (1853), *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (1897), and *Rebecca* by Daphne Du Maurier (1938) bear the most weight in creating the vocabulary and the semiotic field for horror in fiction. Suspenseful, mysterious, and frightening, these stories introduced unequivocal charismatic villains who made readers question their "first impressions" based on

looks and eventually inaugurated the notion of the monster a much broader entity than just something hideous.

It is perhaps the event of the creation of an appealing freak that triggered a cascade of plots and popular retellings of famous horror and gothic literary narratives later to be modified into numerous sequels, prequels, and parodies. Frankensteins, Draculas, and the likes of these "unearthly creatures" made multiple appearances across all artistic platforms. From being set in monasteries, crypts, and castles to more advanced spaces like computer games and abandoned mega-cities, horror narratives always circle back to depicting brutality, imprisonment, and persecution events under fictitious, supernatural, and simply evil circumstances.

Gothic literature permits the reader to delve into a different reality through the imagination where hidden desires are exposed, and no curiosity is deemed unacceptable. Gothic horror has taken a very special place in this new literary reality since it has managed to tie together the romantic and the terrifying aspects of the story. And where love and terror coincide, there is sex and the body. This study will spend a significant effort on the corporeal aspects of horror literature, covering violence, deformity, mutilation, body modification, and desire. This genre offers massive insight into the transformation of the literary treatment of the body as a site for personal, political, and the social exploration of the norm.

This thesis will analyze both Shelley's work and its modern retelling by Saadawi, while addressing the different horror methods used to produce the monster body in both novels. This thesis will highlight the means of presentation and the effects of the skin, body, and the corporeal elements of the narrative on the readers' perception of challenging topics in modern western and eastern societies, especially their treatment in academia.

Recently, academic attention has been glued to the notion of the "body gothic" that studies the corporeal and carnal, and the boundaries of violence in Gothic works of art. For instance, Andrew N. Sharpe extensively interprets the elements of the corporeal in his work *Foucault's*

Monsters and the Challenge of Law (2010). The Body Gothic is very material and comes in nightmarish visions or in the anxious states of the characters regarding their bodies. Of course, the more obvious depictions of threats to the integrity of the body like graphic descriptions of the body's destruction or degeneration also constitute an important element in the academic studies of corporeal horror. These extend into splatter and gore film just as much as they do in the zombie and nightmare subplots of horror novels.

The bodies of special interest are monster bodies. Both the creature made by Dr. Frankenstein and the creation of Haadi, the scavenger, are part of the horror and Gothic tradition of using the grotesque and deformed body of the monster. The term "monster" belongs to Michel Foucault. In his work, he analyzed the monster within the framework of natural history and especially how the meaning of the term crystallized in the 18th century, according to the tools of power that generate monsters and their definition within the "politico-judiciary" power frame. Monstrosity is a necessity for him, and this thesis follows the idea of monsters as normative bodies that challenge civilian and religious law.

Foucault's understanding of the body isn't literal: it is a construct of collective knowledge, based on the discursive fields of physical dissimilarity and desire. This thesis is also in line with Foucault's use of the terms, monstrosity, monstrousness, and monster, interchangeably. The interrelation of the grotesque and the Gothic constitutes a fruitful field of investigation in terms of the body in horror narratives.

Moreover, the corporeal depictions of the monster body and skin in horror fiction are a key subject of academic study and are present in cultural studies that engage history, sociology, and psychology. Starting from the early 19th century, many critics have focused their study efforts on the body and its horrors - like Sigmund Freud in his seminal, *The Uncanny* (1919), Julia Kristeva with her *Abjection* (1982), and Mark Fisher with his, *The Weird and The Eerie* (2016). This study will peruse the jargon developed by the aforementioned theorists in the

fields of psychopathology, human behavior, and culture insofar as they offer an analytical framework for the "monster body".

Sigmund Freud's studies of the uncanny as something as strangely familiar upon encounter goes beyond the strangeness of the other. The psychological effects of seeing a familiar thing or event as something unsettling, eerie, or in the taboo context is the underbelly of the monster construct. Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection is based on the notion of the identity crisis and looking at the waste products of the body and its excess parts, she connects these entities to the disgust of the reader. Horror for her often succumbs to visceral abjection. she uses the readers' vivid reactions to fear-related notions and makes them recoil from the "other" entity. Monsters, as this study will proceed to argue, are in essence abjected creatures.

When it comes to Mark Fisher's ideas of the eerie, it is not the monster body per se that relates to the preoccupation with the odd, but rather the attractive appeal of absence that comes together with fright when the monster starts to dominate the frame of the narrative. Monsters are eerie since they fall outside the standards of normal experience and consciousness. They are the excess and the lacking at the same time, as will be demonstrates through the examination of the two installations of Mary Shelley's and Ahmed Saadawi's creatures.

These ideas of excess, absence, and the mixed feeling that monsters can provoke come forth through multiple regression analysis, as proposed by Viktória Prohászková in her article, 'The Genre of Horror' (2012). She stipulates that horror is a tool of emotional discharge that correlates with monsters as revered representations of superhuman powers for which the reader longs The deformed reality of monstrous existence balances between creating awe and fear; and it is the mastery of such authors as Shelley and Saadawi who transform the horror vocabulary concerning hideous bodies into a lasting impression of disgust and fear that extend beyond a momentary experience in readers.

Monsters can act in counter-position to everything safe, stable, and healthy. Joseph Grixti, in his *Terrors of Uncertainty* (1989) takes another stance, one this current study cherishes – that

the monsters in horror fiction function as metaphors for the societal realia that modern society is rejecting. In their search for a channel of discharge, horror novels become a potential instrument of emotional release and control. Monsters in this framework become impersonations of the worst and most unjust face of reality that has to be challenged and destroyed to restore the justice that the reader fails to achieve outside the fictitious world. Shelley's example of this idea is seen in her Frankenstein monster as a stand-in for the horrors and challenges of the Industrial Revolution. By contrast, Saadawi's monster is tempting to be read as his reflection on the violence in the Middle East.

This stance is supported by a contemporary literary theorist, Rosemary Jackson, who offers an interpretation of the horror genre as a "repressive cultural schematization". This thesis adheres to the postulation that what a society suppresses through laws and cultural conventions is often explored in the genre of horror as a way for social anxieties to be relieved. Through the study of similar monster narratives unfolding on two different continents and at different times, this thesis will reveal how Western readers interact and respond to Shelley's horror work and how the same process takes place in the Eastern reading culture as regards Saadawi's novel. The two monsters will serve as the ground for comparison of two contrasting societies and their methods and approaches to dealing with monster narratives.

Horror writings unsurprisingly also reflect the author's personality. The story of *Frankenstein* bears many parallels with the personal life of Shelley, who had witnessed a lot of deaths. The experience of her mother's death as Mary was born as well as the loss of her own two children shortly after they were born left an imprint on her personality and her affections as a writer. Saadawi, as a film documentarian and literary writer, has transposed his experience into the embodiment of elements in the Iraqi sociopolitical context into the monster narrative of his 2013 novel.

Through an examination of the way horror has progressed as a genre from its first brief appearances to the height of popularity in "the long 18th century" and to its modern

omnipresence on every artistic platform, this study takes a dynamic approach to horror as a vehicle of release necessary for the modern reader. The growth of the scope of reproductions of violent acts and body horror marked by the First Industrial Revolution, the two World Wars, and current global armed conflicts is a sociocultural phenomenon tightly connected to the production of the *Frankenstein* monster narrative, both explicitly and implicitly.

This study will examine Shelley's work, its retelling in *Frankenstein in Baghdad,* and the escalation of violence these two texts present if regarded as a continuum. One of the major projected findings of this study is the amplification of monstrous features in the creatures of the 21st century thanks to the perceived boost in evident socio-economic violence on the global level. In the long run, a comparative examination of these two horror narratives may present a paradigm for the documentation of real violence through fictitious narratives aimed at presenting the ultimate image of modern horror for generations to come.

2: THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2:1 THE ORIGINS OF THE GOTHIC AND HORROR FICTION

The literary tradition that combines both the ancient dark ages' theme of cruelty and the enlightenment of the modern era is often referred to as "horror." This literary genre embeds and blends romance tales in haunted settings like monasteries, crypts, castles, or gloomy places before a backdrop of ruins and decay. Horror works of art usually include brutality, imprisonment, and persecution. They also deal with fictitious, supernatural, and evil phenomena.

The most potent tool relied upon by the horror genre is *fear*. For instance, Orson Scott Card, a public speaker, essayist, critic, and novelist, writes in several genres but is known best for his science fiction works. In *Maps in a Mirror* (1990), he talked about three stages of fear in fiction. the first stage, "dread", is the kind of fear a person experiences when they know there is something there (nearby), but they can't identify or explain it. Hearing a noise in the house although the house is empty is one example. As for the second stage of fear, "terror", it occurs when a person identifies the scary thing and begins to understand it, such as if they see a shape of a man stepping out of the shadows with a bloody axe. Moreover, Card names the last and weakest stage of fear as "horror". He argues that horror is the aftertaste of a fright that can only happen as a consequence of being scared.[1] With a horrible, "hacked-up corpse, your emotions range from nausea to pity for the victim." (Scott, p. 10).

The development of literary theory and criticism has enriched the horror fiction genre. Many fields of studies are associated with it, the most prominent being the interest in the element of fear in humans. The horror fiction genre is contradictory for a good reason. Although it contains repulsive and provocative elements, fear and disgust generally go against human nature; horror attracts followers, nonetheless. Despite the fact that fear generates dread, especially from blood, and death produces horrors, people still seek out the works of the horror genre.

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[1] Card, *Maps in a Mirror*, 10.

Fear is said to be the most primal and fundamental of human emotions. Imagine our ancestors huddled up in caves while thunder rolls above outside. They are frozen rigid to the spot, hearts hammering in their chests as a fearsome beast slinks by. Charles Darwin was a naturalist, geologist and biologist and is best known for his contributions to the science of evolution, such as the *theory* of *evolution* by natural selection, first formulated in his book *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. In 1872, he was the first to note fear's primordial roots. He says in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals,* "We may likewise believe that fear was expressed from an extremely remote period in almost the same manner as it is now by man." (Darwin, p. 382).

Moreover, the concept of fear from the "other" is explored by Frantz Fanon, a French West Indian psychiatrist and political philosopher from the French colony of Martinique, whose works have been influential in the fields of post-colonial studies, critical theory and Marxism. In Fanon's work, *Black skin, White mask* (1952), he embodies the emotion of *fear* from the "other" in a first-hand encounter: "Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened! Frightened. Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself tears, but laughter had become impossible." (Fanon, p. 84)

This passage implies that it is not simply a question of somebody being afraid of someone passing by; on the contrary, this fear is triggered by a specific object. The black man offers his memory of a white child's fear elicited by the man's looks. When the child announces that he's frightened, he declares this fear to himself, but the presentation of this experience is through black man's point of view: who is the object of this fear. This certainly testifies to the shared, communal root of the described experience.

Sara Ahmed is a literary scholar and author whose area of study includes the intersection of feminist theory, lesbian feminism, queer theory, critical race theory and postcolonialism. In her work, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), she explains that fear is signified through language by the white body, but it goes beyond just that vehicle. She argues that fear moves

through the subject and the object at the same time. In the aforementioned example, the body of the black man absorbs the fear, causing an effect of tightening: the smile becomes "impossible" and the man's own body becomes alienated when it is "othered" by someone else's fear.[2]

In this way, fear does not simply come from within and then move outwards towards objects and others (the white child who feels afraid of the black man); rather, fear works to secure the relationship between these bodies, bringing them together and moving them apart through shudders felt on the skin, on the surface of the body through the encounter. The story moves on. Fear makes the body shiver with a cold that moves from the surface into its depths, like the cold "that goes through your bones."(Fanon, p.86) Fear envelops bodies becomes a vehicle for fear, encapsulating it and letting the fear sink in. However, the connectedness of bodies in fear does not form a shared space between the subject and the object of fear.

The visceral reaction of shivering in the body of the black man is misinterpreted by the white child as rage. This faulty reading of a bodily response becomes the grounds for fear, but that doesn't mean that the misinterpretation is the cause for fear. The white child doesn't feel fear as a reaction to the situation at the moment; it is a response to a systemic notion that goes back to the past learned association between "black" and "fearsome" in his mind. The fear, in this case, springs from the deep "otherness" between the bodies of varying races constructed from learned cultural preconceptions.[3]

Fear re-establishes the distance between bodies whose differences are derived from a surface reading that produces shivering and recoloring. Fear involves proximity that is crucial to establishing the "apartness" of bodies. Such proximity involves repetitive stereotypes. Homi K. Bhabha, a professor of English and African American literature, in *The Location of Culture* (1994) explains that fear may also work as an affective construct: it does not reside positively

[2] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 62.
[3] Ahmed, 63.

in a particular object or sign. It is this lack that allows fear to slide across signs and between bodies. This sliding becomes stuck, but not permanently, in the relation between another body as a symbol of threat and the body that produces and internalizes the fear. This effect becomes evident in the following statement of the child: “Mama, the nigger's going to eat me up.” This cannibalistic fear of being consumed is political since the proximity of “the other” is only effective when it threatens to incorporate the self of the subject within.[4]

In the case of black bodies, the fear of them is generated in white societies by associative links between the notions of the “other” and black discourse: Negro, animal, bad, mean, ugly. These impressions extend beyond the personal feelings of the subject of fear to the existence of an entire group of beings residing against the other group that threatens the separate status of their existence. These feelings of fear for the integrity of the group are often used to justify violence as a means of fighting for the lives of white bodies threatened by the very existence of black bodies.

Ahmed adds the words of R. D. Laing, a Scottish psychiatrist, who in *The Divided Self An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (1965) wrote extensively on mental illness – in particular, the experience of psychosis. The discourse of fear is dominated by narratives of preservation, especially when it comes to societal discourses where it is not simply “me”, but also “us”, “what is”, “life as we know it” or even "life itself” that must be protected from the otherness of threatening bodies.[5]

Anxiety is prominently described as objectless and to be separated from fear. For example, Stanley Jack Rachman, a psychologist who wrote many books in his field, in *Anxiety* (2004) states that fear is an emotional retraction “to a threat that is identifiable”, (Rachman, p. 3), meaning that it always has an object. This object is not only important in its spatial position to the body that feels the fear but also in its temporality. Fear is an intense experience that unfolds

[4] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 82.
[5] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 64.

in the present that also acts as a premonition for future pain. Thus, fear displays the potential of connecting the body in the present - with a bodily reaction to the imminent event - to the future dimension when the potential threat is causing pain to the subject. In a way, fear is a prerequisite for pain. Here it is useful to note Heidegger's treatment of fearsome objects:

> That which is detrimental, as something that threatens us, is not yet within striking distance, but it is coming close... As it draws close, this 'it can, and yet, in the end, it may not' becomes aggravated. We say, 'It is fearsome'. This implies that what is detrimental as coming close by carries with it the patent possibility that it may stay away and pass us by; but instead of lessening or extinguishing our fearing, this enhances it. (Heidegger, p. 179-80).

Martin Heidegger, a philosopher and seminal thinker in the Continental tradition of philosophy, is best known for contributions to phenomenology, hermeneutics, and existentialism. He places fear epistemologically in the future and highlights the relations of distance and time between the subject and the object of fear. In his book *Being and Time* (2013), he also speaks of this distance as anticipation; he says that inherent futurity enables fear's existence in the first place. Interestingly, the distance between the two actors of fear cannot be overcome in Heidegger's view. He insists that the subject of fear cannot break free from the connection with the object; when it passes the subject by and leaves its field of sight, the object of fear evolves. The fear becomes more intense when its source does not contain it anymore and when it is not clearly identifiable or visible. Thus, the loss of the object of fear has strong power over the fearing.

Symbolic values can build up an object of fear that possesses a strong emotional connotation and that has a political power of causing exclusion and transition. This affective, emotional component presents a dichotomy of love and hate, also a part of political discourse. It means that when an object of fear causes hate, the subject is turning to the object of love for protection. The transition between the two ends of the emotional spectrum is paradoxically based on the fantasy that love means the preservation of life, only if the alternative scenario is death.

Ahmed describes fear as an embodied experience that affects the surfaces of bodies. However, here an important distinction has to be made between fearsome bodies and those that internalize

and experience fear. The subject bodies react differently to fearsome stimuli, and the emotional response in them varies. [6]

Emotions need a shared space for expression, and where this connection can produce safety and intimacy in some cases, fear exploits this space for subjugation and dominance. The body, open in the shared emotional space to the world is fragile. The openness of this space around the body means that it can be surrounded and governed by possible threats. The body in this space has no other choice but to shrink back from the potential pain and trauma. Thus, fear governs the body's mobility, pushing it into compact, tight structures and forcing some bodies to take up the minority of space - both real and political. From this point of view, as proposed by Ahmed, emotions become a part of the regulatory mechanism for bodies in social spaces. Fear does not originate in the body as a default mobility restriction. It surfaces through interaction with particular narratives of fear that already exist in society. Going back to Heidegger's argument that fear grows stronger with the loss of the fearsome object, it is important to note that the absence of definitive objects of fear results in anxiety on the societal level. If there isn't a concrete threat, then everything gains the characteristic of being potentially traumatic, and the world around the body becomes inherently fearsome. One of the defining principles in the politics of fear is: to combat the fearsome world, society has to devise a collective object of fear that restricts the mobility of some bodies and allows for the expansion of others.

One of the primary human emotions connected and provoked by fear is the sensation of "disgust". Disgust is one of the strongest human emotional reactions that stimulates both mental and physical states as described in *Disgust: Theory and History of a Strong Sensation* (2003). Winfried Menninghaus is the author of many works in philosophy, aesthetics, literature, the arts, and psychoanalysis. He talks about the concept and underlying philosophy of disgust. He considered disgust to be among the few human reactions with a great potential

[6] Ahmed, 68.

for triggering violence. Menninghaus turns to the works of Immanuel Kant, an influential German philosopher, for the definition of disgust as a "strong vital sensation." Such sensations "penetrate the body, so far as it is alive," according to Kant. He also notes the systemic response in the nervous system that comprises the process of disgust in a human body when it emerges through smell, touch, upon sight, or even thought about a disgusting object.[7]

Disgust appears to exist as a human alarm mechanism. It signals an emergency and mobilizes the body's capacity for removing itself from the interaction with an object treated as a threat to its well-being. The intensity of the reaction to the object is so divergent from the self that the disgust triggered is profound. The fight to remove the self from the disgusting object comes about as a "to be or not to be" issue. In this light, disgust is what takes up all of the space between the delectable and revulsive, wholesome and unacceptable, appreciation and rejection. Gross, icky, stinky - all these descriptors mean an absolute judgment of the object's attractive potential. In looking at Menninghaus's example of the decaying body as a symbol of a potential threat, it is crucial to identify the defense mechanism triggered by the lack of pleasurability of the object of fear that comes into contact with a living human with a coating of disgust.

Any smell or taste identified as contaminating causes the body to recoil and make the distance from the potential threat greater. Some researchers define love in terms that counter the theory of disgust almost symmetrically, outlining the desire for proximity and any form of interaction as a form of expansion triggered by appealing smells, tastes, looks, etc.

Historically, disgust has been regarded as a basic human feature. In the 18th century, anthropologists insisted on the importance of disgust for normal human functioning on the personal and societal level. The evolutionary theory started a trend continued by neurology and empirical psychology, for including disgust on the list of basic sensations that comprise human nature. In the Freudian school of psychology, disgust is treated as a neurotic symptom of repression; it is described as a state opposite to the normal, natural state. Disgust seemed to

[7] Menninghaus, *Disgust*, 1.

them not a universal but rather a personal effect that can potentially be felt by any human in the right cultural and societal context.

Freud had even called it a "hereditary fixture" in one of his critical works. German philosopher Walter Benjamin, a cultural critic and essayist, considered disgust to be a basic human feature that can be traced to a universal pattern of human behavior. The theory of disgust, when studied at the intersection of many disciplines, proclaims that no human is exempt from experiencing disgust. [8]

While culture has a great effect on that which provokes disgust, selected things tend to elicit this emotion among all cultures. For instance, some common cross-cultural disgust triggers are spoiled food, animals and insects such as cockroaches, worms, and rats. Some other notions on the list include poor hygiene, bodily fluids and excretions (feces, urine, pus, and vomit), and the products of bodily violation like blood and mutilation, death and corpses.

Charles Darwin is one of the main theorists who has described the characteristics of disgust. He studied the physical reactions connected with experiencing emotions. He found that people who are only mildly disgusted may frown and use their hands or bodies to push the disgusting object away. Stronger cases of disgust may cause them to involuntarily scream or purse their lips. The human who experiences strong disgust may spit and verbalize the feeling with a short vocal response like "ach" or "ew." In extreme cases, people may display an open mouth, wrinkled nose, or contorted face, as though they were going to vomit. Some may actually vomit.

Horror fiction is a rich genre that incorporates and agitates a wide variety of human emotions and expressions like fear, disgust, and their aftereffects. Moreover, appealing to these reactions can be a powerful tool in literary work for creating strong reader experiences either in fiction or nonfiction. H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937) a horror fiction writer, identified the key characteristics of the horror genre in *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1927). The literature

[8] Menninghaus, 2.

genre produces a sensation of supernatural horror and arouses a feeling of "cosmic fear" in readers. Additionally, Noël Carrol, a philosopher of art and film and a published journalist, emphasized that the concept of "dread" in Lovecraft's brand of supernatural horror as one of the many aspects of horror that this genre can generate in his book, *The Philosophy of Horror* (1990)

Viktória Prohászková in her article, "The Genre of Horror" (2012), explained that one of the other possibilities of explaining the appeal of horror is offered via monsters that represent the deformation of reality and possess supernatural powers and abilities. These characters promote the reader's respect and longing for these features. The aversion evoked by monstrous looks is outweighed by the admiration the reader may feel.[9] This can be illustrated by the vast number of monsters found in contemporary literary writings that are widely considered as crucial elements in generating fear.

Moreover, another contemporary theorist, Rosemary Jackson, a mentor and leader for undergraduate students majoring in special education and learning disabilities, interpreted in her book, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981), the horror genre as a "repressive cultural schematization" (Carrol, p. 175) What society suppresses through laws and cultural conventions is often used to express disagreement with certain social and political procedures that are considered unjust. Therefore, the horror genre becomes an effective tool of emotional discharge to remove social anxieties and functions as a controller of the masses, preventing them from projecting these anxieties onto reality.[10]

The horror genre is a diverse one that cannot be defined by a single element; rather, it is defined according to categories that serve the motives of the targeted study. This study limits these categories, concepts, and theoretical jargon to Sigmund Freud's "The Uncanny" (1919), Michel Foucault's "Monster" (1975), and Mark Fisher's "The Weird and the Eerie" (2016). These

[9] Prohászková, 'The Genre of Horror', 140–41.
[10] Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or, Paradoxes of the Heart*, 175.

authors are considered to be the main theorists in the fields of psychopathology, human behavior and culture; they offer an analytical framework for putting the "monster body" in the spotlight to gain a better understanding of the monster's aura that is reflected in the reader's fear in both Shelley's and Saadawi's works.

In examining the development of certain literary genres and works of Gothic and horror fiction in regard to the element of fear and its main symbolic embodiment in the monster, a tight connection appears between certain elements such as the uncanny, eerie, and monstrosity. This connection may cause the individual to experience a type of feeling and emotion that may be described as *unsettling* and *horrifying*, even towards a familiar thing that could cause harm and subversion.

There are similarities between the attitudes engendered by fear and those that stem from the unknown. The works of Freud, Foucault, and Fisher are crucial to understanding the relationship between these elements. Much of the literature on psychopathology, human behavior, and culture come from Sigmund Freud, particularly, *The Uncanny* (1919), which is strongly associated with this study. The *uncanny* is the psychological experience of something as strangely familiar, rather than simply mysterious. It may describe incidents where a familiar thing or event is encountered in an unsettling, eerie, or taboo context.

Freud is considered to be the father of psychoanalytic theory. He was a neurologist and his major field of study was the human personality. His work is unique for the reason that it aims to elaborate on the hidden structure of the mind in addition to the human personality, behavior, and experience in different contexts. In his literary writings, Freud announced that sensations related to the traumatic events of life do not obviously reveal themselves. In fact, they are concealed in the unconscious. Expressing these pent-up desires and memories is essential for human beings.

One of Freud's important concepts is the "*uncanny*" which has many similarities with the idea of the eerie as seen in the work of Mark Fisher. William E. Cain is a literary writer and editor

for many works. In *The Norton Anthology of the Theory and Criticism* (2001), he explains the concept of the uncanny:

> What is frightening to what arouses dread and horror; equally certainly, too, the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general. Yet we may expect that a special core of feeling is present which justifies the use of a special conceptual term. One is curious to know what this common core is which allows us to distinguish as 'uncanny' certain things which lie within the field of what is frightening. (Cain, p. 930).

The term *uncanny* comes from two German words, *Heimlich* and *Unheimlich*, which mean "the familiar and unfamiliar." Freud uses these terms in *The Uncanny*, later translated in 1925, to indicate the sensation of discomfort as well as strangeness that emerge in the human self without forewarning. In other words, the Germanic word, *unheimlich*, appears to be the contrary of *Heimlich/heimisch*, which means "familiar", "native" or "belonging to the home". It is concluded that what is "*uncanny*" is terrifying, specifically because it is unfamiliar and unknown. It is natural that not everything novel and uncommon is frightening; nonetheless, this relationship cannot be inverted. It can merely be said that what is new can easily become uncanny and frightening; some new things are scary, but this is not necessarily the case. Something should be added to what is new and uncommon to make it uncanny.

One of the most effective devices for smoothly creating the uncanny is to leave the reader with uncertainty as to whether a specific character in the story is to be regarded as human or an automaton. The author will organize the material such that the attention of the reader is not immediately focused on his doubt; therefore, he might not get into the matter and clear it up directly because, as it has been said, that would rapidly dispel the peculiarly emotive impact of the entity.

Freud explained his own experience as a fiction reader with literary uncanniness in an interpolated narrative. He described his experience of reading Strand Magazine in English during a time of isolation when Europe was involved in a World War as having an "uncanny feeling". The story Freud found remarkable was about a couple of newlyweds who rented their first home and noticed something strange about a peculiarly looking table with carved

crocodiles on it. The house appeared to be infested by crocodile-like supernatural creatures that weren't easily identifiable as ghosts or monsters. The author of that rather trivial story went for describing the experiences of the newlyweds who saw bits and pieces of the supernatural event and could only clearly identify the movement of the creatures as "gliding".[11]

Freud believed that uncanny feelings happen in places where one ought to feel more secure, or when a person is more familiar with something. Moreover, Freud's usage of the German term shows how uncanny experiences are structural; that is, how the sensation of being "unhomely" or "not-at-home" happens within the notion of the home. Many critics and theorists have presented their points of view concerning Freud's idea of the uncanny. For instance, Anthony Vidler is an architecture historian and critic who in his work, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (1992), argues about the concept of the uncanny:

> The uncanny has, not unnaturally, found its metaphorical home in architecture: first in the house, haunted or not, that pretends to afford the utmost security while opening itself to the secret intrusion of terror, and then in the city, where what was once walled and intimate, the confirmation of community… has been rendered strange by the spatial incursions of modernity. (Vidler, p. 11)

Vidler factually resituates the notion of the uncanny in lived space. The modern home turns out to be a site of paradox that displaces its occupant even as it locates him in an allegedly private and personal space. Because of its uncanny position, the modern home similarly includes monstrous features because it pledges security as well as stability; but it confuses and threatens, as Timothy Beal a literary writer and scholar in the field of theology believes in his work, *Religion and Its Monsters* (2002). He argues that monsters are embodiments of the uncanny insofar as they threaten the safety and wholesomeness provided by one's home. The monster becomes a displacing force that creates chaos in a space of order and triggers disbelief in the stable components of human life, such as self, society, and the world order.[12]

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[11] Leitch and Cain, *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 946–47.
[12] Beal, *Religion and Its Monsters*, 5.

