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Psychoanalysis and the Gothic

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The connection between literature and psychoanalysis is as old as psychoanalysis itself. For the psychoanalytic critic, the elements, structures, and themes that constitute the "make-believe" world of the literary text speak to the desires and fears of both authors and readers. To be an adult is to know the distinction between fantasy and reality, passionate longings and pragmatic limitation. And yet, as adults we give up nothing of infantile wishes: we simply become more cautious, more crafty in shaping those early desires into forms that are acceptable to ourselves, and which may even be applauded by our societies.

Using condensation, displacement, and various representational modes as tools, we carefully rework our desires into the stuff of dreams, in which we can safely experience what we do not want to acknowledge in waking life. In daydreams and neurotic symptoms, we use the mechanisms of defense to construct systems that satisfy basic desires while still letting us function adequately in the "real" world. Dreams and daydreams are stories written by ourselves for ourselves, though. In literature, we weave the beautifully elaborated fabric of language that lets us articulate what could not otherwise be known or said, not only for ourselves but for others also.

Freud and others in psychoanalysis' first generation drew upon literature both for examples of psychoanalytic insight and as prior statements of what they themselves were struggling to understand. All literature is subject to such analysis, but in the compressed, time-honed forms of myth and fairy tale, they often saw the nuclei of our most abiding concerns. In "Creative writers and day-dreaming," Freud also identified writers of what we would now call "popular culture" texts as providing particularly fruitful objects for psychoanalytic investigation, because it is "the less pretentious authors of novels, romances, and short stories, who nevertheless have the widest and

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most eager circle of readers of both sexes" (Freud, 1953–74a, 149). In such texts, the "secondary elaboration" through which we reshape primal material seemed less densely wrought, the wishful, forbidden desires more clearly evident. The enthusiasm of readers for such genres further underscores their power, a power often nervously depreciated by relegating them to the realm of "low" culture.

The Gothic is such a genre, one that is important to psychoanalytic critical inquiry not solely for its ongoing popularity and easily recognizable motifs, but for the affinities between its central concerns and those of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis examines how and why our most strongly held beliefs and perceptions are sometimes at odds with empirical evidence. We work incessantly to maintain a simulacrum of congruence between fantasy and reality, but the boundaries blur in the most routine of everyday events, such as "slips of the tongue," daydreams, or simply dissonance between what other people mean as opposed to what we want to hear. Usually we quickly reconcile such breaches, but when it cannot be done readily, Freud tells us that this gap can call forth the uncanny, which is "often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced" (Freud, 1953–74c, 244).

The Gothic protagonist, such as Emily in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, also lives in a world that seems "more like the visions of a distempered imagination, than the circumstances of truth" (Radcliffe, 1970, 329). Gothic novels, like psychoanalysis, explore the ostensibly irrational or "distempered." They examine the ways in which seemingly idiosyncratic or "excessive" responses may in fact tell us more than can be dreamed of in a rationalist philosophy, as Leslie Fiedler asserted in his early and influential study:

> There *is* a place in men's lives where pictures do in fact bleed, ghosts gibber and shriek, maidens run forever through mysterious landscapes from nameless foes; that place is, of course, the world of dreams and of the repressed guilts and fears that motivate them. This world the dogmatic optimism and shallow psychology of the Age of Reason had denied; and yet this world it is the final, perhaps the essential, purpose of the Gothic romance to assert. (Fiedler, 1966, 140)

Indeed, Kelly Hurley credits the Gothic with "invention" of a systematic discourse of the irrational, an "invention" that precedes Freud's first glimmerings about the unconscious (Hurley, 1997, 6).

