DEMONIC TEXTS
AND TEXTUAL DEMONS

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The Demonic Tradition, the Self, and Popular Fiction

Frans Ilkka Mäyrä

Tampere Studies in Literature and Textuality

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– Frans Ilkka Mäyrä
Tampere, Finland

This book is dedicated to my parents, Reetta and Matti Mäyrä.

Contents

Illustrations

Abbreviations

BT	Anne Rice, *The Tale of the Body Thief*
DA	Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*
E	William Peter Blatty, *The Exorcist*
F	Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus*
HD	Clive Barker, "The History of the Devil"
IV	Anne Rice, *Interview with the Vampire*
MD	Anne Rice, *Memnoch the Devil*
N	William Gibson, *Neuromancer*
QD	Anne Rice, *The Queen of the Damned*
RB	Ira Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*
SV	Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*
VL	Anne Rice, *The Vampire Lestat*

See Bibliography for further details.

The Beginnings

And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"
He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many."

– The Gospel according to Mark[1]

INTRODUCING THE INTRODUCTIONS

This study deals with demons, and the plural and heterogeneous materials associated with them. It is not concerned with the actual existence of such beings, or with metaphysical speculations that such beliefs might inspire; rather, the reality of demons I am interested in unfolds in the pages of fiction and in horror movies, in hallucinatory fantasies of visionaries, madmen, and people tormented by anxieties and oppressive social conditions.[2] Troublesome and often obnoxious, demons nevertheless continue to figure in our nightmares and even in such waking fantasies as might be granted the name of art. They have been in our cultural vocabulary for thousands of years and continue to challenge our assumptions and theories of human nature. Ancient transgressors, they help to give a historical dimension to the current debate on dissolution of subjectivity, plurality, heterogeneity and conflicts in the structure of the self. They can be approached with theories of text or the self, but in the process they also help to reveal the demonic tensions in these theories, in their own textual selves.

Since the subject of this study is plural, not one, it is only appropriate that it has several introductions. The first one, "Discovering the Demonic Heritage" will open this work with some notable examples of demonic figures appearing in folklore and literature. The next section, titled "The Character of This Study," will position my work by discussing its goals, theoretical and methodological preferences, and it also clarifies my use of some key

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[1] Mk. 5:9. – Bible translations are from the "Revised Standard Version" if not otherwise indicated.

[2] Readers interested in engaging in campaigns against the demonic powers are well served by the abundant offerings of bestselling "spiritual warfare" literature; e.g. Kurt E. Koch, *Between Christ and Satan* (1968) and *Demonology Past and Present: Discerning and Overcoming Demonic Strongholds* (1973), Hal Lindsey with C.C., Carlson, *Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth* (1972), Mark I. Bubeck, *The Adversary: The Christian Versus Demon Activity* (1975) and *Overcoming the Adversary* (1984), Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (1997), Thomas E. Trask and Wayde I. Goodall, *The Battle: Defeating the Enemies of Your Soul* (1997) – just to mention a few classic and recent examples.

concepts. In the section "Previous Research" the reader will find which studies I consider as the most important predecessors and influences on this research. Finally, "How to Use This Book" gives some reading advice and outlines the contents of the different chapters. The whole work can also be read as an introduction; it is an introduction to a special area, often characterised by controversy and confusion. My hope is that this book can inform and stimulate its readers to create their own interpretations, either parallel to the lines I have drawn in my readings, or in new directions.

Next, I will quickly outline how the demonic has figured in different mythologies and folklore and then in the Western literary tradition by reference to some canonical works. This will familiarise the reader with some central themes – the relationship between self and demonic figures, and the internalisation of the demonic, in particular – which will be studied with more detail in the subsequent chapters.

DISCOVERING THE DEMONIC HERITAGE

The prevailing hold that realistic narrative conventions still have on our impressions of literature might make demons appear as marginal figures – fairytale remnants from an alien culture. However, one needs only to take a wider look at the cultural and historical landscape and the situation alters dramatically.

Various demonic beings are present in narratives all over the world. They haunt and pursue, tempt and terrify – and charge innumerable stories in this process with necessary excitement as the protagonists try to survive their visitations. In the Sanskrit epic, *Ramayana*, the ten-headed king of demons, Ravana, abducts queen Sita and forces her husband Rama and his allies to undergo numerous adventures before they eventually succeed in slaying Ravana. In another part of the world, the Zoroastrians tell of Ahriman, "the Lie," an evil lord who fights with his demons against the light and good creation of Ahura Mazda only to be defeated by him at the end of time. The educated and sophisticated elite often scorns the belief in the existence of demons, but these creatures have such a hold on the imagination that they keep coming back. Buddhism is a good example of this. The Blessed One could have taught the non-existence of gods and demons, but as the doctrine was transmitted in narratives there has been very little Buddhism without some mythology that often also exhibits demonic figures. The Badhâna Sutta and many other Buddhist sources relate colourful stories that describe how Mâra, the Evil One, does his worst to complicate Siddharta's road to enlightenment. As T.O. Ling writes, "Mâra emerges from the background of popular demonology, and has obvious affinities with it."[3] Stories about de

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[3] See Ling 1962, 43-71 (quotation from the page 44). The section "Works of General Reference" in my bibliography offers starting points for those interested in getting more information about non-Western demonologies. (See especially *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade.)

mons form an important part of the narrative heritage in many cultures, and this material has proven exceedingly enduring. Folklores all over the world celebrate demons alongside human ghosts and natural spirits, in animal as well as human forms, and do not often clearly distinguish their moral character: the same spirit may be benevolent or malevolent. The fundamental moral character of spirits is often described as morally ambivalent or neutral towards humans. The attitude and conduct of humans themselves has a strong influence on the reaction of the supernatural in a folktale.

The Western literature has made use of a particular, emphatically dualistic demonological heritage, which I outline in chapter one. Some of the best known works of European literary tradition contain a great deal of demonic material. Dante Alighieri created a monument to the Middle Ages in his famous *Commedia* (1314-1321).[4] The invisible realities of Christian theology are illustrated in one hundred cantos, as Dante gives a vivid description of his tripartite journey through the worlds beyond the grave – first, *Inferno*, then *Purgatorio*, and finally *Paradiso*. Combining sophisticated allegorical symbolism with realistic (and often cruel) descriptions of the suffering sinners, the *Inferno* culminates in a confrontation with the Devil. Dante's description of his vision is well worth quoting:

> If once he was as fair as now he's foul
> and dared to raise his brows against his Maker,
> it is fitting that all grief should spring from him.
>
> Oh, how amazed I was when I looked up
> and saw a head – one head wearing three faces!
> One was in front (and that was a bright red),
>
> the other two attached themselves to this one
> just above the middle of each shoulder,
> and at the crown all three were joined in one:
>
> The right face was a blend of white and yellow,
> the left the color of those people's skin
> who live along the river Nile's descent.
>
> Beneath each face two mighty wings stretched out,
> the size you might expect of this huge bird
> (I never saw a ship with larger sails):
>
> not feathered wings but rather like the ones
> a bat would have. He flapped them constantly,
> keeping three winds continuously in motion

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[4] "Comedy" as a title suggests that the direction of the poem is from darkness to light, from misfortune to happiness (and is thereby "untragic" according to the Aristotelian classification; see chapter 13 of *Poetics* [Aristotle 1982, 57-58]). Dante's poem was made "divine" (*La divina commedia*) in the 1555 edition.