From the previous statement, one may conclude that the concept of the uncanny plays a great role in the creation of monsters in literature because monsters or monstrous conceptualizations have different dimensions.

Joseph Grixti, in *Terrors of Uncertainty* (1989) comments on horror fiction, saying that monstrous individuals usually refer to ways of evading apparent insinuations of discomfort as well as the uncertainties that seem to be tied to the continually-changing economic, political, and social circumstances of our culture that are technologically oriented.

Grixti assures us that monsters in horror fiction are usually metaphors for those unpleasant societal and pantheistic realities the current society is seeking to reject and revise. Monsters come to be seen as "scapegoats", incarnated as terrifyingly and abjectly other that should be challenged and diminished. Generally, monstrosity is identified by a symbolic gaze that gives definite importance to specific bodies and behaviors, rendering them monstrous. Being unusual bodies, they are directly noticeable, and it is not astonishing that failing to accord them with the tribute of normative, these bodies are recognized as monstrous.[13]

Speaking of monsters and monstrosity paves the way for the significant theorization of Michel Foucault (1926–1984). He was a social theorist, literary critic, and one of the pioneers of the monster discipline. He laid the foundations for different types of juridical-natural monsters that are political and moral in nature. He refers to the monstrous in his work, *Les Mot Et Les Choses* (1966), also known as *The Order of Things,* in which he analyzed the monster in natural history by describing the monster as a being that exceeds the natural order. Foucault's investigation of the monster unveiled what had been a source of confusion, unknown variants, and unclear speculations prior to the 18th century. In short, Foucault investigated the monster according to the tools of power that generated it, and he defined it according to the "politico-judiciary" power frame.

[13] Grixti, *Terrors of Uncertainty*, 172.

Of note is Foucault's emphasis on the centrality of the body in his argument for power, knowledge, and the organization of physical dissimilarity and desire. In such analyses, the body often appeared as a digressively-arranged product of established knowledge and control. Foucault used the terms, monstrosity, monstrousness, and monster, in substitute. He presented a general definition rather than a specific one for each of these terms, saying that monstrosity is given to a being that should ultimately fall within or challenge the prohibition of religious law. Monstrosity exists only when confusion collides, overthrows, or interrupts the civil, religious or canon law. The variations between monstrosity and disability are exposed at the friction point "between a breach of the natural law-table and a breach of the law instituted by God or by society, at the point where these two breaches of law come together." (Browning and Picart, p. 56). However, monstrosity is the sort of natural abnormality that usually calls law into question and deactivates it. Here, Foucault believed that the monster has to be comprehended throughout the nexus of law/nature and, more particularly, as the result of the dual infringement of law as well as nature.

He further emphasized bestial transgression as an act to clarify the historical considerations of asymmetrical bodies designated as monsters, but this does not seem to have significant space within his theoretical accounts. In fact, Foucault appeared to be ambivalent concerning etiology and responsibility. It appears that his conceptual framework necessitates two circumstances for the monster's birth: the breaching of nature and the breaching of law. Regarding the violation of the law, the key object for Foucault is not the act of the monstrousness; yet, this element might be fully existent. The crucial fact is that the monster's body often poses a challenge to lawfulness and classification. Specifically, the monstrousness element is most obvious in this challenge. Therefore, according to Foucault, the problem concerning the monster is eventually not a problem of causatives or responsibility, but a problem of effects.

Foucault must have sensed that monstrosity eludes all notions of identity and difference; therefore, all monstrosity is deeply and inevitably political. In fact, it is the promise of

unsettling subversion. Foucault had also devised a genealogy of abnormality that linked monstrous humans from the past to individuals in the present that don't conform to acceptable bodily norms.

As noted above, the concept of "eerie" was explored by literary writer and critic, Mark Fisher (1968-2017), a British writer, critic, and cultural theorist in *The Weird and Eerie* (2016). He provides many examples of the unsympathetic absence or fundamental alterity in science fiction that are particularly disturbing for the reason that they remind people that the world might not be as it appears. Fisher declares that the "eerie" is typically a mode of radical narration, irradiating from the ruins of the lost. He notes that this mode is preoccupied with the odd (not the awful). The attractiveness of the eerie is enlarged by the notion that readers feel enjoyment in what frightens them. However, it is the attraction of outside phenomena that evade standard consciousness, experience, and perception that make the eerie so distinct. Fisher states that the eerie is established by the failure of absence or presence. The sense of the eerie appears either with the presence of something when nothing should be there or with the presence of nothing when something should be there. For instance, an "eerie cry" belongs to the first type of the eerie - the failure of absence. Fisher explained that in "the cry of a mere animal reflex or biological mechanism, there is some kind of intent at work, a form of intent that we do not usually associate with a bird" (Fisher, p. 62). In fact, the eerie essentially includes forms of suspension and estimation. It is still not known whether there is something eccentric or odd about the cry of a bird. Commenting on such an analysis, Fisher confirms that with the concept of "eerie", no clear definition is possible since it can only exist in an undefined form. The eerie is something inaccessible; it is always about the unknown; it is a secret that fails to exist if uttered or shared. However, the eerie does not equal the mysterious. For a mystery to be eerie, the knowledge or sensation that comprise its core has to go beyond the realm of shared experience.

The idea of the eerie is connected with the concept of agency. For instance, presence failure can question the agency of a specific natural event. Therefore, the eerie is almost an idea of forces that govern human life as well as the world. Forces like these do not completely exist in normal human sensual apprehension. They don't occur with any substantial sensuality, yet they have the capability of creating any type of effect.

Moreover, Roger Luckhurst, a British writer and scholar of modern and contemporary literature in his article, "Making Sense of The Weird and the Eerie", explains that the eerie "allows us to see the inside from the perspective of the outside" (Luckhurst, 2017). It is a worrisome intrusion of a thing from the outside. In fact, it is a treacherous obtrusion, and a confusing juxtaposition, as if the object exists in the wrong place. Besides, the eerie is "a certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces" (Luckhurst, 2017). In fact, the eerie is regarded as the original extension of Fisher's ideas. He often takes the eerie from everyday usage and imbues it with a tangible accuracy whereby empty lands are eerie, strange locations are eerie, ruins and abandoned structures are eerie. Something is moving in seemingly empty or evacuated sites that is autonomous from the human subject. As such, the agency has been hidden or obscured. Because it rises up from the outside and remains there, it resists simplified hermeneutic clarification.

Fisher further adds that the eerie is a special type of perturbation, involving a sensation of unfairness and injustice. An eerie objector entity makes people want to eliminate its existence: this strange object must not exist at all. Nevertheless, if the object or entity is found in the environment, the classifications used to create a sense of the surrounding world cannot be valid. This perception motivates Lovecraft to state:

> To achieve the essence of real externality, whether of time or space or dimension, one must forget that such things as organic life, good and evil, love and hate, and all such local attributes of a negligible and temporary race called mankind, have any existence at all. It is this quality of "real externality" that is crucial to the weird. (Fisher, p. 16).

Fisher presents a further example of the idea of the eerie relevant to a capitalist society that is controlled by artificial forces. He implies that the eerie could play a great part in this regard. He believes that monetary operations, and capital in particular, are part of the eerie concept since its symbolic value may have nothing tangible behind it, and yet it has a considerable power over real-world entities that goes beyond reality.

Because of capital migration around the world, it can leave traces of the eerie in both deserted factories as well as the new, for both are empty and eerie such that post-modernist shapes evolve. This becomes clear in "On Vanishing Land" (2013), an essay by Fisher and Justin Barton. It is seen particularly in Fisher's haunting depiction of a shipping container in the harbor city of Suffolk, a huge automatic system of "inorganic clangs and clanks."(Fisher, p.76) Keeping an eye on it from the nearby countryside, he observes an "eerie sense of silence" in spite of the noisiness, because "what's missing [is] any trace of language or sociability." (p76) Both have often been associated with horror, yet this emphasis overlooks the fascination that such texts can evoke. Both the concepts of the weird and the eerie are fundamentally concerned with the outside and the unknown, which are not intrinsically horrifying, even if they are often unsettling.

The development of the classical literary genre of Gothic fiction into its modern form, i.e., the genre of horror fiction, permits and incorporates most of the literary work of both genres. One of the most influential literary masterpieces that falls within the borders of these two genres is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. This novel contains many concepts and perspectives eligible for examination with the help of contemporary theoretical devices. In fact, it can be analyzed with a fresh lens as a model of horror fiction. Based on the theoretical studies of Freud, Foucault, Kristeva and Fisher, who studied the unsettled state of mind that the individual experiences when encountering fear, and especially when this fears spring out of interactions with unusual things such as monsters, Chapter three will go on to investigate the implications of the confrontation with the monster body in *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley.

3: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF GOTHIC AND HORROR FICTION

3.1 THE OVERVIEW OF GOTHIC AND HORROR WORKS FROM PREMODERN TO POSTMODERN

The horror fiction literary narrative is the modern form and further development of the much older concept called, "Gothic fiction", which appeared for the first time in the work of the English writer Horace Walpole's literary fiction, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). Walpole (1717-1797) in his work mixed the fanciful with grounded actuality by placing normal people in paranormal situations. Generally, this work of fiction is usually presented in an outlandish country, in a medieval castle with towers as well as clandestine passageways. Mostly, the castle is gloomy and eerie, plagued by squeaking pivots, doors of trap, and winds in addition to the ominously life-like feature of persons in paintings. This setting techniques in the Gothic genre were created by Walpole's enchantment with artefacts and the history of the medieval.[14] *The Castle of Otranto* consists of many Gothic scenes and themes, one of which is a violent and sadistic death in which the idea of death suddenly happens without any warning at all. For instance, Manfred, the protagonist of this novel, unintentionally kills his daughter Matilda.

Moreover, Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), one of the pioneers of Gothic fiction in the 18th century, added excitement, painted reminiscent sceneries and atmosphere or moods, depicted progressively compound, evil antiheroes, and concentrated on the superwoman and her fight with evil. She totally transferred the Gothic novel from a mere vehicle of terror portrayal into a means for explaining the psychological side of suspense and fear. With the writings of Radcliffe, Gothic fiction becomes a craze. Her massive popularity has been related to a number of novelties. Her literary work, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), fits the key characteristics of the gothic genre; a heroine in danger, a wicked

[14] David Punter, *A New Companion to the Gothic*, 2012, 324–25.

count, an eerie castle, a vague and frightening male character, long with past unseen secrets.

Radcliffe presented a detailed clarification of the paranormal setting. In fact, she usually gets credit for making the typical Gothic antihero ever so common.[15] Claire Buck, a contemporary writer and author of many works in women's discourses in her book, *Women's Literature* (1992) stated that "Radcliffe interweaves concentration on the picturesque, mystery and feeling, following the fashion set by Walpole." (Buck, p. 846). Radcliffe has been identified by most critics of her period as being the "queen of Gothic fiction". She is considered to be a crucial figure in a tradition that unfettered the imagination of collective English literary from traditional as well as rational restrictions. Her major contribution to this genre is her unique narrative style in explaining the *supernatural* element in her works. The supernatural element usually goes beyond logical explanation and the laws of nature. It is ambiguous and featured mostly in mysteries events and phenomena; however, many people believe in its existence according to celestial religion.

After Radcliff's major work, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, another influential literary work in this field was presented by Matthew Lewis (1771-1818). He wrote *The Monk* in 1796. In his novel, Lewis deals with suspicion concerning Catholicism and the monk's secret sides of the Catholic. It continues the dark themes of emergent Gothic works; nevertheless, Lewis's work was convicted of being lecherous, with its satanic and pornographic elements, besides elements like the mother killing and making a deal with the Devil, that can be seen as somewhat wretched. Yet, this darkness has gradually become embracement by the Gothic audience.[16] Lewis' notorious work created a

[15] Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic Literature*, 2005, 117; 244.
[16] Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic Literature*, 2005, 25.

controversy with the religion authorities, however, and the Gothic audience was attracted to his work even further.

By the beginning of the 18th century, the Gothic genre had gained wide popularity within the literary arena particularly after Mary Shelley (1797-1851) introduced her ground-breaking novel, *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* (1818). This novel brought a new theme to the genre, blending the two different worlds of the spiritual and supernatural with science because of the rise of the First Industrial Revelation in the 18th century. Shelley's novel presents an ambitious and radical scientist named, Dr. Victor Frankenstein, who performs an unethical experiment when creating a living monster from the dead body parts of human corpses. Shelley highlights the dangers of science in making the typical monster in addition to the character of the obsessive scientist who gradually develops into the insane scientist.[17] Gothic fiction as a concept means "medieval" or "barbaric". The concept of the *gothic* was first introduced in Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, subtitled in its second edition as "A Gothic Story". This Gothic characteristic appeared in earlier works such as those of William Shakespeare when he featured ghosts and bad omens in his famous play, *Hamlet* (1599-1602).

Another important aspect of Gothic fiction is its development in literary works, particularly in novel writing. After Shelley's *Frankenstein,* another aspect is added to this genre - "vampire narratives" – in which the vampire is a fictional being, usually a person who is dead in his grave and feeds at night on the blood of the living. It was first used in Gothic fiction work with the publication of John William Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819) and later the famous Gothic novel, *Dracula* (1897), by Bram Stocker which enriched Gothic fiction and launched Gothic sub-genres. Vampiric fiction usually expresses middle-class concerns about the moral decay of aristocratic society. Moreover, the Gothic literary writings became extended to the American

[17] Smith, *Writing Horror Fiction*, 5.

literary arena. Edgar Ellen Poe, a renown influential writer and literary critic, first adopted and developed Gothic fiction in *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), which features a "short narrative hysterical" style. This type of *hysterical* narrative deals with the hysteria of the female characters and a paranoia usually associated with males.[18]

Moreover, Gothic fiction developed rapidly in the 19th century with the introduction to a new element - the "werewolf". A werewolf usually refers to the mythical creature of a man transforms into wolf. It appeared in the work of Frederick Marryat, *The White Wolf of the Hartz Mountains* (1839). This literary fiction narrative derived from Marryat's novel, *The Phantom Ship* (1839). Marryat's *Phantom Ship* is full of the element of horror as well bloody events that are full of fear and tension that put the reader in a state of suspense and surprise.

Furthermore, paranormal, or inexpressible events are common elements in Gothic works: mythical creatures such as giants, ghosts, or dead creatures coming to the life again. It is worth mentioning that the narration in the Gothic era might be extremely sentimental; usually the characters are frequently outdone by sorrow, surprise, anger, and particularly terror. Characters suffer from raw nerves in addition to a feeling of in-the-wind doom. Speeches of crying are common. The act of blood drinking and bloodletting are different from the action of making someone cut himself. The incentives may be alike, but the ends could be dissimilar. The drinking of blood could be solitary among two people or within a group, while cutting oneself is most often solitary. The key differentiation here relates to the greater emphasis on blood shedding rather than the pain of drinking. Historically, blood has been used as a powerful symbol in literature for of life as well as death.[19]

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[18] 'Glossary of the Gothic: Paranoia/Hysteria | Glossary of the Gothic | Marquette University'.

[19] John Bowen, "Gothic Motifs". *Romantics and Victorians*, 15 May 2014. https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and victorians /articles/ gothic- motifs. Accessed July 5, 2019.

The Gothic fiction genre can express the human deepest fears. It also seemed to satisfy the unexplainable inquisitiveness that people acquire for mystery. This kind of genre permits the investigation and debate of social fears and subjects usually considered to be taboo and fuels cultural mania. Terror and mystery are found in eccentric people and continually remained offered in dissimilar ways because this genre has endured several contents, within the discourses and values of different cultures. The texts of the Gothic genre comprise many literary techniques and devices in accordance with its typical characteristics[20]. However, works of Gothic fiction are limited to certain generic elements on the other hand, while *horror* fiction works incorporate a wider range of generic features. In addition to its basic elements, it also includes Gothic features such as the psychological and technological horror that appear in sci-fi works, especially after the First Industrial Revolution. The iconic example is Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which used the invention of electricity in the experiment of creating the monster. Dominic Strinati is a contemporary literary scholar, who in his work, *An Introduction to Studying Popular Culture* (2000), defined the horror genre as "a genre that represents the need for suppression if the horror shown is interpreted as expressing uncomfortable and disturbing desires which need to be contained."[21]

The interest in horror fiction writings increased dramatically after the many popular literary writings like Shelley's work and those of Charles Dickens (1812-1870). He contributed to this genre with his remarkable books as a well-known British novelist of the second half of the 19th century. He wrote many famous classical works in horror fiction. For instance, *A Child's Dream of a Star* (1850) and *The Haunted House* (1859) are undoubtedly his finest horror stories. This seems to be the case with most of the early writers of horror.

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[20] Robert Harris, "Elements of the gothic novel". *VirtualSalt*, Nov. 22 2017. https://www.virtualsalt.com/gothic.htm. Accessed 6 July, 2019.

[21] Strinati, *An Introduction to Studying Popular Culture*, 82.

As mentioned, the horror fiction genre developed from the Gothic literature of the 18th century that reached its first peak around the year of 1790 to become the dominant genre of its time. The consecutive genesis of horror as an independent genre began in the early 19th century. Even though in the beginning, such works were affected by Gothic fiction, their effect constantly weakened, and the horror genre took over. For instance, the *Tales of Terror* (1899) is a horror collection of fifteen short horror tales by Dick Donovan that heralds in a new century. These horror writings become widely popular in the 20th century.

This literary fiction flourished as well in the Eastern Semitic regions of the world as their culture was inclined to spiritual powers and magic. Apocalyptic literature and cabalism created a fertile environment for various authors such as Gustav Meyrink, who wrote *The Golem* (1915) and S. Ansky, who wrote *The Dybbuk* or *Between Two Worlds* (1914). Both works are considered to have created archetypal monsters deeply rooted in the Jewish religious tradition. Meyrink's *The Golem* novella is about a creature in a rabbinical myth that becomes animate after it had been clay. The mythical figure of *the Golem* becomes a source of influence on the horror works that followed. The early horror genre writings of the 20th century flourished in the literary arena.

By the 19th and 20th centuries, the horror fiction genre had been shaped and flourished, and had become independent from the Gothic novel despite the fact that some writers tended to use Gothic elements to embellish their works. Among the most prominent contemporary writers that reflect contemporary themes and concepts are Robert Bloch (*Psycho,* 1959), Shirley Jackson (*The Haunting of Hill House,* 1959), Stephen King (*Night Shift*, 1993; *Carrie* 1974), Clive Barker (*Books of Blood,* 1984-1985*)* Dean Koontz, (*The Good Guy*, 2007; *Intensity,* 1996), Thomas Ligotti (*The Nightmare Factory*, 1996/2007; *Teatro Grottesco* (2006). Craig Davidson, (*The Troop by Nick Cutter* ,2014) and Ahmed Sadawi (*Frankenstein in Baghdad,* 2013), written in *the* Arabic language and later translate into English in 2018 by Jonathan Wright.

The Gothic genre has won audiences despite wide derogation from literary critics and it took over the field of British literature for more than half a century. Between Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto,* widely viewed as the first work in the horror-and-terror genre published in 1764, and *Melmoth the Wanderer* written in 1820 by Charles Robert Maturin, the frightening narratives of the uncanny made an entire generation of readers squeal with pleasure. Gothic works of art breached the norms and traditions of the Age of Enlightenment, introducing scandalizing plots and thus transforming the look and feel of mainstream literature in England. Walpole has famously declared that "the great resources of fancy have been dammed up by strict adherence to common life" (Barron, p. 3) and made a point of the liberation of the imagination. He proved that a controlled creation could satiate the 18th century reader's thirst for novelty.

Walpole established a literary countermovement that unleashed the repressed yearnings of the audience to be scared and amused not by a strictness of form but by putting mental illness, irrationality, physical decay, and death on the front lines. The supernatural overthrew the neoclassical hold on what was considered beautiful, proper, and thus interesting. Fear awoke the thrill and provoked a new mode of perception and a new definition of pleasure. Gothic literature unearthed a whole universe of new impressions, for decades held back by the strict values of the Age of Reason, also known as The Enlightenment, where policies, philosophy, science and communications in Europe were radically reoriented during the course of the "long 18th century" (1685-1815). The Gothic was a response so natural that it not only became a well-defined genre but also kept its popularity after a peak in the mainstream. To this day, many authors dedicate their careers to the exploration of the glory of dark impulses, and contemporary readers are still hungry for more.[22]

There were three distinct aspects that made Walpole's Gothic story so genre specific. The events of the novel take place in a remote location, feeding into an atmosphere of distance and

[22] Barron, *Horror Literature,* 3.

seclusion. This adheres to the tradition of Gothic novels that tend to situate the story in an unfamiliar world, not only geographically but also temporally removed from the reader. The second prominent aspect of the Gothic is its inseparable union with horror and the elements that induce fright and the sense of danger in the characters. Both are tangible, like devices and props, and supernatural. From *The Castle of Otranto* to present-day works of the Gothic genre, these elements are omnipresent. The third aspect crucial to the genre, according to Walpole, is the insularity of the setting, when characters are trapped in or barred from leaving the space of the novel.

A curious subversion often featured in Gothic novels often feature are the buildings and infrastructure hosting the characters have more mobility and exhibit more willpower and flexibility than the human heroes. The people in Gothic scenarios are often imprisoned in cellars, labyrinth-like hallways, or moving between the levels of a scary structure, such as an abandoned house or haunted castle. The latter was a staple in the early years of the literary form. The Gothic castle often became the main actor in the story development, assuming the same emotions and fatal tendencies held by the characters. Their repressed drives would overthrow the founding sensibilities of The Age of Reason, and Walpole's Gothic novel offers evidence of this. Walpole is widely lauded as the first novelist of the Gothic genre, but he wasn't the one to have started this literary movement.

Starting from 1740 on, several poets, including Parnell, Akenside, Edward Young, Robert Blair, the Brothers Warton, and Walpole's close friend, Thomas Gray, have explored the uncanny and dark desires in a series of poems later labeled, "graveyard" verse. The overarching theme of these mid-18th century poetic tendencies was the high-flown exploration of the yearning for "the sweet release of the grave" - the escape from the modern confines of reason and the intertwining of death and pleasure.

The upsurge in monster-themed works of art is a rather contemporary development in Asia. Several recent texts highlight a particular deployment of monsters as actors in "cultural work".

Both Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) and Ma Jian's novel, *Beijing Coma* (2008), make good use of the potency of the monsters' enigmatic characteristics and dubiety.[23]

A characteristic relevant in both Asian and Western traditions is the monstrous. According to Michel Foucault, Western thinking defines monsters as a disruptive force in nature's continuum, or "the emergence of difference" that stands out from its otherwise coherent hierarchy of lower to higher life-forms. In the Eastern tradition, however, while monsters belong to this continuum, they are not "othered"; rather, they belong to an array of possible beings that defy the dichotomy of good vs evil and natural vs supernatural. Thus, as Foucault argues, a being can only be monstrous if it goes beyond "natural limits" and "classification" and meets certain criteria; namely if it will

> …fall under, or at any rate challenge, an interdiction of civil and religious or divine law. There is monstrosity only when the confusion comes up against, overturns, or disturbs civil, canon, or religious law. The difference between disability and monstrosity is revealed at the meeting point, the point of friction, between a breach of the natural law-table and a breach of the law instituted by God or by society, at the point where these two breaches of law come together. Disability may well be something that upsets the natural order, but disability is not monstrosity because it has a place in civil or canon law. Monstrosity, however, is the kind of natural irregularity that calls law into question and disables it. (Picrat, p. 56)

This means that not all disability is monstrosity, but all monstrosity is breaching of natural limits.

Alain Grosrichard argues that the monster can be defined as "a divine sign of an impending threat or punishment." It often exists as a conductor of God's will or truth that shouldn't be ignored or a calamity or divine judgment will interfere. However, the Christian narrative has changed this perception to exactly the opposite. While in mythology, both Greek and Nordic, monsters can represent both good and evil, the contemporary Western tradition seems to have abandoned any positive rendition of monsters as necessary or inevitable instruments of divine ruling. The 18th and 19th century European literary tradition persists in presenting monsters as antagonists to be overcome on the hero's path to glory or salvation. Psychopaths (e.g.

[23] Browning and Picart, *Speaking of Monsters a Teratological Anthology*, 54.

Stevenson's Mr. Hyde), vampires, golems, and the like are often devoid of any ways to redeem themselves or even survive. On the contrary, the human actors need to peruse the rituals of the Christian religion, the philosophy subservient to it or scientific advances to overcome hardships and flourish. Even ungodly creatures created as likable characters, such as Shelley's *Frankenstein* monster, cannot afford to be saved. Victor Frankenstein's creation might well be an allegory for arrogance, but he is not a message from the divine; rather he is an unholy child that needs to be vanquished as an abomination before God.[24]

One cannot state that the diversified notions and functions of the monstrous in the Asian literary body stem directly from Buddhist or Hindu-influenced narratives. Another objection to the theory - that the notion of monsters as evil stem from a religious worldview - can be rendered from Arabic literature and its Islamic roots. One example is the monster present in oral narratives throughout the Middle East, the ghoul that despite the etymology of its name (from ghal, "to kill") and a habit of eating human flesh is rarely portrayed as an evil being. Ghouls from Arabic folk tales, such as the Syrian, "The Bird of the Golden Feather", and the Iraqi, "A Tale within a Tale" appear as guides and advisors. In the Syrian, "The Woodcutter's Wealthy Sister", a ghoul embodies divine punishment for glutton while in the Saudi-Arabian, "A Lost Shoe of Gold", the ghoul is introduced to the narrative to buttress the dominance of divine law. In this story, the ghoul goes on a rampage, trying to persuade a woman to go back on her promise to God, breaking up her family and allegedly killing her child. Her resilience in the face of terror gets rewarded when the ghoul admits that he has been an enforcer of God's will and gives her wealth, family, and good standing in society back to her.

While Christian tradition has rejected monsters from its narrative body, other than as an evil notion, since it's spread through Europe in the 5th century, the dominance of Islam in the Middle East and beyond since the 13th century has granted monsters a bigger domain and range

[24] Browning and Picart, 57.

of possible functions. In this way, ghouls are akin to the Asian counterparts and can act as both divine and ungodly, depending on the requirements of a particular narrative.

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen advocates looking at monsters within a discourse to "be examined within the intricate matrix of relations (social, cultural, and literal historical) that generate them." (Browning and Picrat, p. 61) In this iteration, monsters become a reflection of the historical narrative within which they were create. Adding an historical diachrony of meaning to the sociocultural context that the monster used to belong to provides the reader with a more varied spectrum of meaning held by the monster.

If this approach is applied to Stoker's *Dracula*, what comes forth are the elements of anti-Semitism, queer notions, premodernism, hedonism, etc. that were all present at the end of 19th century discourse. Dracula is not that different from his victims viewed from multiple interpretive approaches; the monster's thirst for blood and power psychoanalytically correlates with the victims' subconscious destructive desires or it can be rendered a capitalistic desire for winning and potency, as demonstrated by Franco Moretti's Marxist reading of the novel. Thus, Dracula serves as a mirror-image for the hidden aspects of human identities, such as loyalty to governing systems that look at people as a resource for labor, through the image of the undead. This dubious belonging to both categories of us and "the other" makes Dracula a clear example of the paradox that is a monster: it reveals human nature while also serving as a counterpart to it. This is where Asian and Western monsters are quite similar.[25]

When monsters are borrowed from Arabic or Asian traditions into Western literary narratives, their initial nuances are usually distorted in the servitude of sensationalism. The ghoul, for instance, becomes a repulsive flesh-crazed being that lives in graveyards and feeds off the dead. Western authors have completely overlooked the initial folk-tale specifications of ghouls by "adapting" these foreign monsters to become pure evil. To fit the Western agenda, the Asian

[25] Browning and Picart, 61.

heritage have been marauded and abused, giving colonialist sensibilities a much higher priority than the peoples' traditions.