Some critics agree with this but then claim that, precisely because psychoanalysis grows from the same cultural unease as the Gothic, it is itself a sociocultural symptom, with no more explanatory force than any novel. Such arguments, however, often presume that there are other, objective methodologies uncontaminated by cultural influences, that there is something suspect about any methodology (or genre) where one can say, as a character does in Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, "'*Emotions are my events*'" (Maturin, 1968, 204), or that attention to the hidden and unconscious precludes social change. These conclusions ignore a critical tenet of psychoanalysis, however: we *cannot* understand individual and cultural expression –

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or effect lasting change – without careful consideration of the hinted-at, the hidden, and the denied.

If the Gothic can be said to influence psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis in its turn illuminates the Gothic explicitly and implicitly. For example, late nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels sometimes refer to psychoanalytic concepts or feature a psychiatrist-like figure or "alienist" who boldly explores psychic territory where no one has gone before. William Patrick Day rightfully repudiates any simplistic family tree, however:

> The Gothic is not a crude anticipation of Freudianism, nor its unacknowledged father. Rather, the two are cousins. . . . The Gothic arises out of the immediate needs of the reading public to . . . articulate and define the turbulence of their psychic existence. We may see Freud as the intellectual counterpart of this process. (Day, 1985, 179)

Finally, neither the Gothic nor psychoanalysis is the other's oedipal child. Psychoanalysis and the Gothic are cognate historical strands made up of the same human hopes and anxieties and then woven into particular patterns by the movements of sociocultural change.

The Gothic, criticism of the Gothic, and psychoanalysis are thus themselves subject to analysis. Each has its own history, formed by the internal development of the discipline or genre, as well as by the ways in which it shapes and reflects culture. Even if psychoanalysis is not an objective system that one can use to play doctor with the literary text, it is indeed a mode of thinking about and interpreting aspects of life. Psychoanalytic textual criticism fulfills the same task, although it limits its arena of investigation to texts, a term that encompasses many forms. Analysts – a term that here describes practitioners in both fields – share what Eugenia DeLamotte identifies as "the essential activity of the Gothic protagonist," "interpretation" (DeLamotte, 1989, 24).

In thinking about psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic criticism of the Gothic, then, it is important to keep in mind the ways in which both modes of interpretation have evolved, because this helps us to make sense of the vast range of interpretative strategies that can be rightfully identified as "psychoanalytic." The stages of "elements," "structures and themes," and "systems" that organize this chapter smooth over exceptions, ambiguities, and alternative movements, as all such schema do; they do not outline a smoothly unfurling historical amelioration.

Sometimes shifts in psychoanalytic and literary critical emphases happen in tandem; sometimes there is a lag on one side or the other. And, as in human development, all stages continue to operate simultaneously, although one may be ascendant at a given time. The individual at the genital stage, for example, still has decided oral and anal interests. Similarly, the analysis of individual symbols that was paramount in early interpretation, whether in Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* or the New Criticism, is still important for contemporary practitioners. If we think of the changing emphases in both psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic Gothic criticism over

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time in terms of their own stages – "elements," "structures and themes," and "systems" – we have a rough gauge for both historical development and individual interpreters' practice.

Elements

In early psychoanalytic studies and psychoanalytic literary criticism of the Gothic, both the text and the patient seem self-contained. Although both models acknowledge formative factors, analysis usually proceeds as though dealing with a finished product: the text is autotelic, or contains all significance within itself, and the patient's identity primarily intra-psychic. The emphasis is upon elements, or the smallest units of interpretation, and these elements are then used to identify types or categories. The stance of psychoanalysts or critics is ostensibly objective: they can ferret out the meaning that people and texts unwittingly represent. Their conclusions are often presented as authoritative, although that attitude is actually at odds with psychoanalytic and critical premises.

During what I am calling the "elements" stage, Freud developed two models for psychic functioning, the topographical (unconscious, conscious and pre-conscious) and the structural (id, ego, superego). These provided fertile ground for Gothic criticism, as did several key issues related to these models: the interpretation of dreams (with its emphasis upon symbolization, manifest and latent content, dream-work, and a central "wish"), repression as a central defense in neurosis, the role of the past in symptom formation, and nosology, or the classification of disease.

