

Franco Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders:  
Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*  
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## Dialectic of Fear

### 1. Towards a Sociology of the Modern Monster

The fear of bourgeois civilization is summed up in two names: Frankenstein and Dracula. The monster and the vampire are born together, one night in 1816, in the drawing room of the Villa Chapuis near Geneva, out of a society game among friends to while away a rainy summer. Born in the full spate of the industrial revolution, they rise again together in the critical years at the end of the nineteenth century, under the names of Hyde and Dracula.<sup>1</sup> In the twentieth century they conquer the cinema: after the First World War, in German Expressionism; after the 1929 crisis, with the big RKO productions in America; then in 1956-57, Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, directed by Terence Fisher, again, triumphantly, incarnate this twin-faced nightmare.

Frankenstein and Dracula lead parallel lives. They are two indivisible, because complementary, figures; the two horrible faces of a single society, its *extremes*: the disfigured wretch and the ruthless proprietor. The worker and capital: 'the whole of society must split into the two classes of *property owners* and *propertyless workers*.'<sup>2</sup> That 'must', which for Marx is a scientific prediction of the future (and the guarantee of a future reordering of society) is a forewarning of the end for nineteenth-century bourgeois culture. The literature of terror is born precisely *out of the terror of a split society*, and out of the desire to heal it. It is for just this reason that Dracula and Frankenstein, with rare exceptions, do not appear together. The threat would be too great: and this literature, having produced terror, must also erase it and restore peace. It must:

restore the broken equilibrium, giving the illusion of being able to stop history: because the monster expresses the anxiety that the future will be monstrous. His antagonist – the enemy of the monster – will always be, by contrast, a representative of the present, a distillation of complacent nineteenth-century mediocrity: nationalistic, stupid, superstitious, philistine, impotent, self-satisfied. But this does not show through. Fascinated by the horror of the monster, the public accepts the vices of its destroyer without a murmur,<sup>3</sup> just as it accepts his literary depiction, the jaded and repetitive typology which regains its strength and its virginity on contact with the unknown. The monster, then, serves to displace the antagonisms and horrors evidenced *within* society *outside* society itself. In *Frankenstein* the struggle will be between a 'race of devils' and the 'species of man'. Whoever dares to fight the monster automatically becomes the representative of the species, of the whole of society. The monster, the utterly unknown, serves to reconstruct a universality, a social cohesion which – in itself – would no longer carry conviction.

Frankenstein's monster and Dracula the vampire are, unlike previous monsters, dynamic, *totalizing* monsters. This is what makes them frightening. Before, things were different. Sade's malefactors agree to operate on the margins of society, hidden away in their towers. Justine is their victim because she rejects the modern world, the world of the city, of exchange, of her reduction to a commodity. She thus gives herself over to the old horror of the feudal world, the will of the individual master. Moreover, in Sade the evil has a 'natural' limit which cannot be overstepped: the gratification of the master's desire. Once he is satiated, the torture ceases too. Dracula, on the other hand, is an ascetic of terror: in him is celebrated the victory 'of the desire for *possession* over that of *enjoyment*'<sup>4</sup>; and possession as such, indifferent to consumption, is by its very nature insatiable and unlimited. Polidori's vampire is still a petty feudal lord forced to travel round Europe strangling young ladies for the miserable purpose of *surviving*. Time is against him, against his conservative desires. Stoker's Dracula, by contrast, is a rational entrepreneur who invests his gold to expand his dominion: to conquer the City of London. And already Frankenstein's monster sows devastation over the whole

world, from the Alps to Scotland, from Eastern Europe to the Pole. By comparison, the gigantic ghost of *The Castle of Otranto* looks like a dwarf. He is confined to a single place; he can appear once only; he is merely a relic of the past. Once order is re-established he is silent for ever. The modern monsters, however, threaten to live for ever, and to conquer the world. For this reason they must be killed.<sup>5</sup>

