THE PHILOSOPHY OF HORROR

or

PARADOXES OF THE HEART

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appearance of Gray—seeming to come out of nowhere—is a kind of supernatural revenge, a cosmic pang of conscience, but it does not involve anything remotely resembling a monster.

There are, of course, many stories like this: Guy de Maupassant's "Who Knows?," in which the narrator's furniture inexplicably disappears and reappears; Richard Matheson's "The Edge," in which Donald Marshal, gradually and with mounting anxiety, appears to learn that he is a *doppelganger* from a parallel universe; David Morrell's "Mumbo Jumbo" where the reader is led step by skeptical step to the point at which one is supposed to conclude that the pagan statue actually is the source of its owner's success. Many of the episodes on the old TV series *The Twilight Zone* are of this sort. Often they are tricked out with O. Henry-type hooks. They seem to prosper best in short forms. Their conclusions often correlate with some sense of cosmic moral justice. But they need not. Such stories may involve horrific beings—e.g., the son risen from the dead in W.W. Jacobs's classic "The Monkey's Paw"; but in the main their energy is spent constructing a psychologically disturbing event of preternatural origins.[49]

One can neither deny that there are such stories nor that they are frequently grouped together with the type of fictions from which my theory has been derived. Nevertheless, I do think that there is an important distinction between this type of story—which I want to call *tales of dread*—and horror stories. Specifically, the emotional response they elicit seems to be quite different than that engendered by art-horror. The uncanny event which tops off such stories causes a sense of unease and awe, perhaps of momentary anxiety and foreboding. These events are constructed to move the audience rhetorically to the point that one entertains the idea that unavowed, unknown, and perhaps concealed and inexplicable forces rule the universe. Where art-horror involves disgust as a central feature, what might be called art-dread does not. Art-dread probably deserves a theory of its own, though I do not have one ready-to-hand. Presumably, art-dread will bear some affinities with art-horror since both traffic in the preternatural—with both supernatural and sci-fi variations. And, of course, some fictions may traffic in both art-horror and art-dread; the admixture may take a range of forms in different stories. However, the two emotions, though related, are still discriminable.

Fantastic Biologies and the Structures of Horrific Imagery

The objects of art-horror are essentially threatening and impure. The creator of horror presents creatures that are salient in respect to these attributes. In this, certain recurring strategies for designing monsters appear

A threat to normal identity

with striking regularity across the arts and media. The purpose of this section is to take note of some of the most characteristic ways in which monsters are produced for the reading and viewing public. This section could be subtitled: "How to make a monster."

Horrific monsters are threatening. This aspect of the design of horrific monsters is, I think, incontestable. They must be dangerous. This can be satisfied simply by making the monster lethal. That it kills and maims is enough. The monster may also be threatening psychologically, morally, or socially. It may destroy one's identity (William Blatty's *The Exorcist* or Guy de Maupassant's "The Horla"), seek to destroy the moral order (Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby* et al.), or advance an alternative society (Richard Matheson's *I am Legend*). Monsters may also trigger certain enduring infantile fears, such as those of being eaten or dismembered, or sexual fears, concerning rape and incest. However, in order to be threatening, it is sufficient that the monster be physically dangerous. If it produces further anxieties that is so much icing on the cake. So the creators of art-horror must be sure that the creatures in their fictions are threatening and this can be done by assuring that they are at least physically dangerous. Of course, if a monster is psychologically threatening but not physically threatening—i.e., if it's after your mind, not your body—it will still count as a horrific creature if it inspires revulsion.

Horrific creatures are also impure. Here, the means for presenting this aspect of horrific creatures are less obvious. So I will spend some time looking at the characteristic structures through which horrific impurity is portrayed.

As discussed in an earlier section concerning the definition of horror, many cases of impurity are generated by what, adapting Mary Douglas, I called interstitiality and categorical contradictoriness. Impurity involves a conflict between two or more standing cultural categories. Thus, it should come as no surprise that many of the most basic structures for representing horrific creatures are combinatory in nature.