At the center of Freud's early work is the wish – a heartfelt desire which, when forbidden, will struggle its way to indirect expression even when accompanied by pain. The "silence, solitude, and darkness" in which the uncanny thrives come from infantile anxiety or fear – the same fear that resides at the heart of the Gothic, as Ellen Moers, David Punter, Judith Wilt, and others argue (Freud, 1953–74c, 252; Moers, 1977, 138; Punter, 1980, 21; Wilt, 1980, 5).

Understanding the prominence of such fear in the Gothic required a toolbox of interpretative strategies for which psychoanalysis was superbly suited. Early critical studies (up to approximately the mid-1960s) of the genre drew extensively upon psychoanalytic insight, even when the discipline was not specifically invoked. In the same way that we may refer to "complexes," "Freudian slips," or "denial" without necessarily knowing their full complexity, early critics recognized the elements, themes, and structures of the Gothic as indisputably psychological.

Freud's analysis of symbols in *The Interpretation of Dreams* specified that each dream is the result of a wish, that there is a manifest and latent level to the dream, and that the symbols through which the dream enacts itself are stitched together by condensation (compression of many emotions and ideas) and displacement (transferring affect to another figure), drawing upon residues of the day's memories to address older concerns. This mode of analysis was tailor-made, as it were, for the Gothic, that liter-

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ary celebration of the dream state. The veils, specters, dreams, hidden passages, and imperfectly understood but foreboding messages that punctuate the text seemed fraught, like actual dreams, with an unknown significance.

Just as early psychoanalysts thought that simply identifying the latent or unconscious meaning should prove sufficient for full understanding (this later proved to be incorrect), so too early critical practice suggested that it was possible to identify *the* meaning of a symbol. Indeed, early critical studies were often organized as lexicons of Gothic motifs with set meanings. Although theory asserted that symbols were complex, multivalent units, practice often processed them through the most simple of metaphoric mills, so that A equaled B. It is important, however, that we recognize this basic metaphoric mode as a necessary first step, similar to that which every budding critic takes when first triumphantly discovering the "secret meaning" of an image, as well as the power and titillation that accompanies such knowledge.

Although Freud, too, emphasized that symbols and symptoms are overdetermined, or may fulfill several needs, and cautioned against assuming a universal meaning for symbols (a caution he himself often ignored), the Gothic's elements provided a rich field for elementary genital-hunting analysis. Every sword became a penis, every dark passageway a vagina. While such local analysis may provide a partial truth, it also presents the same problems as those found in early psychoanalytic practice. Patients who were told the meaning of a particular symptom often had a burst of response, or abreaction – and then went on to form new symptoms. So, too, the literary text proved resistant to such neat formulas; a residue of uncertainty and incompleteness usually remained.

Freud himself was puzzled by this repetition and developed the structural model of id/ego/superego to explain more fully what he was seeing, and himself experiencing. Following Freud's lead, Carl Jung posited a similar tripartite system made up of archetypes he called the shadow, persona, and anima. In both schools, interpretation moves from the isolated act or symbol, with its conscious and unconscious dimensions, to consideration of it in relation to other elements of the psyche. If, in literary critical terms, the emphasis upon single elements assigned fixed meanings is the metaphoric, we can call this mode the allegorical.

Because characters in the Gothic are frequently flat, the genre lends itself easily to allegorical interpretation, in which individual characters or structural features, such as setting, are seen as significant because of what they represent. For example, a critic might say that the hero stands for the ego, the punitive older male for the superego, and the villain for the id; or that the castle is the ego, the dungeon the id, and the monastery the superego. The most common instance of allegorical analysis is recognition of the double or divided self.