> to lock Cocytus eternally in ice.
> He wept from his six eyes, and down three chins
> were dripping tears all mixed with bloody slaver.[5]

Huge, passive and immovable, Dante's "Dis" is a part of a fixed structure. He is locked in the icy pit of Hell, in the position of farthest distance from the light and goodness of God, and in his allegorically subordinate role – his three faces a diabolical parody of the Holy Trinity, and a distorting mirror of God's perfection (ignorance, impotence and hatred or envy, opposing the Highest Wisdom, Divine Omnipotence and Primal Love).[6] The bat's wings, however, also suggest the figure of a medieval demon with its nocturnal and beastly associations, generously illustrated in medieval descriptions of hell.

The Renaissance and the subsequent economic and social development created a demand for a new individuality; the subjects for Church and State became increasingly aware of themselves as free individuals, agents with economical and political initiative and independence.[7] The tempting possibilities and painful turmoil of this cultural metamorphosis did not pass without receiving its manifestation in demonic imagery. *Paradise Lost* (1667) by John Milton reshaped the figure of the Devil by granting him the role of an active performer. His character captured the rebellious spirit of his time and explored the moral defects and dangers inherent in its conflicting dynamism. Catherine Belsey has located a change in discursive practices in the latter half of the seventeenth century that eventually produced the idea of a rational, unified and autonomous subject of modern "liberal humanism." But this subject enters the cultural stage as "an isolated figure, uncertain of the knowledge of the self, the world and others which legitimates its lonely dominion."[8] Milton's Satan breathes this into poetry:

> The mind is its own place, and in it self
> Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.
> What matter where, if I be still the same,
> […].
> Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
> To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
> Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n.[9]

The Devil's celebration of the fully autonomous subjectivity encourages the reader to put the proud words under scrutiny; it is the Devil speaking, after all. The emerging free self finds in this scene its ambivalent apotheosis: both an embodiment of the courageous ideals of modernity, and its

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[5] *Inf*. 34:34-54; Dante 1314/1984, 380-81.
[6] See Mark Musa's notes and commentary (ibid., 384-5).
[7] See, e.g. Heller 1967/1978, 198-99; Taylor 1989, 101-5; Foucault 1966/1989, 217, 308.
[8] Belsey 1985, 86.
[9] *Paradise Lost* 1:253-63; Milton 1973, 12.

negative, demonic aspect – the disconnection, emptiness, rage, narcissism.[10] Milton's own experiences as a secretary in Cromwell's Council of State, and the bitter disappointment of the Restoration has undoubtedly granted his portrait of the diabolical rebel some of its striking power and captivating ambivalence.[11]

The popular "Devil books" (*Teufelsbücher*), flourishing from about 1545 to the beginning of the seventeenth century, had brought up the Protestant peoples to standards of proper conduct; they warned of particular vices (dressing, eating, drinking, cursing, dancing, and so on) and colourfully described the associated demons.[12] The early Lutherans tended to take the Devil seriously, and the fantastic stories told about the magician Faustus came to be interpreted in this context as proofs that Faustus had been in league with Satan.[13] The Faust legend has received numerous literary interpretations (Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* [c. 1588] should especially be mentioned), but none were so influential as *Faust: Eine Tragödie* (1808, 1832) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Milton still formulated his goal in *Paradise Lost* in dominantly Christian terms: "That to the highth of this great Argument / I may assert Eternal Providence, / And justifie the wayes of God to men."[14] Goethe was writing from another perspective, radically altered by the Enlightenment, the birth of modern science, the advent of industrialism and Romantic individuality. His protagonist is a modern man, a scientist, and his demons are rising from a troubling inner emptiness and pains of love (Part One), inner contradictions constantly spurring him to the productive life of achievement – even at the cost of appearing immoral (Part Two). Mephistopheles, Goethe's Devil, is "Part of a power that would / Alone work evil, but engenders good."[15] Goethe described his views on this power in his autobiography:

> He [Goethe himself, as the protagonist of the autobiography] thought he could detect in nature – both animate and inanimate, with soul or without soul – something which manifests itself only in contradictions, and which, therefore, could not be comprehended under any idea, still less under one word. It was not godlike, for it seemed unreasonable; not human, for it had no understanding; nor devilish, for it was beneficent; nor angelic, for it often betrayed a malicious pleasure. It resembled chance, for it evolved no consequences; it was like Providence, for it hinted at connection. All that limits us it seemed to penetrate; it seemed to sport at will with the necessary elements of our existence; it contracted time and expanded

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[10] Harold Bloom's use of *Paradise Lost* and the figure of Satan is illustrative; see his *Anxiety of Influence* (Bloom 1973/1975, 20-21).

[11] See Hill 1984.

[12] Russell 1986/1992, 54.

[13] Melanchton, Luther's disciple, wrote an account of Faustus' life in the 1540s (ibid., 59).

[14] *Paradise Lost* 1:24-26 (Milton 1973, 6).

[15] *Faust I*; Goethe 1808/1949, 75.

space. In the impossible alone did it appear to find pleasure, while it re-jected the possible with contempt.

To this principle, which seemed to come in between all other principles to separate them, and yet to link them together, I gave the name of *Demonic*, after the example of the ancients, and of those who, at any rate, had perceptions of the same kind.[16]

The modern literature on the demonic has inherited a great deal from this restless, amoral principle. As Rosemary Jackson observes, Goethe rede-fined the demonic, unlocking it from its earlier, fixed role as an external su-pernatural evil, and made it something more disturbing – an "apprehension of otherness as a force which is neither good, nor evil."[17]

Goethe has directly inspired many notable works, such as Thomas Mann's exploration of the tragic developments in Germany in his *Doktor Faustus* (1947) and *Der Tod in Venedig* (1912; Death in Venice).[18] A compa-rable impression in the role of the demonic in modern literature is perhaps only made by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Goethe's ambiguous celebration of the amoral demonic, and his willingness to endorse even its destructive dimen-sions in such "demonic individuals" as Napoleon, receives its rebuttal in the wretched attempt of Raskolnikov to move "beyond good and evil" by com-mitting murder (*Prestupleniye i nakazaniye*, 1866; Crime and Punishment). Such a novel as *Besy* (1872; The Possessed) announces its interest in discuss-ing the inner emptiness of modern intellectuals and the consequent evil in demonic terms already in its title. Dostoyevsky's critique is fundamentally conservative and Christian, but also in his works the demonic is treated as an internal and psychological reality rather than something supernatural. In *Bratya Karamazovy* (1879-80; The Brothers Karamazov) Ivan is faced with the Devil in his *delirium tremens* and tries to maintain his sanity by declaring this visitor as a delusion:

> I always divine the nonsense you talk, because *it is I, it is I myself who am speaking, not you*! […]
> You are a hallucination I am having. You are the embodiment of myself, but only of one side of me . . . of my thoughts and emotions, though only those that are most loathsome and stupid.[19]

In another kind of ambiguity, Ivan cannot really incorporate his evil double as a part of himself; as he is awakened, he rushes to the window claiming: "It is not a dream! No, I swear it, it was not a dream, it has all just happened!"[20] Such a state of cognitive hesitation has taken a central place in the modern critical perception of fantasy and Gothic (I will return to this in

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[16] Goethe 1849, 157. Emphasis added.
[17] Jackson 1981, 56.
[18] The earlier work also displays the influence of Nietzsche's views on demons and tragedy (discussed below, pp. 75-80).
[19] Dostoyevsky 1880/1993, 735. Italics in the original.
[20] Ibid., 751.

chapter four), but one should remember Ivan's affirmation of the demonic other, as well as his attempts at denial. The significance of the demonic should be looked for in the recurring pattern of simultaneous recognition and rejection. This ambivalent logic is discussed in its various interpretative possibilities and diverse manifestations in the following chapters.

THE CHARACTER OF THIS STUDY

The initial task of the writer is to open and position one's text by explicating its context and starting points. The basic contents and aims of this study are indicated by its title, *Demonic Texts and Textual Demons*: my focus is on such characters and other features of texts that relate to demons and the demonic. The chiasmatic structure suggests a reciprocal relationship; not only are my texts "demonic" (polyphonic and internally conflicting), but the demons are also "textualised" (consisting of numerous impulses, influences and mutually warring discourses). The three terms of my subtitle – *the Demonic Tradition, the Self, and Popular Fiction* – name the three areas where these elements will be identified and examined. The "demonic tradition" I am interested in is realised in the demonologies of the past, and in the beliefs, practices and narratives of many people even today (different cults, fundamentalist religious groups and many non-Western cultures are especially notable in having kept their demonic traditions alive). The "self" refers to an identity (narrative, social, or psychological) that is problematised, disintegrated and reintegrated by the disrupting effects of demonic activity. By titling my analysed texts "popular fiction" I do not mean that they all would be bestsellers (even if many of them are); rather, this selection (discussed below) demonstrates the wide range of demonic elements in contemporary fiction, from popular horror through science fiction to the "magical realism" of Salman Rushdie. With their blasphemous potential, demonic elements have the capacity to mingle "high" and "low" in a manner that shakes the boundary between "art" and "popular entertainment."

In addition to the history treated in this study, my thesis also has a history of its own. I wrote my first essay on the subject in 1987 – a brief seminar paper dealing with *The Exorcist*. Employing metaphoric language from the subject of my research, I might say that I have been possessed by the topic ever since. Demons kept appearing in surprising contexts and I was gradually able to perceive their connections in a challenging framework of questions. During the last few years I have noticed some signs of increasing interest in this outlandish field. Concerned discussions about Satanism among youth cultures surface regularly in the press, but the 1990s has also seen attempts to restore the demonic as a religious, social or psychological concept. These moves, in their turn, were met by critical answers that aimed to unmask the reactionary agenda of such efforts. There were suddenly "demonic violence," "demonic males," even "demonic apes" on the agenda. Much of this debate was intimately linked to the social developments and

political disputes in a North American context, and I found myself somewhat of an outsider to many of its features.

My own point of view is shaped by the secular, scientific and mediated horizon of the postmodern world many of us are inhabiting. The burst of "theory" that invaded the literary disciplines during the 1980s has left its distinct marks on this study, but even more important has been the daily experience of living within a multiplicity of languages, different cultures and discourses constantly contributing to each other, and often also competing and colliding with each other. The somewhat marginal cultural position of Finland proved to be an asset; not only in the sense of making me aware how "we" are defined and determined by "their" cultural projections and stereotypes (Edward Said's work is potent in demonstrating this theme[21]), but also in pointing out how "us" and "them" have always been inseparably intertwined. Stimulating "foreign" influences are always turning the task of representing an identity (personal, as well as collective) into a dialectic of autonomy, innovation as well as something uncomfortable, or alien.

I therefore approach most definitions of the demonic with caution. The central concepts of this work are put into a centrifugal, rather than centripetal, movement. "Demon," for example, is approached in its various roles as an ambivalent supernatural being of religion and folklore, and then applied to wider theoretical discussion and elucidation in literary analyses. The initial nucleus is nevertheless maintained, and I use "demonic figure" or "demonic character" in those cases where some association with demonic forces is suggested, but when a dimension of "supernatural being" is lacking or unclear.

The "demonic" is similarly explored in various contexts both as an adjective and a noun, while it retains its connection to the demonic tradition (as characterised in chapter one). In general parlance, the demonic has lost some of its specificity – a person can be "demonic" and that can simply mean "strongly motivated" or "inspired." This study emphasises the uncanny and disturbing, as well as the imaginative and inspiring potentials of the demonic; this area is so often illustrated in violent, infernal imagery, I argue, because it is rooted in some significant but unrecognised areas – typically in sexual impulses, destructive anger, or conflicts in social or psychic identity that cannot be faced directly. Its chthonic, underground associations relate to its subconscious and repressed status. The grotesque forms, that are another distinctive feature of this area, are capable of suggesting powerful tensions in their distortions.

This emphasis on the significance of "unpresentable" materials has led me to critique the cognitocentrism that tends to dominate many current theories, across disciplinary boundaries.[22] The significance of an uncon-

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[21] See Said, *Orientalism* (1978).

[22] As employed in this study, "cognitocentric" owes its usefulness as a critical concept especially to new studies that have revealed the fundamental role of emotions in human thought and behaviour (popularised by Daniel Goleman in his book, *Emotional Intelli-*

scious conflict, for example, can be "translated" into cognitive statements only crudely. It is felt in a particular situation, under particular conditions and the ensuing pain and anxiety can discharge in various expressions, and these, in their turn, can be analysed. One should, however, be careful not to assume that any particular situation could be completely condensed into one's analytical statements, or – even worse – to deny or "bracket" such a reality on the basis that it does not conform to the demands of intellectual clarity. As William Ray has written: "meaning involves a tension, perhaps an unresolvable paradox, between system and instance," and "this paradox must inform literary study."[23] This tension between interpretative reduction and the irreducible difference (and *differance*) is discussed in chapter three.