### *Frankenstein*

Like the proletariat, the monster is denied a name and an individuality. He is the Frankenstein monster; he belongs wholly to his creator (just as one can speak of a 'Ford worker'). Like the proletariat, he is a *collective* and *artificial* creature. He is not found in nature, but built. Frankenstein is a productive *inventor*-scientist, in open conflict with Walton, the contemplative *discoverer*-scientist (the pattern is repeated with Jekyll and Lanyon). Reunited and brought back to life in the monster are the limbs of those – the 'poor' – whom the breakdown of feudal relations has forced into brigandage, poverty and death.<sup>6</sup> Only modern science – this metaphor for the 'dark satanic mills' – can offer them a future. It sews them together again, moulds them according to its will and finally gives them life. *But at the moment the monster opens its eyes*, its creator draws back in horror: 'by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open . . . How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe . . . ?' Between Frankenstein and the monster there is an ambivalent, dialectical relationship, the same as that which, according to Marx, connects capital with wage-labour.<sup>7</sup> On the one hand, the scientist cannot but create the monster: 'often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion.' On the other hand, he is immediately afraid of it and wants to kill it, because he realizes he has given life to a creature stronger than himself and of which he cannot henceforth be free. It is the same curse that afflicts Jekyll: 'to put your good heart at rest, I will tell you one thing: the moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr

tional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety'.<sup>29</sup> And fear breaks out when – for whatever reason – this repressed impulse returns and thrusts itself upon the mind: 'an uncanny experience occurs either when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once again to be confirmed.'<sup>30</sup> Fear, in other words, coincides with the 'return of the repressed'. And this brings us perhaps to the heart of the matter.

The literature of terror is studded with passages where the protagonists brush against the awareness – described by Freud – that the perturbing element is *within them*: that it is they themselves that produce the monsters they fear. Their first fear is – inevitably – that of *going mad*. 'Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman.' (*Frankenstein*). 'God preserve my sanity . . . there is but one thing to hope for: that I may not go mad, if, indeed, I be not mad already.' (*Dracula*, Harker's words). '[Dr Seward] says that I afford him a curious psychological study' (*Dracula*, Lucy). 'I have come to the conclusion that it must be something mental.' (*Dracula*, Seward, who is also the director of a mental hospital). Jekyll has to defend himself from the suspicion of being mad, just like Polidori's Aubrey a century earlier. In these novels, reality tends to work according to the laws that govern dreams – 'I wasn't dreaming', 'as in a dream', 'as if I had gone through a long nightmare'.<sup>31</sup> This is the return of the repressed. But *how* does it return? Not as madness, or only marginally so. The lesson these books wish to impart is that one need not be afraid of going mad; that is one need not fear one's own repressions, the splitting of one's own psyche. No, one should be afraid of the *monster*, of something *material*, something *external*: "'Dr Van Helsing, are you mad?" . . . "Would I were!" he said. "Madness were easy to bear compared with truth like this."' *Would I were*: this is the key. Madness is nothing in comparison with the vampire. Madness does not present a problem. Or rather: madness, in itself, *does not exist*: it is the vampire, the monster, the potion that creates it.<sup>32</sup> *Dracula*, written in the same year that saw Freud begin his self-analysis, is a refined attempt by the nineteenth-century mind not to recognize itself. This is symbolized by the character who – already in the grip

of fear – finds himself by chance in front of a mirror. He looks at it and jumps: in the mirror is a reflection of his face. But the reader's attention is immediately distracted: the fear does not come from his having seen his *own* image, but from the fact that the *vampire* is not reflected in the mirror. Finding himself face to face with the simple, terrible truth, the author – and with him the character and the reader – draws back in horror.