Some early and important readings of the Gothic, such as Fiedler's, relied primarily upon this model. Such allegorical analysis can show patterns not readily discerned through metaphoric interpretation, but its most common failing is the construction of a new whole that bears little resemblance to the original and that leaves out stray parts, as Eve Sedgwick observes:

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> At most, psychological criticism has been able to pair two characters who are "doubles" into one self; but when the same formal structure divides non-personified spaces of units of the narrative, it seems to fall away from interpretation. (Sedgwick, 1980, 35)

The final result, like Frankenstein's creation, may speak more to the desire and ingenuity of the creator than to the needs of the creature, and may not be quite as pretty as one had hoped.

Interpretation in the elements stage that emphasizes defense mechanisms and classification provides new insights while running many of the same risks; rather than being inductive, it may so emphasize deduction that conclusions inevitably support the principles with which one began. Marie Bonaparte's psychobiography of Edgar Allan Poe, for instance, exemplifies the ways in which the analysand – or Gothic text – can be reduced to a bundle of symptoms. Latent or unconscious materials have the weight of truth: what is sequestered in the dungeon seems to have more significance than what is on display in the drawing-room, the present to have less import than the individual, familial, and social past.

The defense mechanisms most invoked by both metaphoric and allegorical psychoanalytic criticism are repression and resistance. Through their use, analysts can assert the supremacy of the rational or real, to which Gothic protagonists and patients are presumed to have little access. "Resisting" patients, heroines, and texts are then declared to be repressing their own truths. This is frequently so, of course, and indeed this analytic insistence, when joined to an interest in pathology (or "dark romanticism" in the literary realm), also helps in the construction of often-useful systems of classification allied to the allegorical mode.

Thus, while Freud used literary texts as well as clinical experience to create what he called "character types," early literary critics identified a host of Theophrastian categories, or thumbnail sketches, that populated the Gothic, such as "La Belle Dame," the Faustian overreacher, the satanic tempter. Of these, none was so popular as the Persecuted Maiden, recognizable as Freud's hysteric, and there is an uncanny similarity between the narratives that inform some of Freud's early case histories, such as "Dora," and the Gothic (Massé, 1992, 16–19). Fiedler and others may argue that the male is inevitably the center of Gothic (Fiedler, 1966, 128), but it is the female who is primarily used to explain why that is so; within psychoanalysis, she plays the same utilitarian handmaid's role. Like one of Charcot's hypnotized hysterics, frozen into an attitude that simultaneously displays her desire and denies her wish for its fulfillment, the Gothic woman is fair analytic game.

The treatment of the hysteric and of the Gothic woman, both prototypical figures, underscores the strengths and limitations of the elements stage. Her presumed passivity and lack of self-knowledge make her into an easily diagnosed case presentation, a *tabula rasa* for interpretation. The critic's superior stance may manifest itself in snide humor about her repression, which is evidenced both mimetically and diegetically; the marriage plot, seen as a self-explanatory formula, moots issues of character devel-

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opment over time; her wishes and dreams seem transparent once one knows how to decipher them.

And yet, she and other prototypical figures or diagnostic types (who do not often fare much better) are the precipitants for analytic change. While on the one hand we can, in hindsight, astutely critique the limitations of early methods, on the other we must also acknowledge the cultural strictures that led to their selective emphases or omissions, as well as their foundational contributions. Both forms of analysis have their own repetition compulsion, a drive to return to what has not yet been resolved or worked through satisfactorily, which mandates more complex analysis in later stages.

Structures and Themes

The stage that I am here calling "structures and themes" blends into both the "elements" and "systems" stages; it recapitulates and anticipates other emphases, while also having its own. Late stages of development, as I noted earlier, do not mean that earlier ones have disappeared. So, too, people show curiosity about later stages even when most focused on the current one. Children whose main project is toilet-training nonetheless find their genitals fascinating; myths or fairy tales contain within them hints of later narrative preoccupations.