Even though, in most cases, it is a safe bet to interchange the terms "horror" and "Gothic", there exists a plethora of examples of Gothic literature containing no elements of horror, such as Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* and horror stories far removed from the Gothic tradition of writing, such as Elizabeth Bowen's "The Cat Jumps". When it comes to inducing horror upon the reader, a certain classification of horrific effects can be argued. Stephen King deserves the suggestion of using the most powerful way to make a reader afraid of the unseen: "it is what the mind sees that makes these stories such quintessential tales of terror." (Punter, p. 211) The next best level of horror is emitting a visceral, physical reaction of fear in the reader. The third level is creating the feeling of "revulsion" in the reader, which is to make him or her feel repulsed by the narrative.

The notion of the scary is fluid, too. The images that horrified our ancestors wouldn't necessarily scare the modern reader; however, the basecamp of what's truly terrifying has a thematic stability that is surprisingly viable. One could argue that horror fiction, especially in its Gothic or ghost iterations, is the most stable of contemporary genres, pursuing a limited scope of emotional effects (terror, fear, uncertainty, malignity) and featuring a peculiar set of narrative stereotypes (the crumbling castle, mansion or haunted house, the vampire, demon, or presiding ghost). Is the haunting potential of horror narrative in its radical disruptive powers?[26]

In the centennial of the Gothic genre, there is not much else to deliberate about the attraction of the 19th century's most popular genre; writers and the critics both seem to have little to say. People have always dreaded nightmares, and the evidence comes from our anthropoid ancestors. This state can be interpreted but not explained, as if it is written in our DNA. The unbreakable antagonism between the living and the dead manifests itself in the fright of the living for the dead and the enmity of the breathing by the buried. The invocation of this

[26] Punter, *A New Companion to the Gothic*, 2012, 211.

opposition underlies many classic horror and fantasy stories. In their most refined state, examples of such motifs can be found in Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," Johann Ludwig Tieck's "The Bride of the Grave" (a classic German terror romance), Sheridan LeFanu's *Carmilla*, W. W. Jacobs's "The Monkey's Paw," Robert W. Chambers' "The Yellow Sign," and Barker's novel The *Hellbound Heart*. The rapture in the law of absolutely no contact or transition between life and death is at the heart of every zombie, vampire, robot, or come-to-life tale, including the classic narrative of *Frankenstein*.

Contemporary beliefs and ethics get rewarded by the time the story ends when the heroine outsmarts the Inquisition and gets permission to marry a cavalier she chooses for herself. Moreover, she chooses a modern villa over a medieval castle that symbolically deteriorates. This is a typical example of a story based on what Robert Miles defines as the "Gothic cusp" - a story happening on the crossroads of the contemporary and the medieval worlds, with modernity emerging as the tale unfolds, all coming to conclusion in one generation.

The out-of-date depiction is also present in those literary works that strive to appear almost modern or steer away from defining a timeframe for their plot. One such prominent example is Lewis's *The Monk*. However, to a reader from the Protestant culture, southern Europe is bound to represent a very particular rime, a so-called "contemporary, continental medieval period." (Punter, p. 279) Since the Inquisition existed in Italy, Spain, and southern France until 1834, one needn't have traveled in time to experience the "Gothic" elements of a setting, as in the first pages of Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797). Anachronisms are essential for the Gothic novel as a genre that praises the antagonism of contemporary and antiquated cultural elements that, for example, can take each other's places or outlive their actual lifespans.[27]

Even though the epithet, "Gothic", is often misjudged as an element of the past, various iterations of Gothic fiction in prose, poetry, theater, and film have successfully permeated the Western cultural space from modern through postmodern times.

[27] Punter, *A New Companion to the Gothic*, 2012, 278–79.

To qualify as a Gothic story, it does not have to be set in a haunted castle or involve vampires. The setting can be anywhere from an old foreign city, a century-old jail, an Egyptian pyramid, a cemetery, a forgotten family home, an abandoned movie theatre, an aging underworld space, an unmaintained production site, a mysteriously forsaken spaceship to the inside world of a computer game. Any such space provided that harbors some sort of ancient or old secrets that could potentially torment the characters in some way is fit for a Gothic tale. Sometimes, the heroes would be haunted with the help of supernatural creatures such as ghouls, ghosts, or monsters that have no place in the world of the living or have one foot in the grave. That creature would be brought to life as a manifestation of sin, long-buried conflict, or a law violation by some sort of external force, be it the will of the antiquated space our heroes are in or some alien, unearthly force.

The juxtaposition of the worlds of the real and the unreal are at the heart of Gothic fiction, and such stories tend to take one sides or suggest the possibility of crossing the border between the two figuratively or literally. This fluctuation between natural and supernatural realms often designates a movement along a continuum between "terror Gothic" and "horror Gothic".

The former is a game of suggestions and shadow play that makes the characters – and sometimes the reader – question their sanity and safety as well as makes them anxious about a secret from their past. The latter is all about physical movement between the worlds; it gives in to violence and created revulsion, brings shocking outcomes, and outright destroys the repressed standards of the quotidian. The core audience of these tales has always been the middle-class Anglo, although it has shown a tendency to variation lately by postcolonial African American, American Indian, and Latin American audiences.[28]

Many literary works in premodern times explored the monster and how its scary physical body caused fear and distress to people. What the reader feels when they pick up a horror book is anxiety – through the characters, their narrative arc, and what they ought to be afraid of. The

[28] Jerrold E. Hogle, *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–3.

fear of dying, being physically hurt, injured, or raped, as well as the fright of losing one's mind is the direct cause of this anxiety.

Although it might be tempting to assume that anxiety is the underbelly of horror, we have to look deeper into the core feelings after which the aesthetics of the genre is going. It's not the state of fright but the cause of it that the horror analysis should be pursuing. And in most cases, it is all about the many faces of evil. Human experiences of the evil stem from the memory of pain and violence; we feel anxiety towards what might or what intends to hurt us. To dig deep into the root of what is truly threatening to us, we need to look at the reasons for the way we feel. The true project of horror is to bring evil to light, to point at it and lay itself bare. In the 19th century, the horror project was about what tormented then-contemporary readers, the evil things they did or thought of doing, the consequences of their malign actions that couldn't stay buried, and the haunting legacy of evil that hung over the generations to come. [29]

A horror story is a piece of fiction that aims to impress readers negatively by shocking, repulsing, or terrifying them. Some horror narratives feature comic or grotesque elements but never to the point of overpowering the frightening powers of such work of literature. The horror story may be regarded as a mode of human reflection on subconscious drives, fears, and repressions regarding sex and corporeality, dark desires, the penalty for wrongdoings, violence, and mortality.

One of the main elements that reinforces this frightening is the deformed body; in fact, the question of the body has always been ambiguous. Humanist and Christian philosophies have often treated the body only as a supporting element - a vessel or an item containing the soul or the mind. In these Western traditions, the body is to be discarded after serving as a vehicle on Earth with no harm to the true, transcendent "self".

However, other views on the issue have been expressed, some of which have even been backed up by recent scientific discoveries that shed light on the way our physical and physiological

[29] Barron, *Horror Literature*, 62–63.

perception models our personalities. In this regard, the body becomes more than a medium; it is an inseparable part of selfhood.

Both these views on the body are too diluted to reflect reality; there are innumerable concessions that both traditions make in their descriptions of the essence of the human, corporeal, and otherwise. The body and the part it plays in our ways of thinking and feeling are extremely hard to define, especially since it is never in stasis; we change day to day and thus no finite definition of the body seems plausible.

Many contemporary men of science and the arts suggest that the body equals the self, but their esteemed opinions provoke many questions as to identity and subjectivity. Another issue is how the corporeal aspects of humans are represented in literary works and hence how the body can be "written" and regarded within the ideological and socio-historic conversation.

Body studies are a relatively young field of literary analysis that focuses on the centrality of the body in the discourse of knowledge, power, and desire. This conversation is said to have been launched in the 1970s by such poststructuralist thinkers as Foucault, who looked at the body as a product of control and the regulation of physical difference.

Other theorists, such as Frederic Jameson and Jean-Baudrillard, explored how the notion of the body is constructed by the culture. The so-called cultural materialist approach argues that it isn't the body itself that hosts cultural signs but rather the image of it. [30]

Caroline Joan S. Picart and John Edgar Browning are literary authors. Their work, *Speaking of Monsters* (2012), highlights the literature on the monster in many theses. At first, in "The Monster's Body Is a Cultural Body", they stated that the monster can't appear in a cultural vacuum: it comes out of a metaphorical overlap of a certain time, feeling, and place. The body can literally represent fright, lust, tension, and imagination (both soothing and unnerving); it is pure context, both cultural and historic, that produces the monster. Even in its etymology, the *monstrum* suggests the textual nature of its essence. It means "that which reveals," and "that

[30] Hillman and Maude, *The Cambridge Companion to the Body in Literature*, 1–3.

which warns." The monster asks for a reader or an interpreter who can decipher the hidden meaning of the monster's existence.[31]

In their next thesis, "The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference", they characterize the monster as the "other" that comes to life. It can perform the role of the discursive other or a third-term supplement. The monster is the manifestation of the Outside, the Beyond— of all those concepts rhetorically removed and different but still come from Within. The otherness of the monster doesn't necessarily have to be corporeal, but the difference it is likely to represent concerns sex, race, politics, economy, or culture.

There is often no order or natural necessity for the monster's otherness, and this absence of predisposition for the difference makes the monster all the scarier at the level of institutions and the whole society. The monster's body, as an entity partially defined by the norms of the society within which it functions, bears a difference called by circumstance and not need (like the being created by Frankenstein from the compilation of arbitrary pieces of a group of corpses). Thus it urges the creature to question its origin and the reason for its creation.

Another example is that of Godzilla crushing Tokyo, where Girard frees the monster to atomize the fragile system of connections between private bodies and the public sphere. And finally, in their last thesis, "The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible", they explain that monsters transcend the borders of accepted popular culture norms but in a different way than what Roland Barthes argues in his work. They take on the position of gatekeepers for knowledge accessible to human exploration. The giants of Patagonia, the dragons of the Orient, and the dinosaurs of Jurassic Park are the embodiments of the notion of danger that comes from abusing curiosity; they punish the excessive urge for discovery and propose the contrary. They celebrate the stay-at-home and better-safe-than-sorry kind of explorers.[32] Monsters delimit social spaces prohibiting human mobility in every sense – be it sexual, intellectual, or a geographical move.

[31] Browning and Picart, *Speaking of Monsters a Teratological Anthology*, 16.
[32] Browning and Picart, 17.

Trespassing into the territory of the unknown would trigger either an attack from the monstrous guardians of the space or even turn the trespasser into a monster himself. When the reasons for the monster's emergence are political, such as expedience or nationalism, what follows is usually military violence (invasions, usurpations, colonization). However, when the monster comes to life to prevent a break-in into the prohibited spheres of human existence, often its body displays the grotesque nature of such behaviors and actions. Every monster's body has a twofold meaning in the narrative: on one hand, it tells the story of its origin, and on the other, it displays a cultural issue underlying the conflict of the story. The monster of prohibition has the power of directing the reader's attention to the horrendous consequences of crossing the system of relations we call culture.

Joseph Grixti advocates for the symbolism in horror fiction; he talks about the dimension of monstrosity, arguing that monsters are the "means of evading the real implications of the uncertainties and discomforts which appear to be endemic to the constantly changing social, political, and economic conditions of our technologically oriented cultures"(Hock-Soon, p.1). Grixti's assertion that monsters can serve as metaphors for "unpleasant social and existential realities" aligns well with the notion that the modern world aims at purging itself of elements foreign to its integrity. The horror-inducing otherness that monsters embody makes them scapegoat-like figures. Contrary to what Grixti is suggesting about monsters has been used as evasive means of "uncertainties and discomforts." Countless complicated monster narratives can be found that serve as means for contextualization if not for definition of otherness in cultures and ideologies.

Monsters disrupt the cultural narrative from within, suggesting that in the process of the construction of an individual in the context provided by society, culture, language, and ideology, *something* is suppressed or ignored by the complex societal network. The monster reveals the notion that given the right circumstances, this fundamental flaw can upsurge and destroy the fragile balance in the "moment of the monster" - deeply and for good.

Patrick McGrath, a literary author and novelist, in his short tale, *Angel* (1989), describes a specific kind of body which, within religion and myth, is acceptable – even lauded – but which, in any other circumstances, becomes a monster. As for the figure of the "angel", McGrath distinctively "demonizes" his angel, turning an otherwise icon of purity and beauty into a body that is putrid, grotesque, and decaying. *Angel* is a story within a story (a popular Gothic strategy). The framing narrative belongs to Bernard Finnegan, the journalist-turn-biographer of Harry Talboys. The framed one is Talboys, better known as Anson Havershaw – the angel. McGrath talks about the monster body between the fantasy and corporeal perspectives.

Havershaw's physical unfitness comes through his body odor, described as an "over ripeness in the bouquet" and "slightly rotten". No masquerade or eccentric behavior can help him blend in. However, for the time being, Bernard doesn't notice the important details.

The body of an angel comes off as an idea of pureness and beauty. This image is remarkably androgynous when speaking to Spargo and in Botting's point, as quoted earlier with regard to the absence of gender assignment in desire. This body is painfully real, with its unpredictability and the inevitable decay it has to suffer. To evade the fate prescribed for this body, Havershaw engages Bernard in the transformation into text of his desire to immortalize the flesh. In all earnest, it's not the object of the body but the idea of its perfection that Havershaw seeks to preserve – the androgyny, youthfulness, and unmovable *fantasy* of a body that is only found in art. The decay of his physical body acts as a materialization of the reality of Havershaw's corporeal demise eating at the fantasy of his symbolic beauty. When Bernard discovers the real condition of Havershaw's body, the horror of the corporeal is astonishing:

> Harry's flesh has rotted off his lower ribs and belly, and the clotted skin still clinging to the ribs and hipbones that bordered the hole - was in a state of gelatinous putrescence. In the hole I caught the faint gleam of his spine, and amid an indistinct bundle of piping the forms of shadowy organs. I saw sutures on his intestines, and the marks of neat stitching, and a cluster of discoloured organic vessels bound with a thin strip of translucent plastic. He should have been dead, and I suppose I must have whispered as much, for I heard him say that he could not die. (Hock-soon Ng, p. 152)

Havershaw's revealed body exists in an antonymous state to the angel of Bernerd's tale. In the place of a "flat chest, and very finely nippled", Havershaw's torso appears concave and blemished; the angel's "belly punctuated by the merest suggestion of a navel" is contrasted to Havershaw's gaping hole of an abdomen that is see-though and immodest in showing his insides. Remarkably, while the angel is painted genderless, Havershaw's penis is grotesquely unmissable as a reminder of his male impotence and weakness ("a tiny, uncircumcised penis all puckered up and wrinkled in upon itself"). The most striking difference is in the locus of the appearance: while the angel's beauty is in his impenetrable, perfect exterior, Havershaw's hideousness originates in the display of what is usually hidden. The idea of corporeal beauty of the Twenties is incapacitated and the *fin de siècle* (a French term meaning "end of century") true body gets exposed. Immortality befalls on Havershaw as a curse, and this dark irony highlights the body as an inaccessible fantasy.[33]

Another aspect of the monster body is the "deformed body" that goes beyond disfigurement or physical flaws. It has come to include distortion and perversion under its semantic umbrella. The deformed body is ultimately a physical eccentricity, an "oddly formed [body] incorporating other bodies, bestial or human, into [its] own." Here are designated spaces where "the monsters" can interact with the public such as at freak shows, prisons, asylums where one can experience a gaze that designates an individual to be "his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself. Another such surveillance site is the circus, where unlike "the freaks of nature", clowns that dress in deformities for performance. For instance, Buffo, the Master Clown, in *Nights at the Circus* (1984) by the novelist, Angela Carter, performs what is the ultimate monstrosity in some respects. "Hilarious, appalling, devastating", Buffo puts on extravagant make-up, dons a bladder-simulating wig on his head, and "wears his insides on his outside [storing] his brains in the organs which, conventionally, stores piss." This clown wears the body inside-out, deconstructing its integrity and attacking

[33] Hock-soon Ng, 150–152.

the corporeal norm. By fragmenting and disrupting the integrity of the human form, Buffo provokes the audience to perceive the entity of his body constructed of flesh, costume, and makeup; in this sense, Buffo is certainly "wearing" his flesh and "inhabiting" his costume and makeup.

Buffo finishes his act with a scene of a literalized deconstruction of his body. He twitches as if in a horrific act of self-dismemberment, attempting to shake off the white of his teeth and eyeballs together with the white paint coating his face. This element of performance reflects Buffo's personal fracture. An alcohol-abuser, Buffo knows that "[d]espair is the constant companion of the Clown". This physical deformity exposes his internal breakdown. According to Pender, deformity can manifest as a hidden trauma rather than external disfigurement. Finally, Buffo (and his fellow clowns) serves as a representation of the rebellious interiority permeating the frail exterior. While Fevver, another grotesque character in *Nights at the Circus,* uses hyper-visualization as a means for disguise, Buffo's only option to attach meaning to his act is making it outrageous even if the outcome is downbeat. Buffo is "what is left but the poor mask of poor Pierrot, who invites the laughter that would otherwise come unbidden." Embodying the laughing matter is better than being a scandalized body. The Master Clown can only exist in the context of deformity: "Take away my make-up and underneath is merely not-Buffo. An absence. A vacancy" (Hock-Soon, p.162). The clowns, as well as circus freaks, use their deformed bodies as a means for acceptance since their commodified abnormalities allow them to appear "marginally acceptable". They have to take advantage of their disempowerment to be granted any authority within the culture. Fevvers, on the other hand, rejects this way of attaining a place in society. There is a difference in the way in which she presents her body at the museum and in the circus. Fevvers has an abnormal body; she is a beautiful monster that at first appears as a subject of other people's gaze. Her winged body is perceived as a commodity that can be displayed in a controlled environment because that is the only way she can be accepted in society. However, when Fevvers comes to the circus, she learns from her

previous experiences and decides to present her body as a part of the performance, partially taking control of her body's exhibition. She has to go through experiencing a different mode of embodiment, the one that will liberate her from her own indifference and the patriarchal limitations imposed on her, to finally accept her unusual body not as a mere tool of deception (because this way she would only become more disempowered within the symbolic). As the events of *Nights at the Circus* progress, Fevvers learns to accept her grotesque body and becomes what is called the "New Woman".[34]

Another aspect of the corporeality of that body that links with the monster is the "grotesque" body. Its notion is inconspicuous since it means physical distortion and interior corruption. The core value of the grotesque is in its potential for sabotaging convention and promoting disruption. According to Barbara Maria Stafford, the grotesque challenges "conventional modes. Dangerous and uncontrollable expressive freedom [constitute] its chief formal transgression, irrespective of the genre."

Mikhail Bakhtin, a renown Russian philosopher, literary theorist, and novelist holds a different view, arguing that the grotesque body "is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body" (Hock-Soon, p. 166). Fevvers embodies a plethora of her male audience's phantasies, and thus already displays this quality of the grotesque.

Upon careful examination of the works of McGrath and Carter, it appears that the "central figure of the modern grotesque is *humiliated* man," as Bernard McElroy rightfully states. In Mcgrath's work, it is often men who are physically and/or morally corrupted in some way that take center stage. Some notable examples are *The Grotesque* (1989), where an array of frightening characters propel the narrative with their dark perversions, or *Spider* (1990), where a young man slowly grows delusional, or the relatively recent *Martha Peake* (2000), where one of the central figures displays his deformed body and allegorical castration, not unlike Anson

[34] Hock-soon Ng, 159–63.

Havershaw. Neither of these novels offers their protagonists redemption so what is left for these grotesque actors is either living in humiliation or vengeance. The novels of Carter exhibit a countertrend – the grotesque is celebrated in her narratives. Her female protagonists reach fulfillment by accepting their deformations and corruptions, and they go on inviting others to do the same. For most women in *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), including Fevvers and Eve/Evelyn, the grotesque offers an aesthetic of redemption and rebirth. Here Hock-soon supports a point of view put forth by Susan Corey, who argues that the grotesque recognizes the estrangement and the forces of evil but promotes healing and the wholeness that comes out of accepting the parts of the self that were repressed or ignored. Even though Corey was offering this observation regarding Toni Morrison's Beloved, such a regard of the grotesque is certainly shared by Carter's work, too. [35]

The modern state of the Gothic is more focused on bodies than it has ever been; bodies are exhibited to evoke fascination or revulsion; they undergo reassembling, modifications, and artificial augmentation. For instance, the Body Worlds' cadaver displays offer an experience that blends the presentation of bodily processes with the playfulness of the postmodern Carnival. However, when the estrangement of looking at the other body is modified with any form of personal history, the recognition that an exhibit was a person akin to the person looking at the exhibit, triggers a moment of the uncanny. On some level, this experience coincides with notions supported by the Gothic trend of previous generations since the bodies in the text were often presented to the reader as artificial and simulative of reality. The modern Gothic bodies tend to act much more like simulacra of the body, although not quite as described by Baudrillard. Even though most modern Gothic bodies (like Von Hagens' plastic corpses) retain a connection to the original in mirroring the initial "real" form, they still manage to provide alienation necessary for the viewer to separate personal nostalgia from the experience of the cadaver exhibit.

[35] Hock-soon Ng, 173–74.

The reader's view of the monstrous has morphed in the West. Retaining the core treatments of fear and desire towards the freakish, the reader no longer regards them as their "secret selves", in the astute words of Leslie Fiedler, but rather as the shaping elements of their identities. Furthermore, monsters and the grotesque don't correlate with the gravity of horror in many modern texts; on the contrary, the difference and otherness are often presented as a cause of pleasure and celebration offering a modulation of the term "Carnival" coined by Bakhtin. He argues that the grotesque body is a body in the process, a hyperbolic entity characterized by its fluidity, fragmentation, and imperfections that are open to connecting to the outside world. Such a body comes in an opposition to the "classical" body most vividly present in the Middle Ages: whole, unapproachable, carefully separate from other bodies. According to Bakhtin, it is the Carnival that transiently breaches the conventions of power distribution and the governing norms that give way to the blatant bodily humor associated with the grotesque that makes such things possible for display as "the effigy of the pope shown with enlarged genitals or a bare behind." (Spooner, p. 67) However, Bakhtin's view of the grotesque doesn't fully align with the Gothic. According to Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, treatments of Gothic literature as a counteract to bourgeois rationality, modernity, or The Enlightenment do not have the necessary historical backup to support the arguments of 19th century criticism. While there is no doubt that Gothic art has mass appeal and lacks cultural prestige, its popularity didn't emerge within the disenfranchised class in Bakhtin's terms. Historical evidence points to the middle-class origin of the Gothic. Moreover, the positive or life-affirming treatment of grotesque bodies is a rarity and not a norm in Gothic narratives.[36]

Xavier Aldana Reyes, a literary author and specialist in Gothic studies, in his book *Body Gothic: Corporeal Transgression in Contemporary Literature and Horror Film* (2014), explains that there is a tight relationship between the corporeality or physical image of the body and Gothic culture. The Gothic embraces corporeality so eagerly because the latter also

[36] Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic*, 66–68.

condemns the set of laws that take control of its existence while simultaneously abusing its carnality and physicality for emotional affect or entertainment.[37]

Moreover, corporeal transgression can be studied as an image of the body infringing its limits or disintegrating what is being transformed to the extent that it can no longer fit into the normative framework of human corporeality. However, other definitions of corporeal transgression forgo violence and deficit in their most instinctive sense. Some types of corporeal transgression that belong to the domains of gender, race, or non-normative sexuality could qualify as a study subject of these definitions, but their complexity and multifaced nature exceed the scope of this project. This study recognizes that a much clearer grasp of the notion of corporeal transgression comes from Stallybrass and White's *The Politics and Poetics* of *Transgression* (1986). They define transgression in the cultural framework of high and low art, and the connection of the latter with the physical body that mirror the Bakhtinian approach to the subject.

Reyes considers corporeal transgression as only acquiring meaning in a particular transient historical, cultural, medical, religious, sexual, or political context. In any given discourse, there are instances of dismemberment, mutilation, mutation, extreme ailments, or modifying surgical procedures deemed intolerable, antagonistic, and even punishable by the governing structure. Although various societal reactions to deformation of the normative bodies exist, Reyes's study concerns itself with texts that feature shock, horror, or disgust as a reaction to corporeal transgression in readers who are identified as normative thinkers by the texts themselves.[38] *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) by H.G. Wells is a horror text that not only provides a graphic portrayal of the grotesque body but also features a very physical type of fright, that of vivisection. The fear of pain is conjured from the screams of animals being altered by Moreau's scalpel long before the sight of Pendrick's body. This fright and growing recognition of his

[37] Xavier Aldana Reyes, *Body Gothic: Corporeal Transgression in Contemporary Literature and Horror Film*, Kindle Edition (University of Wales Press, 2014), Location 215.
[38] Reyes, Location 295.

own vulnerability are instilled in the protagonist before he experiences the monstrous in reality. The mere suggestion of torture corrupts his rationality and makes the survival instinct govern the protagonist's actions. Upon hearing a cry full of pain, Pendrick details:

> I picked myself up and stood trembling, my mind a chaos of the most horrible misgivings. Could the vivisection of men be possible? The question shot like lightning across a tumultuous sky. And suddenly the clouded horror of my mind condensed into a vivid realization of my danger. (Reyes, Loc, 391).

Pendrick empathizes with a suffering creature, and this "sympathetic pain" that Moreau rejects as an anti-scientific impulse serves as an example of how the premonition of horror can be immediately shared by two bodies.

On a ground level, "body gothic" corresponds to the corporeal, carnal, and innate elements of the Gothic. Andrew N. Sharpe the literary writer, in his work, *Foucault's Monsters and the Challenge of Law* (2010), uses this term to refer to Gothic fiction that zeroes in on bodily aspects and motifs. The transgression of corporeality and the limitations of the horror of embodiment accompany materialism and transcendence as core notions of the subgenre of the body horror.[39]

Body gothic explores some crucial aspects of materiality and the role of the corporeal in nightmares that both instill anxiety in characters and the reader, but it also offers a reflection on the nature of human existence.

The relevance of body gothic is in its unique perspective on the relation between the carnal and the spiritual which reveals the constant repressed state human beings are in due to the inescapable confines of the body. This empirical and phenomenological nightmare comes from the fact that the body is beyond the control of the spirit; it is a vehicle for pain and decay, and sometimes it can rebel against the mind of its owner**.**[40]

[39] Reyes, Location 385–403.
[40] Reyes, Location 415–21.

The definition of body horror is offered by Ben McCann in his recent publication, namely that "[b]roadly speaking, body horror features the graphic depiction, destruction or degeneration of the human body" can be used as a descriptor for splatter or gore horror film subgenres.