The repressed returns, then, but disguised as a monster. For a psychoanalytic study, the main fact is precisely this metamorphosis. As Francesco Orlando has remarked of his analysis of Racine's *Phèdre*, 'the relationship between the unconscious and literature was not postulated according to the presence of contents, whatever their nature, in the literary work . . . perverse desire could not have been acceptable as content in the literary work without the latter's also accepting *the formal model capable of filtering it*.'<sup>33</sup> This formal model is the monster metaphor, the vampire metaphor. It 'filters', makes bearable to the conscious mind those desires and fears<sup>34</sup> which the latter has judged to be unacceptable and has thus been forced to repress, and whose existence it consequently cannot recognize. The literary formalization, the rhetorical figure, therefore has a double function: it *expresses* the unconscious content and at the same time *hides* it. Literature always contains *both* these functions. Taking away one or the other would mean eliminating either the problem of the unconscious (by asserting that everything in literature is transparent and manifest) or the problem of literary communication (by asserting that literature serves *only* to hide certain contents). Yet while these two functions are always present in the literary metaphor, the relationship between them can nevertheless change. One can stand out more than the other and win a dominant position within the overall signification of the work. These observations have a direct bearing on our argument, because the metaphor of the vampire is a splendid example of how the equilibrium of literary functions can vary. The problem can be posed thus: what is the sex – in literature, naturally, not in reality – of vampires? Vampires, unlike angels, do have sex. But it changes. In one set of works (Poe, Hoffmann, Baudelaire: 'elite' culture) they are women. In another (Polidori, Stoker, the cinema: 'mass' culture) they are men.



The metamorphosis is by no means accidental. At the root of vampirism, as we have seen, lies an ambivalent impulse of the child towards its mother. To present the vampire as a *woman* therefore means to make relatively little distortion of the unconscious content. The literary figure still retains the essential element – the sex – of that which is at the source of the perturbation. The defences that literature puts up to protect the conscious mind are relatively elastic: D. H. Lawrence (as Baudelaire, implicitly, before him) passes with ease from the vampire theme back to Poe's perverse erotic desires.<sup>35</sup> But if the vampire becomes a man, the unconscious source of the perturbation is hidden by a further layer of signifieds. The link becomes more tenuous. The conscious mind can rest easy: all that remains of the original fear is a word, 'Dracula': that splendid and inexplicable feminine name. The metamorphosis, in other words, serves to protect the conscious mind, or more precisely to keep it in a state of greater unawareness. The vampire is transformed into a man by mass culture, which has to promote spontaneous certainties and cannot let itself plumb the unconscious too deeply. Yet at the same time and for precisely this reason, the repressed content, which has remained unconscious, produces an irresistible fear. Spurious certainties and terror support each other.

### 3. The Strategy of Terror

Marxist analysis and psychoanalytic analysis have permitted us to isolate two prominent groups of signifieds which come together in the literature of terror and which render it, so to speak, necessary. They are, clearly, different signifieds, and it is hard to unite them harmoniously. I do not propose here to reconstruct the many missing links that might connect socio-economic structures and sexual-psychological structures in a single conceptual chain. Nor can I say whether this undertaking – attempted many times and in many different ways – is really possible: whether, that is, it is permissible to 'integrate' Marxism and psychoanalysis into a much broader and much more solid science of modern society. It is a

