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Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti: nastavnički smjer
(dvopredmetni)

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Zadar, 2019.

Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Antonija Štefek,** ovime izjavljujem da je moj **diplomski** rad pod naslovom **The Transformation of the Self: Analysis of the Body in Clive Barker's Splatterpunk Fiction** rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

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Zadar, 12. lipanj 2019.

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1. Introduction

One of the most powerful and strongest human emotions is fear. Horror comes from the Latin word *horrere* meaning to bristle, shake or be terrified and as a mode of writing it has been employed in many forms of narrative throughout history to elicit fear. As such it has been a powerful tool to create narratives that not only reflect what is disgusting and vile but are also able to convey ideas about conventional categories of human existence and challenge the way those categories are perceived. Although one can find horror narratives in texts such as myths, fairytales, religious texts and others, it is within the eighteenth and nineteenth century literature of terror, where the modern horror fiction can find its roots. Within the span of two centuries of tales of terror defined by supernatural forces and monsters hidden in the shadows of antiquated spaces that terrorize the soul, helped form tales of horror whose abjects in form of vicious monsters and humans with appetites that threaten the body and its identity. Clive Barker's horror, that is, splatterpunk fiction contain tales of horrific corporeality not only to shock with horrors of flesh and body decay, but also to evoke a deeper sense of the possibilities, transcendence and transformation of the body in order to break taboos and force a new way of thinking about the condition of being flesh and blood.

The aim of this paper is therefore to explore how the characters transform through their own body or the body of the other and how this affects the perception of their identities and the world surrounding them. In order to achieve this, this paper is divided into two major sections. The first section tries to give an explanation of the terms "horror" and "terror", as well as how these terms fit within the scope of modern horror fiction and the Gothic. The second section is furthermore divided into four sections, the first exploring earlier Gothic writings, the second section deals with how these writings developed in the America, the third section shows how horror started to take shape with writings of Shelly and the Victorian period and lastly the fourth section gives a short description of how horror started to become

the prevalent mode of writing. The second major section gives a description of the splatterpunk genre and Barker's general views of the body. What follows is an analysis of several short stories, his novella "Hellbound Heart" as well as the novel *The Damnation Game* in terms of the body, its transformation or existence and how these affect the characters' views of their own bodies and the world that surrounds them. The Conclusion offers an overview and presents a short summary of the main findings of the paper.

2. Defining Horror and Terror

The continuous prevalence of horror in various forms throughout history is that it is rooted in emotion, in feelings of disgust and fear. Gelder notes that horror texts have real socio-cultural effects, while providing ways of defining what is evil, monstrous or hidden in society (1) which include texts of the modern horror, texts written in the eighteenth and nineteenth century gothic literature (4) as well as rethorics produced by media commentators, philosophers, various government authorities etc (1). Smith furthermore notes, that the term "Gothic" is often replaced with the term "horror", which seems to be partly due to the recognition that certain plots revolving around aristocratic villains or ruined castles for example, are not common in modern writings (140). However, that is not to say that the Gothic and modern horror are completely separate from each other as the latter deals with modern world anxieties and still draws inspiration from Gothic tradition. Stephen King's novels for example often depict "problems generated within small American towns where the social limitations of such an environment become emblematic of wider issues relating to social and moral obligations" (Smith 140) and Barker often borrows traditional Gothic elements and re-imagines them in the context of the body.

For Cavallaro, terror is linked to fear caused by some unknown force and horror to fear caused by visible images (vii) and he claims that they are not separate from each other,

but are "constantly interacting phenomena" (viii). Carroll claims that horror as a genre is modern and that the immediate source is the German *Schauerroman* and the *French noir* considering Horace Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1765) to be the inaugural Gothic novel of relevance to the modern horror genre (4). Smith writes that the Gothic began with Horace's novel and suggests it transferred into the twentieth century onto film and as Gothic elements in novels such as Stephen King's *Carrie* (1974). There are many views and theories on the Gothic and the modern horror genre, whether the Gothic developed into the modern horror genre or still prevails today.

Many critics agree that the historical Gothic stretches from the 1760s to 1790s, other critics give their endpoint around 1820 with Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (Cooper 5). After that, according to Cooper "Gothic" turns into "little-g" gothic that borrows from conventions of eighteen century Gothic (5). Furthermore, while Smith for example refers to Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as belonging to the Gothic, Cooper classifies them as neo-gothic, further explaining that the Gothic morphed into the horror novel and horror film. In view of this, while the eighteenth and nineteenth century Gothic does not express anxieties in the same way, its many elements are still present today in the writings of "horror authors" including Clive Barker.

To sum up, horror which is often associated with feelings of fear evoked by visual disgust is closely connected with terror which one feels when confronted with the idea of the horror being realised and what changes might result in the identity and surrounding realities. Therefore, it is important to understand from where horror had its roots and how it developed which is why the following section gives a brief history of the eighteen and nineteenth century Gothic as well as a description of how it helped develop modern horror fiction, in particular, the splatterpunk subgenre in literature.

3. Terror Gothic

The Gothic had its traditions in "medieval romances, Renaissance tragedies, and early experiments in the novel based on the romance tradition" (Cooper 5) but started its tradition in the eighteenth century.

As previously mentioned, the rise of the Gothic began with Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe. At the time the values were being shaped by privileged forms of culture and art with the "idea of cultivation and civilised behaviours, social mores that were entwined with public and domestic duty, harmony and propriety" (Botting 14). The ideas of rationality were challenged by British Romantics such as Coleridge, Keats and Shelly by using the Gothic to express the sublime, specifically transgressive and frightening feelings of terror which are the most powerful, according to Burke, and to emphasize that the "the worlds of emotion and imagination outweighed the rational "natural philosophies" (Smith 2).

The Castle of Otranto in which Walpole uses aristocratic settings and characters but also incorporates features from old poetry, drama and romance set future themes and characteristics for the Gothic novel (Botting 31). Ann Radcliffe's novels explore the idea of Catholicism as superstition and arbitrary power while her characters traverse a dangerous world of social corruption and supernatural power in isolated and ruined castles, secret vaults, and spectacular mountain ranges (Botting 41). For example in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, the protagonist Emily is married off to the Marquis Montoni who tries to get a hold of her estates by murderous means. She imagines all kinds of supernatural terrors surrounding the castle and the Marquis, but manages to escape into the safety of an aristocratic family where there are also certain ghostly machinations apparent (Botting 42). However, through a series of explanations the mysteries surrounding the castle and the home secrets are dispelled, the man she loves Valancourt returns and domesticity is restored (Botting 43).

It is important to mention that Radcliffe favours terror over horror, as she writes in her posthumously published essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry" (1826) in which she develops Burke's aesthetic theory on the sublime "as a negative experience because it reinforces transience (our passing) and insignificance (our smallness)" (Smith 12) and states that terror expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them" (Smith 26). In *The Italian* (1797) for example, Ellena is constantly put in dangerous situations, but it is her restraint and the rejection of negative feelings (terror) through "fortitude and self-control, instilled by a Protestant God, found within the sublime of one's soul rather than the convent" (Smith 27).

The Monk (1796) written by Matthew Lewis seems to be kind of an antithesis to *The Italian* in which horror seemed to emerge in greater force, as critics considered it obscene and to a kind of horror in itself (Botting 49). Unlike the discretion and reliance on terror in Radcliffe's novels *The Monk* "provides a highly visual, semi-pornographic and violent version of the Gothic world" (Smith 27). The novel revels in immorality and excess and its characters are driven by desire. Ambrosio for example, unable to exercise his desires due to the restraint put on by the Church teachings, ultimately becomes "a monster who cannot reconcile his sexual feelings with the world of the monastery" (Smith 29). Lewis warns that in a seemingly demonic world, one cannot defend themselves against the realities with sensibility, therefore seeing it as a false emotion (Smith 33).

3.1. American Gothic

In American literature, writings of authors such as Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthrone were important in shaping later modern horror.