In many respects, David Cronenberg's filmography is a paramount example of body horror on the screen, especially since his narratives are highly susceptible to interpretation. For example, Justin D. Edwards and Rune Graulund regard Cronenbergian mutations as a metaphor for a "fear of being subsumed by an overwhelming powerful system such as commoditization, technoscience, or hegemony that transforms the body into a grotesque site of human-technological hybrids"**.**

Reyes notes the importance of revulsion in body horror as an instrument of estrangement of the body by means of hyperbolization or modifications of what constitutes the norm**.**[41] On film, body horror is used for its capacity of transformation and mutilation and as a means for surpassing corporeal borders. Gory and horrid images are often deployed for eliciting an affective response in the viewer or to draw attention to special effects; but more importantly, they highlight an avid interest in the body and its constituting parts that would later be explored in a drastically different way by torture porn. As Reyes argues, the nightmares of the corporeal are recreated in works of art to draw a visceral reaction through extreme representations of the body, albeit such horror narratives often make a point of remaining hopeful**.**

Even though the experience of existing in fetal fluid is not real, the fact that all humans have experienced living inside a fetal sac can't be denied. Being in contact with fetal fluids – as one of the elemental bodily liquids – in a conscious state would provoke revulsion in most people, a horror response that King named the lowest form of horror affect. Contrary to his statement, many modern critics, especially those in feminist studies, focus their research on the corporeal motif of the horror and on the symbolic nature of the body's surfaces, fluids, and passages. For instance, Noel Carroll focuses his studies on the visceral reactions (abomination, nausea,

[41] Reyes, 1107–34.

shuddering, revulsion, disgust, etc.) to body narratives that appear as the reader renders something baneful or impure. (Carroll, 1990, 28). Carroll also argues that not all forms and objects of impurity fit the "art-horror" agenda and mentions Dracula as an example of a horrifying figure, who is "threatening and unpure". Furthermore, Carroll suggests that usually it is not the fear of the bodily object or fluid but the fear of contamination or contact with it that makes the reader respond in a supra-rational, physical way. This stance is often supported by feminist theorists of the Gothic who study the psychological symbolism that might be hiding behind horrific entertainment. Julia Kristeva, one of the key feminist researchers, focused her studies on the concept of *abjection*.

Abjection is a theory of identity crisis that centers on waste or excessive products of the body. These may be "menstrual" or "excremental," but both are forms of "defilement" from which the reader recoils.[42] David Punter aptly sums up the basic principles of horror fiction, mentioning presence or a breakout of the supernatural, demonic, violent, and unpredictable, and a lack of explanation or logic of their existence. Some outstanding religious aspects may be included in the definition of horror, such as the afterlife or absolute evil, as well as the omnipresence and omnipotence of the demonic threat.

The horror tale, more so that the Gothic narrative, omits rationality by reaching into the physical response to the textual stimuli. That is how even sci-fi horror stories turn manmade creatures into demons and science into magic. This genre doesn't shy away from incoherence and symbolism that turns a badly-lit hallway into a path to the "other world" in inexplicably effective genre formulas.

Many critics and theorists of horror also note the political aspects of this genre. King has noted that the formulaic nature of horror helps define it as a "conservative" genre. Reading horror for him is both "a rehearsal for death" and "as Republican as a banker in a three-piece suit" (Punter, p. 221) Whitley Strieber, commenting on King's outlook on horror, suggests that horror fiction

[42] Punter, *A New Companion to the Gothic*, 2012, 218–21.

(especially in its pulp form) "was forbidden and despised", while also supporting the conspiratorial thought that it has a "rebellious" or "teenage" aspect to it, be it rebellion against the big lie of the government or subversion exhibited by the middle class. According to Strieber, Barker supports this notion of subversion but singles out another reason for it. Barker highlights horror's potential for a universal account of human behavior and desire:

> which is to say, our minds. That's where we live, after all. And our minds are extraordinary melting pots, in which sensory information, and the memory of same, and intellectual ruminations, and nightmares, and dreams, simmer in an ever-richer stew. Where else but in works called (often pejoratively) *fantasies* can such a mixture of elements be placed side by side? (Punter, p. 222)

This universality of the vision of the self and others offered by the horror genre opens a new way of reflection for readers, where they can consider their forbidden desires rather than repress them and comprehend the complexity and paradoxical nature of their tastes. This regarding of horror fiction as a healthy interest, with its power to terrify, fascinate, and entertain further complicates the definition of the genre, presenting a struggle for generations of critics and writers. Horror has been intertwined with the Gothic - its ghost always present on the literary scene, whether seen or not. However, since the end of the 20th century, horror fiction has been gradually elevated from the status of a cheap thrill provider to a "prerequisite condition for other forms of art and criticism".[43]

Foucault's theoretical framework offers a view of monsters as a legal category that informs the reader about the role and constitution of outsiders in the law's framework, ranging from the consideration of how we label monsters to how often monstrous behavior is attributed to a universalized everymen. In both the cultural and legal context, the reflection on monsters in social theory sheds light on the relation between the categories of the monster and the outsider.[44]

As Andrew N. Sharpe astutely observes, the monster category can be traced as far back as Roman law in Western culture. In modern English law, the same category emerges in the mid-13th

[43] Punter, 221–22.
[44] Andrew N. Sharpe, *Foucault's Monsters and the Challenge of Law* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 21.

century on into modernity. Together with the monster, other categories of the outsider in common law in England are the leper, the idiot, the lunatic, and the deformed or disabled. The monster category, however, holds a special place among legal outsiders because it poses a different legal problem. Upon careful observation, we see that even the figure of the leper, traditionally understood as excluded from medieval European societies, comes up in Bracton's 13th century note that a "supervening disease does not take away an inheritance already held. Deformed bodies seem to be included into the legal discourse, even though the otherness of disability has been described in terms of 'an oscillation between processes of integration and exclusion'". In English law, as traceable to Roman law, the difference between a monstrosity and a deformity was the mark of the extent to which the law could accommodate a bodily difference or morphological irregularity.[45]

Even though most researchers interchange the terms, monster, monstrosity, and monstrousness, in their work (Kumari Campbell, 2005; Lunger-Kruppers and Landes, 2004; Shildrick, 2002, Creed, 1993), a conceptual distinction between them may be beneficial. George Canguilhem's seminal work on *Monstrosity and the Monstrous* (1964) and the more recent reflections on the subject by Foucault in his text, *Abnormal: Lectures at the College de France* 1974–1975 (2003), can serve as good ground for distinguishing between the interrelated terms. Canguilhem argues that the terms, monstrosity and the monstrous, not only are related by etymology but also act as two modes of normative judgment in medical and legal discourse. The third term, the monster, can be regarded as an amalgam term of the other two since it is a being that is both "a monstrosity, understood in terms of morphological irregularity, and monstrous, understood in terms of transgression of the law," according to Canguilhem. He disagrees with Shildrick's view of the monster as having a monstrous quality most often because of its "aberrant corporeality". Instead, Canguilhem advocates for the transgression of the law and not the deformity of embodiment that constitutes a monstrous quality. Foucault

[45] Sharpe, 22–24.

seems to express a similar view of the monster as an amalgam of the concepts of monstrosity and monstrousness. He sees the difference between deformity and monstrosity, a distinction traceable to Roman law applying to the transgression of natural limits that goes beyond breaching the law of nature. It is Foucault's belief that "an interdiction of civil and religious or divine law" is what makes the monster properly defined within "a juridico-natural complex". Unlike deformity that constitutes a disability, often incorporated in civil or canon law, monstrosity is something that challenges the law, deeming it impotent. Foucault adds that a being is only deemed a monster if "it is a legal labyrinth, a violation of and an obstacle to the law, both transgressions, and undecidability at the level of the law."

Thus, monstrousness appears as a formative quality in the category of the monster for its power to become an obstacle to the law's execution or its categorical structure. Some examples of beings that transgress the order of the law due to legal issues with the norms of marriage, baptism, and inheritance are hermaphrodites, conjoined twins and human/animal creatures since in the framework of the law, there are no legal definitions for them as opposed to the legal distinctions between human and animal, male and female, or a legal subject as a single embodied mind.

Both Canguilhem and Foucault recognize that a breach of law that constitutes a monster is often supported by a breach of nature. According to Sharpe, other critics, including David Delaney and Kati Soper, point to the fact that in Western philosophy, the definition of human stems from integral opposition to and distinction from nature. However, when it comes to the legal construct of the monster – separate from the natural order and thus opposed to it – human beings are contextualized by belonging to the normative order of nature. From the point of view of English law, it is precisely the body and not the mind that constitutes a human as opposed to a monster, and thus Delaney's view of the human body in opposition to nature is not viable within a legal context**.** It is also worth noting that Canguilhem and Foucault's stances

differ when it comes to the conditions necessary for the double corruption of the law and the natural order by a monster in the legal terms of causation and responsibility.[46]

The body of the monster is suggestive of interpretation, while the category of monstrosity seems the most readily available for symbolic analysis. While some theorists blend the Gothic romances of Mrs. Radcliffe, Walpole, and Lewis with the 19th century Gothic tales of monsters and vampires, there is an argument for embodied horror as a separate modern trend of the genre. Moreover, the 19th century Gothic tale and the late 20th century Gothic horror film exhibit purely capitalistic qualities that make the economic interpretation of them very lucrative. The works of the Gothic genre feature multiple modes of consumption and production and often exploit the economies of meaning in their narratives. Thus, the monster itself can be interpreted as an economic form that encapsulates a variety of racial and sexual threats to nations, capitalism, and the bourgeoisie all in one body. Take Dracula, Jekyll/Hyde, or even Frankenstein's monster; every one of these creatures is a melting pot of race, class, gender, and sexuality - elements of meanings trapped within fabricated, disenfranchised bodies.

According to Judith Halberstam, a gender and queer theorist and author of several books, in his book, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (1995), he states that cinematic body horror offers an even lower expressive potential of horror than its literary counterpart. In *Frankenstein*, the novel, the image of monstrosity is limited only by the reader's imagination while on film, the monster receives a definite embodiment that fails to horrify with only the sight of it. Thus it has to depend on the violation of female bodies to elicit the desired fright from the audience. Moreover, while there are various elements of deviant race, class, and gender involved, images of deviant sexuality get a wider representation in modern Gothic narratives, as opposed to a plethora of explored deviations in 19th century Gothic tales. [47]

[46] Sharpe, 31–34.
[47] Halberstam and Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, 1–9.

While Frankenstein's monster was an Other primarily because of his hideous look and intangible mode of existence, it is the look and origin of his skin that makes him horrifying. As Halberstam astutely observes, skin as a paramount mark for a human identity becomes a uniting element for 19th century monsters. Its color, pallor, and shape define the otherness of the monster within the particular horror mode. In the story of Frankenstein, the skin is misshapen and misplaced; Dracula's skin is too pale for him to be rendered human and yet he craves to puncture and mark the skin of others; Hyde's skin is too dark and thus making him long for white skin. For Dorian Gray's canvas, the superficiality of looks drives him to desire his portrait's "skin", while Buffalo Bill has an unquenchable sexual drive for female skin. Skin becomes the unbreakable border that separates the body from the outside world, and the breach of its surface provokes the monstrous to reveal itself.

Halberstam also argues that the Gothic can serve as a site or *topos* in 19th century fiction and the contemporary horror film. He offers the opinion that in its typical form, the Gothic *topos* is the monstrous body, and in its generic form, the Gothic disrupts realism and is devoid of generic purity. Shelley's *Frankenstein* might be interpreted as an allegory of Gothic production since it features an idyllic depiction of the family life of the De Laceys. This structure turns upside-down and sustains the reverse order – it isn't the realism that hosts the Gothic but rather realistic elements hiding here and there in the Gothic context. This way, the novel can be regarded as a Gothic construct.

Halberstam cites Shelley, calling her novel "hideous progeny" and suggests that this treatment of Gothic novels by their authors was quite often characteristic of the works in this genre in the 19th century.[48] Even though the popularity and profitability of the Gothic novel grew gradually as the century progressed, Robert Louis Stevenson described his novella about Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde as a "Gothic gnome" and expressed worries that he had produced a distorted work of literature. The Gothic novel was itself monstrous in its deviant plot, and with a disproportion

[48] Halberstam and Halberstam, 11.

of popularity and the anxiety it caused its creators. The label "Gothic gnome" grants the genre special treatment, that of a mutant form of artistry where readers hold as much responsibility as the writers while collaborating in cultivating interest for monstrous narratives. The Gothic genre shares and nurtures the consumerist intentions of the public, putting forth monsters like Frankenstein's "product" that rebels against his creator. And then there is Dracula, whose over-consumerist behavior aims at spawning more of the like, with consumers feeding on the extensions of monstrosity, violence, or overindulgence. Even though Gothic fiction has been labeled "degenerate" (as defined by Max Nordau in *Degeneration*) within the body of other popular literature (denounced by 19th century critics), the authors of these Gothic tales seemed to express quite a moral stance against monstrosities. In their works, Gothic writers acknowledged the aesthetic of pleasurable fear that emerged separately from a monstrous body – that often possessed foreign and inhuman features – and encouraged the expulsion of this body for successful completion of the story arch. Halberstam notes that both Dracula and Hyde are given distinctly uncanny descriptions both in their looks and behavior. He notes that Mina Harker depicts Dracula as "an angular figure with a strong face notable for peculiarly arched nostrils ... a lofty domed forehead… bushy hair and eyebrows,…sharp white teeth…and ears pointed at the top" (Halberstam, p. 13), while Hyde is described by Stevenson as a small and deformed man, "pale and dwarfish ... a troglodyte." These descriptors are designed to create alienation in the viewer, whereby the antiheroes not only look unattractive by human standards but also exhibit sexual corruption, thus connecting these inhumane appearances with perversions.

Using Kristeva's definition of horror in terms of "abjection," Halberstam suggests that the Gothic body is to be identified as contrasted to what it isn't. Gothic tradition, in this view, provokes the obsessive textual treatment of the body in order to lift it from the unspoken and undocumented reality of sameness. Moreover, the point of view of the monster is omitted and disregarded in most Gothic texts. Novels of the Gothic genre inscribe supernatural or

monstrous features to class, racial, sexual, and national relations. However, when a rendition of the Gothic narrative falls short and centers on sexual perversion rather than on the exploration of other implications of the monstrous, what is lost is the historical, economical and corruption contexts of the monster tale.[49]

Halberstam theorizes that Gothic novels are technologies that produce the monster as a remarkably mobile, permeable, and infinitely interpretable body. He looks at the monster's body as a machine that, within the Gothic modus, creates meaning and has the potential to assume any horrific trait the reader feeds into the narrative. The purest idea of a monster is that of a universal vehicle for any fear-producing trait and a meaning-producing machine. In this framework, the Frankenstein's monster is bursting with both flesh and potential interpretations. Dracula's body, in this regard, represents the potential for a surplus of meaning since the idyllic vampiric body is a satiated body, filled with the blood of its victims. Halberstam suggests that monsters' bodies are prone to demonstrating any number of interpretational categories, be it gender, race, nationality, class, or sexuality. He demonstrates this theory on the conceptual ambiguity of the readings of Dracula as an aristocrat and symbol of the masses, a homosexual and a heterosexual, an effeminate macho, a consumption-oriented producer, a parasitic host, and a lesbian. Thus, Halberstam concludes that Gothic fiction is rigged to produce meanings for its monsters and their narratives, using a set of technologies for crafting perfect, versatile antiheroes. In his proposed framework, monsters are everything that is not human, and a particular human, too – white, male, middle class, and heterosexual.

The Gothic is also a narrative technique, as Halberstam argues, and a set of textual tools able to transform the beautiful into the hideous and then pack this transformed concept neatly into a humanist moral fable. The modern Gothic, thus, appears to be a genre in crisis, unable to narrate and categorize because of its obsession with boundaries and their collapse; the monsters it creates are different from their horrific predecessors in their semblance to humans.

[49] Halberstam and Halberstam, 12–21.

Furthermore, horror fiction, both in print and on-screen, fails to subscribe to the standards of the genre and simultaneously strives to adhere to the conventions of a subgenre.[50]

Ken Gelder, an author, in his work, *The Horror Reader* (2000), suggests that in so much as monsters are products of a culture, they may serve as evidence to the culture's state. However, in some cases, the monster masks some revelatory aspects of a given culture and may even highlight a blind spot in the culture's vision. The margin of the culture field is often monstrous, the outer edge of it resisting classification and structural integrity. Gelder highlights the importance of Mary Douglas's essay, *Purity and Danger* (1966), for making an astute point about the cultural fear of "pollution" that occurs when the aspects usually separate blend to occupy a shared space. In this vein, monsters can be regarded as generic hybrids that don't appear as a new-blended entity, but as disjointed parts propped against each other. Alternatively, the hybrids might come off as formally incomplete or over-the-top and grotesque. Monsters bring attention to the differences left outside of normative definitions of the human. Gelder suggests that Marie-Hélene Huet's book zeroes in on motherless monsters. These creatures come to life, omitting their natural birth and pushing the mother-figure out of the picture altogether, such as an artificial man without a soul who emerges from the language itself and resembles a modernized narrative of the Jewish legend of the golem.[51]

Huet explores the scope of imagination of monsters in Renaissance times. She states that monsters of all sorts sought to represent every possible deviation from the normative body. The monstrous originated from God and the Devil, astronomical objects, unnatural unions of different species, or monstrous parents. Ideas for such monsters were often taken from already existing myths and anomalies of nature: essential body parts could be missing or in surplus, while animal physiology was adopted for human body structure, or mysterious symbols were covering its skin. A good example of such deformities is the Ravenna monster; he lacked arms

[50] Halberstam and Halberstam, 21–25.
[51] Ken Gelder, *The Horror Reader* (Psychology Press, 2000), 80–82.

but had a fishtail, and his body has strange markings shaped like a Greek letter, a cross, and even a half-moon, according to some sources. Curiously, it is the monster's mother who gets the blame for her offspring's looks. According to the legend, since the mother couldn't control her mind's violent desires, the baby didn't take after the father as was prescribed by nature's norm. This denied paternity highlights the emasculating power of female imagination – an idea that stayed at the heart of rigorous discussions until the 19th century.[52]

In his work, *The Horror Reader* (2000), Gelder explores Mary Russo's adoption of the term "freak" in the 1960s when rock music and street culture marked a powerful shift in the semiotics of the term from shame to pride. This shift wasn't unique, as words like "black" and "queer" had their historic detours too, moving from a swearword in the dominant culture to an empowering label chosen by the minority.

Some works of art made their contribution to sway the public opinion about the mythology of "freaks", such as Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932) that was almost as influential in this discussion as the people who held the label, including Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention. In the biographical notes of Patricia Bosworth, there is a mention of photographer, Diane Arbus, being mesmerized by Browning's film, putting a spotlight on "not imaginary monsters, but real." (Gelder, p, 91) The documentary pursuits of Browning, however, received varying reviews from critics and theorists who saw his project as daring but also exploitative. However, in the prevalent if romanticized reception of the film, most attention had been given to the mixture of authenticity and non-conformity in the bodies of freaks. The meaning of the biggest spectacle of the film was largely ignored – the image of the body of a "normal woman". Cleopatra was altered and intentionally deformed for violating the code of the freaks.

Before elaborating on this point, some clarification of the relationship between the freak and the grotesque is necessary. There is a certain semantical closeness between the two concepts since they coincide as the bodily categories. Gelder refers to Susan Steward's study of culture

[52] Gelder, 84.

and scale for the definition of the freak of nature that represents the problem of the boundary between two distinct natural categories (self and other, male and female, the inside and outside of the body, animal and human). Steward noted also that the status of the physiological freak is empirical and comes out of societal discourse much like the grotesque.

Freaks are always marginalized and presented as objects and not agents of the show. They would often be caged and kept silent, while a barker took charge of telling their stories to the audience. In the 19th and 20th centuries, freaks were often presented as objects of medical studies or curiosities to be observed as natural anomalies. This grounding of their opposition to the bodily norm within biological discourse is what made them "real" in the view of empirical social sciences. This status of a true, if abnormal, being of nature marks a distinction from the way that the freak had been contextualized. They used to be presented as God-given monsters who were to serve as mediators between the earthly and the divine. Nevertheless, the othered status of the freak is what remained unchanged throughout the 20th century, limiting their recognized realm of existence to freak shows, photography exhibitions, films, medical studies, and eugenics.

If we follow Bakhtin's view of the grotesque body that is open, fluid, and exhibiting no firm boundaries between the self and the other, its opposition to the notion of the freak is clear. Another point of difference, astutely remarked by Steward is that there is a historical distinction between the grotesque body in the Bakhtinian sense and the grotesque spectacle in the context of a freak show, where the freak is regarded as a passive receptor of the gaze, as a spectacular object removed and othered from the viewer:

> We find the freak inextricably tied to the cultural other – the Little Black Man, the Turkish horse, the Siamese twins (Chang and Eng were, however, the children of Chinese parents living in Siam), the Irish giants. The body of the cultural other is by means of this metaphor both naturalized and domesticated in a process we might consider to be characteristic of colonization in general. For all colonization involves the taming of the beast by bestial methods and hence the conversion and projection of the animal and human, difference and identity. On display, the freak represents the naming of the frontier and the assurance that the wilderness, the outside, is now territory. (Gilder, p. 93)

Sara Ahmed, literary scholar and author, talks about the affective politics of fear by suggesting that fear is an embodied experience that engages the very surface of bodies into affectual response. However, the question of the difference in fear between different bodies remains, and Ahmed states that the scope of fear felt by different bodies fluctuates.[53]

Clive Bloom, a pioneer in gothic fiction field, in his work, *Gothic Horror: A Reader Guide's from Poe to King and Beyond* (1998), emphasized that fear is an innate, ancient emotion that culminates in the fear of the unknown. The most effective horror stories go beyond the description of gore, violent acts, and supernatural happenings. It is about the oppressive, mysterious atmosphere of something unknown and inexplicable endangering the fragile order installed by nature. It pertains to the most feared situation conceived by a human brain – that of malicious chaos on the brink of descending upon the familiar world. In this light, no weird tale can follow any theoretic formula of narration closely. [54]

As mentioned regarding Carroll and Reyes, one crucial element that associates the emotions of fear and horror of readers is the performativity of *disgust*, for disgust is something that offends a person's taste. It can be a momentary reaction to our perception of food: if its appearance, smell, or texture is out of the ordinary, the alarm for disgust turns on. Darwin reflected on disgust in the following way: "In Tierra del Fuego a native touched with his finger some cold preserved meat which I was eating ... and plainly showed utter disgust at its softness; whilst I felt utter disgust at my food being touched by a naked savage, though his hands did not appear dirty." (Ahmed, p. 82)

This complex quotation urges a series of questions about the grades, reasons for, and the variety of disgust reactions. Ahmed observes that even though Darwin suggests an almost self-evident treatment of his reaction, there is a number of deep reasons for the way he felt at that moment. Darwin uses the term "disgust" in accordance with its etymology (it means bad taste) and

[53] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2004, 68.
[54] Clive Bloom, ed., *Gothic Horror: A Reader's Guide from Poe to King and Beyond* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 55–57.

invites the reader to encounter the situation he describes, implying that he, the reader, is already familiar with the history of the white European mobility that involved treating natives as knowledge, property, and commodity. Darwin offers his reading of the body of the native as projecting disgust at the texture of the foreigner's food while also sharing his own disgust at the unacceptable view of the behavior of the "savage". Darwin emphasizes that the man who came close to him is not visibly dirty; it is the fact that Darwin recognizes that his disgust is the reaction to dirtiness that prompts another revelation. The proximity and nakedness of the body perceived as inherently dirty triggers this reaction in the scientist's body which is why the latter recoils at the supposed contamination of his food.

Ahmed argues that this example serves as proof that disgust goes beyond the momentary bodily response; rather, it is a reaction rooted in impressions of other bodies that approach us.[55] Disgust is a tactile feeling and based on the unwanted proximity of certain objects and bodies. It is not the entity that offends on its own but the closeness of an unwanted surface that is felt to be offensive. When disgust flows over the body, this visceral reaction gets extended onto the object that seems to provoke the feeling. The body stays in the grasp of disgust by briefly holding onto a particular aspect of the object that holds this negative influence, like its shape, texture, or the pattern of its movements. This tactile closeness is what "offends" the body and triggers the response of disgust.

The next stage of disgust is withdrawal. The body pulls away and recoils, and the impulse for such movement comes from disgust itself. It is the action and counteraction of gaining proximity to the disgusting object and retreating at an offense, or physical rejection of it, as Paul Rozin astutely observes in his article, "Perspective on Disgust" (1987). The disgust-producing encounter is inter-corporeal insofar as the disgusting object seems to invade the space of the body. It may feel as if this is what seems disgusting about the object that violates

[55] Sara *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 82–83.

the space, and thus that aspect invokes rage in the body, directed at the mere potential of a disgusting object to get close enough to repulse and interact with the body.[56]

Dana M. Oswald is a literary critic. In her book, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature*. (2010), she states that monstrous bodies that break the borders of human norms display two dichotomic possibilities – to destroy and to create. Like the acts of erasure, they display a potential that is both frightening and productive.[57]

Ian Conrich and Laura Sedgwick in their work, *Gothic Dissections in Film and Literature: The Body in Parts* (2017), argue that Gothic fiction exploits the natural variety of human bodies, with body parts that can or cannot grow back, change color. Those that perform vital functions are responsible for sensations or reproduction, depending on the sex of the body. Gothic film and literature explore the corporeal and emphasize the change in appearance, size, or texture of the body to highlight beastliness and deformity as compared to the human norm. In other subgenres of the Gothic, such as surgical horror, internal organs are exposed, taken out, or transplanted into a different body for horrific effect, extending the boundaries of then-modern science.[58]

About the *head* and *face*, Conrich and Sedgwick argue that with the exception of skin modified with tattoos or piercing, the head and face are the most distinctive features of the human body. The head is the receptive center of sensory experiences through the eyes, ears, mouth, teeth, lips, hair, and nose. It is also where the processing unit of the body is located – the mind – and thus, it is also a place for the casual interaction between mind and body. Thus it is right at the junction of such debates as interactionism and Cartesian dualism.[59]

Conrich and Sedgwick describe the eyes as the most expressive body parts that are believed to give access to a person's thoughts and concealed feelings. The eyes are connected with the

[56] Ahmed, 84–86.
[57] Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature*, 207.
[58] Conrich and Sedgwick, *Gothic Dissections in Film and Literature*, 1–2.
[59] Conrich and Sedgwick, 33.

brain by the optical nerve and to the soul, according many myths and sayings. They partake in body language, signaling if a person is "happy, sad, tired, attentive, disgusted, empty-eyed (vacant) or dead-eyed (psychopathic)".[60]

Another important finding was that *skin* plays an affective role as the largest organ in the body. Unlike the burn victims in real life, badly burned characters in Gothic fiction seldom see a recovery through surgery. Most commonly, their skin deformities stay untouched and serve as a reason for their expulsion from society, making them the outcasts. Heroes that get horribly disfigured in a fire are found in multiple adaptations of novels for screen. They become the monsters of the story, such as Erik, the Phantom in *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* (*The Phantom of the Opera,* 1910), Anton Phibes in *The Abominable Dr. Phibes* (1971) and *Dr. Phibes Rises Again* (1972), Cropsy in *The Burning* (1981), Freddy Krueger in *the A Nightmare on Elm Street series* (1984–2010), and Peyton Westlake in *Darkman* (1990).[61]

Whatever transgresses the borders of the natural order, presenting itself in distinct groups of species, kingdoms, and categories, is labeled a monster within the framework of the power that produces it, or as Foucault defines, within a politico-judiciary power frame. The monster serves as a passage to the analysis of the grotesque construct of medical knowledge and juridical power that defines a being as a deviant. "Foucault calls this the power of normalization." The monster's lineage circles back to reflective questions on the nature of man and the boundaries of his normalcy. No anthropological context would suffice to supply a definite answer since man as a creature is constituted by the knowledge-power systems of society, his instincts, desires, and corporeality. Unknown values here turn our attention back to the making of the monster and what mechanisms, powers, and knowledge units are encapsulated in the man-monster construct. There is also no definitive answer to the questions of what is possible when a man faces a monster and how one is supposed to defend himself from the monstrosity.