highly complicated scientific problem, and I do not intend to broach its general aspects. I would merely like to explain the two reasons that – in this specific case – persuaded me to use two such different methodologies. The first is rather obvious. The central characters of this literature – the monster, the vampire – are *metaphors*, rhetorical figures built on the analogy between *different semantic fields*. Wishing to incarnate Fear as such, they must of necessity combine fears *that have different causes*: economic, ideological, psychical, sexual (and others should be added, beginning with religious fear). This fact seems to me to make it possible, if not obligatory, to use different tools in order to reconstruct the multiform roots of the terrorizing metaphor. But the monster and the vampire are metaphors for another reason too. Not only in order to synthesize phenomena of different natures, but also to *transform them*: to change their form, and with it their meaning. In Dracula there is monopoly capital and the fear of the mother: but these meanings are *subordinated* to the literal presence of the murderous count. They can be expressed only if they are hidden (or at least transformed) by his black cloak. Only in this way can the social consciousness admit its own fears without laying itself open to stigma. Marxism and psychoanalysis thus converge in defining the function of this literature: to take up within itself determinate fears in order to present them *in a form different from their real one*: to transform them into *other* fears, so that readers do not have to face up to what might really frighten them. It is a 'negative' function: it distorts reality. It is a work of 'mystification'. But it is also a work of 'production'. The more these great symbols of mass culture depart from reality the more, of necessity, they must expand and enrich the structures of false consciousness: which is nothing other than the dominant culture. They are not confined to distortion and falsification: they form, affirm, convince. And this process is automatic and self-propelling. Mary Shelley and Bram Stoker do not have the slightest intention of 'mystifying' reality: they interpret and express it in a spontaneously mendacious manner. This becomes clearer if we go back once again to the fact that monsters are metaphors. Now generally, in literature, metaphors are constructed (by the author) and perceived (by the reader) precisely as metaphors. But in the literature



of terror this rule no longer applies. The metaphor is no longer a metaphor: it is a character as real as the others. 'The supernatural', Todorov has written, 'often appears because we take a figurative sense literally.'<sup>36</sup> Taking the figurative sense literally means considering the metaphor as an *element of reality*. It means, in other words, that a particular intellectual construction – the metaphor and the ideology expressed within it – really has become a 'material force', an independent entity, that escapes the rational control of its user. The intellectual no longer builds the cultural universe; rather, this universe speaks through the intellectual's mouth. After all, this is a familiar story: it is the story of Dr Frankenstein. In Mary Shelley's novel, the monster, the metaphor, still appears, at least in part, as something constructed, as a product. The monster, she warns us, is something 'impossible as a physical fact': it is something metaphorical. Yet the monster *lives*. Frankenstein's first moment of terror arises precisely in the face of this fact: a metaphor gets up and walks. Once this has happened, he knows that he will never be able to regain control of it. From now on, the metaphor of the monster will lead an autonomous existence: it will no longer be a product, a consequence, but the very origin of the literature of terror. By the time of *Dracula* – which carries the logic of this literature to its farthest consequences – the vampire has existed since time immemorial, uncreated and inexplicable.

There is another point on which the works of Shelley and Stoker diverge radically from one another: the *effect* they mean to produce on the reader. The difference, to paraphrase Benjamin, can be put like this: a description of fear and a frightening description are by no means the same thing. *Frankenstein* (like *Jekyll and Hyde*) does not want to *scare* readers, but to *convince* them. It appeals to their reason. It wants to make them reflect on a number of important problems (the development of science, the ethic of the family, respect for tradition) and agree – rationally – that these are threatened by powerful and hidden forces. In other words it wants to get the readers' assent to the 'philosophical' arguments expounded in black and white by the author in the course of the narration. Fear is made subordinate to this design: it is one of the means used to convince, but not the only one, nor the main one. The person who is frightened is not the *reader*, but the *protagonist*.

The fear is resolved within the text, without penetrating the text's relationship with its addressee.<sup>37</sup> Mary Shelley uses two stylistic expedients to achieve this effect. She fixes the narrative time in *the past*: and the past attenuates every fear, because the intervening time enables one not to remain a prisoner of events. Chance is replaced by order, shock by reflection, doubt by certainty – all the more completely in that (the second expedient) the monster has nothing *unknown* about him: we watch Frankenstein assemble him piece by piece, and we know from the start what characteristics he will have. He is threatening because he is alive and because he is big, not because he is beyond rational comprehension. For fear to arise, reason must be made insecure. As Barthes puts it: "'suspense" grips you in the "mind", not in the "guts".'<sup>38</sup>