Brown's novels examined persecution, criminality and the power and terror of the human mind while examining motivations and delusions in connection to social and aesthetic implications (Botting 75). In his novel *Wieland* (1798) Brown depicts the life of Clara and

Theodore Wieland the balance of which is disturbed by a strange voice which actually belongs to a biloquist and makes them question their beliefs (Smith 34). The story culminates with Theodore murdering his wife and children while claiming that the strange voice which told him to do it belonged to God (Smith 34). Therefore, Carwin's voice is used here as an "evil", disruptive presence that causes anxiety in other characters and it suggests that any kind of "reality" cannot be trusted (Smith 38).

Nathaniel Hawthorne demystifies Gothic representation of past and the lingering superstitions by returning to realism and placing the discourse within family and society. The story of *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) for example, centres on the theft of the land on which a family home, a gloomy and grotesque storage for ghosts, was built. The new owner-thief Pyncheon of the house dies shortly after being "cursed" by the previous owner Maule, creating a basis for local superstition (Botting 77). Two generations later, a stranger, who is the heir of old Maule, reclaims the land by marrying the youngest member of the Pyncheon family (Botting 77). As he knows the house and its past secrets well, he finds the deeds entitling him to great estates and "replaces the ghosts" with propriety and domesticity while demystifying the deaths as a result from apoplexy and not a curse (Botting 77).

The stories of Edgar Allan Poe however, could be considered a decisive break from the previous Gothic writings, as the world of darkness and gloom enters the internal realm, focusing on the individual psyche (Cavallaro 11). His morbid and macabre stories explore individual delusions and general anxieties about death by using doubles and mirrors to create effect and scientific theories to present natural horrors as the source, such as criminals rather than supernatural entities (Botting 78). The exploration and portrayal of haunting situations are often inseparable from the character's mind, so for example, in *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839) Roderick Usher's mind is directly linked to the house, so that when the house collapses so does Roderick's mind (Cavallaro 87) and in *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843) a murder

confesses his crime because he thought his victim's heart was beating beneath the floorboards, hinting at his guilty conscience (Botting 80).

3.2. From Terror to Horror

The nineteenth century was marked by rise in science and technology, as well as the concern for social and moral decline in the West. An important text of horror fiction written within this period is Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* (1818) as it challenges intellectual and philosophical ideas, while taking a sceptical approach to Romantic ideas (Smith 42). The tragic fate of an ambitious scientist and his creation is told throughout many different narrative forms and methods, while exploring the dominance of images of darkness and disunity in contrast to humanistic fantasies of light and unity, the desire to create life without the female, constrictions of family life and so on (Cavallaro 117). The Creature in the novel mirrors Victor's own desires and is a representation of "repressed energies of a deranged individual mind" (Botting 67), but he is also an eloquent and intelligent individual which questions the nature of the monstrous. According to Smith, the Creature's nature does not correspond to its appearance, which results in misconstrued images of nature to which false notions of monstrosity are being applied (45). If seeing is not natural, then everything else comes into question, from Victor's own perception to social constructs such as domestic values or moral and legal systems (Botting 68).

During the Victorian period the concerns about degeneration identified earlier in the nineteenth century were intensified in relation to threats to civilisation, whose origin scientific analysis concluded to be in the human nature of the individual (Botting 88). In a similar fashion to *Frankenstein*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) uses science, that is, "expertise in medicine and chemistry to concoct a potion that releases a new type of being from inside" (Cooper 74). According to Smith, the reason for Hyde's emergence is an empty middle-class society apparent in the main characters that

are a part of high professions, such as law or medicine (100). Hyde represents a regression to primitive and animal states as opposed to culture, progress and civilisation (Botting 91) but he also possesses a vitality lacking in other characters (Smith 101). Furthermore, the drug Jekyll creates does not separate evil from good, because "evil" is an inherent part of human nature which is why Jekyll enjoys the depravities Hyde indulges in, while Hyde hides behind the mask of a respectable member of society (Botting 92). In view of this, the novel accentuates the complex ambiguity of human identity and questions the stability of social laws, norms and morals.

While *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde* could be considered texts that use the image of the monster (the double) as a result of "irresponsible science", in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897) science is utilised to explain the strangeness of the world and the bizarre human nature (Hurly 189). The novel introduces the infiltration of darkness, secrets and madness once contained within the castle walls into the safest places in Victorian society and dramatizes the battle between the preindustrial, aristocratic despot and the self-righteous, philistine society (Cavallaro 30). The threats Dracula and his vampires present are many - from sexual deviancy and disease through the act of blood drinking to the fear of the past barbarity conquering the present civilization by means of a foreign invader (Botting 97). However, in order to defeat the vampire the hunters do in a way behave like the Count, for example, the vampire hunters give blood to Lucy, which alludes to promiscuous behaviour and they pursue him to his homeland which could be read as "forms of violence that were inherent to British colonialism" (Smith 116-117). Lastly, although *Dracula* can be read from many different theories and viewpoints, it certainly does not represent the double as something external, but rather, "a reality, however submerged, that is inside all of us (Cavallaro 183).

According to the themes, settings and elements contained in these texts, it should be evident that they belong to the Gothic tradition. However, considering the abundance of descriptions of monstrous abhuman bodies and the characters' disgusted responses to them, that is, the insistence on the corporeality of the body (Hurley 192), one might argue that fiction of fear slowly puts horror at its centre rather than fear. The introduction of science and description of monsters, hideous primal doubles and vampires blend the traditional Gothic with shocking horror, thus making it difficult to separate terror from horror.

3.3. Towards the Body

In the twentieth century the ongoing development of science and technology and its effects on society and the individual constituted a perfect ground for the development of "modern horror". In this "postmodern condition" as Botting calls it, loss of identity and alienation from the self and the society resulted from "dehumanised environments, machinic doubles and violent, psychotic fragmentation (…) linked to a growing disaffection with the structures and dominant forms of modernity (102). As a result, reality and truth are subject to diffusion, generating thereby meanings and identities that find it impossible to grasp an idea of human order and unity (Botting 102).

The American writer Ambrose Bierce, for example, sets his stories in haunted houses in which the past disturbs the present and for M. R. James, who perfected the ghost story, academics and scholars discover old manuscripts and artifacts bearing strange runes and inscriptions within the Gothic atmospheres of collages and libraries (Botting 103). The writers of "the weird", Blackwood and Machen, express their dissatisfaction of the industrialization and secularization of the world by diving into the horror tale often in the guise of philosophical and political complaints (Joshi, "Ramsey Campbell" 9).

An important development for the modern horror genre was the introduction of the magazine *Weird Tales* in the 1920's, not only because it sustained the interest for horror but

also because it introduced H. P. Lovecraft and his "supernatural horror" which greatly affected and inspired future horror writers, Barker being among them (Joshi, "Ramsey Campbell" 10). His later work, starting with "The Call of Cthulhu" (1926), combined horror fiction with science fiction, creating what is now today known as the Cthulhu Mythos (Joshi, "Ramsey Campbell" 22, 23). In his stories the supernatural dread shifts from human worlds and gods to those of the stars and intergalactic space where the forces who rule the universe are symbols for the mystery of cosmos and the insignificance of human existence (Joshi "Ramsey Campbell" 23).

However, what mostly influenced the modern horror genre is the move onto film and television with film adaptations of Gothic classics like *Frankenstein, Dracula, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* which captured the mood of social and economic crises in the 1930's in America (Smith 136). The horror tradition was later dominated by Universal in the Hammer cycle of horror films from the 1940s to 1970s, spawning their own horror versions of the classic Gothic monsters and creating new stories around them (Smith 137).