[60] Conrich and Sedgwick, 49.
[61] Conrich and Sedgwick, 183.

The monster is outside the law insofar as it bypasses its natural and social limits. The juridical-natural monster, as Foucault determines, transgresses the norm's possible definitions, going beyond the deformation and referring back to responsibility for its existence.[62]

Reyes exemplifies in Michael Morrison's *A Dark Night's Dreaming: Contemporary American Horror Fiction* (1996) that body horror is a genre that sees the death or reassembling of the body as a transformative stage of existence and focuses on the preference of the post-human life to the mediocrity of the middle class in the 20th century. Body horror often concerned itself with the mystical and honored the transmorphic abilities of the body unlike the contemporary preoccupations with horror depictions of the body as a carnal prison**.**

Moreover, the splatter-punk movement and Cronenberg's biological horror focalize on the corporeal and visceral following the Gothic tradition. Bodies in flux or with some modifications can be traced back to Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*; but it is Cronenberg's vision that approaches the process of change for both its creative and destructive purposes**.**[63]

Reyes also turns to Linda Badley's *Writing Horror and the Body: The Fiction of Stephen King, Clive Barker, and Anne Rice* (1996) for an explanation of body horror as one of several discourses of the body that uses the iconography of the monstrous, as articulated by the fantastic to depict the anxieties of the 1980s, and presents the projection of the body again.[64]

The original story of Jekyll and Hyde and the 1958 film adaptation turn to the "monster feature" arc that identifies the monster as the "other" that needs to be eliminated. Cronenberg chooses a different approach; he zeroes in on the mechanisms of change, turning the monstrous body into a site of horror. This body, however, produces horror as an unknown and inconceivable mode of the corporeal in the making. This is a singular feature of body horror, creating fear not just by introducing the other but by accenting that it the familiar that turns into the unknown.[65]

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[62] Luciano Nuzzo, 'Foucault and the Enigma of the Monster', *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law - Revue Internationale de Sémiotique Juridique* 26, no. 1 (March 2013): 63–65, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-012-9275-8.
[63] Reyes, Location 1168.
[64] Reyes, Location 1186.
[65] Reyes, Location 1206.

3:2 MARY SHELLEY'S CORPOREAL BODY DEPICTIONS OF THE MONSTER IN *FRANKENSTEIN* (1818)

Shelley was born in London on the 30th of August in 1797. She was raised in a family of intellectuals: her father was the philosopher, William Godwin, and her mother was the pioneering feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft. Shelley was a novelist who wrote many literary works, the most notable of which is *Frankenstein* or *The Modern Prometheus.* When Shelley wrote the novel, *Frankenstein*, she said that she desired to "curdle the blood and quicken the beatings of the heart" with her writing. Her words testify that the novel should be placed in the Gothic genre, since Gothic works often emphasize aspects of fear and terror, along with the presence of the supernatural and the use of highly stereotypical characters.

Shelley's *Frankenstein* is certainly concerned with the corruption of social institutions. The fact that the creation of a new man is at the center of her novel suggests that she had little faith in the innocence of the human race, much like other Romantics of her time. Shelley's monster is a creature of superhuman capabilities for all things, such as his speed, strength, and durability. He represents the Industrial Revolution in many respects in terms of concepts, flexibility, and speed. In the novel, the monster is defined as a new species with regard to his tallness (eight feet) and the proportional width of his figure.[66]

The story also bears many parallels with the personal life of Shelley who had witnessed a lot of death. Shelley's mother died giving birth to her; Shelley lost two of her children shortly after they were born, and she also lost her husband, the poet, Percy Shelley. Curiously, *Frankenstein* was originally published under his name as women at that time were not allowed to publish books since writing was regarded as an unseemly activity for a woman who was only supposed to take care of her family and the household.

The novel was written in the 19th century to "thrill the heart". It has been reworked and rewritten in many stage productions. There are various counterparts in the novel: the good and

[66] Shelley, *Frankenstein (Webster's Thesaurus Edition)*, 44–45.

the evil, a creator and his creature, the monstrous and human. The three main characters, Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the creature all partake in the conflicts of the story in various ways. Walton is a polar explorer who meets Victor Frankenstein in the Arctic. It is to Walton that Victor tells his story; and he, in turn, writes it down in a metanarrative via a series of letters to his sister, Margaret Saville, who is back in England. Victor is repulsed by the creature at first sight. He refers to the creature as "the wretch" and is horrified by the thing he has given life to. This shows that Victor is only concerned with the physical appearance of his creation. The creature, indeed, has a monstrous appearance; it is an assembly of different human body parts. When Victor spotted the monster for the first time he stated:

> I perceived in the gloom a figure which stole from behind a clump of trees near me; I stood fixed, gazing intently: I could not be mistaken. A flash of lightning illuminated the object and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect, more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy daemon to whom I had given life. What did he there? The figure passed me quickly, and I lost it in the gloom. (Browning and Picart, p. 162).

Dr. Frankenstein describes how hideous the creation is and refers to his creation as a being that is worse than the son of the devil when he states, "It became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived."(Shelley, p. 50). Therefore, the creation has a truly monstrous appearance in his brutality and hideousness. In the novel, mankind continuously rejects the creature because of his looks. The most vivid example of this treatment comes from an episode with De Lacey. The old blind man at first extends his friendship and hospitality to the creature and offers the monster to take refuge and rest in his home. However, as soon the creation's true appearance is revealed, De Lacey throws the creature onto the floor and vigorously hits him with his stick, even though the creature's actions had brought no harm upon him.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, science was progressing rapidly. Some of the common experiments included testing new techniques on dead animals and humans, such as galvanism that was designed to bring drowned victims "back to life". Around the same time, the ideas of

grave desecration to salvage human bodies for experiments provoked increasing fears for many people who had not even considered that something could prevent them from resting in peace. On one hand, these scientific discoveries and experiments were exhilarating, but on the other hand, they were terrifying. The source of this fright came from the trope of a man trying to "play God" and the possible disastrous consequences of such ungodly actions. Shelley addressed the fears of her time in this novel. The vision of the monster glaring over Victor in his study is designed to evoke fear; she also provided another sense of emotion, that is *suspense*. It is created in the novel when Victor hears the footsteps of the wretch coming from the passageway and he is afraid at the uncertainty of what is going to happen to him:

> I trembled from head to foot; I felt a presentiment of who it was and wished to rouse one of the peasants who dwelt in a cottage not far from mine, but I was overcome by the sensation of helplessness, so often felt in frightful dreams, when you in vain endeavour to fly from an impending danger, and was rooted to the spot. (Shelley, p. 169)

The fact that Victor is trembling with fear creates a tense and suspenseful atmosphere; and the mystery of who the visitor can be adds to this chilling feeling. Frankenstein, therefore, attests to many ideas about the nature of the atmosphere in a Gothic novel. He says, "I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs." (Shelley, p. 49) This description immediately highlights the horrific movements of the monster and the fact that its eyes are "dull", suggesting that it is barely alive. Also, when the monster's breath is described as "hard"' and his body's motion is called "convulsive movements", we get the impression that it is more of a machine than a human being. Apart from the monster's creation, no other supernatural events fall within the narrative, but it is a mystery as to how the monster manages to travel and follow Victor across the country without any knowledge of his travel plans. However, Victor's monster, with his superhuman speed and strength, was most likely observing every movement that Victor was up to, like with the Delacy family when the monster was observing them for months and learning their language by watching them.

The most noticeable description of the monster belongs to Victor: “His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes his shriveled complexion and dun-white sockets” (Shelley, p. 49)

The fact that the monster has yellow skin makes him seem completely unnatural, out of the ordinary, and gruesome to look at. The image of arteries and muscles exposed where the skin did not cover his insides implies that he looked wounded and gory. The word “shriveled”, used to describe the monster’s complexion, points to the creature’s old and withering look that contrasts starkly with the fact that he had just been “born” into the world. As this is when the monster is introduced to the readers, the first impression of him as an ugly wretch comes in such a horrific and vivid way that it sticks with them for the remainder of the tale.

The monster in Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is a premodern monster because his external features are recognizably human since he is made of human parts. Frankenstein’s monster, like other pre-modern monsters, takes after human anatomy and physiology in a twisted way. In the novel, the reader experiences horror and disgust over the monster’s looks through the eyes of Dr. Victor Frankenstein when he sees and describes his creation for the first time. Frankenstein says, “breathless horror and disgust filled my heart” (Shelley, p. 50) at the creature’s appearance, despite having taken the trouble to assemble beautiful parts. He runs from the room and paces in an agitated way, unable to rest. The point here is that Frankenstein immediately rejects his creation.

The list of victims of Frankenstein’s monster is not long, yet most of them are Victor’s family members and friends because of the monster’s sworn vengeance upon his creator, Dr. Frankenstein. These victims suffered both the horror of seeing the ugly monster and death from his cadaverous hands. One of the crucial reasons why the readers can relate to the dread and fear felt by the characters is because of Shelley’s effective choice of including secondary characters of different ages and genders.

Frankenstein's family dies because of the creature's actions: Victor's father, his brother, William, and his cousin Elizabeth (also Victor's fiancé) perish from the monster's hand directly or vicariously. Victor dies eventually as well. The reader can feel the thrill described from the point of view of either a child, a man, a woman, or an elderly man; and, thus, the reader is extended the opportunity to relate to the character's experiences and see his reflection in one of them.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* did not only jumpstart the monster, but she gave a push to a whole subgenre of body horror. The Gothic genre of the late 18th century conjured up horror in scary places. With Frankenstein, fear wasn't a trick played by the mind on the body on location; it was embodied in the monster himself. *Frankenstein,* the novel, is often classified as sci-fi rather than Gothic fiction. However, its corporeal obsessions and monstrous traits, as well as the narrative and real-life conflicts of an author and his creation - both in the case of Frankenstein and his monster and Shelley and her novel - are profusely Gothic.

Shelley's *Frankenstein* might be one of the most important works of literature of the modern Gothic since it permeated contemporary mythology, the history of the novel, and changed the cultural paradigm of fear and prejudice. *Frankenstein* contributed to the development of the discussion on monstrosity itself, launched a dialogue about the pleasures and dangers of writing, and also introduced a new, animated object of terror into the genre. By keeping the source of fear in the "real" object of a body rather than supernatural or divine beings or remote mysterious locations, Shelley replaced the architecture of fear by physiognomy. She brought the spotlight on writers and readers and replaced the devious villain by a complex union of an antiheroic creator and his monster.

Frankenstein's monster has come to be known as a "totalizing monster" that seems to live through every attempt to defeat him; he constitutes a permanent rather than temporary danger. These qualities made the monster a part of modern mythology, recognized both by popular culture and literary criticism. Frankenstein's creature does not exhibit essential monstrosity

since what makes him threatening is not an essential feature of a particular body but a sum of many specific monstrosities that come together to give him form. This exuberance of peculiarities predisposes the monster to constantly question the nature of his existence and to fail in finding the answer repeatedly. The connection between the monster's impossibility to find a definition for himself is reciprocated by the novel on a meta-level. As Shelley notes in the introduction to her novel, it is her "hideous progeny" that shall "go forth and prosper", extending the same uncertainly of definition from the monster of the story to the text itself. Shelley's novel is a monstrosity in regard to its form: its excessive thematic contents, dabbling into philosophy, reflections on the sublime, domestic sentiments, and questions of ethics. Halberstam gives this disproportionate thematic distribution of the novel credit for the emergence of textual monsters. The monstrous narrative can be productive in several ways; for one, it has the potential to be reproduced within the various interpretations. And readers, too, add to the variety of readings. To get closer to the core of these issues, we must consider the narrative. Halberstam suggests that the novel is a metaphorical embodiment of Gothic fiction and that the Gothic takes after the process of text production.

The identities of the creator, Frankenstein, and his creation, the monster, are built on an alignment with or opposition to the various constructs of the humane. Victor's identity is based on his status as a white, upper-class male while the monster's yellow skin, giant and incoherent body, and unstable gender build up his monstrosity**.**

The foundation for everything in *Frankenstein* is literature and text related rather than based on religion or science. The role of definitions of the human and humanity is already stressed in the epigraph, and the search for the meaning of these definitions happens through the problem of form. The monster in the novel is denied the label of human because his body is not shaped right – he is too big, unpleasing, and unshapely. Frankenstein creates him in search of answers about "nature's secrets" and yet what comes out of his investigation is another question. Frankenstein's monster is the body as a battlefield for nature and humanity, and it uses up both

human and natural resources to exist. He is a scientific byproduct of human and natural remains bumped up against each other.[67] Halberstam highlights the features of Shelley's monster that produce visual horror:

> Beautiful! - Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black) and forwing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes) that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set) his shriveled complexion and straight black lips (Halberstam, p. 38)

The monster's skin is barely enough to cover his interior, and yet his complexion is shriveled. The facial features that could be perceived beautiful – "lustrous black" hair and "teeth of a pearly whiteness" – are consumed by neighboring ghastly descriptors of "watery eyes" and "shriveled complexion." The decisive attribute of his appearance is "straight black lips" – a mark of the inhuman and the lack of life within the body. The monster is designed to look vulgar, repulsive, and terrifying - a masterpiece of horror.

Frankenstein is often referred to as an ancestral text for Gothic horror cinema. The horror film has to repulse the viewer, too. At the same time, the monster of the silver screen needs to be capable of hosting the projections of the spectators' fears. Shelley's novel offers a monster so unwatchable that only a blind man would not be repelled by him on a visceral level. In this respect, old De Lacey's blindness can be interpreted as the blindness of the reader, because the visuality of the monstrous in *Frankenstein* is definitive as a preconception of cinematic horror. Much like horror spectators, the characters in the novel see the monster and therefore they are depraved on the same level of empathy that "blind" readers of the story have. Once the monstrosity has been seen, the bearer of it, the monster, cannot be forgotten and, therefore, is forgiven for it. The monster in *Frankenstein* embodies the concept of a visual monstrosity - the ultimate factor of judgment for the story's actors. Within the novel, this argument is most

[67] Halberstam and Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, 28–36.

vividly illustrated by the narrative of the De Lacey family that accentuates visual recognition as the most important factor in the monstrous narrative.

The same visual coding is true for the construction of humanity and acceptance in Shelley's novel. The women in Victor's family - Elizabeth, Caroline, and Justine - in their story arcs display the same recognition intentions and outcomes that delineate the differentiation of the human and the monster. Caroline retrieves Elizabeth from a peasant family because she recognizes the girl's heritage in her appearance. Elizabeth is pictured as "thin and very fair" as opposed to the other children in the poor family's cottage who appear as "dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants" (Halberstam, p. 39). Caroline adopts both Elizabeth and Justine, but based on their bloodlines surfacing through their looks the former is fit for marriage as a nobleman's progeny, while the latter is given a life of servitude because her ancestors are of a lesser class. Elsewhere in the novel, Frankenstein decides to create a mate for the monster who pleas for tolerance and makes a speech to impress his creator against the backdrop of the sublime alpine view. While the speech sparks compassion and a desire to console the monster in Victor, both impulses get eradicated by the sight of his creation that triggers horror and disgust for a "filthy mass that moved and talked." While the monster's body was devised as male, it always appears as rotting, desexualized matter. His raw, decomposing flesh is hardly holding together, thereby defining the monster as an "unfinished" and "filthy" mass. The only call for action this body provokes is a call for its destruction, thus disassembling the constructed form to straighten out the natural order.[68]

In recent years, there has been growing interest in the *Frankenstein* novel as Gelder suggests in an article by Paule O'Flinn, "…the production and reproduction in the case of *Frankenstein"* is such that the flow of history relocates the elements of the text and offers varying ways of looking at it. While in 1818, *Frankenstein* relied on one set of meanings, in 1931 and 1957, the

[68] Halberstam and Halberstam, 38–47.

same novel could be made to signify other things, and the author's intention has nothing to do with this process.

The story of Frankenstein and his creation is torn apart by three differing historic processes in each generation only to reappear as messily stitched together as Mary Shelley's monster himself. Literary criticism, in the face of this challenge of textual interpretation, has taken varying approaches. Some critics prefer to overlook these historic fashions and appeal to the timeless elements of the narrative; others acknowledge the historic influences but dismiss the relevance of the politics and power dynamics that ruled the corresponding societal context in order to look into the "mirror of human evolution". (Gilder, p. 115) Gelder suggests a still different approach that takes the history of the British society as an interpretive lens to decompose *Frankenstein*.

He observes that Shelley began writing the novel in June 1816 at the Maison Chapuis, Montalègre, near Geneva, where she was living with her husband. What nudged her to start working on the book was a literary challenge from their neighbor, Lord Byron, who suggested that each should write a ghost story. What is of importance in Gelder's argument here is that Shelley was working alongside two activist-men who had publicly responded to the Luddite crisis as she was setting off to create her monster tale.[69]

It is worth mentioning that every new political reiteration of the text emerges during tumultuous times. The 1961 Supplement to the *Oxford English Dictionary* features Sidney Webb's use of the term "Frankenstein" as he described the steam engine as a point of shared resentment for landlords and capitalists in *Fabian Essays*, published in 1889 at the height of the socialist upsurge. In 1972, the same Supplement quotes the *Daily Telegraph* of 3 May 1971, calling the Nationalists' black political revival in South Africa a "political Frankenstein". In both cases, the name of the monster's creator serves as the metonymy for the monster as part of the

[69] Gelder, *The Horror Reader*, 115–16.

mythologization process that makes it possible for journalists to salvage a stripped-down metaphor and leave the ideological coherence of the text behind.

This decomposition of the novel into mythical motifs and metaphors had already begun in 1832. In a personal letter to the English critic, Leigh Hunt, Shelley admits that she has discovered a first work of "fanfiction" featuring her character. Richard Brinsley Peake had put on a successful stage adaptation called, *Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein,* in London. The impact of the monstrous narrative was impressive by all standards as she shifts the blame for the violent acts committed from the monster's internal impulses to his social circumstances. She also permits him to voice his innocence and lets him explain his misery with his circumstance. Hammer film, *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957), directed by Terence Fisher with Peter Cushing, ignores this important detail and suggests that it was the monster's biology that set him on a rampage. Most film reviewers reacted to this change sharply, describing the sequence where the monster's behavior gets grounded in nature and not nurture "absurd and unnecessary sequence", "a cumbersome attempt at establishing motivation", "ridiculous" and "the main weakness" [70] In the novel, Frankenstein's monster gazes at his reflection in the pool and voices his own hideousness:

> I viewed myself in a transparent pool! At first I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification. Alas I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity. (Shelley, p. 111)

The "fatal effects" referred to by the monster are the consequences of social biases to different appearances and his future of social rejection. For instance, even Dr. Frankenstein rejected him and describes his repulsion by the deformed monster: "I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs. How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form?" (Shelley, p. 49).

[70] Gelder, 117–20.

The descriptive passage that dwells on the monster's creation is the high point of Victor's arc. The setting is characteristic of the Gothic: "dreary night", "half-extinguished light", and the rain that metaphorically reciprocates Victor's "dismal" mood. He seems to anticipate the disaster and describes his state in a pitch-perfect Gothic way – he is in "agony" and what he feels is indescribable. The scientist focuses on the least appealing characteristics of the monster body's reanimation. First, he notes a single "dull yellow eye" opening, then he sees the creature coming alive in an unattractive "convulsive motion". Frankenstein recalls that while collecting the separate parts, he was guided by how beautiful they were, but he sees none of that beauty in the patchwork creature he animated. The features that in a different context would have looked pleasing seem only to accentuate the negative features. The external ghastliness of the creature is an important precursor to the way people will perceive him, and it is their reaction that guides the monster's development.

Dona Heiland, a literary author and expert in Gothic and gender studies, in her book, *Gothic and Gender An Introduction* (2004), explores John Polidori and James Malcolm Rymer's article, "Uncanny Monsters in the Work of Shelley," highlighting the uncanny monster(s) in Shelley's work. One interesting fact of Shelley's biography, as noted, is that she was the daughter of two esteemed writers, early feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft, and a forefather of the anarchism, Godwin.

It is tempting to consider the correlation of biological and literary descent in the work of *Frankenstein*'s writer, especially since Shelley weaves direct autobiographical reflections into the narrative. One well-research personal reference is the trauma of childbirth that can be traced back to Shelley's and her mother's pregnancies – the latter died while giving birth to Mary. And then there is the dedication of the novel to her father, Godwin. However, to view Shelley's novel only as indebted to her parents' literary legacies would be shortsighted. The more straightforward cultural connections that can be traced in the novel, such as religious discourse,

scientific and ethical controversies, and romantic poetry all contributed to the expansion of the thematic variety of Gothic fiction.

The main confrontation in *Frankenstein* of the human-creator and the monster he crafted relays the conflict into the ambiguous territory between nature and culture, human and monstrous, parent and child, male and female. Previous Gothic novels mainly followed pre-determined genre formulas, like the protagonist's arc where he moves from blissful safety to an anxiety-inducing challenge to salvation. The challenge usually concerns the upset cultural and sometimes the natural order. Frankenstein's monster is the first Gothic horror construct that literally embodies the narrative he comes from and a number of racial and sexual threats it presents to a nation, capitalism, and the bourgeoisie.

Halberstam's *Skin Shows* suggests that the similar motifs of the 18th and 19th century Gothic tradition should be related with caution since the change in historic context provoked different kinds of fears. With the transition from the threat from corrupted aristocrats or monks is displayed as the architectural entrapment of castles and abbeys towards the corporeal horror of monstrous bodies, the lens of interpretation of the setting and plot of the Gothic narrative needs to change, too.

A lot of threats evident in the 18th and 19th-century horror were supplied by science. The lack of understanding of biological discoveries and research pursuits led the populace to make assumptions and seek irrational and gothic-like explanations for it. Heiland stipulates that monsters act as uncanny counterparts to our societies, mirroring everything that we try to avoid or hide as unwanted or threatening to the fragile order of things. [71]

Andrew Hock Soon Ng is a literary author of several books. Regarding the subject of "monster bodies", he argues that monstrosity, however difficult to define, depends on its opposition to normative bodies. *Frankenstein* is a pioneer monster narrative where monstrosity comes forth through an aberrant template body of the monster. The appearance of the creature is what brings

[71] Heiland, *Gothic & Gender*, 98–100.

about the disgusted reaction of its maker in the first place. Victor Frankenstein expresses how hideous he finds the monster by calling him a "catastrophe", "the wretch", a "breathless horror", and finally:

> Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived. (Shelley, p.50)

However, it is unclear whether Victor finds the monster repulsive on his own or if the repulsion that the scientist feels comes from his inability to confront the moral corruption that his creation reflects. Hock-soon argues that the body of the monster can function as a revelatory image of some symbolic crises (socio-cultural, ideological, language), embodying the means through which such crises can instill anxiety in certain bodies through monstrous meanings.

Monstrosity can be of different kinds, and Hock-soon argues that besides the performative (the serial killer texts) and psychical (*High-Rise and The Fifth Child*), there is one monstrosity that embodies strangeness. He focuses on McGrath's short tale, "Angel" (1989), and Carter's celebrated *Nights at the Circus* (1984) to discuss the third type of the monstrous because these texts contain a particular kind of body which gets full acceptance in mythical or religious contexts; but it turns into a monstrous body when taken out of that context. These monstrous bodies belong to "angels", or beings - like many other non-normative embodiments – that can only ever be represented allegorically, for their "reality" would prove too traumatic otherwise. Hock-soon asserts that monster's real and textualized body cannot be reconciled because the revelation of the true corporeality and natural mechanisms behind it would necessarily deconstruct the body as text and its symbolic space within the narrative. In "Angel", the story of the biographer and his monster is connected to the story of a city coping with the state of decay at the *fin de siècle*. While the impeccable body of the angel is decomposing - regardless of all the efforts to cover it up with cosmetics and storytelling, New York is getting corrupted, with a brief slowdown achieved by a fantasy of "restoration of order". In this regard, McGrath's

narrative is also about spaces. Of course, the space-body mirror connection in the narrative is more metonymic than metaphoric, and it does not display any direct mutual influences. However, this dichotomy can be treated as a rehearsal for the argument that geographical space and the body are often interrelated on a monstrous scale.

Nights at the Circus, unlike most other works of Gothic fiction, treats the monster as a positive element of the narrative. However, Carter's monster, Fevvers, has some similarities with the monsters discussed in this study insofar as she presents a danger to the symbolic space of the novel. She crosses the limitations of her narrative arc and rebels against the male gaze through a careful mediation and the reassignment of her body's purpose to maintain a playful dubiousness that resists closure. [72]

In recent years, some sort of *template* of the monster has begun to formulate in the literary medium. In *Foucault's Monsters and the Challenge of Law*, Sharp states that monsters are popular subjects of literary study; for example, (Neocleous, 2005; Bildhauer and Mills, 2003; Gilmore, 2003; Shildrick, 2002; Graham, 2002; Beal, 2002; Ingrebretsen, 2001; Lykke and Braidotti, 1996; Williams, 1996; Cohen, 1996; Huet, 1993; Davidson, 1991; Park and Daston, 1981). From the looks of it, every culture and all historical periods have triggered the creation of monsters. Cohen even calls them "pure culture".

As a cultural construct, the monster is fictitious, at least to some extent, and he exists in opposition to the living. The most efficient monsters, as per Shildrick's research findings, are made of organic matter. Some researchers, such as Canguilhem, insists that mechanical or mineral beings cannot qualify as monsters at all since they take after an artificial design and exhibit no internal cohesion. The real monstrosity, Canguilhem argues, stems from a modification or deviation from a morphological norm. Many researchers also note that this deviation often manifests as a physical lack or excess.

[72] Ng, 'Monstrous Body', 144–45.

Another form of monstrosity is hybridism. Some examples of such monsters would be human-animal beings created by unnatural unions of various species. This surplus or dearth in morphology in a monstrous body points to its hybridity since the balance between human and non-human is lost in such a case. To sum up the aforementioned points, to qualify as a monster, the being should be part human but never to the full extent. The human aspects of the monster should not be changed to the point of obstructing their recognition by the reader or viewer.

Sharpe agrees with David Graham that monster status is an effect of hybridity and extends the opinion that the sight of the creature and the volatility of the ontological hygiene of the humanist subjects are responsible for the reaction of horror. The demonstration *(monstrare*) of this hybridism of the human and non-human destabilizes axiomatic certitudes to evoke horror, according to Graham. They also act as a distinction mechanism between the two sides of the hybrid they represent and challenge the nature of that very distinction. The monster can serve as an omen of the classification crisis or, in Jacques Derrida's terms, "a contradiction of the cultural taboo against mixing genres." (Sharp, p. 30)

For Sharpe, the concept of monster presents a problem for language since it simultaneously presents an excess of signification, or a surplus of meaning and an inability to shrink down to preexisting terms and fit into human efforts to comprehend and commodify.

The critiques of the monstrous often center around the corporeality of the monster. Sharpe expresses little surprise at such a tendency, going with the Barthes view of the body as a "primary source of symbolism". (Sharp, p. 31) However, the textual site of the monstrous goes beyond the external surface of the body. It is vital to reflect on the historical shifts of law discourse and consider the alternative focus on the soul that Foucault identified as a target of legal regulation (1977). It is especially relevant since the abnormal individual was introduced as a modern monster after this shift.[73]

[73] Sharpe, *Foucault's Monsters and the Challenge of Law*, 29–31.