One structure for the composition of horrific beings is *fusion*. On the simplest physical level, this often entails the construction of creatures that transgress categorical distinctions such as inside/outside, living/dead, insect/human, flesh/machine, and so on. Mummies, vampires, ghosts, zombies, and Freddie, Elm Street's premier nightmare, are fusion figures in this respect. Each, in different ways, blur the distinction between living and dead. Each, in some sense, is both living *and* dead. A fusion figure is a composite that unites attributes held to be categorically distinct and/or at odds in the cultural scheme of things in *unambiguously* one, spatio-temporally discrete entity.

The caterpillars in E.F. Benson's story of the same name are fusion figures insofar as they defy biology not only due to their extraordinary length but

also because their legs are outfitted with crab pincers. Similarly, the blighted victim in John Metcalfe's "Mr. Meldrum's Mania" falls into this category since he is a combination of a man with the Egyptian god Thoth, already a fusion creature compounding an ibis head with a human body, not to mention his moon-disk and crescent accoutrements. Lovecraft's amalgams of octopi and crustaceans with humanoid forms are paradigmatic fusion figures, as are the pig-men in William Hope Hodgson's *The House on the Borderland*. Fusion examples from film would include figures such as the babies in the *It's Alive* series and the grotesqueries in *Alligator People* and *The Reptile*.

The central mark of a fusion figure is the compounding of ordinarily disjoint or conflicting categories in an integral, spatio-temporally unified indiyidual. On this view, many of the characters in possession stories are fusion figures. They may be inhabited by many demons—"I am legion"—or one. But as long as they are composite beings, locatable in an unbroken spatio-temporal continuum with a single identity, we shall count them as fusion figures.

Also, I tend to see the Frankenstein monster, especially as he is represented in the Universal Pictures' movie cycle, as a fusion figure. For not only is it emphasized that he is made from distinct bodies, along with electrical attachments, but the series presents him as if he had different brains imposed upon him—first a criminal's and later Igor's. In this, the films appear to uphold the unlikely hypothesis that somehow the monster has a kind of continuing identity—one that is perhaps innocent and benign—in spite of the brain it has. Obviously, this is, to say the least, paradoxical, but if we allow the fiction of brain transplants, why quibble about whether the monster is in some sense the still the same monster it would have been had it not had a criminal's or Igor's brain foisted upon it?

The fusion aspect of the Frankenstein monster becomes quite hysterical in Hammer Films' *And Frankenstein Created Woman*. Dr. Frankenstein transfers the soul of his dead assistant Hans into the body of Hans's dead, beloved Christina, and Hans, in Christina's body, seduces and dispatches the hooligans who had driven Christina (i.e., Christina unified in mind and body) to her death.

The fusion figure may find its prototype in the sort of symbolic structure that Freud called the *collective figure* or *condensation* with respect to dreams. Freud writes that one way

> . . . in which a 'collective figure' can be produced for the purposes of dream-condensation [is] by uniting the actual features of two or more people into a single dream-image. It was in this way that Dr. M. of my dream was constructed. He bore the name of Dr. M., he spoke and acted like him; but his physical characteristics and his malady belonged to someone else, namely to my

> eldest brother. One single feature, his pale appearance, was doubly determined, since it was common to both of them in real life.
>
> Dr. R. in my dream about my uncle with the yellow beard was a similar composite figure. But in his case the dream-image was constructued in yet another way. I did not combine the features of one person with those of another and in the process omit from the memory-picture certain features of each of them. What I did was to adopt the procedure by means of which Galton produced family portraits: namely by projecting two images onto a single plate, so that certain features common to both are emphasized, while those which fail to fit in with one another cancel one another out and are indistinct in the picture. In my dream about my uncle the fair beard emerged prominently from a face which belonged to two people and which was consequently blurred. . . ."[50]