The anxieties connected to the communist invasion of society and human bodies in the 1950's and the horror films of Hammer studios which concerned themselves with social and sexual liberations of the 1960s and 1970's influenced the interest for the body in horror literature (Botting 109). With the emergence of works of Stephen King (*Carrie*), James Herbert (*The Rats*) and Anne Rice (*Interview with a Vampire 1976*) as well as texts depicting psychotic killers like in Ramsey Campbell's *The Face that Must Die* and demonic possession in Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist* (1971), horror experienced a new "revival" (Bloom 7). It was however King's horror fiction that "pushed the envelope of the physically squeamish (…) and established a balance between outrageous and acceptable content" (Dziemianowicz "Darkness" 14) which influenced many current and future writers. Following King's model, Charles L. Grant took a more subtle approach to horror with his *Shadows* anthologies giving

rise to what was later dubbed as “dark fantasy”, a genre that presented horrors that gave shape to people’s anxieties and fears in everyday life through extraordinary circumstances (Dziemianowicz “Darkness” 14). A majority of bestsellers until the year 1984 fit in the category of King and Grant, that is, until Clive Barker’s *Books of Blood* (1984-1985) brought explicitness, graphic sex and gore onto horror’s main stage, opening the door for the splatterpunk movement (Dziemianowicz “Darkness” 15).

4. Splatterpunk and Barker

The technological advancements of the second half of the twentieth century, both military and medical, as well as the sexual revolution and the rise of feminism, gay liberation, and African-American civil rights from the 1960s and “an attack” on Christian ideologies that greatly shaped the western values and ethics in culture (Bruhm 260, 261) resulted in the ever increasing interest in the body and corporeality which became the horror’s new muse.

Badely remarks that with technologies like transplantation, genetic, or reproductive technologies manipulating and controlling the body, a fear arose of it becoming mere commodity, rendering thereby the body as the self meaningless (8). However, as science kept configuring the body, thus demanding the reinvention of category boundaries for life, death, gender and species, the body grew more fantastic making it the stronghold of identity which was previously reserved for the soul during the Gothic period (Badely 8). Furthermore, due to us living in a postliterate culture, an age of graphic realism and special effects, the shift from imaginary terrors of the Gothic to “splatter” horrors seemed only logical (Badely 3).

The term “splatterpunk” was coined by David J. Schow in the 1980’s and was used to describe the “in-your-face aesthetics of low-budget splatter films, with their hyperkinetic rhythms and unapologetic explosions of gore” (Joshi “Icons” 607) and one of the major inspirations for the movement was George Romero’s zombie film trilogy which started with

Nigh of the Living Dead in 1986 with the zombie as the "voracious eating machine that hungers for human flesh" (Dziemianowicz "Darkness" 15). In contrast to modern gothic fiction, splatterpunk draws inspiration from splatter cinema which foregrounds special effects rather than creating suspense or a certain atmosphere and therefore relishes corporeality (Aldana Reyes 31). John Skipp and Craig Spector wrote on the splatterpunk's desire to stretch the boundaries of modern horror that was heavily influenced by the tradition of writers such as Lovecraft, Poe or Machen in their zombie anthology *Book of the Dead*, stating that its purpose was in "meat meeting mind, with the soul as screaming omniscient witness "(Aldana Reyes 31). According to them, splatterpunk works on multiple levels, the first being the flesh which surrenders to the laws of physics, the second that plays on the naked faces of the people facing the horror and the third the level of fusion and integration, meaning that the horror can no longer be escaped or avoided because it has become too real and a part of us (Aldana Reyes 32).

The aim of splatterpunk literature is therefore not only to show gore for gore's sake, but rather to appeal to the connection between the "real" horror and the mind as well as to transform them in a way that challenges the concept of body as described by conventional categories.

4.1. Condition of Flesh and Blood

As mentioned previously, Clive Barker burst onto the horror scene in 1984 with his first three volumes of *Books of Blood* which won the World Fantasy Award in 1985. According to Badely, if King reinvented and defined the modern horror genre, Barker revitalized the tale of terror by placing it in the perverse, grotesque and ironic (74). For Nicholson Barker explores the perverse under the guise of horror, not as the horror of sex but as sex of horror in his reports of fear causing loss of control or ambiguous thrills in torture (273).Furthermore, Wisker remarks how Barker's writing emphasizes the body and its

vulnerability to decay and mixes eroticism and terror with desire for death, not to evoke disgust but rather to celebrate it as the rearrangement of flesh (118). Morgan observes that Barker's writing is also a return to "the nature of the gothic horror modality, its interrogation of the most abhorrent implications of the flesh and of physical life" (10).

One of the reasons why Barker's writing is concerned with what he calls the condition of being flesh and blood, is attributed to him being an illustrator and his involvement with the The Dog Company, a marginal theatre group that specialized in the perverse, anti-theatricality, spectacle, shock, and emotional ambivalence (Badely 74-75). Ever since early childhood, Barker was fascinated with the notion of the "forbidden", something if uttered has unspeakable consequences (*Essential Clive Barker* 15). By valuing the forbidden and not suppressing it as well as comprehending one's taste for the strange, morbid or paradoxical helps one understand the power and legitimacy of one's wildest drives, something that is a sign of good health (Cavallaro 7).

While it is true that the "splatter" in Barker's fiction does in a way serve to attract fans of horror, it also conveys complex ideas, forcing the genre to take on taboos and controversial issues like politics of gender, feminism, homosexuality, urban blight or violence in the media or pornography (Badely 74). He achieves this by borrowing from the Gothic tradition from texts of writers such as Marlow, Poe or Shelly and placing the focal point on the vulnerability and manipulation possibilities of the flesh. The following sections provide an analysis of how Barker uses the transformations and concepts of body in his short stories, the novella "Hellbound Heart" as well as his novel *The Damnation Game* to convey the possibilities, limits and desires of the body and how in turn this affects the characters and the reader.

4.2. Reading/Viewing the Body

The first three volumes of *Books of Blood* is introduced by an interesting joke: "Everybody is a book of blood; Wherever we are opened, we are red" (Barker Books of

Blood) thus evoking the image of the body as text. By opening the body one reads the word (flesh) and discovers one's innermost anxieties or desires (Badely 75).

This is further explored in the short story "The Book of Blood" which functions as a type of introduction to the rest of the stories contained within the volumes and is a reinterpretation of the haunted house narrative.

In the story a young man McNeal, pretends he can communicate with the dead by faking ghost writings and using anonymous names taken from the telephone directories and writing them on the attic wall of the house Number 65 in Tollington Place. He is proud of his endeavour of misleading the infatuated Doctor Florescu into believing his "game" was reality. Oblivious to the secret of the house being an intersection of one of the highways where the dead walk, he enjoys playing the medium. Due to this, the dead after "enduring his levity and insolence, his idiocies, the fabrications that had made a game of their ordeals" (*Books of Blood* 1: 7) decided it was time to tell the truth, by using McNeal to record their testaments and making him into "their page, book and thus the vessel of their autobiographies" (*Books of Blood* 1: 8). What ended the recording of "hieroglyphics of agony on every inch of his torso, his face, his limbs" (*Books of Blood* 1: 8) was the look of compassion and love she shared with her beautiful, cheating child and the dead, fearful of this look, fell away on every side like dying flies (*Books of Blood* 1: 9).The boy's body , now a testament to life beyond flesh, would be an object of curiosity, repugnance or horror and a book of blood for the doctor now translator to deliver into the world (*Books of Blood* 1: 11)

Barker "vividly depicts the concept of the body-as-text" (Cavallaro, 128) imposing the reader with the idea that subsequent stories are those of the dead inscribed on a human body. By reading the words, the reader is opening 'wounds' in the body of the book and the terrible experience of the dead 'bleed' every time one reads their stories. Thus the wound of the body

is made the "text's central metaphor and, through puns and ambiguities, its central issue" (Badely 82).

Furthermore, in "Son of Celluloid" Barker conveys an idea of how different narratives shape future texts and in turn how they affect our identities (Cavallaro 118). In the story of the haunted theatre, an escaped convict Barberio dies in a crawlspace behind the movie screen at a movie theatre which had once been a Mission Hall. The space, the air itself where he died "lived a life of its own for fifty years" receiving "electric stares of thousands of eyes (...) pressing their sympathies and their passions on to the flickering illusion, the energy of their emotions gathering strength" (*Books of Blood* 3: 7). Eight months after Barberio's death, his body infused with the energy gives birth to a cancer that longed "to be more than humble cell" and transformed into "a dreaming disease" (*Books of Blood* 3: 32). The cancer in need of more energy entraps the few people left one night at the theatre by transforming itself into characters from movies they love. Ricky, an employee at the theatre and a movie enthusiast, succumbs to the images of John Wayne and Marlin Monroe, as he feels the cancer "draining out his life through his eyes, luxuriating in the soul-looks he was giving" (*Books of Blood* 3: 27). Birdy, the heroine of the story is confronted by thousands of movie stars and glimpses of the lives she lived through Mickey Mouse and Garland or Tracy and Hepburn. She is almost consumed by the cancer until Dumbo appears which reminds her of her childhood and the humiliation she suffered due to her fat body. She regains her sense of reality and as the cancer latches onto her body in order to find a new way of extracting energy from her, she rolls onto it with the whole weight of her 225 pounds and manages to escape.