Another set of key concepts for this study are "self," "subject" and other names for human agency, and their "Other." I prefer to read philosophical concepts back into history and particular situations whenever possible, and this is reflected in the dominance of various "selves" over the more abstracted "subject." Any self also has its Other – or such can be constructed from those areas that are excluded beyond its boundaries. Our perception of otherness is never neutral; others tend to get meanings in their relation to our own "centres of signification." In this sense "Other" is a mythical concept, and the use of a capital letter is justifiable. I am not so comfortable with the practice of some proponents of Jungian or self psychology to capitalise "Self." This suggests that some "true Self" could be perceived beyond the various "roles" that mask our real identity – even from ourselves. This is a debatable idea and figures in the discussion of chapter two. If "Self" appears in the text, this is a feature of a text I am quoting or paraphrasing, and not an endorsement of the aforementioned view.[24]

I am well aware that many of the selected texts in this thesis are controversial, to say the least. They have the capacity to shock, to hurt, or insult some readers. *The Exorcist* can offend with its handling of Christian symbols

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gence [1995]; see also Sacks 1987 & 1996); it is also related to the inadequacies of the traditional opposites, "emotivism" and "cognitivism," for the study of cultures (see Shweder 1991, 226-29). The experience of meaning or the act of making a value judgement (such as distinguishing between good and evil) carry many dimensions; the dominance of mere cognition should be questioned and rethought in our theories, as well as the conventional views on the "rational" and the "irrational." (Cf. Jacques Derrida's project of creating a critique of "logocentrism.")

[23] Ray 1985, 3.

[24] An American proponent of "psychology of the self," Heinz Kohut, usefully differentiates three levels that are relevant in discussing questions of psychological identity; 'ego,' 'id' and 'superego' relate to the structural (abstract) dimension of theoretical analysis, 'personality' is employed in the social sphere, whereas 'self' mainly suggests the level of personal experience (Kohut 1971/1977, xiv). Kohut's views are also important because he focuses on the (post)modern "loss of self." According to him, narcissistic personality disorders dominate in the late twentieth century. These are symptoms of insecurity, alienation and dislocation: the inner structures of contemporary psyche are not stabilised. Whereas a Freudian patient had neurotic symptoms because of conflicts in instinctual repression, Kohut describes people with feelings of fragmentation or inner emptiness. (See Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self* [1971/1977], *The Restoration of the Self* [1977].)

and the female body, and *The Satanic Verses* with its irreverent attitude towards the Islamic tradition, for example. Other readers may read these, and my other texts, and find enjoyment, thrilling ideas and startling visions, complex and conflicting presentations that address their own, complex and conflicting conditions. My own position is closer to this latter group, but during my research I have also grown much more aware of how much a disturbing potential contributes to the particular fascination and effect these demonic texts are capable of invoking. They find their audience among those readers who are capable of a playful and experimenting attitude even towards "serious" matters, or who have resentment, oppositional attitudes and a dissident position towards the dominant values and ways of living. Such attitudes are prominent especially among youth cultures, where demonic imagery is a manifest element in rock lyrics, music videos, computer and role playing games, comic books and animated cartoons. This study may help to situate such contemporary popular forms in a wider context, but one does not need to be a fan or a specialist in these areas, I hope, to appreciate the more comprehensive view of the demonic adopted in this study.

A recognition of the conflicting ethical status of my subject matter for different audiences leads also to the consideration of the ethics of research in this area. Even if it would be possible to do "purely" neutral, formal or descriptive criticism (which I do not believe), demonic texts clearly demand a different approach; in their provocative and often outrageous characteristics they invite strong reactions and call for interpretative activity – they engage their reader in their conflicts and invite ethical and evaluative criticism. In practice, this can mean various things; in his *The Ethics of Reading* (1986), J. Hillis Miller argues that an ethical attitude towards a text demands that the reader make a particular text the "law" of his reading, forcing him to follow it with "fidelity and obedience."[25] The productive and "re-visioning" aspect of reading complicates the picture, but Miller's deconstructionistic emphasis on the fundamental "unreadability" of a text nevertheless grants it an air of immunity or inviolability. Wayne C. Booth, in contrast, opens his discussion of an "ethics of fiction," *The Company We Keep* (1988), with an eye towards particular readers and their evaluative reactions towards texts: his book is dedicated to Paul Moses, a black assistant professor at The University of Chicago during the 1960s, who refused to teach *Huckleberry Finn* because he felt it was offensive. Booth argues that "we arrive at our sense of value in narrative in precisely the way we arrive at our sense of value in persons: by *experiencing* them in an immeasurably rich context of others that are both like and unlike them."[26] Basically, this amounts to what phenomenology and hermeneutics have long been saying about the reading process: there is a dialectic of anticipation and retrospection as the horizon of the work and that of the reader are related to each other. Any "understanding"

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[25] Miller 1987, 102.
[26] Booth 1988, 70. Italics in the original.

that is produced of a work reflects the reader's own disposition as well as that of the text.[27] Booth resorts to neologism, and uses "coduction" as the name for the particular logic of the communal appraisal of narratives.[28]

Picking a middle road between these two interpretations of ethical criticism, I think that it is important to note both sides of this situation; first, how our relationships to fiction are different from our relationships to persons – there is generally a much greater degree of freedom and tolerance in this area as compared to our real-life concerns. And second, both writing and reading are activities that do not happen in a completely separate sphere, even if we were "only" discussing "mere fiction" here. A work of fiction may have an effect on the reader, even if I think that many of the "detrimental" effects of such questionable materials as violence or pornography are really readers' ways of exploring *their own* morally ambivalent and destructive impulses, using these materials as their means.[29] This might seem quite a liberal position; many readers would probably pass much more severe "judgements" on the disturbing aspects of the demonic texts in question. Because of the strong tradition of condemnation and prohibition that has stigmatised this field, I feel that a more neutral and many-faceted way of reading the demonic is nevertheless justifiable. I emphasise the free and voluntary nature of this area; the sadomasochistic pleasures of the demons in contemporary horror, for example, are produced and consumed within this particular subculture, and any ethical reading of them should pay attention to this context, with its alternative values and aesthetics. But one should not try to "clean" or palliate the demonic: it is loaded with fears, aggressions and ambiguous desires to counterbalance its striking energy and imaginative stimulation.

Hermeneutic and ethical considerations also have necessary links to the methodology of this study. Rather than promoting one single theory and way of reading, I rely on an interdisciplinary approach and a plurality of reading strategies to capture the diversity and specificity of the various texts. The basic reading position is perceived as a dialogue with the text, and an openness towards various interpretative contexts, all contributing to a many-sided presentation of the subject matter. The tensions inherent in such an approach to reading are treated in chapter three. The literary study of the following pages is informed by anthropology, psychology, philosophy, theories of text and self, conceptual analysis and often also specific contextual (biographical, social, historical) information. The goal is to offer the reader a rich and illustrative exploration into the world of demons, and to construct an interpretative framework that helps to make the demonic

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[27] See, e.g. Iser 1972.