Within the elements stage, generic and diagnostic categories remain fairly rigid, but the scope and definitions of these categories expand during the structures and themes stage (approximately 1965–80). Nomenclature *is* identity within early psychoanalysis: "she is an hysteric" is a summative statement that leaves little else to be known. When analytic attention moves to more nuanced understandings of the ego and of developmental stages, however, classification becomes more flexible, categories more descriptive than reifying. A patient might indeed be hysterical, but his whole identity is not assumed to be packed into the term "hysteric." There is a similar transition in criticism from the early focus upon *the* Gothic novel, a genre with certain distinctive features that was prominent between 1764 (Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*) and 1820 (Maturin's *Melmoth*). In the second stage, however, "Gothic" increasingly becomes an adjective as well as a noun, a literary mode as well as a genre. Texts written in different periods and cultures (particularly the United States) are regularly discussed as "Gothic," albeit far removed from the historical events that helped to spawn the first generation.

The demographics of these newly expanded populations lessen the usefulness of classification by elements. Too much does not quite fit now, and the broader patterns of structures and themes provide fuller accounts of resemblances as well as allowing for new questions and formulations that arise from differences. As the patient – or text – demonstrates its own complexity, the role of analyst/interpreter becomes less god-like, more human. In addition, analysts' own ego needs become an acknowledged

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part of interpretative activity. Counter-transference, or the therapist's own defenses in regard to a patient, denies the dispassionate absoluteness of the therapist's conclusions; reader-response criticism achieves the same end. The reader/critic reads through her own "identity theme," as Norman Holland and Leona Sherman claim (1977). No longer the objective translator of arcana, "the reader has turned suddenly into creative participant," Punter states (1980, 97). Lastly, the diachronic dimension inherent to developmental schema further undermines interpretative certainty: the end of the story/genre/life cannot be fully known. To oversimplify greatly, we might say that the key question shifts from "What are you trying to hide from, deny, or repress with this behaviour?" to "What are you trying to preserve and achieve?"

This shift comes about, in part, from emphasis on the active role of the ego – on how it works to achieve adequate and purposive functioning – and puts both patients and Gothic characters in a new light. No longer immobile and passive recipients of external stimuli, they are seen as agents who act as well as react. The nature of the stimuli then itself becomes a topic of investigation.

In England, the object-relations school, best represented by Melanie Klein and D. W. Winnicott, emphasized the child's playful self-creation and the mother/child dyad. Within the United States, Erik Erikson's work stressed the infant's eager growth and powers of adaptation as well as the cultural and familial expectations that shape adult identity. Both traditions significantly modify Freud's developmental schema and highlight the temporal dimension of character development.

Throughout this stage, critical discussion moves increasingly from dissection of the single character to consideration of the whole text, from isolated novel to genre. While discussion in the elements stage, for example, might localize psychoanalytic issues within a single character or symbol, that which draws upon structures and themes will recognize and address more far-ranging manifestations. Thus, rather than analyzing individual characters as the repositories of the text's paranoia, hysteria, voyeurism, sadism, or masochism (the most often-noted attributes of the Gothic), criticism in this stage will move toward identification of these responses as not only content-specific themes but as structural issues. The discussion of paranoia, for instance, is no longer limited to a character's conviction that someone is out to "get" him, but is extended to recognizing paranoia as a structural feature evident in the text's "hiding" of meaning from scrutiny via multiple or imbedded narratives, hidden manuscripts, lost letters, or enigmatic warnings. In third-stage or systemic analysis, we will hesitate to dismiss "paranoid" expectations without careful inquiry into whether or not this character has good cause to expect scrutiny or danger from external sources.

Patterns thus become more elaborate and wide-ranging than in the elements stage's classifications, in part because the shift to ego or object-relations psychology encourages analysis of "round" characters, whereas "flats" were more useful for early classifications. Psychoanalysis proper usually does not deal with psychosis (which could be viewed as the therapeutic equivalent of the "flat" character, recognizable for one inflexible constellation of attributes) because transference, or relationship with another,

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cannot be established. The earlier, related flattening of even neurosis now becomes modulated to a more contextualized identification of individuals' characteristic mode of response in times of stress and recognition that such response is a part, and not the whole, of identity.