According to Cavallaro, the cancer is "a bestial collage built from the crossnarrative fantasies of cinema audiences" and the illusions it produces do not merely imitate reality, but they actually replace reality (118). To do so, characters that face those illusions have to willingly acknowledge the incarnations, that is, be emotionally involved with the illusions

being projected (Cavallaro 119). Ricky kisses Marlin Monroe as she is about to kill him because for him the illusionary woman is better than reality. Birdy on the other hand is saved by the image of Dumbo, which reminds of the reality of her own body and breaks the cancer's hold on her. Being confronted with her own body, the body of the cancer is shown for what it is: "a tumour grown fat on wasted passions" (*Books of Blood* 3: 32). By equating the body of the cancer with that of the screen, Barker manages to convey an idea of false reality of the body as portrayed by movies, specifically Hollywood and how the illusionary image tends to misconstrue one's body image.

4.3. Body Identities

Two short stories which address similar aspects are "In the Hills, the Cities" and "The Body Politic" as both handle the image of the body as parts, the former being assimilation of human body into a whole and the latter the deconstruction of the body.

Barker himself said that the inspiration for "In the Hills, the Cities" were "Goya's Colossus...a giant striding away from a valley packed with tiny panicking figures...rendering faces from human figures...and democracy itself: the notion that in exercising our democratic rights we make(...)a single will of our many wills." (*Essential Clive Barker* 274).

In the story, an English couple, Mick and Judd, during their tour of Yugoslavia come across an ancient ceremonial battle between two cities, Popolac and Podujevo, which is repeated every ten years. However, the inhabitants do not battle on the ground but instead, they strap themselves together by means of complex contraptions into an urban organism (Cavallaro 192) into colossal giants whose "movements kill animals, crush bushes and throw down trees" (*Books of Blood* 1: 131) an image going back to Frankenstein's act of creating the creature, only now it is living human bodies as parts that give birth to "one creature, one perfect giant (*Books of Blood* 1: 132). As the giants are about to begin the contest, Podujevo cries out as one of the "weak flank had died of the strain, and had begun a chain of decay in

the system (...) spreading a cancer of chaos through the body of the city (*Books of Blood* 1: 133) as it fell and struck the ground in a bloody mess. Popolac "woken by the horror at its feet, (...) trashed and twisted and turned from the grisly carpet of Podujevo (...) lost to sanity and all hope for life" (*Books of Blood* 1: 135). The bodies of the cities can be interpreted as "society as machine (...) embodied and harnessed through a network of forces and relations (Badely 76) and like the organs in a human body, each individual part has to operate in unity.

Faced with the coagulating gore the tourists are also horrified, as their "domesticated imaginations had never conceived of a sight so unspeakably brutal" (*Books of Blood* 1: 135) of "men, women and children alike (...) tied together as though in some insane collective bondage game" (*Books of Blood* 1: 135). However, later in the story as they encounter Popolac, which eventually accepted reality for what it is and reconfigured itself in "the single-minded giant (...) an irresistible tide of collective feeling (*Books of Blood* 1: 139), they are fascinated by it. Although it was malformed with its abnormally thick and stumpy legs, short arms, oddly jointed hands and over-delicate torso, it was horribly life-like and the image touched the Englishmen not with dread or horror, but with "awe that rooted them to the spot" (*Books of Blood* 1: 147). Although Popolac itself is in a state of "decay" it is its strong faith in a "bizarre perversion of the concept of the body politic and (...) in the 'irresistible command' of an identity-erasing totalitarianism" (Cavallaro 192), which ultimately affects Mick who was so entranced by the giant that he even failed to register his lover dying by a whirling stone fragment. In his ecstasy he caught the foot of the monster thinking that it is better to serve it in its purpose and to die with it than live without it. While hitchhiking with the god he relizes that"love and life and sanity were gone, gone like the memory of his name, or his sex, or his ambition" (*Books of Blood* 1: 148)

While the grotesque aftermath of Podujevo's bloody downfall inspired feelings of horror which turns into terror at the thought of the body state falling apart, Popolac generates

a feeling of terrifying awe, which swallows up individuality while promising purpose. The story in itself is more or less ambiguous and which emotion, whether that of awe inspired by becoming one with many or terror induced by how it is easy to cast away one's identity, prevails is up to the person reading the story.

In a similar fashion "The Body Politics" imagines the body as state; however, the inhabitants are in this case various body parts, that is, hands of the protagonist Charlie George who develop a sense of self and decide to rebel against the body politic, a stable unity with the head as its centre of operation.

At the beginning of the story Charlie notices weird behaviour such as grabbing hands of other strangers or the lack of sensation as his hands travel over his wife Ellena during sex. Suspecting he might be going insane he visits a "headshrinker" Dr. Jeudwine. With the help of the doctor and Freud's teachings, he comes to a revelation that the problem all along was the dream of his father's hands refusing to die, even now "beating a tattoo on the casket lid, demanding to be let out" (*Books of Blood* 4: 5) which supposedly represents parental power, even though the symbol is usually the penis, not hands. Feeling content, he looks forward to regaining his equilibrium, while the hands took this as a sign to take action. They conclude that Right (the Messiah) would cut off Left so that it can raise an army to help them with their revolution. Unfortunately, as they begin their plan they have to kill his wife which wakes Charlie. In shock he tries to use his hands to phone for help however, he realizes that although his right hand was "still attached to him (...) it was not his (*Books of Blood 4:* 9).Using this opportunity, the hands lead Charlie to the kitchen and Right chops off Left shocking the tyrant's system into unconsciousness, thus beginning the revolution. From here on Left gathers brethren from residents of the YMCA as they "hack at themselves with any and every sharp instrument they could lay hands on" (*Books of Blood* 4: 16). Even Dr Jeudwine does not

escape their endeavour as he cries upon his death for the generations that (...) would put their faith in the efficacy of Freud and the Holy Writ of Reason as he did (*Books of Blood* 4: 23).

Jeudwine's hands then leads the way to their Messiah at the hospital who lures Charlie to the garden of a hospital where Right lures Charlie to a tree with unnatural fruit of hands "hundreds of them, chattering away like a manual parliament as they debated their tactics" (*Books of Blood* 4: 31). Realizing the true horror of his reality, that they were simply human hands, Charlie decides to take revenge on them by throwing himself of the roof. As he gives himself to gravity, the hand army follows and throws "themselves to their death in pursuit of their Messiah" (*Books of Blood* 4: 32). However, the story ends on an ambivalent note as another rebellion is presumably starting, this time including the legs of the only survivor of the YMCA "massacre" Boswell. Although horrified at the sight of his dismembered legs, what ultimately terrifies him is the realization that "he was an alliance only held together by the most tenuous of truces" (*Books of Blood* 4: 33) wondering which part of him might rebel next.

As Badly claims, the story presents an overthrow of the centred identity by a revolt of hands, which shows that "the individual is not stable and certain but is always changing and consists of a multilayer of identities" (77). Furthermore, the "deconstructed, demolished or divided identities (...) oppose traditional categories of unitary selves" (Carroll 175) and therefore the hands present the subversive force which demands new ways of interpreting the psychology of human identity. Lastly, the erasure of the body as the centre of subjective coherence also questions the very meaning of what life is (Aldana Reyes 48). The characters are confronted by the betrayal of their own body and the horrifying image of dismembered hands which leads them to the terrifying realization that their body is not the single unit they thought it was. Thus, Dr. Jeudwine is forced to revaluate his faith in the Freudian ego while confronted with Charlie's many identities; Charlie comes to terms with his reality and

embraces death, while Boswell's confrontation with his severed legs not only undermines Charlie's "sacrifice" but it also leaves the reader with ambiguous thoughts of their own bodies.