The narrative structure of *Dracula*, the real masterpiece of the literature of terror, is different. Here the narrative time is always the present, and the narrative order – always paratactic – never establishes causal connections. Like the narrators, the readers have only clues: they see the effects, but do not know the causes. It is precisely this situation that generates suspense.<sup>39</sup> And this, in its turn, reinforces the readers' identification with the story being narrated. They are dragged forcibly *into* the text; the characters' fear is also theirs. Between text and reader there no longer exists that distance which in *Frankenstein* stimulated reflection. Stoker does not want a thinking reader, but a frightened one. Of course, fear is not an end in itself: it is a means to obtain consent to the ideological values we have examined. But this time, fear is the *only* means. In other words the conviction is no longer in the least rational: it is just as unconscious as the terror that produces it.<sup>40</sup> And thus, while professing to save a reason threatened by hidden forces, the literature of terror merely enslaves it more securely. The restoration of a logical order coincides with unconscious and irrational adherence to a system of values beyond dispute. Professing to save the individual, it in fact annuls him. It presents society – whether the feudal idyll of *Frankenstein* or the Victorian England of *Dracula* – as a great corporation: whoever breaks its bonds is done for. To think for oneself, to follow one's own interests: these are the real dangers that this literature wants to exorcise. Illiberal in a deep sense, it mirrors and promotes the desire for an

integrated society, a capitalism that manages to be 'organic'. This is the literature of *dialectical* relations, in which the opposites, instead of separating and entering into conflict, exist in function of one another, reinforce one other. Such, for Marx, is the relation between capital and wage labour. Such, for Freud, is the relation between super-ego and unconscious. Such, for Stendhal, is the bond between the lover and the 'illness' he calls 'love'. Such is the relationship that binds Frankenstein to the monster and Lucy to Dracula. Such, finally, is the bond between the reader and the literature of terror. The more a work frightens, the more it edifies. The more it humiliates, the more it uplifts. The more it hides, the more it gives the illusion of revealing. It is a fear one *needs*: the price one pays for coming contentedly to terms with a social body based on irrationality and menace. Who says it is escapist? ✓

Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1885), London 1924; Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897), London 1974.

2. Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts' (1844), in *Early Writings*, Harmondsworth 1975, p. 322.

3. The 'classic' detective novel has a similar function. The crime casts suspicion over all the characters: their actions become equivocal, their ideals questionable, their aims mysterious. But once the culprit is found, the suspicion immediately evaporates and everyone is rehabilitated. 'A murderer has to be indicted because that is the only way to provide the rest of the cast with an acquittal wholly satisfying to reason. But the psychological purpose of the story is summed up in that acquittal. The detective myth exists not to provoke or endorse guilt but to dissipate it. The solution pronounces the general absolution.' Brigid Brophy, 'Detective Fiction: A Modern Myth', *Hudson Review* 1965, no. 1, p. 29. General absolution is nothing other than the instinctive approval of the general laws of society which proclaim their goodness and justice in the presence of the individual transgression, the exceptional criminal 'case'.

4. Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts'.

5. In Fisher's films, the vitality of the monster and the vampire is completely lost. They never begin with an offensive by the monster (who would be quite happy to stay at home), but with an error or an act of stupidity by 'man'. The invitation is transparently to refrain from wandering, to leave things as they are. The monster is no longer frightening in himself but because his zone of influence has been violated, because men have not kept to the agreement. It is a *welfare state* sort of terror, proper to an era of peaceful coexistence.

6. Mary Shelley's monster is an *assemblage of different corpses*. By presenting it as a single corpse (albeit gigantic and abnormal) restored to life, the film tradition greatly trivializes its social meaning.

7. 'Thus capital presupposes wage labour; wage labour presupposes capital. They reciprocally condition the existence of each other . . . capital and wage labour are two sides of one and the same relation.' Marx, 'Wage Labour and Capital' (1849) in the one-volume *Selected Works*, London 1970, pp. 82-3.

8. Walter Benjamin, 'Zentralpark'.

9. Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', pp. 325-6.