[28] Booth 1988, 72-3.

[29] The psychological and philosophical views presented in chapter two can both be interpreted as supporting such a view, and also as contesting any sharp distinction and division between "internal" and "external" reasons for human motivations – "my desires" and "my ideas" always having their roots in the dialectic of the self and the Other.

elements in texts more intelligible. If there were one argument governing this study, it would be precisely that no single argument is enough to exhaust the tension, dialogue and conflict constantly characterising the borderline condition of demons. They warn us of intellectual hubris and encourage us to respect the complexity of ourselves and our otherness.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Literary demonology is not one of the most popular topics for current research, but there are some worthy predecessors. Theology and anthropology have their ample corpus of studies of both the Judeo-Christian Devil, and of the demonic beliefs of the non-Christian peoples. Many of these are not only sources of information but also documents of their times and attitudes; the Dominican friars, Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, for example, supply bountiful evidence of the powers of the Devil (and of their hatred of women) in their *Malleus Maleficarum* (c. 1486). Montague Summers, who celebrated the "inexhaustible wells of wisdom" and the "modernity" of this document of witch craze in his introduction, also used it uncritically as a source for his "scholarly" studies.[30] One is better advised by modern scholarship, which has questioned many of the old myths flourishing in this area. The Devil has received a detailed history in the series of studies by Jeffrey Burton Russell. *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (1977) addresses the prehistory of personified evil, *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (1981) brings the history up to the fifth century, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (1984) stops before the Reformation, and *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (1986) completes the sequence.[31] I have profited especially from the last volume, as the modern history of the Devil is increasingly also literary history. For those interested in the logic of witch-hunts, I recommend *Europe's Inner Demons* (1975) by Norman Cohn, Joseph Klaits's *Servants of Satan* (1985), and Lyndal Roper's *Oedipus and the Devil* (1994).

My most important sources for demonology are documented in the references for chapter one, and in the bibliography. I nevertheless want to mention particularly *Essentials of Demonology* (1949) by Edward Langton, a learned and meticulous study containing a wealth of information. Because my interests have not so much been spurred by the ambition to engage in detailed historical scholarship as by the need to create an interpretative background for the demonic in contemporary culture, I value highly such a work as *The Ancient Enemy* (1987) by Neil Forsyth. This kind of study tries to synthesise broad developments, to produce interpretations and still maintain a grasp of historical particularities. A classic of general demonic lore is

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[30] See Kramer - Sprenger 1486/1996, xv-xvi; Summers 1925/1994; 1928/1995; 1969. The influence of Summers can still be seen in some current studies of the demonic; see e.g. Valk 1994.

[31] Russell's *The Prince of Darkness* (1988) is an accessible summary of this tetralogy.

The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil (1900) by Paul Carus, and a more current, highly recommendable introduction is *The Powers of Evil in Western Religion, Magic and Folk Belief* (1975) by Richard Cavendish. I should also mention my debt to Alan E. Bernstein's *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds* (1993) and *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (1994) by Bernard McGinn, in their respective fields of expertise. Elaine Pagels's *The Origin of Satan* (1995) and Gerald Messadié's *Histoire Générale du Diable* (1993; A History of the Devil) offered many stimulating ideas.[32]

Literary criticism has engaged with the demonic both on a level of general theory and through specific readings, but not in abundance in either category. A pioneering study by Maximilian Rudwin, *The Devil in Legend and Literature* (1931) is dedicated to the memory of Paul Carus and is useful especially in linking Faust studies with cultural history and the demonic tradition. Rudwin identifies and classifies many of those different roles that the Devil plays in Western literature: the Devil as "master of matter," "prince of this world," or as "sponsor of reason;" "Satan as scholar," as "symbol of science," or generally, how the Devil has the "diabolical responsibility for scientific discoveries." He also notes how often the arts have been represented as sponsored by Satan, and how the Devil himself has repeatedly been portrayed as an artist.[33] The numerous uses that the Romantic rebels and materialist dissidents found for the Devil, lead Rudwin to conclude:

> Thus the Devil is the representative of terrestrial interests and enjoyments, in contrast to those of the spiritual realm. As a skillful reasoner and logician, he plays havoc with those who dispute his clever materialistic philosophy, for he excels in dialectic. He stands for the glorification of the flesh in painting and sculpture, in the dance and drama, in fiction and romantic adve[n]ture, depicting forbidden pleasures in vivid colors, luring on the amorous and the yearning to supposed happiness only to dash this expectation into an empty sense of unreality and frustration. It is his restless impulse in men which provokes them to unsettle the old order of things and become reformers in the hope of promoting greater happiness.[34]

Rudwin closes his study with the "salvation of Satan in modern poetry," the Romantic and Decadent literary endorsement of the materialism

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[32] The modern interest in the symbolic and cultural roles of the demonic is, of course, profoundly indebted to the contributions of psychology and psychoanalysis. Ernest Jones (1931/1959, 154-55) has summed up the psychoanalytic view in three quotations: "He was not cast down from heaven, but arose out of the depths of human soul" (A. Graf), "For the Devil is certainly nothing else than the personification of the repressed, unconscious instinctual life" (S. Freud), and "The Devil and the sombre dæmonic figures of the myths are – psychologically regarded – functional symbols, personifications of the suppressed and unsublimated elements of the instinctual life" (H. Silbert).

[33] Rudwin 1931/1973, 243-54.

[34] Ibid., 269-70. – A more recent study, *The Devil in English Literature* (1978) by Hannes Vatter basically just confirms the main findings of Rudwin's work.

and the powers of disorder. "Satan secured his strongest sympathy," Rudwin writes, "from the French poets of the Romantic period."[35] This claim is substantiated by the massive, two-volume thesis, *Le Diable dans la littérature française* (1960), by Max Milner. Milner covers the literary demonology of the French literature that was created between Jacques Cazotte's *Le Diable amoreux* (1776; The Devil in Love) and Charles Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* (1857, 1861; The Flowers of Evil). The influence of Enlightenment philosophy, European occult traditions, revolutionary and satirical interests, Milton, modern Christian thought, Gothic tradition, Hoffmann and German Romanticism, and modern Satanism are all explored in the French context in Milner's work. The figure of Satan and demonic imagery appears through its perspective as situated at the centre of vigorous intellectual activity and pan-European debate that concerned values and world-view, aesthetics and ethics, politics and poetry.