4.4. Sex of Horror and Desire

As previously mentioned, Nicholson describes Barker's writing not as a horror of sex but rather the sex of horror. Whereas sexuality of the body has been considered taboo and something that needed to be controlled during the Gothic Period, in the modern age, especially since the sexual revolution, this is no longer something that horrifies. In modern horror fiction it is "the welter of constantly scrambled codes and alternatives and threats and prohibitions and dangers that today's sexually politicized world produces" (Badely 5) that is cause for sexual anxiety. For Barker sex and the perverse is not something to be regarded as taboo as we are often taught from a young age. His stories explore many kinds of sexuality from homosexuality, orgies to even bestiality and often centre on the idea that sex has a similar transformative force as death –sex and post-orgasmic loss transform one's body and identity in a similar way thinking about death does (Winter).

The best example of "celebrating" sexual liberation and indulgence is presented in "The Age of Desire" in which Jerome, a man who is unattractive with a low libido, receives a drug at Hume Laboratories which causes his body to burn with a "heat in his flesh licking him into ecstasies" (*Books of Blood* 4: 113). Although this drug brings forth the most primal of human urges, similarly to *Jekyll and Hyde,* Jerome does not feel disgusted but embraces the experience. Love songs that did not arouse him before suddenly "flayed him, evoking (...) a world bewitched by desire" (*Books of Blood* 4: 126) promising him that "love was in the air (...) waiting to be found" (*Books of Blood* 4: 126).

From here on out Jerome would "love" everyone and everything he encounters. As he assaults Boyle, one of the policemen chasing him, his desire reaches its peak in a grotesque

literalization of romance as he demands Boyle to "give him his heart" while trying to physically rip it out (Badely 79). Furthermore, Jerome fetishes whatever he sees and his perversion comes to a point where the "serial rapist becomes polymorphously perverse" (Badely 80) and copulates with a wall, murmuring sweet nothingness to the bricks while his mind thinks about "mingled anatomies, female and male in one undistinguishable congress" (*Books of Blood* 4: 132) and of the "marriage of his seed with the pavement" (*Books of Blood* 4: 132). Also, the recalled horrors he perpetrated woke no sense of sinfulness in him as "moral consequence (...) was burned out by the fire (...) licking his flesh to new enthusiasms (*Book of Blood volume* 4: 132) regressing him to the stage of child "innocence" free of inhibitions and restrictions. The fire engulfs him to the point where as he presses through a crowd each time he touches someone, he climaxes imagining his body as "a singular monument to his prick (...) a walking erection which would ravish all – flesh brick and steel" (*Books of Blood* 4: 141). In the end he confronts his "maker" Welles who wanted to bring an "Age of Desire" to the world with his drug. However, he does not go through with his initial intention of killing him, because he realizes that the doctor would learn the error of his ways. Finally, his system not able to contain the drug anymore fails and with lighting travelling through his rod and his spine he dies, not able to communicate anymore the glory and horror of his experiences. Similar to the Creature in *Frankenstein*, Jerome is a victim of Dr.Welles' ambition, who wanted to manipulate the natural order of life with science in order to create something new. However, Jerome's "new body" becomes liberated in a perverse way, thus becoming a "revolutionary "desire machine" that wreaks havoc within the System" (Badely 80) meaning that the horrors and glories he experiences are simultaneously terrifying and pleasurable because they transcend the conventional definition of pleasure.

The concept of sexual desire and death is explored in the novella "Hellbound Heart" in form of "visceral nightmares that undermine spectral qualities of haunting (Aldana Reyes 50).

The story revolves around Frank a hedonistic man who solves the puzzle of the Lemarchand's box hoping to find “pleasures (...) which would redefine the parameters of sensation, which would release him from the dull round of desire, seduction and disappointment” (Hellbound Heart 6). As he meets the Cenobites, he is confused by their “scars that covered every inch of their bodies, the flesh cosmetically punctured and sliced and infibulated (Hellbound Heart 6), as well as the lack of humanity in their faces and their genderless nature. Unbeknownst to Frank, the four sexless, disfigured entities adopted sadomasochistic practices as their religion and are about to subject Frank to the same (Głowala 169). Whereas Frank thought they would come with women made ready for sex, “languid bodies spread on the floor underfoot (...) virgin whores (...) whose skills would press him (...) to undreamed-of ecstasies (Hellbound Heart 7), the ambiguous Cenobites “overdosed him on sensuality, until his mind teetered on madness, then they'd initiated him into experiences that his nerves still convulsed to recall” (Hellbound Heart 24). Without knowing the “principles of reward and punishment” (Hellbound Heart 24) and the Cenobites being deaf to the pleas for mercy, Frank was to be subjected to torture for all eternity.

However, due to his brother Rory accidently wounding himself with a chisel, a few drops of blood fall on the spot where Frank ejaculated before meeting the Cenobites and he is able to escape the prison. It is his brother’s wife and former lover Julia who finds Frank reduced to “unrecognizable fragments of anatomy” (Hellbound Heart 20) and he demands she acquire blood for the resurrection of his flesh. Julia, “whose power to charm knew no bounds” (Hellbound Heart 15), then seduces men with her body and promise of sex while trying to convince herself that they are just nourishment. Badely remarks that Julia’s motive for Frank’s resurrection is to give her pleasure like he did on her wedding day (97) and she transforms from a bored “hausfrau” to a woman filled with desire. Moreover, taking care of Frank she is portrayed not only as a desiring woman, but also as a mother who believes to

have ““made this man, or remade him, used her wit and her cunning to give him substance” (Hellbound Heart 38), in which case Frank would be the growing fetus and the attic room, the womb (Głowala 169). Although Frank claims that Julia gave him a reason to live, he only sees her as means to en end and as he gets stronger, he reveals his true nature as a sadist and degenerate (Głowala 170). Julia on the other hand, in her desire to restore Frank and make him love her, is blind to his true nature and accepts to murder her own husband to provide Frank with a skin.

Their undoing proves to be Kristy who in an encounter with the unfinished Frank manages to get hold of the puzzle box. She unwittingly summons the Cenobites herself and promises them to deliver Frank if they spare her life. She does so by forcing Frank who was wearing Rory’s skin to name himself upon which the Cenobites “had their hooks in him, the flesh of his arms and legs, curled through the meat of his face to the hooks, chains, which they held taut” (Hellbound Heart 61) and in seconds they rip him apart, thus ending the process of his restoration. As Kristy leaves the house she finds out that Julia too had been taken by one of the Cenobites who entrusts her with the puzzle box on whose lacquer Julia’s and Frank’s faces were echoed like ghosts.

The Cenobites and their realm is a mysterious place where the body is transformed and rearranged in order to experience ultimate sadomasochistic sensations and by facing the characters with the ambivalence of both the Cenobites bodies and their concept of pain and pleasure, the notion of what is pleasure and pain is questioned as well. Furthermore, the perverse process of Frank’s rejuvenation which involves sacrificing life and ingesting other people’s blood, mirrors how our flesh changes every day and that everything we consume changes our bodies (Badely 98). Julia herself revels in the fact what powers she possesses over Frank’s body, because he is solely dependent on her until he fully rejuvenates. Nevertheless, one could say that Frank does get punished as he is the one who summoned the

Cenobites and agreed to sell his soul. However, Julia's guilt is more ambivalent as she did not want knowledge offered by the Cenobites and was presumably taken by them because she got involved with Frank. Kristy is probably the only true victim of Frank's endeavour because she is accidently involved with the Cenobites and is even tasked with keeping the puzzle box which suggest that the seekers of the Cenobites have to be careful of the knowledge they seek, as it could be fatal not only to their bodies but the bodies of other people as well (Oaks 289).