10. *Frankenstein* can be read as the inversion of *Robinson Crusoe*. In the eighteenth century, disobedience to the father is rewarded; a century later it is punished by death. The difference in the endings depends entirely on the relations that are set up between the son and labour-power. Friday is a negro ('race of devils') but Crusoe civilizes him, forces him to become a 'man', to speak English, believe in God, wear clothes, serve his master. The monster, on the other hand, is the man who becomes inhuman, who rejects God, betrays his master, abandons civilization and threatens to found a new race. The difference is reflected in the different narrative techniques: Crusoe *controls* the situation, and this enables him to be a universal narrating ego; Frankenstein, who has lost control of it, cannot even command the edifice of the novel.

11. It should also be noted that Mary Shelley is unable to construct a wholly successful image of the family. Walton's family, for instance, amounts to one married sister, who is the addressee of all his letters. It is as if the 'domestic affection' celebrated by the author began being obscured by the shadow of incest.

12. This clarifies another aspect of the fear aroused by the monster. As Kant had already written in the *Analytic of the Sublime*: 'An object is monstrous where by its size it defeats the end that forms its concept.' (*Critique of Judgement*, Oxford 1952, p. 100). The monster's size prevents it from fitting into the precise and limited

compartments of the pre-capitalist division of labour. The fact 'defeats its concept', in other words, its 'humanity', making it - precisely - a monster. It can only use its immense productive capacity at night, concealed, for mere survival. It would make a capitalist happy (and it practically goes so far as to say as much itself): but there are no capitalists in the novel.

13. Harker himself is forced to recognize this clear-headed bourgeois rationality in Dracula, after the latter has saved him from the purely destructive desire of his lovers: 'surely it is maddening to think that of all the foul things that lurk in this hateful place the Count is the least dreadful to me: that to him alone I can look for safety, even though this be only whilst I can *serve his purpose*.' (My italics). So *un-cruel* is Dracula that, once he has made use of Harker, he lets him go free without having harmed a hair on his head.

14. Before Dracula there had been another literary character who had lost his shadow: Peter Schlemihl. He had exchanged it for a purse full of money. But he soon realizes that money can only give him one thing: more money, still more money, all the money he wants (the purse is bottomless). But *only* money. The only desire Peter can satisfy is thus the abstract and immaterial desire for money. His mutilated and unnatural body denies him access to tangible, material, corporeal desires. So great a scandal is it that once the girl he loves (and who loves him) finds out, she refuses to marry him. Peter runs away in desparation: he can no longer love. (Just like Dracula: "'You yourself have never loved; you never love!' . . . Then the Count turned . . . and said in a soft whisper: - "Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so? . . .") Chamisso's story is a fable (*The Marvellous Story of Peter Schlemihl*); published in 1813, the same period as *Frankenstein*, it too revolves around the conflict between the spread of capitalism (Peter) and feudal social structures (Mina and her village). As in *Frankenstein*, capitalism appears in it as a fortuitous episode, involving just one individual and lasting only a short time. But the underlying intuition has an extraordinary power; it stands on a par with the punishment of Midas, for whom gold prevented consumption.

15. Marx, *Capital* Volume I, Harmondsworth 1976, p. 342.

16. ' . . . the Un-Dead are strong. [Dracula] have (*sic*) always the strength in his hand of twenty men; even we four who gave our strength to Miss Lucy it also is all to him' (p. 183). One cannot help recalling the words of Mephistopheles analysed by Marx: 'Six stallions, say, I can afford, / Is not their strength my property? / I tear along, a sporting lord, / As if their legs belonged to me.' (quoted in 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', p. 376).

17. Marx, *Capital* Volume I, p. 741.

18. Marx, 'The Property of Philosophy' (1847) in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 6, London 1976, p. 195.

19. This is the case with all the minor characters in the novel. These (the stevedores and lawyers, sailors and estate agents, porters and accountants) are always more than satisfied with their dealings with Dracula, for the simple reason that Dracula pays well and in cash, or even facilitates the work. Dracula is one of them: an excellent master for wage-earners, an excellent partner for big businessmen. They understand one another so well, they are so useful to each other, that Dracula never behaves like a vampire with them: he does not need to suck their blood, he can buy it.