For Freud, the condensatory or collective figure superimposes, in the manner of a photograph, two or more entities in one individual. Similarly, the fusion figure of art-horror is a composite figure, conflating distinct *types* of beings. In his discussion of condensation, Freud stresses that the fused elements have something in common. However, in art-horror what the combined elements have in common need not be salient—in T.E.D. Klein's "Nadelman's God," the horrific entity has literally been constructed from a hodgepodge of garbage. As in the associationist writings of the British Empiricists, the fantastic fusion beings of horror are colligations of ontologically or biologically separate orders.[51] They are single figures in whom distinct and often clashing types of elements are superimposed or condensed, resulting in entities that are impure and repulsive.

Freud notes that the collective structures we find in the dream-work are not unlike ". . . the composite animals invented by the folk imagination of the Orient."[52] Presumably, Freud has in mind here figures like the winged lions of ancient Assyria. Other examples of this type of condensation-figure would include the gargoyles on medieval cathedrals, the demon-priest (part rodent, part man) in the central panel of Hieronymus Bosch's *Temptation of St. Anthony* triptych, the chickens with the heads of human babies in Goya's "Ya van desplumadoes" in *Los Caprichos,* and characters like The Thing (a.k.a. Ben Grimm)—literally a man of stone—in the Marvel comic book series *The Fantastic Four.*

Of course, in these examples, the elements that go into the condensation or fusion are visually perceptible. However, this is not necessary. One might condense different ontological orders such as the animate and inanimate—e.g., a haunted house—and here nothing that meets the naked eye signals the fusion. And, furthermore, whether any of the preceding examples shall count as *horrific* fusion depends upon whether or not, in the representational context in which they appear, the beings so concocted match the criteria of art-horror.

As a means of composing horrific beings, fusion hinges upon conflating,

combining, or condensing distinct and/or opposed categorical elements in a spatio-temporally continuous monster. In contrast, another popular means for creating interstitial beings is *fission*. In fusion, categorically contradictory elements are fused or condensed or superimposed in one unified spatio-temporal being whose identity is homogeneous. But with fission, the contradictory elements are, so to speak, distributed over *different,* though metaphysically related, identities. The type of creatures that I have in mind here include *doppelgangers,* alter-egos, and werewolves.

Werewolves, for example, violate the categorical distinction between humans and wolves. In this case, the animal and the human inhabit the same body (understood as spatially locatable protoplasm); however, they do so at *different times*. The animal and the wolf identities are not temporally continuous, though presumably their protoplasm is numerically the same; at a given point in time (the rise of the full moon), the body, inhabited by the human, is turned over to the wolf. The human identity and the wolf identity are not fused, but, so to speak, they are sequenced. The human and the wolf are spatially continuous, occupying the same body, but the identity changes or alternates over time; the two identities—and the opposed categories they represent—do not overlap temporally in the same body. That protoplasm is heterogeneous in terms of accommodating different, mutually exclusive identities at different times.

The werewolf figure embodies a categorical contradiction between man and animal which it distributes over time. Of course, what is being said of werewolves here applies to shape changers of every variety. In Kipling's "Mark of the Beast," the victim is on his way to becoming a leopard, while in Machen's "The Novel of the Black Seal," the boy-idiot seems to be transmutating into a sea lion. One form of fission, then, *divides* the fantastic being into two or more (categorically distinct) identities that alternatively possess the body in question. Call this temporal fission.[53] Temporal fission can be distinguished from fusion in that the categories combined in the figure of the fantastic being are not temporally simultaneous; rather, they are split or broken or distributed over time.