4.5. Accepting/Rejecting Transformed Bodies

Barker believes that his stories show incredible powers of inner self-transmutations depicted in his characters' external transformation of the body (clivebarker.info) which emphasizes the duality of the human nature and how different individualities accept or abject the transformed body (Głowala 161).

In "Jacqueline Ess: Her Will and Testament", the body of Jacqueline and others undergo many changes due to her power of body manipulation. Similar to Julia, Jacqueline feels trapped by her life and after a failed suicide attempt she acquires power to rearrange human bodies. She forces her therapist's body to be a woman and wills "his manly chest into making breasts of itself (...) until the skin burst and his sternum flew apart" (*Books of Blood 2:* 60) so that he may learn what a woman is. Afterwards, scared by her new power she tries to resist them for months but the memory of the forbidden and the power is too tempting and she uses her powers on her husband Ben by transforming his body into "one of his fine leather suitcases, while blood, bile and lymphatic fluid pulsed weakly from his hushed body" (*Books of Blood* 2: 63). Determined to learn how to control the power that gives her freedom, she offers a powerful crime boss Titus Pettifer her body in exchange for knowledge on how to use it.

However, she soon realizes that the power Titus has is nothing compared to hers of body manipulation and after being imprisoned by him, she decides to deal with the men who

"bred her like a cow to give a certain supply" (*Books of Blood* 2: 82). Jacqueline then transforms Titus into a perverse version of a "four-legged crab, his brain exposed (...) lower jaw broken and swept up over his top jaw like a bulldog (...)humanity bewitched into another state" (*Books of Blood* 2: 83) and leaves for Amsterdam. Realizing that the only person who accepted her was her lover Vassi, she leads him indirectly to Amsterdam where she lives her life as a prostitute because she realizes that the only way to find her identity is through sex with others. By the time Vassi finally finds her, her power is so out of control that her body transforms even when she does not will it. In the end, as they make love both are killed, her "keen breasts pricked him like arrows; his erection, sharpened by her thought, killed her in return with his only thrust" (*Books of Blood* 2: 90).

For Jacqueline her power represents freedom, however power is difficult to control and those who usually possess great power, have difficulties connecting with or trusting others. As Badely states, for her hell is other people because throughout the story she is aware that others try to exploit her and her power, however she also learns that she is complete in the other and when completed, she is dead (89). Although Barker's story does celebrate Jacqueline's emancipation and freedom with various horrors she inscribes on men's bodies, it also underlines the terrifying truth that one can never be completely free, as we can only identify ourselves in others, which in some cases results in death.

A further example of acceptance and rejection of the transformed body is in "The Madonna" in which a swindler, Jerry Coloqhoun, manages to find an investor, Ezra Garvey, to fund the restoration of an old bathhouse. Through various circumstances both Coloqhoun and Garvey (the former because of sexual desire and the latter trying to escape Garvey's prosecution) encounter the Madonna, a body with no head or limbs which does not need a male counterpart to reproduce, in the bathhouse pools when they are alone and have sex with her daughters which transforms their male bodies into female ones.

Garvey, shocked by the women and their broods, believes he was drugged and sexually exploited and eventually rejects his change as he "slashed at his body (...) and when the loss of blood overcame him (...) his knees buckled and he toppled into the water (*Books of Blood* 5: 72). Jerry on the other hand, is not afraid of the daughters or the Madonna, and even seems to be in awe of her. He accepts his new body "as a baby accepts its condition, having no sense of what good or bad it might bring" (*Books of Blood* 5:72) and as Badely remarks "learns to enjoy being a girl" (Badely, 90). After his lover Carol, with whom Jerry did not have a very good relationship, says his new body was vile and revolting he returns to the pools and throws himself in the whirling vortex of water where the Madonna and her daughters apparently escaped, not caring whether he lived or died, as "death was no more certain than the dream of masculinity he'd lived" (*Books of Blood* 5: 75).

While one man is not capable of accepting his horrifying new body, a state for which he blames others (Jerry and the daughters), the other is returned to the innocent phase of a child accepting its condition as it is. The Madonna in the story is not represented as a monster but as a "utopian dream of a world without gender (...) a world open to change" (Badely 91) in which one either denies its existence and drowns as did Garvey, or like Jerry accepts it and learns how to swim towards that new world.

In "The Twilight Towers" similarly to "Jacqueline Ess" the body is transformed from the power within. According to Dziemianowicz, Barker used the classic character of the werewolf to explore personal identities within the context of the Cold War politics (Icons 680). The main character Ballard is an English agent in Berlin trying to persuade a former KBG agent Mironenko to escape to Britain. However, the next day after having a conversation with Mironenko, Ballard finds out that he is missing and decides to investigate the matter. Soon he comes across a boy being beaten up by someone and when he glimpses at the malformed form of the assailant the din in his head "took on (...) the sound of helicopter

rotors (...) and mounted to a blinding roar" (*Books of Blood* 6:75). Afterwards he has dreams in which he hears voices telling him to forget them by imagining a box, buried deep within. However, he doubts the voices and believes they were implanted into his head to use the pain and the sounds to suppress his true nature. When he finally manages to track down Mironenko he confirms his suspicions as he learns that both sides, the British and the Russian, employed agents like themselves who were brain-washed with a program in order to control their hidden power. He also witnesses the Russian's human features transform into "bizzarities", his "mouth a raw wound, the teeth vast(...) the lumps at his neck (...)head becoming torso without an axis intervening" (*Books of Blood* 6: 87). Although he fears such a monstrous body, in order to save his own life he too transforms and rather than wanting to escape it, embraces his new body. After eliminating his pursuers he chances upon a group of other beasts such as him listening to Mironenko's sermon of how they will "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (*Books of Blood* 6: 96).

In traditional horror narratives, the concept of the werewolf is used to denote the violation of the distinction between human and animal by inhabiting a body at different times and usually the two identities are in conflict with each other - the human fearing for the loss of identity and the wolf desiring the release of its primeval power (Carroll 46). However, Ballard does not lose his identity, but his body rather transcends into a new type of hybrid human-monster in which the mind retains the ability of rational thought and acquires the powers of the monster. Similarly to "The Madonna", the rejection of the transformed body brings pain and confusion, while accepting it as a new form that offers more possibilities brings forth inner peace.

4.6. Transforming Religion Through the Body

As already mentioned, science and technology have been reconfiguring the way the body is perceived since the nineteenth century and with further discoveries individuals have

become able to manipulate their bodies in various ways, for example through body modification or prosthetics. However, as science reveals the body the anxiety resulting from the rift between the organic and the search for its spiritual meaning also causes a kind of contempt for embodied life, something that existed since medieval times (Morgan 108). Barker claims that horror in itself is religious in its roots and he believes that the spiritual is important in making sense of ourselves and our bodies (Vince). However, this "spiritual" should not be one religion which defines the whole world, because that would mean that there is only one truth and everything else is a lie (Vince). It is therefore not surprising that his fiction often "villainizes" institutionalized Christian theology while his characters search for new ways of closing the rift between spirituality and the body.

"Rawhead Rex" reworks the concept of defeating the monster with Christian belief and iconography by foregrounding the body as a source of salvation. Rawhead, an ancient god-like creature that terrorizes the Welsh town of Zeal, is liberated after hundreds years of sleep by Thomas Garrow who had known him from "some nightmare he'd heard at his father's knee" (*Books of Blood* 3: 41). He is described as veracious monster of great strength and driven by desire and appetite. Although he believes himself to be practically invincible, he fears womanhood and what it embodies, so for example, in his search for food he does not attack Gwen because she "had the blood-cycle on her, (...) and it sickened him" (*Books of Blood* 3: 45. However, as Digioia mentions, this makes sense because Rex is an ancient pagan monster who has been asleep for a long time and it is logical that he has ancient fears of menstrual blood, something that has been considered taboo in many cultures dating thousands of years ago (22). Therefore, he is not affected by Christian symbols and he freely walks into a church and considers "The Light of the World" to be a "picture of a sexless martyr, doe-eyed and woe-begone" (*Books of Blood* 3: 64).