In considering the panoply of issues relating to psychosocial development, both psychoanalysis and Gothic criticism of this stage tend to begin by focusing upon the male character as normative and, usually, upon the oedipal plot. Even within this concentration, however, other issues of sex, class, race, and culture start to become manifest.

Two commonplaces of Gothic criticism, both of which depend upon the Oedipus complex, can help to show this emergence of new concerns. Ambrosio, in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, can be seen as an oedipal figure. Although he is an orphan (a textual erasure of the past that supports the "family romance" of the individual as self-created), he enacts the mandates of the oedipal struggle through the most lofty of surrogates, the parental arms of the Catholic church. In his ambitious virtue, he supplants all other "Fathers," and nothing less than the Madonna excites his lust. His end, like that of most oedipal outlaws, is not happy: he is himself destroyed by what he sought to control. What we see in *The Castle of Otranto* is a mirror image of the young man's oedipal ambitions. The mighty prince Manfred, himself married, nonetheless wants to wed the fiancée of his dead son and to kill the filial surrogate whom she loves.

Neither plot nor character can be contained by the rubric "Faustian overreacher," nor do they fit smoothly into the standard oedipal outline, wherein the young male wants to kill daddy and bed mummy. When considered via developmental or ego psychology, each representation not only embodies psychological insights but also serves as an expansion or critique of those insights. Manfred's plot suggests that generational struggle is not always initiated by the younger "separated one" and directed against what Wilt calls the "great old ones" (Wilt, 1980, 19, 12). The "great old ones," skillful manipulators of cultural codes, want to maintain their power and extirpate potential usurpers: this does not signal a benign authority. Even the dastardly Ambrosio is the result of "the contest for superiority between his real and acquired character" (Lewis, 1973, 237); it is the Fathers who train him to the very qualities for which they damn him. In both novels, authority – or "reality" – works *against* what Freud held forth as the desideratum of analysis, "common unhappiness," or what Punter describes as that of Kleinian development, "a reasonable oscillation between feelings of hope and despair." These Gothic fictions, like others, "deal in interruptions of this maturing process," and the interruptions are seldom self-initiated (Punter, 1989, 22).

Just as male characters become more fully fleshed in analysis, seen as dynamic representations of ego development rather than part-objects, so, too, female characters begin to stir and come to life. No longer cast as emblems of the Persecuted Maiden or other archetypes, their textual histories begin to be noted, the ways in which they, too, have been carefully schooled in their roles discussed, and the reality of their textual dangers acknowledged. As Margaret Doody states: "It is in the Gothic novel

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that women writers could first accuse the "real world" of falsehood and deep disorder" (Doody, 1977, 560). Those accusations are now heard.

The questioning of the sane and benevolent real world that begins with a closer look at the young/old male struggle thus continues through another binary opposition, male/female. Here, too, myths suddenly seem strangely different. If it is true, as Moers claims, that "property seems to loom larger than love in *Udolpho*" (Moers, 1977, 207), then perhaps criticism has constructed its own secret spaces in which to confine unruly issues, themes, and characters which might suggest that Gothic dread is anything other than an individual or familial problem. The emphasis upon interpersonal relations and development destabilizes previously secure plots in psychoanalysis also. The possibility of a different story, for women particularly, leads to the "discovery" in both fields of what was always there and to curiosity about what might remain unseen.

Systems

In the structures and themes stage, elements are increasingly not discrete items but parts of constellations in which their meanings may vary according to the way they cluster or the order of their presentation. Pattern, seen in other novels and other patients, is fully as important as constituent parts. Interpretation acknowledges the ambiguity of texts and of life: the "definitive" reading no longer seems quite so achievable or desirable. Toward the end of this stage, important new structures are identified, and binaries such as male/female, gay/straight, mother/daughter, upper-/working-class are added to the older/young male divide that figured in the Gothic and psychoanalysis from the first. There is still a tendency, as pronounced as in the elements stage, to laud each localized pattern as "the" pattern. And yet, the insistence upon interpersonal relations, rather than upon the patient or character as *isolato*, suggests that there is at least *one* other who serves as a microcosm of social existence.