My own interest is not primarily directed towards study of the Devil as a literary personage or motif; the plural and heterogeneous character of demons and the demonic in general connects to a wider setting and questions that have been left almost untouched by literary studies. The older "myth criticism" made some attempts in this direction. Northrop Frye abstracted from literary history and from the results of such anthropological syntheses as the encyclopaedic *Golden Bough* (1890-1915), by Sir James Frazer, a broad structural theory of modes, symbols, myths and genres, published as *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). The demonic has a place in this system: demonic imagery is a form of "metaphorical organization" and identification, undesirable, and opposed to the apocalyptic (desirable) alternative.[36] Frye writes:

> Opposed to apocalyptic symbolism is the presentation of the world that desire totally rejects: the world of the nightmare and the scapegoat, of bondage and pain and confusion; the world as it is before the human imagination begins to work on it and before any image of human desire, such as the city or the garden, has been solidly established; the world also of perverted or wasted work, ruins and catacombs, instruments of torture and monuments of folly. [...] Hence one of the central themes of demonic imagery is parody, the mocking of the exuberant play of art by suggesting its imitation in terms of "real life."[37]

Frye's illustrations of this dark and parodic imagery are suggestive, but the grandiose theoretical scheme supporting it has gradually lost its relevance. Frazer and his "Cambridge school" of anthropology were looking after universal logic and patterns in myths and rituals, but later research has

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[35] Rudwin 1931/1973, 285.
[36] Frye 1957/1973, 139. The apocalyptic and the demonic belong under the more general category of "undisplaced myth," which is in its turn an alternative category to the less metaphorical (and more modern) forms of metaphorical organisation, the "romantic" and the "realistic."
[37] Ibid., 147.

emphasised that such elements (no matter how ancient) nevertheless gain their meanings in their particular social and cultural contexts, and therefore detailed case studies are preferable to grand systems. The "poststructuralist" critique of human sciences has not completely drained such systems of knowledge of their usefulness and relevance, but the truth claims invested in them are nowadays formulated with much more caution. A historian, like Hayden White, might well focus his reading on the fictional and metaphorical aspects of historiography, while endorsing Frye's categories as analytical tools.[38] In the case of this study, particularly its cultural context should be noted as an important qualification: this is a modern, distinctly Western work.[39]

The traditional dimension of demonic imagery cannot be denied, no matter how illusory any comprehensive theory of the role of demonic in cultural history might necessarily be. Kent Ljungquist, in his article "Daemon" for the *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs* (1988), presents quite a similar approach to the demonic tradition to the one that I have adopted for my own purposes.[40] It is useful to know the classical background and the ambivalent characteristics of the pre-Christian "demons" to better understand how the demonic operates in contemporary fiction. But the idea is to bring materials from history to face the hermeneutic challenge of our own situation, the present context, rather than to suppose that the interpretations and selections should reflect some "objective reality" of the past. The "fidelity and obedience" of ethical reading relates also to the ideals of scientific method, but one should differentiate between studies that aim at factual demonstration and verification, and studies that engage in cultural discussion and interpretation. This one is primarily of the latter kind.

One influential predecessor is yet to be mentioned. I have profited immensely from the discussion of the demonic by Rosemary Jackson in her *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981). Her reading is informed by modern developments in philosophy and psychoanalysis, and particularly the way she situates the demonic at the dialectic of "I" and "not-I," or the self and its perception of otherness, has been helpful in numerous ways. Other debts in theory, illustrative examples and interpretations are too numerous to be listed here; they are discussed in chapters one to three, and in the references throughout the work.

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[38] White 1973, 7-11. For an overview of the various positions adopted by twentieth-century historiography, see Breisach (1994, 327-419).

[39] *The Concept of Man: A Study in Comparative Philosophy* (1966; edited by S. Radhakrishnan and P.T. Raju) is one example of an alternative approach to the discussions concerning subjectivity. Vytautas Kavolis notes how even cross-cultural psychology asks "only Western questions of both Western and non-Western psyches. Efforts to develop non-Western psychologies out of the heart of non-Western experiences and from within the linguistic universes by which these experiences have been structured are rarely (mainly in Japan and in India) beyond elementary beginnings." (Kavolis 1984, 10 ["Preface"].)

[40] Ljungquist 1988.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This work is organised in two parts: the first offers more general, historically and theoretically oriented information and interpretations, whereas the second consists of analyses of some contemporary demonic texts. Because these may serve different interests and readers, it perhaps useful for me to give a brief outline of their contents here. The reader is encouraged to read this book in a non-linear manner (suiting the plurality of its structure and materials), exploiting the possibilities for transition opened up by the references (both internal and external) in the footnotes.

The first chapter, "The Ancestry of the Demonic," is a general introduction to the demonic tradition and the various demonic discourses. It is concerned with historical materials and builds an interpretation of them, the borderline character of demons as a starting point. The "demonic tradition" that I am discussing here should be taken as a heuristic construction, not as a claim for some clear and unified group of demonic beliefs or materials, passed immutably from generation to generation. The structural logic of demons (their liminal and transgressive character among and between cultural categories) seems to be quite enduring, but the particular uses that these figures have served are extremely diverse, reaching from a *daimon* from a Greek tragedy to a jesting devil from a Medieval carnival, or to the hysterical behaviour of a possessed nun in seventeenth-century France.

"The Demonic in the Self," the second chapter, focuses on the relationship between demons and the self and connects it to various theoretical discussions. I approach the self as a metaphorical and mental construction, a figure of speech, realised in its various, often narrative representations. Demons find their expressive potentials in the disruptive aspects of this necessarily incomplete and dynamic process of self-representation. Expressing and exploring the disintegration and disunity of the self, demons have the theoretical sympathies of such psychological and philosophical views that reject the traditional humanistic idea of a more or less coherent and unbroken subjectivity. This chapter reveals a dialogue and tension between two ways of reading the self, the "therapeutic" and the "aesthetic." While the former perceives a state of incoherence as a challenge for integrative and healing activities, the latter emphasises tension and conflict as rich and necessary constituents for the polysemy of our plural condition. Friedrich Nietzsche is my central example of the demonic potentials in the aesthetic or anti-humanistic theorisation.

The conflict and dialectic of opposing objectives also structures my reading of "textuality" in chapter three, "Unravelling the Demonic Text." The debate between Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida on the status of "madness" in Descartes's meditations offers a way to differentiate between two modes of perceiving a text, and consequently two different reading practices. Both these writers are radical French proponents of "poststruc-

turalism," but in this case they are used to illustrate alternate ways of relating to the demon of madness: Foucault appears to be more interested in the emancipatory, engaged and historically or socially contextual textuality, whereas Derrida's deconstruction perceives the "context" also in textual terms. I put this radically textual, deconstructive and polyphonic alternative under a closer scrutiny and read Bakhtin, Kristeva, Derrida and Barthes to outline the genesis of a peculiar idea, the "demonic text." The ambivalent, rebellious and blasphemous aspects in the 1960s' and 1970s' theories of text become more comprehensible, I hope, in light of this reading of their demonic subtext.