Other novels linked with horror films and the exploitative science tradition established by *Frankenstein* are *Flesh* (1987) and *Resurrection Dreams* (1989). They stand out as demonstrative of the ways in which pulp fiction considers corporeal issues but does it from a gorier and more manipulative point of view. Barker and Laymon's fiction when examined together supplies a comprehensive sample of the type body Gothic fiction that comprised the first continual attempt to create a novel transgressive literary form that zeroed in on the corporeal in the 1980s**.**

Reyes highlights David J. Skal's curious suggestion that *Frankenstein* is more fit to be called a modern creation myth than a theory of evolution or Genesis. Frankenstein's name is mentioned in medical and ethical discussions so often that it is safe to say he's one of the most famous literary doctors: he's mentioned in debates about molecular biology, DNA manipulation, Vitro fertilization, bio-engineering, cloning and even GMO foods (the latter are even referred to as Frankenfoods in some sources).

The scope and range of stage and screen adaptations of Victor's pursuit of finding nature's secrets are impressive from Kenneth Branagh's Romantic view of Frankenstein's persona to Frank Henenlotter's slapstick comedy, *Frankenhooker* and Paul Morrisey's lust-for-the-dead *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1973), to sincere parodies like Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein* (1974), which reused the setting of the 1931 classic adaptation of the novel by James Whale. Victor Frankenstein was not a unique or pioneering installation of the mad scientist trope, but the impact of his character on the development of genre film can be traced to the present moment.

Moreover, the Frankenstein-type creator of the monstrous has spread into many works of the horror genre that explore all kinds of contemporary anxieties related to psychological disorders and isolation. Reyes gives the instance of Lucky McKee's *May* (2002), where a troubled young woman (Angela Bettis) finds herself lonely and isolated from her peers because she has to wear an eye-patch for medical reasons. When her mother notices that May can't seem to find a friend,

she gives her daughter a doll in a glass cage – a family treasure to be the girl's companion. The mother gives May a piece of advice that gets a literal interpretation as the plot unfolds: "[i]f you can't find a friend, make one". May goes through a series of unsuccessful romantic relationships and decides to follow her mother's advice and craft her own Frankenstein monster. She stitches together the arms, legs, and neck of her acquaintances to make the patchwork body out of the "best parts" of the corpses to fabricate a being that would alleviate her loneliness.

The victim body in the surgical horror sphere gains the status of a disposable part of the whole as a constituent of a bigger patchwork creature. This way, the body loses its subject status and is stripped of its political and personal meaning to become a teleological experiment that is, in itself, grounds for accepting anguish and even one's own demise.[74]

Although the monstrosity of the patchwork creature is not in any way played down in *The Human Centipede* – on the contrary, it is the core source of horror – it is often shown through the prism of the thrill Heiter, the creator of the centipede, exuberantly displays. In a sequence that thematically takes after the torture scene of Josh in *Hostel*, Heiter prompts his creature to defecate. When Katsuro (Akihiro Kitamura) submits to the inevitability of the biological process and defecates into Lindsay's (Ashley C. Williams) mouth, the reaction the viewer is shown is the pleasure on Heiter's face. The mad surgeon laughs triumphantly and does not hold back his unrestrained delight at the automatic aspects of human biology.[75]

The victims in *The Human Centipede*, are trapped in the materiality of their existence in captivity. Even though the Gothic setting of a remote area, dark roads, and menacing storm play a convention card in this horror movie, the main source of fright comes from the victims' total submission. It is not their abduction that serves as the means for their arrival in a captive state, but it is their imprisonment in their new status as body parts. Lindsay's post-surgery body

[74] Reyes, *Body Gothic*, 2902.
[75] Reyes, 2953.

is a segment of the human centipede that is at a physical and psychological impasse for her sense of subjectivity. The torturous aspect of modern Gothic texts, and especially the one in *The Human Centipede*, shift one's regard of the biological body to a claustrophobic prison or an object of the withdrawal. Surgery, although sharing the Frankensteinian impetus of creating new life, becomes de facto a means of violence and seizure of the bodies of others. Even though it stands to reason that the controlling energy of surgery is deemed symbolic in a text explicitly giving a nod to fascist governance, the text's fixation on bodies as artificial constructs destined for collapse into constituent smaller bodies is even greater.

The characters whose bodies make up the combined monster must experience the visceral qualities of the bodies to a maximum extent. Lindsay, Jenny, and Katsuro are forced to excrete in a communal, modified fashion, defying the usual intimacy and personality of this specific bodily function. Lindsay's absolute inability to establish control over the process is meant to generate horror, but it also underscores the misery that stands as "a species of memento mori", according to Reyes. The scene is a bleak reminder that the human body is governed not by social conventions but by biological regulations that humans cannot overcome. Lindsay's inability to break free from her position suggests the hopelessness of human attempts to escape physicality.

The subgenre of the body gothic, which is surgical horror, focuses on the imperfections of human corporeality even when it exhibits the creativity of bodily deconstruction. An exemplary instance for this argument comes from *American Mary*, a critically acclaimed film of 2012 which aimed to justify the surgical practices honed by the body modification community.[76]

Body modification is a rather broad term that includes cosmetics, coiffure, ornamentation, adornment, tattooing, scarification, piercing, cutting, branding, other procedures done mostly for aesthetic reasons, and – as some critics have argued – modifications with various forms of prosthetics and technology. *American Mary*, by Jen and Sylvia Soska, features permanent non-

[76] Reyes, 2981–92.

mainstream body modification that is closely related to the subcultural style and looks into positioning the body as a site of resistance and agency. This aspect of operational horror was institutionalized by academic research and arguably is a prime example of the contemporary horror mode. It is not that images of body modification were absent or irrelevant before the 1990s, but it is the mainstream appeal of this movement that made this horror mode widespread. One of the central characters in *American Mary* that comes to Mary seeking her illegal surgical services is Beatress. Despite her assurance that she has reached her ideal modified body, the Beatress character is problematic. Her obsession to the point of her inability to think about body modification objectively is clear. One instance is Tessa's (Julia Maxwell) doubting the intentions of Beatress who defends the necessity of Ruby's (Paula Lindberg) many surgical alterations. Another visually apparent argument against Beatress' credibility are the scars left from the changes done to her nose and mouth, and Mary notices how uncanny the woman looks at first sight.[77]

Barker's *Hellraiser* is a text deserving of special mention for introducing the influential image of the cenobite. These beings, addressed as members of "the Order of the Gash" in the novel that serves as the basis for the film by the same name, were the worshipers of sadomasochism and body modification. Their signature look of humans clad in leather with open wounds, hooks, and chains covering their bodies is an iconic appropriation of body modification practices for eliciting horror on sight**.**[78]

The thematic variety of surgical horror, be it mad doctors akin to Victor Frankenstein or fantasy operation tools or benevolent cosmetic surgeons, coincides with exposing the dilemma of human existence through our bodies and beyond them. Surgical horror also concerns itself with corporeal anxieties, focusing, in the case of torture porn, on the claustrophobic constraints of the body as prison or, in the case of bod modification, on the body as confinement or an obstacle

[77] Reyes, 3074.
[78] Reyes, 2997–3011.

to personal expression. Fear is embodied in this subgenre. It is exploitative of people's visceral reactions to the depiction of pain or, alternatively, it can come from the image of a deformed or altered body into something that is no longer human or challenges corporeal conventions. The physicality of Western cultures predetermined, to some extent, the role of surgery in the contemporary Gothic mode. The popular obsession with young and beautiful bodies, and the cult of health and physical fitness fed into the emergence of terrifying scenarios where surgery disturbs the wholesome mode of body functioning and becomes an agent of change. Within the discourse of body gothic, the materiality of being and the body as a site of horror, decay, and anxiety embeds surgical horror.[79]

Guy de Maupassant, the author of *The Horla and Who Knows*? – a first-person story about a man in an asylum – died early, tormented by the fear of growing insane. He was a literary genius who was stopped from rising to the height of fame only by his early demise. H. Rider Haggard, a famed writer of the African adventure genre, known for *King Solomon's Mines* and *She*, developed his terrifying narrative, *The Witch's Head* (1885), in that very African setting.

Another talented writer who perished before his time was Guy Boothby, a creator of detective novels, who also dabbled in weird fiction in his *A Bid for Fortune* (1895). It is the story of an occult adventurer, Dr Nikola, who appears in several of Boothby's books. His novels often featured elements of both detective and weird fiction.

Another author mostly famous for his adventure novel, *Treasure Island* (1883), Robert Louis Stevenson had also written several works of horror. His paramount horror fiction *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1888) is lauded as one of the classic horror tales that has received numerous adaptations for stage and screen, also spawning many abridgments and interpretative works of art. Stevenson's horror narratives came from the dark corners of his own mind. He encountered Jekyll and Hyde, for instance, in his own nightmares. Stevenson suffered from tuberculosis that consumed him since childhood.

[79] Reyes, 3128.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) was a somber, depressive genius of his craft whose work followed the legacy of Poe and even imitated some of his work. His favorite settings were gloomy, desolate spaces impossible to get out of. One such location was the coastal township of Innsmouth, the townsfolk of which had a kinship with centuries-old ocean creatures that came ashore at night. Modern horror is indebted to the Lovecraftian influence responsible for the emergence of dozens of horrifying monsters on the coastline of the literary work of later writers.

To write a bestselling contemporary horror novel, it is crucial to be aware of other popular works that define the genre now as well as those that contributed to the development of horror fiction since the 1840s. An aspiring writer should get a feel for Poe and Lovecraft and see how the tastes of the horror-lovers have changed over the years. The literary craft has developed to embed a lot of the realism that film and theatre now exhibit: the characters look and talk like us now; inflated melodrama is no longer saving bad dialogue that sounds foreign to the modern ear. However, the stories that terrified readers a century or more ago can still perform brilliantly if presented in a novel way. Contemporary literature dwells on subplots, unlike the works of Poe and his long-gone colleagues.

4:1 POSTMODERN RETELLING OF *FRANKENSTEIN*: AHMED SAADAWI'S *FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD*

The 19th century works in the horror genre, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as the paramount example, surpassed their predecessors in the genre, offering more nuanced narratives and a deeper conceptual and psychological consideration in their plots. Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis were trailblazers in the development of the horror vocabulary who, together with their many imitators, crafted a rich lexical tapestry for 19th century writers to borrow from. The new generation of horror writers refined the context of the genre to reflect the new reality and added a layer of psychological subtlety to their literary exploration.

In Britain, the state-of-the-art works of the Gothic genre dropped to the lowest strata of the literary market after 1825. Horror tales were plentiful but as cheap reads for the masses like *Varney the Vampire* (1845–1847). Across the Atlantic, tales of horror and terror were revitalized in the work of Charles Brockden Brown later to be picked up and allowed to flourish in the tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe. In Germany, the development of popular horror took a fruitful turn in the works of E. T. A. Hoffmann. He pushed the boundaries of supernatural horror and explored the interweaving of the real and the hallucinatory, predicting and influencing much modern horror. His novel approach to horror gained him even more popularity in France than in his native land.

Among the few iconic notable works of 19th century horror fiction are Edgar Allan Poe's deeply symbolic short story, *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), Robert Louis Stevenson's archetype-setting novella, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Louise Michel's utopian play, Les Microbes Humains (1886), Robert W. Chambers' book of American supernatural "classics", *The King in Yellow* (1895), and Bram Stoker's seminal work, *Dracula* (1897).

Among the most prominent thematic subjects of the weird fiction of the 19th century is the return of the dead, even if not necessarily as living decaying bodies. The archetypal example

of Dr. Jekyll being haunted by Mr. Hyde from within is revelatory of the trend of monsters residing in the psyche, and it took the lead in the horrifying narratives of the post-Gothic era. The world of ghouls and spirits collided with the world of man, establishing a close contact that became openly sexual in some cases. Vampire stories by John Polidori, Théophile Gautier, J. Sheridan Le Fanu, and Bram Stoker all share narrative elements of deadly desire. If there is a definitive connection between the Gothic and other modes of presentation, it is the grotesque. Contrary to the carnivalesque, it offers no comic relief and relies heavily on the subjects of mutilation and body modification.[80]

The grotesque bodies of H. G. Wells' Gothic classic, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), explore the installation of terror through the hybrid form and monster narrative. Their anatomy evades categorization and presents the implicit threat of otherness. These creatures – the Beast Folk – call for repulsion and distrust; their uncanny bodies intimidate Pendrick not only because of their feral nature but also because their human features make him question his own identity. [81]

The monstrous shapes and mixed Gothic bodies of the creatures Pendrick meets on the island make him question civilized humanity and point out the inherent monstrousness of all men. The same fear of evolutionary regression in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* comes into play here, prohibiting Pendrick from a full and seamless reintegration into his civilized habitat.

Aldana Reyes highlights Kelly Hurley's argument that the corporeality of 19th century Gothic works has a direct connection to the developments of biology and Darwin's theory of natural selection, as well as then-modern psychology and criminal anthropology. The corporeal discoveries at the turn of the new century prompted anxieties about the possibilities and limits of the human body. Dr. Moreau, and by extension the readers of Well's story, share the

[80] Aldana Reyes, *Body Gothic*, 136–45.
[81] Aldana Reyes, 145.

excitement for the body's plasticity and its capacity for reshaping. This feature of Gothic bodies, namely their realized potential to disturb the boundaries of corporeal norms and their societal reaction to them, is where terror originates.[82]

The image of the Gothic villain has never been conspicuous. Ferocious but attractive since its first Byronesque installations, the image of the Gothic antagonist developed into several new archetypes that were either more human or much more surreal - but always aberrantly seductive to the villain's victims. In some cases, the third archetype arose, where the antagonist bore a close resemblance to the hero, as foretold by Edward Bulwer-Lytton and his Rosicrucian romances. This heroic exploration of the surreal found realization in the real-life trends of the occult revival that were extremely valid in French and British cultural contexts during the Victorian period.

On many levels, the 1910s in America and Britain belonged to the 19th century in terms of culture and social organization. This was a time when the Victorian Age had slowly started to loosen its grip but very much continued to be dominant; and this continuation is also evident in the prime examples of horror literature of the period. For instance, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Robert W. Chambers' *The King in Yellow* were written a few years before the 20th century began but grew popular in the new century. Arthur Conan Doyle, famous for his detective fiction written in the late 1800s, published his supernatural story, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in 1901.

Twentieth century literature really became a distinct phenomenon in 1919 in the wake of the First World War. It is marked by the ambiguity of class distinctions, finding its reflection on the literary plane in both Britain and the U.S. The blurred line between the elegant and subtle elements of horror plots meant for the upper-class readers with more down-to-earth characters and less refined monsters birthed a new trend in the genre. Lowbrow stories such as Charles Birkin's *Creeps series* (1932–1936) and occult horror novels such as Dennis Wheatley's *The*

[82] Aldana Reyes, 145–53.

Devil Rides Out (1934) in Britain and pulp magazines in America are products of this new literary epoch. [83]

Deformity is one of the staple subjects of the body gothic. The vocabulary of the Gothic in terms of deformed bodies is problematic from the point of view of disability studies that have recently challenged a lot of the rhetoric in horror narratives. In one of the brightest examples of early 20th century cinematic horror, Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932), grotesque bodies are introduced to the narrative for their distressing potential. At the same time, the rhetoric of deformation is challenging; it critiques normative discourse and exploits the bodies of perceived "freaks". The film portrays the people with deformed bodies in a humanizing fashion with a lot of semi-documentary footage that prompts intimacy. However, the intention of highlighting the threat that differing bodies pose to normative society also effectively marginalizes them, putting them in opposition to the rest of the world.

The treatment of the otherness of the body in the film as a cause of undesirability and exclusion becomes even more evident in the character arch of Cleopatra, portrayed by Ola Baclanova in the film. When the "freaks" discover that she had been simulating romantic interest for the rich midget from their group (Harry Earles), they punish her by changing her to look like one of them, thereby labeling body deformity as inherently monstrous.

The short stories of H.P. Lovecraft were published in 1936 as a stand-alone book that included such masterpieces as "The Dunwich Horror" and "Shadow over Innsmouth". In the years of post-World War II, there was an evident shift from crude pulp horror towards more complex narratives. The major player in this change of form and content was Stephen King, whose best-selling horror stories changed the course of horror genre history. He is responsible for popularizing horror novels over the horror short story and bringing the genre back to its 18th century glory. Another major influence unique to the postwar years of horror development

[83] Cardin, *Horror Literature through History*, 30–31.

came with the rise of film and television. The omnipresence of horror stories on all media fed the unprecedented familiarization of horror.

The reconception of horror to fit postwar sensibilities led to the rise of the zombie genre and the emergence of splatterpunk. Graphic violence and the gore of splatterpunk stemmed from the fiction of Clive Barker and his six, Books of Blood (1984-1985), that advocated for a very liberal use of sex and violence in the horror narrative of the 20th century. That is also the period when body gothic was on the rise. Even though it isn't defined by violence, body gothic often features violent acts alongside deformation, transformation, and the dramatic exploration of violence.

In later texts that feature deformity, like Katherine Dunn's *Geek Love* (1989), a similar circus environment to the one in Browning's *Freaks* does not focus on the otherness of the characters' bodies. Instead, it uses this difference in looks to critique and deconstruct normative bodily discourse. One of the odd characters of Dunn's novel, Arturo the Aqua Boy, is a product of his parents' deliberate experiments with toxic substances and drugs taken to breed a deformed human. He then becomes a revered figure who turns on normative humanity for being "othered" because of having flippers for hands and feet.

Reyes believes that all Gothic art is implicitly corporeal because in its essence, it always aims to shock or sensationalize. The central role that the body plays in any Gothic narrative is also evident in its hope for a visceral reaction in the body of the reader or viewer on top of the effect it has on their intellectual perception. Horror is generally more interested in exploring the monstrous since excesses of the body are often grounds for demonstrating larger concerns about humanity and the fluctuation of the boundaries they create.[84]

As with the 20th century, the turn of the 21st century has poignantly put forth the aftermath of the events of the previous century. The 2000s saw a boom in digital technologies, along with the presentation of Human Genome Project results, the terrorist panic that followed the tragedy

[84] Aldana Reyes, *Body Gothic*, 189–206.

of 9/11, and the fruition of conspiracy theories and anti-government initiatives. All of these trends have left an imprint on the development of modern horror that leans towards apocalyptic narratives, dystopian fiction, and zombie-narratives in particular. The advent of e-books has also impacted horror, making the out-of-print works of horror fiction, and especially those from the 1980s peak period, available to the reader. Digital text production also meant a boost for self-publishing on platforms like Amazon. This prompted horror to become almost as permitting in the cultural context 2000s as it was in the 1980s. The horror literature of the future will have to contend with the current premise - a very wide presence of the elements of horror in popular culture.

Another subgenre with a strong presence in the 21st century horror context is *weird fiction*. This subgenre belongs to supernatural horror and takes root in the work of a prominent writer, Ramsey Campbell. He is considered by a number of critics to be one of the great masters of British horror fiction. In the words of T. E. D. Klein, “Campbell reigns supreme in the field today" (Campbell, p.158) and S. T. Joshi has mentioned that "future generations will regard him as the leading horror writer of our generation, every bit the equal of Lovecraft or Blackwood." (Ruthven, p.132) Campbell is a very prolific writer and some of his best work includes *To Wake the Dead* (1980) – the story of Rose Tierney who gets psychic powers and time-traveling abilities twenty years after one game of Ouija that resulted in the disappearance of a child.

He also authored a notable collection of horror stories on sexual themes called, *Scared Stiff: Tales of Sex and Death*. It was first published in the United States in 1987 by Scream/Press and then in the UK in 1989 by Macdonald. His other collection of short stories, *Alone with the Horrors: The Great Short Fiction of Ramsey Campbell* 1961–1991, is an anthology of works in the fantasy and horror genres. It was published by Arkham House in 1993 in an edition of 3,834 copies. One of the latest award-winning horror fiction stories by Campbell is *The Grin of the Dark* (2007) – the story of Simon Lester, a recent grad majoring in film studies who is

asked by his former teacher to look into the life of a forgotten comedian from the silent era. Other notable works of contemporary horror fiction belong to David Moody, Conrad Williams, Alexander Gordon Smith, and Clive Barker.

David Moody's story, *Autumn* (2005), is about an infectious virus that consumes most of the Earth's population in less than a day. The epidemic is as swift as the death itself – the infected die in agony in a matter of seconds. Only a few survivors make it past the first ten minutes of the narrative, and by the end of the first day, they wish they were among the dead. The corpses rise in number, and the living experience hell on earth. Conrad Williams is a master of complex plots who in his novel, *The Unblemished* (2008), set in apocalyptic London, manages to present the mind of a serial killer who submits to the notion that he is the heir to a dynasty of cannibals. It runs alongside a story of a mother who witnesses her daughter's killing and a plotline of Bo Mulvey - a man who has to sole-handedly save the human race.

Another strong voice of modern horror is Alexander Gordon Smith. His 2009 novel, *Lockdown,* is set in the world's most secure prison for young offenders, the Furnace. Located below the surface of the earth, this place confines both criminals and the falsely accused. The protagonist, Alex Sawyer, has a life sentence to serve for manslaughter that he is not guilty of. Set to break free from this prison, he finds out that the Furnace is no ordinary penitentiary. It is a truly dark place, where coldhearted creatures patrol the corridors in gas masks at night, obscure giants in black suits feed the inmates to the shadows, and monsters howl from bloody tunnels. Alex has to face the terrible truth about the Furnace's real, deep purpose and learn about the omnipotent warden who has committed unspeakable atrocities that reach beyond the prison world.

On another point along the horror spectrum, there is a detective story by Clive Barker titled, *The Scarlet Gospels* (2015). Centered around the classic antagonism of good and evil, Barker's novel tells the story of the renown supernatural detective, Harry D'Amour, who comes face to face with a devilish clergyman, Pinhead. Based on the classic narrative structure of grand

battles and many secrets, this gory, tangled horror story is a classic installation of the epic writing for which Barker is famous.

Overall, the representation and diversity in the horror genre of the 21st century signal the health of the literary genre even in times when immersive horror, along with games, films, and TV series present a strong rivalry to horror fiction. As Slavoj Žižek has brilliantly remarked in his book, *Living in the End Times*, the variety of apocalyptic scenarios explored by modern horror denote general pessimism and disappointment in global capitalism, as well as the impending victory of free trade and neoliberalism. However, of note, many current horror narratives steer away from socio-political commentary and a critique of the state of world affairs. The new generation of writers who grew up on the booming horror literature of the 1980s are building upon such subgenres as the "weird" to create a very multifaceted literary body of 21st century horror. [85]

In order to discern body horror from other visceral subgenres, like torture porn, one might lean toward Paul Wells' famous treatment of the body horror genre. Wells argued that the essential elements of corporeal horror are the overt presentation of decay, termination, and the ultimate falling-apart of the body. Additionally, body horror zooms in on the treatment of fragile processes and functions of the body and the anatomical norm redefined by many configurations of physiology. Another view on the genre is presented in *Mammoth Book of Body Horror anthology* (2012) that highlights the three major issues tackled in body horror texts. According to Reyes, it consists of "..anxieties surrounding transformation, mutation, and contagion."[86]

In any mode, body horror aims for a purely visceral reaction in the reader or viewer. Like any other Gothic genre, it is meant to trigger fright. Corporeal horror highlights the potential of a body to be transformed, to change, and to mutate out of its unstable norm, which is what

[85] Cardin, *Horror Literature through History*, 46.
[86] Aldana Reyes, *Body Gothic*, 1097.

splatterpunk is all about as a subgenre. The body gothic comes under so many guises that it evades definition even though it has always challenged the notion of the bodily norm.

According to Michael Morrison in Reyes's retelling, body horror is a transformative genre of fiction that focuses on the transition to "a new kind of life", disregarding the finite nature of death and, instead, focusing on post-human states as a more fascinating alternative to the banal middle-class existence of the 20th century. Body horror exists in unequivocal opposition to some contemporary horror that regards the body not as a vehicle of transformation but as a carnal prison. The Gothic mode offers plasticity to its writers, allowing them to fit the narrative to depict the anxieties of the current time and age. [87] One of the apparent examples of this feature of the Gothic is Cronenberg's work. His desire to break away and make the genre fit his goals and directorial priorities facilitated changing the face of Gothic narratives. Wayne Drew suggested that Cronenberg's approach to form and structure as well as his philosophical treatment of the narrative matter allowed him to reach the "aboriginal impact of the gothic novel itself" (Reyes, Loc, 1163). Cronenberg's unique achievement is that he changed stale iconography into a contemporary, culturally-appropriate visual vocabulary and reinvigorated the horror scene of then-contemporary arts.

In one of his films, *The Fly* (1986), Cronenberg adds a twist to the mad scientist trope. Much like Victor Frankenstein, the scientist in *The Fly* dares to challenge the rules of human existence and attempts to tamper with the laws of biology to invent teleportation. In Cronenberg's adaptation of the short story to the screen, as well as in the source text, the scientist's experiments with disintegrating the matter result in disasters: from inverted objects to living beings turned inside out, to the scientist himself being transformed. The scientist's ambition to break the natural order ends up producing monsters. In the short story, two beings emerge – a small fly with a man's head and a grotesque humanoid with a head and an arm of the fly. Cronenberg's adaptation was informed by DNA exploration in contemporary scientific

[87] Aldana Reyes, 1153–61.

discourse so instead of the teleportation machine, his scientist invents a fusion device that creates a monstrous fly-man.

The corporeal Gothic genre explores challenges to the bodily norm. It uses modifications of the body to illustrate the cruelty of some characters, but it also exploits the shock value of a visceral experience that the reader or viewer might have. [88]

One of the key features of the literary Gothic is its adaptability; the stories are flexible enough to acquire retellings, rewritings, and adaptations, keeping the core plot elements intact. Vanessa Joosen, a writer and a researcher of children's literature, in her book, *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales: An Intertextual Dialogue Between Fairy-tale Scholarship and Postmodern Retellings* (2011), offers a theoretical framework of the works of key literary theorists that explore the concept of intertextuality. Joosen highlights two approaches to intertextuality as the dominant ones and then follows a model proposed by Manfred Pfister, a German literary writer. He combines the two theoretical frameworks to produce his own fusional view of the issue of intertextuality. The first framework Joosen recognizes as a highly influential one belongs to French literary theorist, Roland Barthes. He is renowned for his writings on structuralism, semiotics, social theory, design theory, anthropology, and post-structuralism. Barthes's view of intertextuality as a system "in which every text appears to be a part of a universal intertext" contradicts the second influential interpretation of the context offered by adepts of structuralism and hermeneutics, "in which the concept of intertextuality is limited to conscious, intended, and marked relationship between a text and a given text or group of texts" (Joosen, p. 18) Pfister attempts to find common ground between Barthes's theory and the hermeneutical view of intertextuality. He proposes a concentric model of intertextuality where the broad poststructuralist definition gets complimented by the stratification of a universal intertext to represent different levels of connections between the texts in question. The closest relation between the texts is represented in the middle of Pfister's model, and the

[88] Aldana Reyes, 213–21.

"more we remove ourselves from the 'hard core' of the center, the more [the intertextual intensity] decreases" (P. 18). Pfeister identifies six levels or qualitative parameters that define the position of any pretext as related to the text in focus – selectivity, communicativity, reflexivity, structurality, referentiality, and dialogicity".[89]

The novel has multiple retellings and has been analyzed according to this model. It takes a position on the core of such a structure such that literary criticism of the novel becomes much removed from the core but still be part of its intertextual context.