That other may be the mother, as object relations maintains (thus mandating a full reassessment of the oedipal), or some other figure. No matter how the "other" is identified, though, the ascendant part of the binary points insistently to still larger social structures. Just as elements reconfigure as structures or themes, so, from about 1980 on, the latter begin to be understood during the systems stage in paradigmatic relation to one another and in conjunction with other systems.

Throughout this third stage, questioning of boundaries – whether within the psyche, between self and other, between genres, or between disciplines – is paramount. For the purposes of this discussion, I call this new understanding "identity" psychology; in the textual criticism arena, "cultural studies" is the term. We move from the analytic session or the genre to a connection of these interpretative frames with others. In so doing, we pay new attention to time, place, and synchronic structures, and find exhilarating new possibilities for inquiry. Why is there so little attention to race in psychoanalysis? Can displacement not be understood not only as a specific, localized

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mechanism, but as an explanation for the role of servants in the Gothic? The acknowledgement of patient – and text – autonomy first proposed in the structures and themes stage leads to a corollary question: What are the psychoanalyst's and the critic's self-interest and complicity in maintaining the genealogies of power? And, most importantly, how and why have different approaches to understanding the Gothic remained segregated so that psychoanalytic modes usually have little to do with feminist, socio-historical, Marxist, or even theological ones?

The text, then, seems no more stable than did the patient of the elements stage, and the psychoanalyst's status is also shaky. What does he want to institute as "cure," and why? Indeed, the term "client" becomes a common synonym for "patient," a shift that denies the label of disease and underscores the economic nexus that made Freud so uneasy. (If the therapist is a servant dependent upon the wages of the employer, what then?)

Turning to uncomfortable, gross issues such as economics, whether in the analytic hour or through assessment of property in the Gothic, points to a return of the (repressed) manifest, a sort of purloined Gothic, always there while we sought assiduously for it elsewhere. Inverting rationalist privileging in the manifest/latent binary, as well as others, led to important new perspectives in stages one and two. In systemic analysis, however, simple reversal (which leaves the binary structure intact) no longer seems adequate to explain what goes on within psychoanalysis or the Gothic, as Sedgwick maintains in critiquing content-predominant analysis:

> But their plunge to the thematics of depth and from there to a psychology of depth has left unexplained the most characteristic and daring areas of Gothic convention, those that point the reader's attention back to surfaces. (Sedgwick, 1980, 140–1)

The renewed focus on surfaces, as well as continued analysis of the latent, begin to unravel definition by opposition. "Both/and" assumes the force "either/or" exerted in stages one and two.

The most important premise of cultural studies is that textual practices, broadly construed, affect material bodies in the real world. Within psychoanalysis, the contemporary emphasis on therapy, or working through a specific issue, tacitly cedes the same truth. In both realms, what I am calling "identity" is acknowledged as multi-faceted: we are not defined solely by the romance plot, the economic plot or even the psychoanalytic plot. Instead, all operate simultaneously, while we yet maintain a core identity that makes us recognizable to ourselves over time and in different contexts, whether kissing someone, taking an exam, or paying a bill. To some extent, this identity is an analogy for the Gothic itself, which can be seen as informing multiple cultural texts, whether legal, medical, or economic.

One of the most popular contemporary psychoanalytic approaches to the Gothic, Lacanian, can pay exquisite attention to the surface but is at odds with much of what has just been stated. Lacanian interpretation, often yoked to post-structuralist methodologies, sees identity itself as structured like a language, but the belief in a mother

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tongue, or core identity, is chimerical on the subject's part. Fragmentation, like the flickering play of language between the symbolic and the imaginary registers, is to be acknowledged and sought. Even in the Gothic realm, the dissolution of boundaries can be deeply disturbing, as we have seen; within the psychoanalytic, it is gravely doubtful whether someone spouting word salad in a psychotic episode would laud what Rosemary Jackson would argue as appropriately subversive: "to disrupt or eat away at the 'syntax' or *structure* by which order is made" (Jackson, 1981, 72).