Chapter four, "Demons of Horror: Intimations of an Inner Alien," opens the second part of my study. The supernatural, violent and sexual materials associated with the demonic have traditionally been confined to the Gothic, or horror literature. Most of my examples are therefore from contemporary representatives of this genre, even if demonic imagery and subject matters have begun breaking into other areas, as well. (Chapters nine and ten concern developments outside the horror genre.) Chapter four stands as a brief introduction to horror, and to the roles the demonic has traditionally played in this literature – which has nowadays grown into a whole subculture of its own.

"Mothering a Demon: Rosemary's Baby," chapter five, is the first of my horror analyses. Ira Levin's novel holds a special place as it is one of the key works to inspire fresh interest in the Satanic and demonic subject matter in the 1970s. It also introduces an important modern demonic motif, the demonic child. Questions of identity and insecurity are here explored with reference to body as a demonic topos.

In chapter six, "The Inarticulate Body: Demonic Conflicts in *The Exorcist*," we will meet another demonic bestseller. W.P. Blatty's novel has obvious affinities to *Rosemary's Baby* – both of them deal with contemporary fears with the demonic child as their central motif – but in a closer analysis Blatty's tone and attitude towards the demonic is profoundly different. I read *The Exorcist* as a demonic male fantasy, and as a modern Catholic work with a sternly Manichaean worldview.

Chapter seven, "Good at Being Evil: the Demons of *The Vampire Chronicles*" is a reading of a series of popular vampire novels by Anne Rice. Narrative desire and desire for blood become inseparable as I untangle the demonic conflicts and metamorphoses from these thick volumes. The series becomes increasingly incoherent as it draws away from its initial, tragic impulses; the demonic conflict and endless striving at the heart of these vampiric selves is finally all that endures.

After Rice's massive *Chronicles*, I have chosen to focus on a concise text in chapter eight, "The (Un)Traditionalist: Clive Barker's Devil." Barker is an important current horror author, even if not as popular as Anne Rice or Stephen King. Barker's play, "The History of the Devil; or Scenes from a Pretended Life" is an early work of British experimental theatre and broad-

ens the study outside the American popular novel. Where the earlier works
treated the demonic with an almost hysterical fear, Rice and Barker are ex-
amples of modern horror, where the monsters are confronted and their
voice is heard. Barker's extreme visions and awareness of previous traditions
(such as *Grand Guignol*) makes his treatment of the Devil and the demons
innovative and fascinating.

  Barker's Devil is also an engineer, and his demonic creation – an artifi-
cial human being – operates as a bridge to chapter nine, "Technodemons of
the Digital Self." The analysed examples here come outside of the horror
genre, from science fiction, and I have seen it as necessary to write some his-
torical context to the demonic "man-machines" in this chapter. The "magi-
cal" meanings attached to new forms of technology, and particularly to elec-
tricity, can be traced back to *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley. Demonic
attributes and frightening ambivalence has figured in cyborgs, robots, an-
droids and other man-machines ever since Victor Frankenstein's "daemon."
Frederic Pohl's *Man Plus*, Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric
Sheep*, the movie *Blade Runner* and *Neuromancer* by William Gibson are
read with an eye towards how they articulate technological "otherness" in
relation to human identity, and this chapter reveals an interesting displace-
ment of the demonic. Rather than figuring at the borderline of the super-
natural, or to beastly nature, contemporary demons appear at the borderline
of technology; they evoke contemporary anxieties of redefinition or loss of
self.

  The last analysis, in chapter ten, is titled "*The Satanic Verses* and the
Demonic Text." Salman Rushdie's novel has generated diplomatic crises and
violent riots; while it is not my intention to offer any comprehensive expla-
nation as to why this happened, the analysis of the novel's demonic features
may suggest some answers. *The Satanic Verses* is very self-conscious in its
use of the many possibilities that connect the demonic to the postmodern
theories of the text and the self (as studied in chapters two and three), and it
sums up many features that the previous popular novels only implied. It
celebrates monstrosity as a form of hybridity, the hallmark of our postmod-
ern condition: it presents demonisation as a political and racist practice of
dehumanising the others ("aliens"). It takes forceful sides in a cultural
struggle, and situates itself against religious fundamentalism and other sys-
tems of thought that would return to the pre-modern state of clear-cut iden-
tities. In this process it is necessarily placing itself in the position of reli-
gious "adversary;" *The Satanic Verses* considers the self-demonising poten-
tials in its own project, and even prophesies its author's future verdict. The
analysis presents this novel as so entangled in the various, partly uncon-
scious demonic conflicts that it undoubtedly is my best example of a de-
monic text in all of its ambiguous glory.

  Last but not least, "The Epilogue" discusses such developments that
could not fit in this study, and summarises my main findings and the lessons
I derive from this demonic endeavour. The bibliography does not contain all

the materials I have used, but all explicit references are identified there, and also a few important others. The bibliography is divided in three parts (general reference, research literature and works of fiction) for practical reasons. An index is also supplied to facilitate quick access to the discussions of individual texts, authors and key concepts.

Finally a note on the use of the personal pronoun: "he" is applied throughout this study as a substitute for "the reader" to indicate my own, active role. A female reader, or a reader from a different cultural background or with a different set of values, would perhaps read these materials differently in numerous ways I cannot anticipate. Instead of trying to deny such a possibility, I embrace it. Disagreement is another name for diversity, and a sign of the other, inviting respectful dialogue, rather than denial.

PART I

1.   The Ancestry of the Demonic

Ἡ. ἔφη ὡς ἦθος ἀνθρώπωι δαίμον

– Heraclitus[1]

DEMONS AS AMBIVALENT OPPONENTS: THE DAIMON

Our word for demon is etymologically derived from the ancient Hellenic *daimon*. This is an interesting and challenging concept, and points towards an original ambivalence that efficiently resists all attempts to fix and delimit the meaning of demons and the demonic. In his *Greek Philosophical Terms* F.E. Peters defines daimon as *"supernatural presence or entity, somewhere between a god (theos) and a hero."*[2] According to Peters, the Greeks had developed a belief in supernatural spirits at a very early stage; this can be detected in their language. For example, the Greek word for happiness was *eudaimonia*, which literally meant 'having a good daimon.' These people believed that a daimon attached to a person at the moment of birth and dictated one's destiny, good or evil. A good daimon acted as a kind of "guardian spirit" in the life of a happy person. The exact forms of this belief seem to have varied, and according to the shamanistic view the daimon was a very intimate part of an individual, another name for the soul. Among the later transcendentalists it became popular to think about daimons as intermediary figures between the Olympians and the mortals; they inhabited areas close to men and exercised direct influence over their affairs.[3]

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[1] Diels 1903/1966, 177 (Vol. I, fragment 119).