Furthermore, because Rawhead Rex loathes women for their reproductive powers and believes the earth is his to claim, he could be considered as phallus worship personified (DiGioia 24). Because of this, his demise proves to be a "statue of a woman (...) her belly swelling with children, tits like mountains, cunt a valley that began at her navel and gaped to the world" (*Books of Blood* 3*:79)*, a symbol of a woman who can take (semen) and create life which is the opposite of Rawhead Rex who can only devour and bring death and destruction (DiGioia 26). While confronted with the statue, his mind is paralyzed with fear and the villagers manage to overpower him with numbers and pummel him to death.

Therefore, it is not Christian theology and symbols that help defeat the monster like for example in *Dracula*, but it is the ancient artefact of the female body which forces characters to revaluate their beliefs and themselves.

Although Barker criticizes institutionalised Christianity, he believes the Bible to be "a wonderful ragbag of drug dreams and poetry, history, violence and beauty" and one of the most important storytelling texts he encountered (Nicholls). In the ghost story "Revelations" he uses the Bible, specifically Book of Revelations, in order to accentuate the reality of the body as opposed to the fantasies described within the book.

The story revolves around a married couple John and Virginia Gyer and their companion Earl who are taking shelter from a storm at a motel while on their way to Pampa. Virginia, similarly to Jacqueline Ess, is an oppressed wife who discovers she can see the ghosts of Buck and his wife Sadie who after thirty years visit the motel in order to find out why their honeymoon ended with murder. Virginia's husband is highly religious and often tours the country to spread God's word and he is especially fascinated with the Book of Revelations. He dismisses her belief as illusion brought on by the pills she consumes and like a devoted Christian wife she trusts him, making herself believe that the ghosts were delusions brought on by pills and her sensibility. However, as she makes physical contact with Buck she

realizes that her touch made him visible and that "her visions were real (...) more true than all the second hand revelations her pitiful husband could spout" (*Books of Blood* 4: 103). Not wanting to be a victim of her husband's ignorance anymore, she decides to confront Buck by shooting him with the same gun that killed him thirty years ago. However, the bullet slices through Buck and kills John instead, leaving Virginia with regret that she can never make him "concede his stupidity and recant his arrogance" (*Books of Blood* 4: 106). As she is confronted by the police, she almost opts for death rather than prison, however in consultation with Sadie decides that it would be better to pretend insanity and say that the Devil made her do it, thereby exploiting the very religion that restrained her.

According to Badely, the violation of Virginia's body revealed the word of God to be "a misogynistic fantasy of doomsday violence" (85) and a restrictive force to the body itself. Furthermore, Barker reverses the terror narrative of the over sensible Gothic woman by turning Virginia's imaginings to be true and that in order to come to that truth one has to free oneself from religious constraints that restrict the body and therefore the mind.

4.7. Damnation of the Body

Clive Barker's first novel *The Damnation Game* (1985) was published after the first three volumes of *Books of Blood* and similarly like the "Hellbound Heart", it takes inspiration from Marlowe's Faust story while exploring metaphysical questions concerning life, death, mind and body (Barker "Essential Clive Barker" 15). The novel reworks elements of earlier Gothic fiction such as the narrative taking place on estates surrounded by grand nature vistas, dilapidated houses and hotels and haunted castles (within the body) or the Gothic woman presented in Carys, while the main antagonist is a seemingly immortal being who prolongs his life by ingesting other people's souls. Barker combines such elements of traditional Gothic with horrific images of flesh and sexual desire and by confronting the mind with the organic reality of the body explores themes such as fear of death, nihilism and love.

The story focuses on a deal Joseph Whitehead made with a mysterious gambler Mamoulian who apparently "never lost a game and (...)who was not, perhaps, even real" (*The Damnation Game* 6) that if he were to win against him he would grant him power in exchange for his soul. Decades later after Whithead wins the bet, he is one of the richest and most influential people in the world and fearing that Mamoulian will come to collect his debt, he hires Marty Strauss, a gambling addict who has been released from a twelve year sentence in prison, to be his bodyguard. As time goes on Marty explores the vast landscape of the estate guarded by dogs, fences and surveillance cameras and soon learns that the only ones left on the estate were the people Whitehead trusted and his daughter Carys. Carys is a sensitive (she can read people's minds) who uses heroin to escape reality which in turn gives Mamoulian access to everything she sees, hears or feels. After having infiltrated the estate one night, Mamoulian announces to Marty that he would soon take action against Whitehead, thus starting a string of events in which Carys and Marty try to save not only Whitehead's life but also their own.

Mamoulian who also calls himself the Last European is described as the traditional Gothic immortal sorcerer who grants knowledge to people in exchange for their soul (Oaks 289).He can create illusions by diving into other people's minds and he also contains an alternate dimension in his own body, "a no-man's land between flesh and death" (*The Damnation Game* 196) in which he traps people's souls which are the source of his power and immortality. His exterior however, is that of a normal man so that his existence and machinations are often overlooked by the rest of the world (Oaks 289). Tired and lonely from life, he saw in Whitehead a companion and he feels betrayed because Whitehead squandered his teachings for "greed's sake, for power's sake, for the life of the body" (*The Damnation Game* 171). In fact Mamoulian is repulsed by the organic body and its desires and he often practices with cards that show men and women suffering "all manner of humiliation, their

wracked bodies bearing diamond-shaped wounds" (*The Damnation Game* 47) in order to strengthen his mind. As Whitehead confesses to Marty, the body is torment for Mamoulian because "its functions disgusted him (...) he couldn't be free of it, or its appetites" (*The Damnation Game* 129). Mamoulian's disgust of corporality is best shown as he invades the mind of Carys during her sexual encounter with Marty but shrinks back as he is revolted by the "fullness and the fleshiness of this act; by its reality (*The Damnation Game* 80) and only by imagining them dead recedes his nausea.

The characters whose mind Mamoulian invades are scared of his illusions which reflect their fears of the body and they evoke "a paralyzing sense of being overwhelmed (...) rendering one dumb and astonished by the onset of otherness" (Carroll 166). Whitehead sees ghosts smirking "at his breasts, at his shrunken pudenda, at the sheer absurdity of his old flesh" (*The Damnation Game* 90) as he fears old age and decay, while his daughter Carys is confronted with sewage full of "forsaken stuff, offal and dregs" and "creatures that fed on excrement whose bodies were a pun on what they devoured" (*The Damnation Game* 104). Mamoulian thus uses horrific and vile images of the body in order to freeze the mind to the point when everything seems meaningless. This happens to Carys as she is kept captive by Mamoulian who through heroin and constant threats of illusions reduces her body to mere death in life so that when she sees Marty who has come to save her, she can only see how he would age, wind down and die like everything else (Morgan 226). However, after being confronted with Marty's body demoralized by the same illusions mirroring her own state of mind, she decides to take action (Morgan 227). After escaping the house Carys was imprisoned in, Marty and she conclude that their only hope for salvation is if Carys dives into Mamoulian's own mind. They learn of his past as a sergeant who was almost executed in 1818 in a European war and how he acquired the ancient knowledge giving him power of immortality and illusion from a monk whom he kills in order to keep the knowledge for

himself. Finally the devil they thought was hunting them down was demystified as "old humanity, cheated of love, and ready to pull down the world on its head" (*The Damnation Game* 172). The fact that Mamoulian is human and has an organic body like themselves also means that he can be killed, even though he possesses supernatural abilities.

In their final confrontation Mamoulian releases every horrifying illusion he can think of and even swallows Carys' soul in an attempt to gain more strength. She is saved by Marty who manages to infiltrate Mamoulian's body and find her essence while imagining "their locking anatomies-the physical act that was metaphor for this other unit" (*The Damnation Game* 201) after which his body felt "a parody of freedom he just tasted" (*The Damnation Game* 201). The opportunity for this is provided by Breer, Mamoulian's acolyte zombie undergoing graphically described putrefaction and the representation of the perverse nature of the body including paedophilia, cannibalism and the desire for self-mutilation (Caroll 51). Throughout the novel, Breer believed that he is alive and he did not really understand why flies are constantly around him or why "his belly revolted if he put food into it (*The Damnation Game* 84). After Mamoulian reveals that his body has been dead since Mamoulian found him hanging from a rope, Breer decides to take revenge on him by decapitating him with a machete and continuing "to cleave the enemy into smaller and yet smaller pieces" (*The Damnation Game* 202) after which he sets himself on fire and ultimately dies.