20. The finishing touch is Jonathan Harker's short 'Note', written seven years after the events have ended. Harker informs the reader that he and Mina have christened their son 'Quincey', and that 'His mother holds, I know, the secret belief that some of our brave friend's spirit has passed into him.' (p. 336). The American

outsider Morris is 'recycled' within the triumphant Victorian family, not without being made to undergo a final tacit humiliation (which would delight a linguist): his name – Quincy, as appears from the signature of the only note in his own handwriting – is transformed, by the addition of an 'e', into the much more English Quincy.

21. In Stoker's novel the function of Van Helsing describes a parabola: absent at the beginning, dominant at the centre, removed to the margins of the action at the end. His aid is indeed irreplaceable, but once she has obtained it, Britain can settle matters herself: it is indicative that he is only a spectator at the killing of Dracula. In this, yet again, Fisher's *Dracula* betrays the ideological intention of the original: the great final duel between Dracula and Van Helsing belongs to a very different system of oppositions from Stoker's, where there prevails the conflict between Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, Frugality and Luxury, Reason and Superstition (see David Pirie, *A Heritage of Horror. The English Gothic Cinema 1947–1972*, London 1973, p. 51 ff.).

22. The story of Lucy illuminates the interrelationship of the characters. In the opening chapters, no fewer than three of the main characters (Seward, Holmwood and Morris) enter into competition for her hand. In other words, Lucy objectively turns these men into *rivals*, she divides them, and this makes things easier for Dracula who, making them by contrast be friends again, prepares her downfall. The moral is that, when faced with the vampire, one must curb all individual appetites and interests. Poor Lucy, who acts solely on her desires and impulses (she is a woman who *chooses* her own husband, without mentioning it to her mother!) is first killed by Dracula and then, for safety's sake, run through the heart by her fiancé on what, going by the calendar, should have been their wedding night (and the whole episode, as we shall see, oozes sexual meanings).

23. Pirie, p. 84.

24. For Hegel too love originates from 'the surrender of the person to an individual of the opposite sex, the sacrifice of one's independent consciousness'. But then Hegel dialectically resolves and pacifies this self-negation from which love originates: 'this losing, in the other, one's consciousness of self . . . this self-forgetfulness in which the lover . . . finds the roots of his being in another, and yet in this other does entirely enjoy precisely himself.' (*Aesthetics*, 1820–29, Oxford 1975, pp. 562–3.)

25. Stendhal, *De L'Amour* (1822), Paris 1957, p. 118.

26. Marie Bonaparte, *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe. A Psychoanalytic Interpretation*, London 1949, pp. 209–10.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 218–9.

28. 'Totem and Taboo' (1913) in Freud, Volume XIII, p. 61. See also the essay 'The "Uncanny"' (1919): 'Most likely our fear still implies the old belief that the dead man becomes the enemy of his survivor and seeks to carry him off to share his new life with him.' (*Ibid.*, XVII, p. 242).

29. 'The "Uncanny"', p. 241.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 249.

31. Mary Shelley claimed to have 'dreamt' the story of Frankenstein. And one of the passages that stands out in the text is Frankenstein's dream, which takes place immediately after the creation of the monster. At the moment when, in the dream, he is about to kiss Elizabeth, she changes into his mother's corpse. Frankenstein wakes to find the monster by his bed, in an unmistakable maternal pose: 'He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes . . . were fixed on me . . . a grin wrinkled his cheeks . . . one hand was stretched out.' (p. 52). Other things about the monster suggest a reworking of the mother figure: the fact that he is a dead man who comes

back to life; his physical 'bigness'; his language, improbably more 'archaic' than Frankenstein's. The analogy, however, rests mostly on the *function* of the monster within the plot: he kills Elizabeth, punishing Frankenstein for having married her and thereby avenging his mother, killed by the scarlet fever she had caught from Elizabeth, with whom her son is now getting ready to 'betray' her. The situation recalls many of Poe's tales.