A second mode of fission distributes the categorical conflict over space through the creation of doubles. Examples here include the portrait in Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray,* the dwarf in the cavalier's body in Mary Shelley's "Transformation," and the doppelgangers in movies like *The Student of Prague* and *Warning Shadows*. Structurally, what is involved in spatial fission is a process of *multiplication,* i.e., a character or set of characters is multiplied into one or more new facets, each standing for another aspect of the self, generally one that is either hidden, ignored, repressed, or denied by the character who has been cloned. These new facets generally contradict cultural ideals (usually morally charged ones) of normality. The alter-ego represents a normatively alien aspect of the self. Most of my examples so

far employ some mechanism of reflection—a portrait, a mirror, shadows—as the pretext for doubling. But this sort of fission figure can appear without such devices.

In the movie *I Married A Monster From Outer Space,* a young bride begins to suspect that her new husband is not quite himself. Somehow he's different from the man she used to date. And, she's quite right. Her boyfriend was kidnapped by invaders from another planet on his way back from a bachelor party and he was replaced by an alien. This double,[54] however, initially lacks feelings—the essential characteristic of being human in fifties sci-fi films of this sort—and his bride intuits this. Thus, the categorical distinction between humanity and inhumanity—marked in terms of the possession versus the lack of feelings—is projected symbolically by splitting the boyfriend in two, with each corresponding entity standing for a categorically distinct order of being.

The basic story of *I Married A Monster From Outer Space*—its sci-fi elements aside—resembles a very specific paranoid delusion called the Capgras syndrome. The delusion involves the patient's belief that his or her parents, lovers, etc. have become minatory *doppelgangers.* This enables the patient to deny his fear or hatred of a loved one by splitting the loved one in half, creating a bad version (the invader) and a good one (the victim). The new relation of marriage in *I Married A Monster From Outer Space* appears to engender a conflict, perhaps over sexuality, in the wife that is expressed through the fission figure.[55] Just as condensation suggests a model for fusion figuration, splitting as a psychic trope of denial may be the root prototype for spatial fission in art-horror, organzing conflicts, categorical and thematic, through the multiplication of characters.

Fission, then, in horror occurs in two major forms—spatial fission and temporal fission. Temporal fission— which the split between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde exemplifies—*divides characters in time*—while spatial fission—for instance, the case of doppelgangers—*multiplies characters in space.* Here characters become symbols for categorically distinct or opposed elements. In the case of fusion, on the other hand, categorically distinct or opposed elements are conflated or colligated or condensed into a single, spatio-temporally continuous entity whose identity is stable. Both fission and fusion are symbolic structures that facilitate—in different ways—the linkage of distinct and/or opposed categories, thereby providing vehicles for projecting the themes of interstitiality, categorical contradictoriness, and impurity. The fantastic biologies of horrific monsters are, to a surprising extent, reducible to the symbolic structures of fusion and fission.

In order to make a horrific monster—in terms of the impurity requirement—it is enough to link distinct and/or opposed categories by fission or fusion. In terms of fusion, one can put claws on Rosemary's baby, the devil in Regan, or a fly's head on Vincent Price's body. By fission, discrete and/or

Zombie as fusion + spatial fission (double/mirror/shadow)

contradictory categories can be connected by having different biological or ontological orders take turns inhabiting one body, or by populating the fiction with numerically different but otherwise identical bodies, each representing one of the opposed categories. In the most fundamental sense of fusion and fission, these structures are meant to apply to the organization of opposed cultural categories, generally of a deep biological or ontological sort: human/reptile, living/dead, etc. But it is also true that in much horror, especially that which is considered to be classic, the opposition of such cultural categories in the biology of the horrific creatures portend further oppositions, oppositions that might be thought of in terms of thematic conflicts or antinomies which, in turn, are generally deep-seated in the culture in which the fiction has been produced.