Intertextual references appear in the text either as explicit allusions and citations or in a more implicit manner on the level of structural or formal reminiscences. With retellings of the same plot, sometimes authors try to hide the reference or highlight it for a varying effect on the reader. According to Mariana Nikolajeva, these differing strategies appear as "hidden and open dialogues." A good example of open dialogue is Saadawi's explicit mention of the source text in the name of the novel, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. Moreover, character names, action patterns, and other plot elements of *Frankenstein* appear throughout the text to support this open-dialogue relation between the source and the retold texts.

The monster is also openly borrowed from the original text of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The recognition of such borrowing can be impeded by many factors. Ulrich Broich, a German-English literature writer, emphasizes that:

> The threshold for marked intertextual references will be much lower for the literate reader than for the occasional reader. On the other hand, the threshold increases together with the growing temporal distance to the text or pretext for many later recipients, when the contemporary context is no longer immediately present. (Joosen, p. 12).

Despite the existence of many modern versions of *Frankenstein*, readers are always able to recognize the source text no matter how big the temporal gap between the time of publishing the retelling and the original story. Another interesting feature of retold novels is that they erase

[89] Joosen, *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales*, 18.

the boundaries between national literature and work within one intertext that combines the experiences of all nations. In a way, the inheritance of literary texts is always transnational.

Julia Kristeva, an apprentice of Roland Barthes, defined this intertextual inheritance in her work, *The Kristeva Reader* (1986) as "a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another." (Kristeva, p. 37)

Language is perhaps the most important national characteristic of the novel, and this becomes even more evident through the history of global changes and technological development. In a broad sense, all nations are interrelated through literature and the languages it is written in – with borrowed vocabulary and plot points that serve as evidence for universal intertextuality.

Social interactions on any level, through religion, trade, wars, the internet, and tech advancements prompt the creation of strong ties on a universal human level. Literature often functions as a mirror for these ties as portrayed in different cultures with a variety of options in terms of form, content, and style that ultimately are only varying means of telling the same stories.

In this respect, retelling a story in a differing cultural context presents an opportunity for the writer to present the issues in a new light and bring the discourses of different nations closer together for reflection and added comprehension. [90]

Intertextuality is evident in any genre and form from poetry to short story, to novel, and many more. Moreover, the writer who arms up with a toolkit of borrowing titles, characters, and plot patterns not only creates their own work but also reproduces the borrowed element while adding to its cultural and literary significance. For instance, Saadawi borrows the title for his novel from Shelley's world-renown work, *Frankenstein*. Another testament to the significant influence of Shelley on Saadawi's work is his choice of reinterpreting most of the characters from the original story, including Dr. Victor Frankenstein. In Saadawi's novel, it is "Hadi the scavenger" who takes on the role of the monster's creator. The monster, created by Saadawi's

[90] Goodman, 'Retellings of Literature and the Comprehension Process', 305.

mad scientist is called “Whatsitsname” or “Shesma” in Arabic, the original language of Saadawi’s novel. This take on depriving the monster of the humanizing feature of having a proper name is an example of the kind interpretation of Shelley’s plot devices that Saadawi undertakes to write a retelling closely related to the original text.

Other influences that can be traced in Saadawi’s horror novel are borrowings from Egyptian myths, as they appear in the 1994 retelling by Jonathan Cott, *Isis and Osiris*. The scene in Saadawi’s novel where Hadi reassembles and stitches together Whatsitsname from loose limbs and scavenged body parts to be reanimated bears a very strong resemblance to the scene in Cott’s *Isis and Osiris,* where the goddess, Isis, kills and dismembers her husband, the god Osiris, only to reconstruct his body anew.

Another influence in Saadawi’s work can found the ancient Jewish myth of the golem, as it appears in the 1915 German novel by Gustav Meyrink. In Meyrink’s novel, the monster creature is made of clay and is magically brought to life. The creature’s name comes from the Hebrew word, “golem,” which means something incomplete.

The focus of this thesis is on the elements of Saadaawi’s *postmodern* novel. In his critical study, “Modernism and Postmodernism”, Terry Michael Barrett argues that Postmodernism is not a mere chronological follow-up for Modernism but more a reactive literary movement against Modernism. Barrett goes as far as suggesting that Postmodernism would better be called Anti-modernism. He postulates that one of the main features of Modernism is the disregard for history and the past in the name of advocating for innovation and what is new. Revisiting history and relying on the experience of the past is what Postmodernism is all about - it derives new meanings from old contexts and merges the present with the past. In this respect, Postmodernism sits in direct opposition to Modernism as “the formerly oppositional modern movement as a set of dead classics” (Jameson, p. 4). Referencing the past thus becomes a fertile ground for creating new texts. Postmodern texts turn away from mainstream narratives and amplify alternative or marginalized voices and stories, drawing public attention to the omission

and exclusion of the uncomfortable presence of the other. A critic of English studies, Linda Hutcheon, states that the term, Postmodernism, "carries within itself the 'modern' – from which it both derives and deviates. It is 'post' in the sense of temporarily 'after' and conceptually 'beyond'" (Maples and Wake, p. 117).

In this light, Postmodernism is a wide term that encompasses the literary tendency for ambiguity and praise for diverse modes where older works are critiqued and binary categories are debunked. This critical mode loans a rich pattern of coded messages and paradoxes to Postmodern literature "that is new and modern, but also historical … a paradoxical mixing of seeming opposites: the traditional and the new … it was both a break from and a continuation of what had come before"(p. 115-121).

Postmodern works are always hybrid, inviting the reader to reflect on the familiar experiences and added diversity for a wider field of reinterpretation and re-envisioning. Maria Beville, a researcher in Gothic and otherness studies, in her book, *Gothic-postmodernism: Voicing the Terrors of Postmodernity* (2009), suggests that the Gothic is "the clearest mode of expression in literature for voicing the terrors of postmodernity" (Beville, p. 8). Beville adds a spin to the old view of Gothic as a rigid genre by looking at how the concept of terror breaks the binary norms of perception, rooting it deeply in postmodernity. In her view, Gothic-postmodernism is "a luminal genre, existing on the margins between reality and unreality, self and other, fear and desire, reason and unreason, between past, present and future. It often traverses these boundaries and so functions as a 'third space' in literary representations." (p. 96)

Moreover, Beville believes that the authors and readers of the Gothic have long used it as a platform to explore the terror and fear it prompts while also "playing a significant role in the creation of terror itself" (p. 33). Beville's view of terror coincides with that of Stephen King who advocates for the paramount role of the imagination in creating a response to things unseen but suggested: "It is what the mind sees that makes these stories such quintessential tales of terror" (King, p. 22). Here a useful distinction mechanism is suggested by Fred Botting who

ruled that "If terror leads to an imaginative expansion of one's sense of self, horror describes the moment of contraction and recoil" (Fred, p. 6). To further develop this line of thought, we might look at horror as a limiting force in opposition to the expansive effects that terror has on the imagination. Beville makes an interesting argument to support this idea, stating that the full and grotesque description of events that comes with literary horror is the direct opposite of the experience of terror that emerges at a hint of horrors unseen and "opens up a space for fundamental human curiosity, and ontological inquiry" (Beville, p.42). Devendra P. Varma offers a vivid metaphor that provides a good visualization of the difference between terror and horror as "the difference between the smell of death and the stumbling against a corpse" (Varma, p. 130)

4:2 GENERAL OVEREVIEW OF AHMED SAADAWI'S *FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD*

One of the latest iterations and reworkings of Mary Shelley's iconic stories about *Frankenstein* belongs to Ahmed Saadawi - an Iraqi novelist, poet, documentary filmmaker, and screenwriter. In his prominent work, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, he reinvents the classic Gothic narrative to become a fantasy-realism allegory that reflects as much on the current world's disarray as it does on the eternal questions of death and creation. Written in 2013 and translated into English in 2018, this book has acquired many accolades both for the original text and its translation. For one, it won the 2014 International Prize for Arabic Fiction making him the first Iraqi author to ever receive this award. It also received France's Grand Prize for Fantasy, as well as was shortlisted for The Man Booker International Prize in 2018. These awards, as well as warm critical reception, are well-deserved since the story offers as much nuance as it brings a fresh look onto the myth of Frankenstein's creature. The events of *Frankenstein in Baghdad* take place in 2005 in Iraq, in the capital city tormented by war, American occupation, sporadic violence and dire economic prospects. While Saadawi is attempting to capture the general atmosphere of unease of that time in the past of his native

land, and he is mentioning some real events, from the start the readers are informed that the plot is anything but conventional and documental. The novel starts with a top-secret memo that concludes that one of the secret intelligence departments is being shut down because its unethical affairs became known to outsiders due to an inside information leak. And if an irony of a secret unit giving up its secrets at the start is lost on any readers, to top it off the department in question mainly employed astrologers and psychics who were supposed to predict upcoming terrorist attacks. It is called the Tracking and Pursuit Department, and some of its employees will take center place among the novel's characters and plot lines because they will be tasked with investigating the crimes that *Frankenstein* is bound to commit. The number of characters of the novel is compellingly large, and this way two goals are achieved. First, the readers have a perspective on the events that shifts from identity to identity yielding a fuller metaphor on what it is like to experience violence in the city. And second, the book's structure with many subplots, deliberately segmented narrative and mixed chronology creates an atmosphere of chaos. As a result, the reader is not likely to trust any of the narrators to the full and there is room for the dark irony in a city that is so drowned in violence of war it feels surreal.

Most events of the novel take place in the neighborhood of Bataween - a district in the heart of Baghdad where most of the intertwined core characters live, including the new Victor Frankenstein, Hadi. He is a scavenger and a junk dealer who is never clearly defined as a positive or a negative character. The readers meet him together with Faraj, an unsuccessful realtor who usually deals in historic properties left for marauding by now-dead former dwellers. Together they are trying to swindle an elderly Assyrian Christian widow Elishva and persuade her to sell her antiques to them. The elderly woman lives in the hope of being reunited with her late son Daniel who had been missing for 20 years then since he had left to serve in the army during Iran-Iraq war.

Hadi is not defined by his trade, however. In his free time, he roams the streets trying to save

the body parts severed by terrorist attacks and stitch them together to give them the appearance of "complete" bodies. The reason for this seemingly morbid habit is rather noble - Hadi can't bear seeing people's bodies desecrated and disrespected by the authorities who hose the streets to remove blood, ashes, and the remains of blown-up people. The turning point for him (and for the novel) comes when it is his friend Abdaki who gets killed in a car bombing. When Hadi comes to the morgue to identify the body and mourn his loss, there is no body to be found - only the dissembled pierced of flesh stored separately in the facility. This sight triggers Hadi to take his friend's remnants and put them together as a simulacrum body - a vessel for Abdaki's family's grief and morning. Hadi leaves the makeshift corpse in the courtyard behind his house with the hope that the family of the deceased will now be able to bury the body. The next time Hadi sees a bombing sight he picks up a body part that was missing from the stitched-up corpse of his late friend - a nose. He picks up the severed body part and wraps it in a clean piece of canvas in respect and a certain reverence for the body that lost this part and a hope to make his late friend whole again. The irony here comes up to the surface again - by creating a perfect vessel for a lost soul about to enter this carcass, Hadi never planned to put anything inside to "animate" his creation. Hasib Mohamed Jaafar's soul that was violently released in another tragedy in the city from the late hotel guard's body, has found the body Hadi had created and inhabited it with no desire of the creator.

While the creation of the original *Frankenstein* was rooted in the dangerous boundaries of human curiosity, the monster of Saadawi's book is an accident and a miracle, deeply based on the surrealism of the world of gore of the fictional Baghdad. This disparity compared to the original plot is crucial - it metaphorically suggests that even though the tragedy of war is man-made when a horrifying scenario of living in a war-torn city unfolds, the atrocities cannot be tracked to a single person. It becomes a perpetual cycle of villainy and victimhood that this new *Frankenstein* embodies in Baghdad. When Hadi witnesses the reanimation of the body he tries to alert people in a local coffee shop but meets resistance to the surreal event. Only a

young journalist Mahmoud - yet another piece of the narrative puzzle - takes his words seriously. Mahmoud, in the hopes to get the scoop and get ahead in the eyes of his beloved mentor and editor Saidi, gets the information about the monster from Hadi. That is how the reader gets to know that name of the monster (Hadi calls his creation Whatsitsname) who visited its creator and announced that its raison'd'etre is now vengeance. The monster decided to take the role of the hand of justice and avenge every body that served a source for its "fleshy exterior". Mahmoud bites onto that bait and gives Hadi a digital recorder for a proposed interview with the monster. Here, it is crucial that the readers don't get any information first hand - they find out about the motifs, the origin and the actions of the monster from a talk between a witness and a journalist - which mirrors the state of events with almost any mass violence. People almost always find out the details about the truly horrifying events around the world from their papers and screens, receiving the information through a mediator who narrates the story to them.

This mediation here is not an attempt to depict trustworthy war journalism, though. On the contrary, any information the reader gets about Whatsitsname is challenged by rumor and misinterpretation. The media hardly manages to present the monster for what it is and does, living most if the events of the novel open for the readers' own interpretation. The unreliability of information both in the fictional world of Baghdad and to the readers contributes to the overall atmosphere of distrust and fright that surrounds the monster. It is depicted invincible and its motifs are never clear, making it a perfect object of dread for the city. The Tracking and Pursuit Department spearheaded by the man named General Majid begins their investigation into the new wave of crimes, as he is triggered by the unclear media coverage of events. The leader of the department gets alarmed about the connection between the appearance of a monster and the killings after reading Mahmoud's article. However, the editor assures the General that the story is not true. Meanwhile, the creature starts taking action, and just as Frankenstein's monster did, stumbles upon the reason for its appearance.

In Saadawi's novel, this plot point is realized through Elishva who takes the monster for her son Daniel who she thinks is returned to her after so long. Next, the monster starts living up to the readers' expectations for any horror novel - it kills. One of the victims is identified as the man who long ago had convinced Daniel to sign up for military service, and who, according to Elishva, was responsible for her son's demise. Elishva is Christian; she is a lonely wise woman who is taken for a nut head by some of her neighbors while others prefer to believe that her spiritual powers could ward off the demons she so firmly believes "have been unleashed to roam the city".

The recorder finds its way back to Mahmoud, with a story narrated by allegedly the monster itself. Whatitsname tells about its misfortunes, about its life in a half-ruined house in Dora, south of the main place of action of the novel. The monster acquires a following, reluctantly, since the word spread that Whatitsname is either a savior or a sign of an impending doom. The monster's followers do become useful after it discovers that every time it kills it looses one of the integral parts of its carcass. The cycle of revenge becomes visible - every time a "just" killing is done the body part that belonged to the person who had now been avenged vanishes and has to be replaced by a new one. On this quest on the run from law, the monster tries to keep up appearances, meaning that it would only kill the villains of the world. However, this strategy soon fails. The monster kills innocent people to survive, and some parts offered to it by its followers appear to come from the not-so-innocent.

The fine line between guilt and victimhood is something that Saadawi clearly borrows from Shelley even though the origin and the importance of deaths that made the respective monsters' emergence possible in the first place are much more relevant in the new iteration of the classical story. Eventually the conflicting ideologies that make the monster question its integrity tear apart the group of its followers who kill each other in ideological squabbles. Here yet another allegory points at the deeply rooted irony - while an idea of revenge seems noble and at first attracts a lot of followers when the acts become real, the consequences raise

crucial questions. Who decides who shall die and what is just? In what cases is violence justifiable?

These questions are largely rhetorical, so the multitude of their interpretation augments the possible interpretation of every action that the monster takes. While at first its emergence as an embodied idea of revenge was a reason why its followers unite, soon this very idea becomes an apple of discord that ruins the illusion of community it at first fostered. In this aspect, Saadawi's novel raises a very different set of issues than those that drove the main conflict in Shelley's work: while her monster was alienated because of its looks and unnatural way of appearance in the world, Saadawi's creature is never lonely in its pursuit of justice. Whatsitsname, on the contrary, is a timely symbol of the anger and frustration that the public populating the fictional world of the novel was experiencing on the city-wide scale. In this respect, the monster is at home in the world of never-ending violence that welcomes it even though its actions bring no relief and only further complicate the problems behind the city's perils.

At this point, General Majid gets information on where to find Hadi and is set on discovering the monster. In this pursuit, he has Hadi beaten up severely in hopes to retrieve the monster's whereabouts. When that brought no result, Majid consults with their psychics who seem to be able to not only guess the monster's location but also to secure a link with its mind. After a series of quarrels and internal investigations, the secret unit of the Tracking and Pursuit gets dismissed, in a way, repeating the fate of the community of Whatsitsname's followers. To further this dark irony, the senior astrologer decides to locate the monster and inform it that his colleague has been playing tricks on its mind. The creature, still manipulated by the other psychic, kills its informer. In his dying moments, the senior astrologer is smiling as if having fulfilled his life's mission. The tropes get subverted here. Even though the astrologist dies, he is happy with the outcome of his existence, while Mahmoud the journalist gets completely disillusioned in his profession when he finds out that the man, he looked up to is corrupt.

Mahmoud is alive but leaves Baghdad frustrated with the reality countering his expectations.

The final turn of dark irony comes in when Hadi, who created the body that now had become the monster, gets badly disfigured in yet another bombing and is stitched to look like his creation. He, then, is arrested for the crimes he never committed just because the crimes could be somehow tracked back to him. Hadi loses his bodily integrity and his freedom as if he is being punished for his attempts to put the absurd reality of the fictional Baghdad in order by creating a semblance of respect to dismembered victims of the bombings. The monster, on the other hand, is never punished by the authorities, and it even gets to witness its creator's public arrest from a window. No catharsis for the killings is offered to the readers who cannot share the exaltation that the crowd has when they see disabled Hadi thrown into prison for murder. Saadawi is very clear in the way he describes the authorities: they are always in the dark and pressured by external and internal forces to make illogical, and often illegal, decisions to create a semblance of activity. From hiring psychics to prevent the terrorist attacks, to calling up editors of local newspapers to track criminals, to beating up potential witnesses and, finally, to blaming serious crimes on a person based only on their superficial likeness to the physical description of a villain - this is a portrait of a corrupt, powerless structure that makes Whatsitsname look more like a superhuman angel of vengeance than a possessed corpse on a killing spree.

The monster's identity, however unconventional, stills falls under the categories that war often offers up - it starts off as a wartime messiah, a leader, an invincible beast but ends up just as helpless as its victims. Unable to stop from committing more crimes and thus adding to the list of body parts belonging to the late bodies that have to be avenged now, Whatitsname becomes another passive instrument of violence, locked in the never-ending fight for existence. The Iraqi monster is defined by its flesh and contrary to the original creature of the Romantic period, we hardly get a glimpse into Whatitsname's personality. It is more of a plot propeller and an action figure than a character that the reader gets to know. That is why no

sympathy to the monster's fate is being built up as the novel progresses even though Whatitsname is always oscillating between victim and a villain.

One of the biggest achievements of Saadawi's novel is his take on the outlook of modern Iraqi identity with all the complications it gains from the country's past formed in part by colonialism, wars, and terrorism. The identity diversity, as presented in Saadawi's novel, is paradoxical as local people's backgrounds clash to form an uneven portrait distorted by the impossible opposites inherent to Iraqi society. His characters come from different professions, races, and religions, but they co-exist in the real-turned-fictional space of the Bataween District in Baghdad. This identity multitude comes together in a most obvious way in the body of Whatitsname who seems to only care that the body part it integrates is human. However, here one of the downfalls of the novel becomes visible: while aiming high in its metaphorical impact, the author's choice to only make this monstrous body of war comprised of adult, male parts is somewhat shortsighted.

The bodies of women and children that are often violated during the war and who most often fall innocent victims on a city-wide scale are the ones rarely get avenged in real life. Saadawi does put the widow Elshavi in an important place in the novel but her body does not become a part of this cycle of life and death: she is not really the mother of the monster so only her projections of the lost blood relations become the reason for revenge. This decision to overlook the most gruesome collateral damage of war, dead women and children, takes from the hyper-realism of violence Saadawi otherwise succeeds in. One might say that since he calls the shots on what is real and what is mystical, sidelining non-male bodies is an embodiment of Saadawi's own wish that this world of gore spares women and children from bombings and dismemberment. Alas, it contrasts sharply with the reality this novel appears to critique.

The city serves the theater of the horrific events. The streets covered in bombing rubble and body parts present a grotesque sight that lies far from the naturally aging castles of the Gothic

and the pastoral fields of Mary Shelley. The locale of Saadawi's novel seems the opposite of most scenes of the classic Gothic that act as perpetrators in the "scaring" of the hero and the readers. Bataween District is passive - it is a victim and not the perpetrator, a tortured sight that witnesses the violence silently instead of taking an active part in harming any of the heroes. Even though the novel has many elements of the mystical and the fantastical, it is the reality of it that brings dystopia to the foreground, and the city serves as a great example of this repeated trope. Saadawi's descriptions of Iraq often center on anthropogenic acts, it is underlined that is human acts that distort and ruin the city's appearance. The gore becomes super-realistic so that the ugliness and the atrocities are deliberately human-made and made commonplace because of the magnitude and frequency of the acts of terror. As Baghdad looses the last of its original looks and as its prospects seem more and more dire, the idea of eventual reconciliation between the divided population of the Islamic word seems ever less realistic. And the permeating foreign presence in the novel doesn't help. It's Americans who start the mystical Tracking and Pursuit Department, and we also catch the sights of American forces and machinery, like helicopters that disrupt the narrative but also appear in the background, as something strange but already not novel at all. This shadow of colonialism, occupation of Iraq becomes a blemish that seems related to the general state of ruin and violence ruling the country. One of the key plot elements that point to just how deep the roots of foreign intrusion go in Iraq is the fact that Mahmoud becomes disillusioned with his mentor, the editor Saidi when the latter embezzles $13 million of American aid money and leaves the country. The grotesque elements of the plot often seem to stem from the aftermath of the American-led invasion of Iraq that trigger the fantastic and the mystical through the very real decay and horror that had traumatized the Iraqi citizens almost two decades ago. This trace of the trauma in part is responsible for the treatment the classic story of *Frankenstein* gets in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. The Romantic elements are being replaced by magical realism and gore to reach the same levels of the macabre but Saadawi surpasses

Shelley in one substantial element of genre - anxiety. Drawing from the ancient myths of Mesopotamia and fitting the elements of fantastical and religious onto grotesque scenes of mutilation and dismemberment, Saadawi creates a monster that exists in two spaces simultaneously. The real space of Baghdad tormented by its past and the fictional space of the novel where a metaphor of vengeance gets a body fueled by a now-captive soul are blended together to create an unease and disbelief that guide the readers through the whole novel. No catharsis is offered to the readers left to wonder if this tight knot of identities, broken families and communities united under false ideological premises can ever be released. Instead, the novel leaves it up for interpretation if Hadi is responsible for the killings made by his creation, if Whatitsnot is ever going to disintegrate or absolve its many crimes, and if the appearance of such a monster in Baghdad is a dark irony of fate or a consequence of decades-long trauma of foreign invasion.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE MONSTER BODY DIPICTION IN BOTH SHELLEY'S AND SAADAWI'S WORKS

Saadaawi's take on Frankenstein's monster tale mirrors the events of the original narrative in many respects. For instance, when Whatsitsname retells the story of his encounter with some drunken beggars, he mentions the blind hatred towards his monstrous looks. Per the words of the monster himself, the drunken beggars were repulsed by his appearance so much that they "charged to kill him". In the hassle of the fight, the beggars kill some of their own in the "strength of their delirium" and prompt the monster to kill the beggars guilty of this crime of passion.[91]

In the monster's view, the violence he commits is justifiable because he takes revenge on the men guilty of murder. Furthermore, in another instance of violence in the novel, Saadawi depicts the fear that his monster provokes in others as a visceral body response. The terror the

[91] Saadawi, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, 130.

reader might feel gets a physical depiction in the body of one of the monster's victims. The Whatsitsname attacks armed militia and kills them one by one until there is a single foe left:

> Half an hour later there was only one member of the group left, sitting terrified in the corner. I couldn't see his face clearly in the dim light of the rechargeable electric lamps, but I could see he was crying. I moved closer and saw that he was shaking, like a frightened sheep submitting to a butcher. He was well aware that it was no normal enemy that he and his group were up against tonight. It was the wrath of God. In the end, I caught a glimpse of his frightened eyes. Because he felt guilty, he made my task easier, abandoning any attempt to resist even before I touched him. (Saadawi, p.152)

Saadawi's monster is described as so ugly that a regular sane person can't bear to look at him. The only people who interact with the monster are marginalized as "madmen" - a 'magician', an "astrologist", and a "sophist: who later became accomplices in his acts of vengeance. Besides them, there is also a madwoman, Elisha, who lost her son, Daniel, in the war with Iran long ago who also can't bear to look at the monster and accept his deformity.

Moreover, whereas Shelley's description of Frankenstein's monster fits with Kristeva's notion of "abject" that arouses horror through the elements of the Gothic grotesque, Saadawi's horrifying creature is an embodiment of the ongoing terror that the creature arouses in the city. The Whatsitsname is not a giant monster even though its body is also a patchwork of other human bodies. It is ugly and displays deformities but, in the end, it looks human. The effect that Saadawi's monster causes surpasses any momentary revulsion at the monster's body in Shelley's novel.

One might argue that Saadawi's creature better fits with Sigmund Freud's notion of the "uncanny" that manifests "the return of the repressed" and appeals to the familiar in the monster's looks rather than his otherness. An episode in the novel that best illustrates this familiarity is the scene of the astrologer's death: as he dies, he tries to comprehend the face of the Whatsitsname and make sense of its features.

In his work, *Science and Destabilization in Modern American Gothic* (2000), David Oakes looks at the reflective nature of Gothic literature and describes it as "a literature of destabilization in that it inspires its readers to ask questions about themselves, their society,

and the cosmos surrounding them. It serves as a cultural artifact, reflecting the concerns and fears not only of the time in which it is written but also of the time in which it is read." (Oakes, p.1)

The other leitmotif of horror writing present in both Shelley's and Saadawi's work is violence, from its preconceptions to its description to its destructive consequences. The reflective mode of Gothic literature extends through the reader's encounter with violence as a core component of human nature and man's destructive desires. A researcher of violence in the works of art, John Fraser, postulates that "the artist who deals honestly with violence becomes a kind of a nose-rubber or mirror-holder, someone rubbing the spectator's nose in the disagreeable and holding up a mirror in which he can contemplate the essential filthiness, nastiness, and beastliness of mankind." (Fraser, p. 109-110)

The uncanny monster in Saadawi's novel is oxymoronic to the extent that it is a manifestation of life in death. Life is given to the body through a patchwork of the dead parts. Paradoxically, the Whatsitsname is animated by the consequences of the violence that made his existence possible in the first place. Without the goal of avenging the victims of crimes by hunting down the assassins, he is just a heap of body parts that has "sticky fluids were oozing from my wounds and from the fissures where the stitches were coming apart" (Saadawi, p.149) The paradox of his existence is exacerbated by the fact that as soon as the monster finds and punishes the criminal responsible for the proto-death of his body's constituents, that very body part - and thus a part of the monster's body - vanishes.

By achieving the reason for his existence, the Whatsitsname dissolves bit by bit, down to whole arms and legs. Self-destruction for the success in its life mission is not the only price that the creature pays on its quest to avenge its proto-deaths. The monster also has to kill innocent people to replace parts of its rotting body; for instance, when the creature is about to lose its sight, it reluctantly kills an old man in the street and takes his eyeballs.

This plot point takes Saadawi's text one step further than Shelley's monster tale in inducing terror in the reader since the cycle of life and death seems to never end. Saadawi prompts readers to reimagine the monster, again and again, prodding them into continuous terror. While Shelley's creature is described once and then the reader encounters it through the eyes of other characters as something horrible but reliant and stable in its features, Saadawi's monster triggers disgust and revulsion that has no limit. Protected even from the bullets of the police, the Whatsitsname is terrifying precisely of its weird omnipotence. The creature's uncanniness stems from its appeal as a visceral embodiment of guilt as rot that triggers the cycle of perpetual violence.