However, the one who ultimately destroys Mamoulian is Marty himself, as he notices that even after his flesh has been cut up into unrecognizable anatomies his mind still had a control on Carys. As he returns to the hotel to the site of the execution he finds "the European's flesh (...) in a thousand senseless pieces, but alive" (*The Damnation Game* 207) buzzing with stolen life. He then proceeds to squash and burn his flesh while thinking that "all the power and wisdom of the European had come to this muck, and he (...) had been elected to (...) wipe it away" (*The Damnation Game* 208) With the ultimate destruction of Mamoulian's

body the balance of life and death has been restored and after the plunge into abnormality the normal world is a welcoming sight as Marty gazes at the sky (Morgan 35).

The Damnation Game is a novel that examines death as a form of release from the prison that is the body (Aldana Reyes 48) and it views immortality as a curse because the body that cannot die also means an immortal prison for the soul. Mamoulian's character is the manifestation of that prison because his body contains another world within which he entraps souls (Oaks 289) meaning that he is not only a threat to others but also a damning element to himself as he tells Whitehead that "every man is his own Mephistopheles" (*The Damnation Game* 191). Mamoulian's illusions of grotesque body imagery and nihilism and the zombie Breer are used to emphasize not only the condition of the body prone to corruption, decay and death but they also depict the reality of being flesh and blood that constricts the soul.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, horror literature in general is complex and in each given age it has scared readers and viewers with its narratives. However, what is today known as the modern horror genre developed from the Gothic literature of terror. When considering the two centuries since Walpole's novel has been published, what terrifies and frightens has changed from the imagined terrors from Radcliffe's novels to shocking and corporeal horrors of modern horror writings. However, that is not to say that the two are completely separate but rather that they blend in with each other. This is evident from the many tropes and elements of the earlier Gothic period used in later horror writing, even though they do not express the same anxieties and ideas. Radcliffe for example accentuates the importance of fortitude and control against imagined terrors, while Shelly, Stevenson and Stoker focus more on the interplay between individual and society by utilising science and mirroring doubles that often encapsulate unwanted and hidden desires. Furthermore, writer such as Brown, Hawthorne and

Poe place the terrors closer to the individual, home and society while demystifying the old and supernatural. The slow shift from imagined terrors to horrors is not surprising considering the development of sciences that continue to explore and define the individual. So for example, Lovecraftian fiction places its terror within the fear of the cosmos and human insignificance in a time when it was difficult to find human order and unity.

Still, the biggest influence on modern horror, specifically splatter narratives, was the rise of the visual age with film and television as well as advancements in technology that was able to manipulate and explain the human body. However, the body was not demystified but turned into a stronghold of human identity. The splatterpunk movement, which draws inspiration from splatter cinema and visual effects, had the goal to uncover the body and its corporeality by forcing the reader to confront and acknowledge what disturbs or is taboo in order to revaluate social convention surrounding the body. By borrowing from Gothic tradition and placing the body and its possibilities through transformation, Barker's horror fiction challenges what is taboo about the body and forces the revaluation of conventional categories concerning identity, death and decay, desire as well as religion. In "Book of Blood" he borrows the haunted house motif and proposes the idea that reading the text means reading the body, thereby evoking the idea that the stories contained within the book could also reflect the reader's own hidden desires and fears. In "Son of Celluloid" he similarly reflects the desires and misconceptions of the body by equating it to the screen, meaning that by viewing the body as represented in movies greatly alter our own concept of the body. Identity is questioned in the stories "In the Hills, the Cities" and "The Body Politic" equate the body with the concept of state, the former presenting the body state as something both awe inspiring and terrifying and the latter the complexity of fractured human identity. Furthermore, Barker celebrates the release of repressed sexual urges in "Age of Desire" by borrowing from the mad scientists narrative and in "Hellbound Heart" which is a Faustian

type narrative and a reminder of Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart" explores the perverse nature of the body while blurring the boundaries between life and death, pleasure and pain. "Jacqueline Ess: Her Will and Testament", "The Madonna" and "The Twilight Towers" present the acceptance and rejection of the body, while questioning gender identity and exploring the dependence and identification within the other and a return to primal powers as means for further body evolution. Lastly, *The Damnation Game*, which borrows more heavily from the Gothic tradition than his short stories and novella, pays homage to the Faustian Myth and could be described as a modern version of *The Monk* or *Melmoth the Wanderer*. In the novel the haunted castle and the ghosts within is represented as the body of the antagonist who is not a supernatural Devil, but a normal human being who has been "tricked" by a monk into acquiring knowledge which proves to be his damnation and the damnation of others.

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7. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SELF: ANALYSIS OF THE BODY IN CLIVE BARKER'S SPLATTERPUNK/BODY HORROR FICTION

Summary

The theme of this paper is the analysis and understanding of the body in Clive Barker's splatterpunk fiction and in which way the body and its transformations influence the perception of "the self" and the surrounding world.

Since ancient times, people have created tales of horror and terror in order to explore the darker side of nature and to make sense of unknown forces in the world. Tales of darkness have gained significance within the eighteenth and nineteenth century Gothic period of terror with writers such as Walpole, Radcliffe, Shelly or Poe and with time and science development that greatly changed human worldviews, the tales of terror shifted towards those of horror in works of writers such as King, Rice and Barker among others. What is common to these writers is that their works reflect the fears and anxieties of their time periods, which is why modern horror should not be viewed as separate from terror literature, but rather an extension of it.

In the works analysed in this paper, it is shown how Barker uses the image of the body, its various transformations and mutilation in order not only to convey the fears and anxieties connected to the condition of being flesh and blood and how individuals change through their encounter with the transformed body but also to celebrate the body and its desires. Moreover, it is important to mention that Barker borrows from the Gothic mode of writing in order to revive past tropes and reinvent them within the context of the body and horror.

Key words: Gothic period, terror, splatterpunk, horror, body, transformation, the self

8. TRANSFORMACIJA SAMOPOIMANJA: ANALIZA TIJELA U SPLATTERPUNK FIKCIJI CLIVE BARKERA

Sažetak

Tema ovog diplomskog rada je analiza i shvaćanje tijela u splatterpunk fikciji Clive Barkera te na koji način transformirano tijelo utječe na poimanje sebe i okolnog svijeta.

Ljudi su izmišljali još davnih dana priče terora i horora kako bi prikazali mračniju stranu ljudske prirode i kako bi objasnili nepoznate sile u svijetu. Priče tame su dobile na značaju unutar Gotičkog perioda terora u osamnaestom i devetnaestom stoljeću sa piscima poput Walpola, Radcliffe, Shelly ili Poea te s vremenom i znanstvenim naprecima koji su uvelike promijenili ljudski svjetonazor, priče terora su polako napravile pomak prema hororu u djelima pisaca kao što su Lovecraft, King, Rice i Barker. Što je zajedničko ovim piscima jest, da njihova djela odražavaju nesigurnosti i strahove njihovog doba, te je ovo upravo jedan od razloga zašto modernu horor fikciju ne bi trebalo smatrati odvojenom od književnosti terora, nego više kao njezinim nastavkom.

U djelima analiziranim u ovom radu, prikazano je kako Barker koristi opise, transformacije i sakaćenje tijela ne samo kako bi prikazao strahove i nesigurnosti povezani sa stanjem mesa i krvi te kako se pojedinci mijenjaju prilikom suočavanja sa transformiranim tijelom, ali i u svrhu proslave tijela i njegovih strasti. Nadalje, važno je napomenuti da Barker posuđuje od Gotičkog načina pisanja kako bi obnovio prošle trope u smislu tijela i horora.

Ključne riječi: Gotički period, teror, horor, splatterpunk, tijelo, transformacija, samopoimanje