For example, the horrific creatures in Blackwood's celebrated "Ancient Sorceries" are were-cats. An entire French town goes feline, at night indulging all manner of unmentionable (and unmentioned) debaucheries in the presence of Satan. In terms of my model, these creatures are the product of temporal fission. But this division—between cat and human—heralds other oppositions in the context of the story. An Englishman (perhaps the reincarnation of a cat man from bygone days) visits the town and is gradually tempted to join the coven. The opposition of cat versus human plays into further oppositions—sensual versus staid, nondirective activity versus conscientious, female versus male, and maybe even French versus British. That is, the salient opposition of different elements at the categorical level of biology might be thought of as prefiguring a series of further thematic oppositions.

Another example along the same lines would be Val Lewton's film *Cat People*. Irena is a shape-changer whose divided self is not only categorically fissured but also represents the opposition of chaste love versus violent sexuality. In terms of fusion, the vampire in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* may be a case in point; for the opposition between living and dead in the monster's make-up portends a further thematic conflict concerning lesbianism.[56]

The notions of fission and fusion are meant to apply strictly to the biological and ontological categorical ingredients that go into making monsters. So it is sufficient for a being to be part man and part snake for it to qualify as a horrific fusion figure, or for a woman to be a lady by day and a troll or gorgon by night in order for her to qualify as a horrific fission figure. However, it is frequently the case that the oppositional biologies of fantastic beings correlate to an oppositional thematics. This is generally the case with what are thought to be the better specimens of horror. As a result, much of the work of the critic of horror, as opposed to the theoretician of horror, will be to trace the thematic conflicts that appear in her objects of study. That the creatures are fission or fusion figures may be less interesting than

what this dimension of categorical interstitiality prefigures at the thematic level.[57] However, for purposes of theoretically identifying the symbolic structures through which myriad monsters are made, the notions of fission and fusion are crucial.

Along with fission and fusion, another recurring symbolic structure for generating horrific monsters is the *magnification* of entities or beings already typically adjudged impure or disgusting within the culture. In the concluding paragraphs of M.R. James's "The Ash-Tree," the gardener looks into the hollow of a tree trunk, his face contorts "with an incredulous terror and loathing," and he cries out with a "dreadful voice" before fainting. What he has seen is a poisonous spider—spawned from a witch's body for the purposes of revenge—that is as big as a man's head.[58] The spider, already a phobic object in our culture, exceeds in horribleness not only because of its supernatural provenance and unearthly abilities but especially because of its increase in size beyond the normal.

Things that creep and crawl—and that tend to make our flesh creep and crawl—are prime candidates for the objects of art-horror; such creatures already disgust, and augmenting their scale increases their physical dangerousness. In Stephen King's "Jerusalem's Lot," a hellish creature is summoned by means of an unholy book.

> Calvin pushed me and I tottered, the church whirling before me, and fell to the floor. My head crashed against the edge of an upturned pew, and red fire filled my head—yet seemed to clear it.
>
> I groped for the sulphur matches I had brought.
>
> Subterranean thunder filled the place. Plaster fell. The rusted bell in the steeple pealed a choked devil's clarion in sympathetic vibration.
>
> My match flared. I touched it to the book just as the pulpit exploded upward in a rending explosion of wood. A huge black maw was discovered beneath; Cal tottered on the edge, his hands held out, his face distended in a wordless scream that I shall hear forever.
>
> And then there was a huge surge of gray, vibrating flesh. The smell became a nightmare tide. It was a huge outpouring of a viscid, pustulant jelly, a huge and awful form that seemed to skyrocket from the very bowels of the ground. And yet, with a sudden horrible comprehension which no man can have known, I perceived *that it was but one ring, one segment, of a monster worm that had existed eyeless for years in the chambered darkness beneath that abominated church!*
>
> The book flared alight in my hands, and the Thing seemed to scream soundlessly above me. Calvin was struck glancingly and flung the length of the church like a doll with a broken neck.