Nonetheless, post-structuralist, Lacanian models can provide intriguing ideas about the Gothic. Robert Miles, for example, draws upon Foucault, in conjunction with Lacan and others, to construct a "genealogy" of the Gothic that, "in repudiating evolutionary models . . . directs our attention to the 'intertextual' character of Gothic writing" (Miles, 1993, 4). The Bakhtinian carnivalesque celebration of the fragmented self, however, implicitly assumes a return to order or what older psychoanalytic models might describe as "regression in the service of the ego." Post-structuralist models can also bring together seemingly disparate issues in important and insightful ways, as in Hurley's use of Kristeva's semiotic (imaginary, pre-oedipal) to consider both the Gothic and Darwin's theory of evolution. By foregrounding the loss of all boundaries, or dissolution into the abhuman, Hurley addresses issues of race and masculinity in the Gothic that evidence themselves as "hysterical nausea" (Hurley, 1997, 104–11).

Anglo-feminist and Marxist theories also acknowledge the fragmentation of identity, but seldom applaud it. They are the precursors of cultural studies in their adamant insistence that there must be some coherence between theory and practice in the real world. As Margaret Homans rightfully notes, "the coming true of a dream, the discovery in the object world of what was at one time purely subjective, is actually more frightening than the subjective experience itself" (Homans, 1983, 267). What she calls "literalisation" situates horror in the real world, a conclusion already proposed in second-stage analysis, but now developed still further. Within the frame of object relations, particularly as articulated in Nancy Chodorow's influential assessment of mother/daughter bonds, the Gothic becomes, as Claire Kahane asserts, a mirror for the "mysteries of identity and the temptation to lose it by merging with a mother imago who threatens all boundaries between self and other," but also a representation of the mother's own cultural curtailment (Kahane, 1985, 340).

Third-stage analysis thus refuses single causative diagrams or oppositional logic. The gaze, for example, becomes itself an object of scrutiny because of the way in which it enables or forbids entrance into cultural orders, as Susan Wolstenholme argues: "the Gothic structure of looking and being-looked-at offers certain "covers" for the coding of women within the text" (Wolstenholme, 1993, 12). The attributes assigned to looking/being looked at, like those of speech/silence, however, no longer seem so neatly marshaled on each side when the power of *not* looking or speaking seems as possible as the vulnerability of *having* to look or speak. So, too, the earlier focus on male/female relations, via what sometimes seems the omnipresent heterosexual plot, becomes the more complex, multidisciplinary arena of gender studies, so that

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masculinity is no longer the "norm" against which the enigmas of femininity can be measured, but a mystery for analysis in its own right. Presuming that identity is best embodied in the male, the white, the upper class or the heterosexual is no longer the gold standard of interpretation.

The boundaries between the text or analytic session and the real world become less clear, their purpose more suspect. Tania Modleski observes that "The Gothic has been used . . . to connect the social with the psychological, the personal with the political" (Modleski, 1984, 83). The time-honored binary of the individual/society itself begins to dissolve as we examine the ideological stakes that insist that the individual psyche or text is the preserve of horror. The Gothic's own repetition becomes a "pointed reminder of cultural amnesia" (Massé, 1992, 3).

Refusing to accept the preset boundary line between fantasy and reality also leads to joining forces with other modalities and systems. Film, frequently referred to in contemporary studies, is one instance, but so, too, is the crossing of disciplinary boundaries suggested by Punter's *Gothic Pathologies: The Text, the Body and the Law* (1998). In this chapter's analysis, then, we find that we live in a Gothic world, and that the role of interpreters is not to reconcile the individual to that Gothic regime, but instead to train our analytic gaze upon the forces that preserve and maintain it.

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