32. Think of Renfield, Seward's patient who is given considerable space in *Dracula*. Seward examines his case with the utmost care, draws on all the known psychiatric techniques, even forms new hypotheses, and calls Van Helsing for a second opinion: nothing – they draw a blank. Then, all of a sudden, the penny drops: Renfield is the servant of Dracula.

33. Orlando, pp. 138 and 140; my italics.

34. That a desire or a fear underlie the uncanny is entirely secondary for Freud. The terror is caused by the sudden re-emergence of something repressed: having established this, 'it must be a matter of indifference whether what is uncanny was itself originally frightening or whether it carried some *other* effect.' ('The "Uncanny"', p. 241). This ambivalent unconscious origin confers a peculiar function on the literature of terror. The distinction suggested by Freud in his study of jokes – 'Dreams serve predominantly for the avoidance of unpleasure, jokes for the attainment of pleasure' – and extended by Orlando to literature (which also functions for the attainment of pleasure, for the manifestation of a repressed desire), becomes highly uncertain. In the literature of terror the two functions – avoidance of unpleasure and attainment of pleasure – seem to balance each other perfectly. Indeed the one exists for the other: a terror novel that doesn't frighten doesn't give pleasure either. In this respect, and not just because of its contents, the literature of terror seems to be that whose workings approximate most closely to those of the dream: and like the dream it 'imposes' an obligatory context of enjoyment: alone, at night, in bed.

35. D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, London 1924, chapter 6.

36. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic. A structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, Ithaca 1975, pp. 76–7.

37. The ideological aim of *Frankenstein* recalls that assigned by Kant to the sublime. 'If we are to estimate nature as dynamically sublime, it must be represented as a source of fear'. But Kant adds: '*One who is in a state of fear* [cannot] play the part of a judge of the sublime of nature . . . [The sight of natural catastrophes], *provided our position is secure*, is all the more attractive for its fearfulness; and we readily call these objects sublime, because they raise the forces of the soul *above the height of vulgar commonplace* . . . Sublimity, therefore, does not reside in any of the things in nature, but only in our own mind'. (Kant, pp. 109, 110, 114; my italics). Kant already indicates the two paths open to the literature of terror: the path of the 'sublime', which does not arouse fear but moral reflections, and is confined to educated readers; and the path of the 'terrible', which negates reflection and is reserved for the mass. 'In fact, without the development of moral ideas, that which, thanks to preparatory culture, we call sublime, merely strikes the untutored man as terrifying.' (*Ibid.*, p. 115).

38. Roland Barthes, 'Structural Analysis of Narratives' in *Image-Music-Text*, London 1977, p. 119.

39. Barthes describes suspense thus: 'on the one hand, by keeping a sequence open (through emphatic procedures of delay and renewal), it reinforces the contact with the reader (the listener), has a manifestly phatic function; while on the other, it



offers the threat of an uncompleted sequence, of an open paradigm . . . , that is to say of a logical disturbance which is consumed with anxiety and pleasure (all the more so because it is always made right in the end). "Suspense", therefore, is a game with structure, designed to endanger and glorify it, constituting a veritable "thrilling" of intelligibility'. (Ibid., p. 119). Once we realize who Dracula is, once the logical disorder is smoothed over, Stoker's novel changes from a terror novel into an adventure novel: the action is entirely taken up with journeys, duels, chases, plans of battle.

40. Adorno has observed that the 'collective norms of individual behaviour', namely the super-ego, must necessarily be irrational: 'a "conscious" super-ego would lose precisely the authority for the sake of which its apologists cling to it.' T. W. Adorno, 'Sociology and Psychology II' (1955), *New Left Review*, 47 (1968), pp. 82, 83.