Monsters of the magnified phobia variety were quite popular in fifties's movies (undoubtedly, they were suggested by the first radiation experiments on seeds). Some examples include: *Them!*, *Tarantula*, *Attack of the Crab*

Monsters, The Deadly Mantis, Giant Gila Monster, Monster From Green Hell, Attack of the Giant Leeches, The Spider, Black Scorpion, The Fly, The Monster That Challenged The World, The Giant Spider Invasion, Mothra, The Return of the Fly, the humungus octopus in *It Came From Beneath The Sea,* the big crawlers in *Rodan,* the giant grasshoppers in *The Beginning of the End,* and the proportionately towering black widow in *The Incredible Shrinking Man,* among others. Insofar as detached body parts can elicit revulsion, we encounter the *Crawling Eye* attempting to conquer the world. More recently, giant ants have eaten Joan Collins in *Empire of the Ants* and outsized rats have surrounded Marjoe Gortner in *Food of the Gods.* Of course, one cannot magnify just anything and hope for a horrific creature; few seem to have been convinced by the monster rabbits in *Night of the Lepus.* What needs to be magnified are things that are already potentially disturbing and disgusting.[59]

For the purposes of art-horror, one may exploit the repelling aspect of existing creatures not only by magnifying them, but also by *massing* them. In Richard Lewis's novel *Devil's Coach Horse* armies of bloodthirsty beetles are on the rampage, while the identity of the monstrous masses in Guy Smith's *Killer Crabs* and Peter Tremayne's *Ants* requires no further comment. These swarms of crawling things, grouped for an ultimate showdown with humanity, are, of course, really fantastical beings, invested with strategic abilities, virtual invulnerability, a hankering for human flesh, and often mutated powers unknown to present-day biological science. Carl Stephenson's "Leiningen versus the Ants"—surely the *Moby Dick* of the insect genre—is based on the scientifically correct observation that certain types of ants forage in large co-ordinated collectives, but he imbues these ants with qualities and powers that experts of the day would have found unprecedented.[60] They are hunting people and horses—rather than other insects like spiders, cockroaches, and grasshoppers—and the story strongly suggests that they knock out Leiningen's weir *in order to* cross the channel. Saul Bass's movie *Phase IV* presents the army of ants as a superior intelligence while in *Kingdom of the Spiders* the invading tarantulas enwrap an entire town in their web for purposes of food storage; in *Kiss of the Tarantulas,* the spiders become hit-men. As with the case of magnification, with massification it is not the case that any kind of entity can be grouped into horrific hordes. It must be the sort of thing we are already prone to find repellent—a point made comically by *The Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* (and its sequel, *The Return of. . . .*). Massing mountains of already disgusting creatures, unified and guided by unfriendly purposes, generates art-horror by augmenting the threat posed by these antecedently phobic objects.

Fantastic biologies, linking different and opposed cultural categories, can be constructed by means of fission and fusion, while the horrific potential of already disgusting and phobic entities can be accentuated by means of magnification and massification. These are primary structures for the con-

struction of horrific creatures. These structures pertain primarily to what might be thought of as the biologies of horrific monsters. However, another structure, not essentially connected to the biology of these creatures, warrants discussion in a review of the presentation of horrific beings, for though not a matter of biology, it is an important recurring strategy in the staging of monsters. This strategy might be called horrific metonymy.

Often the horror of horrific creatures is not something that can be perceived by the naked eye or that comes through a description of the look of the monster. Frequently, in such cases, the horrific being is *surrounded* by objects that we antecedently take to be objects of disgust and/or phobia. In "The Spectre Bride," The Wandering Jew, a fusion figure, does not initially appear disgusting; however, the wedding is associated by contiguity with disgust:

> [The Wandering Jew] "Poor girl, I am leading thee indeed to our nuptials; but the priest will be death, thy parents the mouldering skeletons that rot in heaps around; and the witnesses [of] our union, the lazy worms that revel on the carious bones of the dead. Come, my young bride, the priest is impatient for his victim." As they proceeded, a dim blue light moved swiftly before them, and displayed at the extremity of the churchyard the portals of a vault. It was open, and they entered it in silence. The hollow wind came rushing through the gloomy abode of the dead; and on every side were the mouldering remnants of coffins, which dropped piece by piece upon the damp earth. Every step they took was on a dead body; and the bleached bones rattled horribly beneath their feet. In the centre of the vault rose a heap of unburied skeletons, whereon was seated a figure too awful even for the darkest imagination to conceive. As they approached it, the hollow vault rung with a hellish peal of laughter; and every mouldering corpse seemed endued with unearthly life.