Some critics of Saadawi's work suggest that his monster should be recognized within the socio-political context of Iraq where the events of the novel take place. The instability and turmoil in Iraq may be traced to the irregularities of the monster's build since it is made up of body parts that used to belong to people of all backgrounds and identities patched together into one body of terror. Saadawi's text quite literally states the impossibility of existence for such a body in a context removed from violence: "Because I'm made up of body parts of people from diverse backgrounds—ethnicities, tribes, races, and social classes—I represent the impossible mix that never was achieved in the past." (p. 146)

Shelley's monster is a creature of very different socio-political and historical contexts that dictated its supernatural capabilities. Frankenstein's monster's speed, strength, huge stature, endurance, and intelligence came about as a manifestation of the era of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. As for Saadawi's monster, its only abnormal bodily ability comes from the fact that its chaotic body can function for as long as it finds spares.

It is the ability to reveal and reflect the terrors that rule over their societies that binds Shelley's and Saadawi's work tighter than the shared narrative of the undead creature. In her book, *Gothic-postmodernism: Voicing the Terrors of Postmodernity,* Beville remarks that horror fiction had such a strong presence in the 18th century because it was "an extorsive force for the

fears, desires, and anxieties that plagued the society as it developed toward capitalism." Shelley's *Frankenstein* voiced the concerns of an entire generation of intellectuals that she belonged to, and it is with the creature's voice that she "articulated fears to do with the power of science, godlessness, social anarchy, and privation" (Beville, p. 23). Postmodernism, as a time of reconsideration of historic truths, triggered the reemergence of the terror that existed at the center of political discourse. In her time, Shelley displayed the terrors that plagued the writers and readers of the Romantic era from the emergence of the industrial order to the scientific discoveries that shook the world. Saadawi follows in her footsteps and puts a spotlight on the terrors of war, violent events, and the circle of life and death perpetuated through acts of vengeance, as well as the way these terrors distort the psyche.

Clive Barker has famously said that "horror fiction is over and over again about the body." It is perhaps the most visceral literary genre that becomes effective only when it manages to trigger a corporeal response in the reader based on the person's ability to experience pain vicariously and commiserate with bodily mutilation.

The body becomes a space and a sight for Gothic literature, and it goes beyond the shocking potential of the genre's experiments. While it is tempting to believe that gratuitous violence is what body gothic is all about, this misconception leaves a very important component overlooked. The notion of a body is fluid, and its conceptual features in Western cultures are often coded in the Gothic narrative. The exploration of bodily horror correlates with a more philosophical question of what it means to be human and how our intellectual experiences are rooted in visceral ones. The studies of modern body gothic available to date are quite limited in their exploration of corporeal transgression which puts anti-establishment views in a very understudied niche. Some writers, like Marie Mulvey-Roberts, Ian Conrich, and Justin Edwards are paving the way for a more diverse future for Gothic studies, but much work needs to be done on the destigmatization of the body within the horror literature framework.

Corporeality is a complex academic topic that encompasses many facets of bodily narratives from those that question the ideas of the corporeal norm to the ones that praise the transgression of the limitations posed by the body's limitations. Steven Bruhm's *Gothic Bodies* and Kelly Hurley's *The Gothic Body* were among the first texts to explore the corporeality in the Gothic literary environment. Bruhm studied the concept of pain as explored by Romantic novelists, playwrights, and poets and argued for the ontological and political relevance of the meditations on pain in the late 18th and early 19th century. In turn, Hurley analyzed British fiction from the same period for connections between experiments on the limits of corporeality in biology, anthropology, social sciences, and evolutionary studies and the way bodies were portrayed in such works as *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *The Beetle: A Mystery*. Within the bodily discourse explored by both researchers in their work, cultural materialism and historicist approaches stand out as the chief research methods. They conclude that body transformation and the sensation of pain present the body as a fragile, open system, and this view of the body is at the core of the Gothic experience.

Another influential study on the body gothic is Judith Halberstam's *Skin Shows*. Halberstam did diachronic research on the body as a cultural object defined by the categories of otherness and difference. He analyzed literary and cinematic texts, focusing on monster bodies from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to Jonathan Demme's Hannibal Lecter in the film, *Silence of the Lambs*. Halberstam used over two centuries of Gothic narratives and revealed the social, economic, and sexual tensions explored by the genre, largely zooming in on skin as "the ultimate boundary" between self and other. His findings helped develop some crucial aspects of trauma studies. Through the exploration of horror and the trauma that followed, many scholars including, but not limited to, Steven Bruhm, Alexandra Warwick, Roger Luckhurst, and Linnie Blake have delved into the political and personal implications of trauma and the mourning process that follows a loss - another visceral experience that goes hand in hand with terror and pain.

The other two highly influential names in the advancement of body gothic research are Catherine Spooner and Fred Botting. In *Contemporary Gothic* (2006), Spooner gives her astute take on the role and function of the body in modern Gothic exhibits. She investigates how the environment can transform the affect that a body - dead or alive - has on the audience of body shows. For instance, she states that the bodies on display at von Hagens' Body Worlds (2002) exhibition serve as a spectacle that offers a view of a plastinated corpse as decontextualized and thus only perceived as a simulacrum of a body. Spooner also observes that diseased or monster bodies might serve as a lens for the examination of corporeal transgression. She argues that the craving of a digital society to reconnect with the physical body stands behind contemporary Gothic's obsession with abnormal flesh and bodily liquids.

Fred Botting has a different view of the contemporary Gothic that explores bodily excess for its shock effect on audiences that crave the spectacle of corporeality and mutation to reestablish their connection with the biological body as a site of horror and consumption. The general trend of embodiment has remained popular over the last thirty years in all kinds of horror subgenres - from splatterpunk, body horror, the new avant-pulp and the slaughterhouse novel to torture porn and surgical horror - can be read as a testament to the digital society's reencountering its physicality.

Within the modern Gothic narrative, the body's boundaries have mostly been regarded as a carnal prison. In this light, dismemberment, defacement, and carnal explosion are often presented as an optimistic way out from the limitations put on a person by their own flesh. The liberation offered by mutation or surgical interference has been fruitfully explored by such works of horror as Barker's *The Body Politic* or in Cronenberg's *The Fly*, where the yearning for artificial hybridity is rooted in corporeal transgression as a necessary step on the path to self-discovery. At the same time, the violent involuntary transgression had been used by many horror artists to reveal the most basic material qualities of human bodies and the helplessness of an individual in the face of the impossibility of transcending the physical world.

This point of view of the body as deprived of a social overcoat and diminished to its flesh-and-bone value is directly connected to corporeality as a means for delivering the sensations and thrills of the horror genre. Some subgenres are, of course, more reliant on the shocking value of the images; but in the end, Gothic and horrific texts are always corporeal. The study of the interrelation of the metaphorical and literal effects of terror-inducing texts on the body is an exciting prospect for future study that may open the door to a more inclusive approach to categorizing, studying, and defining Gothic literature.

Advancement in the academic exploration of horror has to come through the separation of corporeal from aesthetic readings of the Gothic because focusing on the tropes, characters, and recognizable symbols of the genre drive the reader away from the transgressive features of horror fiction.

It is the visceral, sympathetic, and almost claustrophobic engagement with the text that provokes the search for the intention and the effect of a Gothic text. When this mode of analysis is applied to the setting, the narrative patterns or a specific approach to filming horror, the divide between the highbrow and lowbrow division among Gothic texts, is irrelevant. This change of focus from the form to the underlying meaning of the method and the content of horror works of art will allow body studies to focus their analytical lens on corporeal readings that include gore and invoke somatic ties between real and fictional bodies. In this way, body gothic will get a due boost for the study of corporeal transgression as its inextricable part.

Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* relies on the uncontrollable nature of fear as a human response to fright. Very often, Saadawi utilizes the human ability to commiserate as a vehicle for the impression of fear on the reader. For example, he gives very detailed descriptions of the physical reactions expressed in the bodies of the victims when they encounter the monster.

In this respect, Saadawi's work is superior to the writings of Mary Shelley, since in his novel it is not the disgust that one might feel in the moment upon meeting the monster but a repeated description through the eyes of many secondary characters and the author himself. While

Shelley presents the details of her monster's visage very vividly only once and then the reader catches glimpses and impressions of other characters to remind one of the effect the monster has on other people, Saadawi describes his creature again and again in new versions and mutations as the monster morphs along with the story.

The Whatsitsname gains potency and the potential for continuous terror from his supernatural resistance to human weapons, like the bullets of the police. The creature's uncanniness stems from its appeal as a visceral embodiment of guilt as rot that triggers the cycle of perpetual violence. One lens of interpretation might look at the monster as a mirror and vehicle for the geographical and community context it was "born into". Saadawi places his monster in Iraq and adds several characteristics that differ from Shelley's original idea, all of which can be traced back to the creature's potential interpretation as an uncanny monster. In Sigmund Freud's terms, the Whatsitsname could be regarded as an embodiment of the "return of the repressed". Interestingly, this lens suggests that Saadawi's creature is not "othered" but rather comes out of a full assimilation with the socio-political context of the novel.

It is also relevant to the analysis that the uncanny monster in Saadawi's novel is oxymoronic to the extent that it is a manifestation of life in death. The combination of incompatibles - dead parts and the animated creature - builds up the paradox of the Whatsitsname's existence. Saadawi's creature comes to life as a consequence of violence and becomes the instrument of its own brand of justice since it hunts down the people responsible for his body parts becoming available in the first place.

The oxymoron is not the only literary device that dominates at the core of Saadawi's horror novel. His work is intertextual, and this characteristic goes way inside, penetrating the surface connection to Shelley's novel about *Frankenstein* in obvious ways. Saadawi borrows the title for his novel but modifies it to make it different from the already beaten-to-death name devised by Shelley several centuries prior. He also makes intertextual references within the paradigms of the genre, as well as the form of the original novel. Stylistically, though, the connection is

harder to establish since Saadawi uses well-known tropes of horror that can be traced back to several works of horror that came before Shelley. On the level of content, the connections are, to the contrary, plentiful. Saadawi uses the "mad scientist" trope in a similar way to Shelley, but chooses the name, "Hadi the scavenger", for the creator of the reanimated body, shifting the discourse from academia to pastime. Evidentially, Shelley's Dr. Victor Frankenstein was a much more institutionalized character.

Other references in Saadawi's horror novel are Jonathan Cott's *Isis and Osiris* (1994) and Gustav Meyrink's *The Golem* (1915). Both texts are monster narratives, and Saadawi had probable chosen them due to the presence of the reanimation narrative in the former and the spiritual-related creature in the latter work of literature. Interestingly, both texts served as stylistic and genre sources for Saadawi's work by referring to ancient, culturally-rooted myths – a feature absent from Shelley's narrative that borrows much of its mythos from the class struggle of the Industrial Revolution.

As this chapter has shown, Saadawi's horror novel is a patchwork of horrific concepts and Postmodern narratives. From borrowings on the levels of theory, like Kristeva's notion of the "abject" and Freuds "uncanny" to elements of Gothic grotesque and borrowings from many other horror stories, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* expresses its intertextual nature on every level, from form to content. In the same way as the monster body of Whatsitsname acts as a manifestation of the terror that appears in the city, Saadawi's novel is clearly riddled with the influences of Western theories and cultural senses that go beyond the historical and geographical discourse of the novel's world.

5: Conclusion

Horror is a global genre that speaks to people of any and every culture. As this thesis has established, it is first and foremost due to the fact that horror operates on fear – one of the few truly basic human emotions. That select group who seeks the thrill of emotional discharge through horror is bound by the same fascination with visceral experiences no matter their race or origin. Because of the absence of rigid borders, horror is a genre that mutates and changes, depending on the kind of thrill sought by the contemporary reader. Through this characteristic, horror works of art are all connected, while at the same time the evolution of the genre is traceable to historic changes in the world.

This thesis set out to develop a case for the comparative study of Gothic literary works from the premodern and postmodern periods. In particular, this scientific exploration was based on Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein*; *or The Modern Prometheus* and Ahmed Sadawi's novel, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. This kind of comparative investigation isn't the first attempt to compare the modern classic of horror published in 1818 with its 21stcentury retelling by Saadawi in a different cultural and temporal context. However, this thesis has paid special attention to corporeal, monster bodies, and the representations of the monstrous which has made it one of the pioneering attempts in its niche.

The connection of the corporeal to the reader's response and experiential nature of the art of horror is a cornerstone of the thesis. Additionally, some popular theoretical concepts have explored notions of disgust, the uncanny, the eerie, and abjection. Another theoretical stratification crucial to this thesis has been the theory of fear proposed by Orson Scott Card, in which the three stages of fear are "dread", "terror" and "horror". Some attention was also dedicated to defining Shelley's creature as a premodern monster.

The focus of the thesis has been on the treatment of the "monster body" within the framework of the aforementioned theoretical notions, correlating it with the intertextual elements in both Shelley's and Saadawi's work. One of the aims of the present thesis was to examine the

development of literary theory and criticism that influenced and contributed to the development of the genre of horror fiction.

One of the basic categories of this thesis has been the body, specifically the freak, grotesque, and deformed bodies that constitute the basis for a fundamental understanding of fear produced by monsters in horror narratives. Sometimes, the body can be the paramount realization of the setting, overshadowing the more stereotypical elements of the ambiance. The typical Gothic setting, however, is the exterior. What seemed to stem from Walpole's fascination with medieval architecture and mysterious objects has grown into an archetype that plays an important part in the development of the Gothic and horror genres.

Another set of important findings of this thesis regards the nature of fear. Starting from the early researchers of fundamental human feelings and with Charles Darwin as the pioneering leader of this movement, already in 1872, the general consensus had been that fear goes all the way back to our early ancestors. It has always been established by this thesis that fear can originate in a different body and be internalized by the "other" in firsthand encounters. This fluidity of fear has been primarily explored by Frantz Fanon in his work, *Black skin, White mask* (1952). Another important theory regarding fear belongs to Sara Ahmed who in her work, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), explores the subject-object relations within the discourse of fear.

Fear's workings on the audience are a separate, robust field of study. One great explorer of the effects of fright was H.P. Lovecraft who identified the key characteristic of the horror genre as the sensation of supernatural horror that arouses a feeling of "cosmic fear" inside readers in his *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1927). Fear, however, is not the only human emotion that is utilized as a mode of expression for the Gothic and related genres. Disgust, as has been established in this thesis, plays a crucial role in understanding the ways in which horror literature interact with the reader. Disgust is bound to fear along a cause-and-effect continuum. It is a potent human emotion, at the same time cerebral and corporeal. Disgust is connected to

violence even more than fear since it provokes a knee-jerk reaction before the mind knows the true reason for such affect.

From the18th century anthropological view of disgust as the baseline characteristic of human nature, it grew to be conceptualized as a response mechanism that presides in the realms of the body and mind in terms of its significance. In *Disgust: Theory and History of a Strong Sensation* (2003), Menninghaus notes the deep roots of dread as a cornerstone and affective element of human nature. Sigmund Freud had an opinion here, too. He believed that disgust was the only opposition to the normal human state and connected it to archetypical libidinal drives. This universal appeal, or rather the direct opposite of it – disgust – is reflected in the works of art of any time period and culture; but the true fascination with everything disgusting, "othered", and unacceptable is a praised element of the Postmodern era.

Another important concept highlighted in this thesis is Noël Carroll's iteration of "dread" in his brand of supernatural horror as one of the many aspects of horror this genre can generate. Fear is the feeling that engulfs the body; it can manifest as cold entering the body that stays within, bringing physical discomfort. Such a lack of normalcy can also come as a heat drop or a blueish tint appearing on the skin. The difference between the body in fear and the body in comfort is drastic and easily be identified with a naked eye.

The "apartness" of bodies, as duly noted by Homi J. Bhabha in *Location of Culture* (1994) is one of the many frequent stereotypes of fear. Several others include the suggestion that fear always has a particular object it springs from, as suggested by Stanley Rachman, and fear's temporal dimension that comes in the form of anticipation and manifests itself only in the present as a reaction to an existing trigger. Using these stereotypes as a point of appeal makes fear an unsurpassable tool of horror that brings forth powerful experiences in fiction and non-fiction works of art.

The effects of fear have been studied in the course of this investigation as well. Emotional discharge as a primary result of fear has made it the experience people crave. Prohászková, in

her “The Genre of Horror” (2012) exemplifies the attractive potential of horror through the monster narrative. She presents convincing evidence that the readers long for superhuman powers and capabilities that monsters tend to have, and this, in its turn, triggers feelings of reverence and respect for these unnatural creatures and their bodies.

Consecutively, she also makes a good point about audience reflection in the monster narrative and its need for a clear-cut distinction between the good and evil that horror stories cater to.

The artificial environment of these works of art can also act as a safe space for playing out scenarios originating from social anxieties that award horror stories with the status of instrument of power and control. The findings of this work clearly indicate that the horror narrative satiates the human curiosity that ventures into the realms of taboo topics, mystery stories, and the unnatural. This author also believes that there is a clear connection between the human craving for the exploration of morbidity and the cultural phenomenon of the popularity of all things Gothic.

The results of this thesis indicate that horror has always existed in relation to the Gothic. However, since the end of the 20th century, horror fiction has been gradually gaining a more solid status on the literary field. Overall, this thesis supports the idea that corporeality reaches its roots into the Gothic. Reyes introduced the argument that corporeality comes so neatly together with Gothic narratives because both concepts stand in opposition to the existence of laws and judiciary systems as regulatory bodies. Shildrick and Canguilhem presented contrasting views on this issue: the former insists that monstrousness comes from physical aberration and the latter observes that it is the transgression of law that marks monstrousness. Foucault’s views side with Canguilhem on this issue since the French philosopher insists that monsters are always unlawful.

Monster narratives play a special part in the formation of the cultural tapestry. Picart and Browning prominently explored the positioning of monster discourse in relation to the historical and geographical dimensions of the origin of the monstrous. They correlated

monsters with certain literary devises. With metaphor, for example, for the plurality of concepts a monster can embody and with a contextual construct since any monster relies heavily on the time and place it comes from. The societal dimension often becomes translucent through a monster body.

This thesis has found generally that Gothic literature often features different culturally archetypal monsters such as Golem, Frankenstein, and many more. These monsters owe their origin to certain religious beliefs, superstitions, or even luddite-like opinions. The revisionist purpose of monsters as a ground for reflection and recontextualization of societal issues has been explored by Grixti in *Terrors of Uncertainty* (1989). Beal confirms this belief in his study of monsters as manifestations of the "unheimlich".

Overall, this thesis strengthens the idea that monsters in horror fiction can serve many purposes. A prominent finding was that both Shelley's and Saadawi's monsters are reflections of everything the authors considered to be wrong in their respective societies. The outcomes of the thesis confirm the approach of categorizing monstrous qualities offered by Foucault who believed that the terms, monstrosity, monstrousness and monster, are interchangeable. In the realm of law and the positioning of disability within it, the monstrous stands out as a multifaceted construct that breaches law, both common and God's, in some way. Monstrosity might be treated as political, but the context of such positioning has to be deliberately adjusted for a power paradigm to serve as an interpretive lens for a work of art. One way the politics of monstrousness is inevitable is the connection between abnormality in individuals and human monsters.

The thesis has also shown that the relation between horror, the weird, and the eerie is crucial for creating feelings of fear and horror to the readers. Fisher's definition of the eerie as a feeling that comes with the pleasure of fright, underlines the balance of internal and external agents of fear relevant for an effective installment of horror in a work of literature. The odd elements of text are made to signify the mystery unreachable by means of the normal which underscores

the unfitness of the literary reality to the norms of regular human existence. The difference between the two constitutes the core of the pleasurability of horror. Another important aspect of the eerie is the irritability it provokes in people. The itch to remove oneself from the object of fear triggers a visceral reaction to the narrative.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* contains many concepts and perspectives prone to examination with contemporary theoretical devices. In fact, it can be analyzed with a fresh lens as a model of horror fiction. Based on the theoretical studies presented by Freud, Foucault, Kristeva and Fisher, this thesis has examined Shelley's novel with an eye toward the unsettled state of mind that the individual experiences when encountering fear that stems from unusual things such as monsters.

The investigation of Shelley's work shows that she brought a new theme to the Gothic genre, blending two different worlds together: that of the spiritual and supernatural with the world of science. Her novel acted as a reflection on the First Industrial Revolution in the 18th century. First of all, she introduced an ambitious and radical scientist, Dr. Victor Frankenstein, who performed an unethical experiment creating a living monster out of the body parts of human corpses.

Shelley highlights the theme of the dangers of science. She created an archetypal monster, who, in addition to the character of the obsessive scientist who gradually grows insane, acts as a representative of a new humankind that questions the norms of the pre-industrial world. The plot of the novel challenged the norms of the Age of Reason. Its very existence gave way to a wave of transformation in horror that prompted the emergence of new branches of the Gothic, including surgical and body horror.

Moreover, Shelley used an instrument of revolution – electricity as an important plot point – putting it into opposition to the conventional idea of giving life. At the time Shelley created her novel, scientific theories were taking over religious dogmas in the minds of the common people and inaugurated a gradual change in the way humans thought, causing a massive crisis of faith.

Here, an interesting connection can be made with Saadawi's monstrous narrative. Saadawi seems to have deliberately chosen Baghdad as space related to many religious narratives. Although the more modern "Frankenstein" comes to life in the same way as the 19th century one – sewn together from the body parts of the deceased – this animation becomes possible in Saadawi's novel because a spirit inhabits the newly-built carcass. This idea of divine intervention into a purely "scientific" experiment illustrates a much more appealing creation of a new monstrous life for the Eastern reader in the 21st century.

This thesis has found that generally in the East, monsters are treated in a different way than in the West. In the Eastern tradition, monsters belong to the continuum of life and death, and they are not regarded as a completely alien element. Rather, they belong to an array of possible beings that aren't "othered" as inherently evil because of their supernatural features. This finding of the study aligns well with an argument made by Foucault that a being can only be monstrous if it goes beyond "natural limits" and "classification" and meets certain criteria. While there is no space in Christian tradition for monster bodies, Islam permits a much wider realm of normalcy for monsters.

Another interpretative lens briefly discussed in this thesis is that of economics. The 19th and late 20th century Gothic horror film can be categorized as an exemplary form for capitalistic analysis. The Gothic genre stipulates many elements of the capitalistic economy such as the politics of consumption and production. Monsters can function as various racial and sexual threats to the economic well-being of the normative societies.

Most monsters embody a whole series of challenges to the nature of race, class, gender, and sexuality. They can exhibit perversions and project "otherness" in many respects, starting from their looks. Halberstam put paramount importance on the monstrous visage and skin as marks of the monster. However, it is a combination of physical features and a constituent description of the body that separates monstrous discourse from the societal normative paradigm.

The results of this thesis indicate that the body is a fundamental source of people's judgments and biases. In the case of Shelley's monster, as soon as the monster gets introduced, he is othered as a sum of his physical features – the only available parameter for the other characters of the story to perceive him – with only the blind exempt from this closed circuit criterion. Social rejection is described as the inevitable consequence of the monster's very existence. For instance, even Dr. Frankenstein reacts with repulsion upon the first encounter with his live creation. Shelley's and Saadawi's monsters are first seen and described to readers by their makers, Victor and Haddee.

The historical context of the turn of the 20th century centers on the new knowledge of the body that contemporary science was only beginning to acquire. Many horror narratives utilized anxieties about the possibilities and limits of a human body as well as the reactions elicited in the reader from the description of bodily processes and their consequences. Herbert Wells was a known master of science-inspired horror narratives, and his particular success with Dr. Moreau and the tale of vivisection are of a primal importance to an understanding of the cultural landscape of the time when body horror enjoyed its first peak of popularity.

One of the major aspects of body horror and body gothic was the use of violence as an instrument for illustrating excesses and corporeal vulnerabilities. The limits of the body sometimes became the core underlying feature of the terror-ridden narrative, and on the verge of it turning into fear was the promise of pain. This relation between horror texts and bodily responses to reading them is of remarkable importance, as noted in this thesis. Cinematic texts often work with visual transformations and violations of the body's surface and yet the visceral response that is the goal of introducing mutilations, changes, and transformations of the corporeal is at the heart of the matter.

This thesis has raised important questions about the nature of the corporeal impact on the consumer of horror narratives. A bodily norm can only be established in opposition to the monstrous, and Gothic narratives play a major part in the morphing of normalcy. Modifications

of the body come into play to illustrate the cruelty of some characters, but they also can come as instruments of liberation for harnessing the regulatory system and taking charge of one's physical existence.

Each horror writer or critic has contributed to the imaginative discourse of the genre, from the premodern times of the 16th or 17th centuries with their castles and natural calamities and the Mary Shelley's class-related 19th century monsters to the post-modern retellings of the well-known archetypes of horror akin to Ahmed Saadawi's monster novel. Each author of Gothic fiction presents their vision of all the types and stages of fear, from generating the feeling of the "uncanny" to deep, visceral fear. Some appeal to the notion of abjection and hope to provoke an emotional reaction of fear in readers or make them feel disgust. It is a complex tapestry of fear-related notions and sensations, and the best novels seem to engulf the whole range of possibilities of fear.

This thesis is important in furthering our understanding of the role of world literature as an instrument of reflection on the events and society norms of any given culture. Having examined two literary works from different centuries, this thesis concludes that Shelley's monster is a creature of a very particular socio-political and historical context that dictated its supernatural capabilities.

The physical advantage over a "normal human" that Frankenstein's monster has is its blessing and its curse. The creature's speed, strength, and endurance overshadow its intelligence and come with a tension. Dr. Victor Frankenstein created a being that exists as a manifestation of the era of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, a contentious figure that cannot be categorized as pure evil and defamation or as a miracle with the potential of chaotic good. As for Saadawi's monster, its patchwork body grants it a relative omnipotence as long as it is fueled by the perpetual cycle of death and revenge and dead body parts that need to be scavenged over and over again. It might be interpreted as a visage of the socio-political situation in Iraq, but it certainly exists within the framework of local law and cultural convention.

The intertextual elements in Saadawi's novel are plentiful and indicative of a conscious borrowing from the source material of the 18th century but reinterpreted to fit the narrative needs of a Post-modern retelling of Shelley's famous horror story. Perhaps the most striking is the meta connection between the two texts. They both exist as a story within a story, or as a retelling. Dr. Frankenstein tells the story of the monster in the form of letters written by Walton while Haadde documents the history of his creature on a recorder. Shelley and Saadawi both chose an intertextual overcoat for their narrative, and this similarity accentuates the indebtedness of each horror narrative to a preexisting literary and cultural tradition.

Covering vast grounds, this thesis provides insight into the evolution of traditional Gothic works and their transformation into the new Gothic and horror genre. The monster body is evidently represented in many literary works of horror and the Gothic as a deformed body that becomes the source and the object of fear. It is remarkable that throughout the transformative history of both genres that viscerality and corporeality have remained the highlights of literary discourse. This similarity of form has allowed for a deep and clear analysis of the differences in meanings and cultural contexts that are presented as a comparative analysis of two monster narratives of reanimated bodies.

Future studies of the retelling of Gothic and horror literary works from a Postmodern perspective will no doubt provide valuable insight into this genre and the relationship between the body and corporeality in the context of cultural and body studies. A comparative analysis of the works of literature in the horror genre that come from different time periods can provide fertile ground for a further discussion of the politics and poetics of the monster body as a cultural body from its respective time period.

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