Here, though the horrific bridegroom himself doesn't elicit disgust perceptually, everything that surrounds him and his hellish ministrations is impure by the lights of the culture. In a similar vein, Dracula, both in literature and on stage and screen, is associated with vermin; in the novel, he commands armies of rats. And undoubtedly, the association of horrific beings with disease and contamination is related to the tendency to surround horrific beings with further impurities.

In Clive Barker's *The Damnation Game*—a sort of update of *Melmoth the Wanderer*—the Mephistophelian character Mamoulian is ostensibly normal-looking but his associated minion, the Razor-Eater is a hulking zombie undergoing graphically described putrefaction throughout the novel, a feature made more unsettling by his always messy indulging of his sweet tooth. Likewise, the child possessed by the spirit of Beth in John Saul's *Suffer the Children,* though not outwardly disgusting herself, is surrounded by stomach-turning ceremonies such as a make-believe tea party attended by blood-splattered chil-

dren, the skeleton of Beth, and a decapitated cat in a doll's outfit whose head keeps rolling off its shoulders. With Mamoulian and Beth the fantastic being is not perceptually repulsive but is linked by metonymy to perceptually disgusting things. Of course, even those creatures like Dracula though they may not, in the main, be portrayed as *perceptually* loathsome, are nevertheless still disgusting and impure; one doesn't require perceptually detectable grotesquerie in order to be reviling. Dracula strikes Harker as sickening though his appearance is not literally monstrous. In such cases, the association of such impure creatures with perceptually pronounced gore or other disgusting trappings is a means of underscoring the repulsive nature of the being.

In James Herbert's novel *The Magic Cottage,* the villainous magus Mycroft is a stately, altogether human figure who has at his disposal agencies marked by incredible noxiousness. In the final confrontation with the narrator, he summons them: the "carpet was ripping explosively all around me, and sluglike monsters oozed over the edges in shiny slimes. Hands that were scabbed and dripping pus clawed at the frayed carpet in an effort to drag the rest of their life forms out into the open. Those membranes, full of wriggling life, quivered their snouts in the air before curling over the edge. Wispy black smoke tendrils drifted up in lazy spirals, and these were full of diseased microorganisms, the corrupting evil that roamed the depths, subversives that searched for ways to surface, intent on finding exposure, definition—*actuality*. These were the infiltrating substances of evil."

Horrific metonymy need not be restricted to cases where the monsters do not look gruesome; an already misshapen creature can be associated with entities already antecedently thought of in terms of impurity and filth. Think of Murnau's *Nosferatu* and the remake by Werner Herzog, where the vampire is linked to unclean, crawling things. Similarly, zombies with great gobs of phlegm dangling from their lips exemplify horrific metonymy.

Fusion, fission, magnification, massification and horrific metonymy are the major tropes for presenting the monsters of art-horror.[61] Fusion and fission are means for constructing horrific biologies; magnification and massification are means for augmenting the powers of already disgusting and phobic creatures. Horrific metonymy is a means of emphasizing the impure and disgusting nature of the creature—from the outside, so to speak—by associating said being with objects and entities that are already reviled: body parts, vermin, skeletons, and all manner of filth. The horrific creature is essentially a compound of danger and disgust and each of these structures provides a means of developing these attributes in tandem.

Summary and Conclusion

Throughout the first part of this study, I have attempted to characterize the nature of the genre of horror. I have presumed that the genre of horror