[2] Peters 1967, 33. The classification of rational beings into four classes (gods, daimons, heroes and men, in this order) comes from Hesiod and was followed by Plutarch in his *Moralia* (see Ferguson 1984, 33). – Jatakari 1996 is a thorough study (in Finnish) about the role of the *daimon* in Greek thought between 550 and 300 B.C.E. The original roots of *daimon* are multiple and disputed. It is commonly related to the verb 'to apportion' (δαίομαι), but the scholarship does not agree on what was originally apportioned. Some researchers think that the earliest daimons were malign natural powers and spirits; the "apportioning" would have signified violent rending or eating of body (W. Porzig). Others have more positive hypotheses, and suggest that daimons at an early stage were bearers of light (W. Buckert), or that the daimonic 'apportioning' included the dimension of apportioning fate or destiny (M.P. Nilsson). See Jatakari 1996, 4.

[3] Peters 1967, 33-34. Everett Ferguson produces a useful summary of Greek views on daimons in his study *Demonology of the Early Christian World* (Ferguson 1984, 33-59). Jensen (1966) has a more specific goal: to trace the function of Greek demonology in the philosophical and religious dualism of Pythagorean and Platonic thought.

The ambivalent role of daimons is important to notice; apart from that they could be either good or evil, they also gave name to an element in human subjectivity that was an essential and intimate part of human existence, but that was *not human* at the same time. The daimon marked a limit, or fracture, embedded in the human make-up itself. Their mythological position in the interspace between men and gods also underlines their borderline character. This view was given prominence by Plato, who wrote in his *Symposium* that Eros (love) is a "mighty daimon" (*daimôn megas*). His account continues:

> All that is daemonic [daimonic] lies between the mortal and the immortal. Its functions are to interpret to men communications from the gods – commandments and favours from the gods in return for men's attentions – and to convey prayers and offerings from men to the gods. Being thus between men and gods the daemon fills up the gap and so acts as a link joining up the whole. Through it as intermediary pass all forms of divination and sorcery. God does not mix with man; the daemonic is the agency through which intercourse and converse take place between men and gods, whether in waking visions or in dreams. [4]

The negative and destructive sides of such "unconscious" influences and communications are well illustrated in the ancient Greek poetry. As E.R. Dodds has argued in his study *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951), that the people were already in those days aware of how human behaviour can be ruled by different, and even conflicting "reasons." In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon could reason with his senseless acts by claiming that Zeus had blinded him with his enchantment (*atê*), but despite this, he himself carried the responsibility for the consequences.[5] The Greeks did not have a unified concept for a "soul" or "personality"; such concepts as *psychê*, *thymos*, *noos*, and *menos* characterise the area of individual "psychology" in plural and fluid manner.[6] Since the psychic structure was invested with this polymorphic character, it was easy to personify and objectify conflicting impulses, or actions motivated by unconscious reasons as influences of external, alien origin.[7] The Greek writers frequently let their characters talk about their actions by referring to the influence of daimon – even if the more comprehensive vision offered to the audience included the fate of family, or the plans of gods. In Euripides' *Medea* the nurse thinks that her mistress' terrible mad-

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[4] *Symp*. 202d-203a. E.R. Dodd's translation; quoted in Diamond 1996, 69.
[5] *Il*., 19.86-137. See also Dodds 1951/1973, 3.
[6] Dodds 1951/1973, 15; this view was established by Bruno Snell (in 1931; see Bremmer 1983/1993, 8). Bremmer presents evidence which supports the view that the dualistic division between thinking mind (soul) and non-thinking body had not yet developed in archaic thought. Each person was a holistic unity, body and mind – thinking and feeling were not separate from each other, and could be ascribed to such organs as heart, gall, diaphragm or lungs. (Bremmer 1983/1993, especially pages 53-63.)
[7] Dodds 1951/1973, 17.

ness is a daimon's doings;[8] in *Hippolytus* Phaedra believes that her senseless love is spurred by some malevolent daimon – when the audience is informed by Aphrodite herself that the "terrible Eros" is a divine punishment, directed towards Hippolytus.[9] The Furies, or Erinyes, haunt those who have committed violence towards blood relatives, such as Orestes in Aeschylus' trilogy. Cassandra, cursed with the gift of prophesy, sees them dancing on the rooftops as vampiric spirits, swollen with blood.[10] Clytaemnestra, on the other hand, does not feel herself to be the wife of Agamemnon, but as the incarnation of an avenging spirit.[11] These ancient characters are constantly surrounded by spiritual beings, embodiments of forces that operate in their thoughts and actions.

Theseus and Pirithous as prisoners and bound by an Erinys
(from an Etruscan vase; Carus 1900/1996, 203).

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[8] *Med*. 115-130. (Unless otherwise noted, I have used the Greek editions and English translations accessible as electronic texts through the Perseus Project; www.perseus. tufts.edu .)
[9] *Hip*. 27, 241.
[10] *Agam.* 1186-97.
[11] Ibid., 1497-1504.

The particular effect of tragedies (pity and fear, followed by a catharsis, as Aristotle characterised it) is often based on violent conflicts that oppose different, but equally justified, interests or values. Jean-Pierre Vernant has studied this aspect of tragedies, and paid special attention to the relationship between *ethos* and *daimon*.[12] He has noted how difficult it has been for modern critics to understand such characters as Eteocles, in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*; in the beginning of the play Eteocles embodies all the virtues of a rational citizen – only to rush madly into a deadly fight with his own brother. As the chorus comments: "For the spirit of madness brought them together, / And their understanding was taken from them."[13] Vernant claims that conflicts at various levels of tragedy significantly contribute to its special economy. Such characters as Eteocles conform to different models of subjectivity simultaneously. They present human existence as a painful vacillation or conflict between the rational course of *homo politicus* and the irrational twists of mythical action (*muthos*).

> At every moment the life of the hero will unfold as if on two planes, of which each, taken in itself, would suffice to explain the episodes of drama, but which in fact the tragedy aims at presenting as inseparable: each action appears in the line and the logic of a character, of an *ethos*, at the same time that it reveals itself as the manifestation of a power from beyond, of a *daimôn*.[14]

Neither *ethos* or *daimon* by itself would be enough to produce a tragedy. Both are needed and tragedy's specific artistic power relies on the tension between these two incompatible models. It should be noted here, that much of contemporary horror is an inheritor of this double logic (even if it is otherwise derived from much later sources). The action and characters of ancient tragedies or modern horror should not be interpreted under one term – irrational or rational – but perceived in its conflicting movement between the opposites. Vernant illustrates this nicely in his double translation of Heraclitus' famous formula "man's *ethos* is his *daimon*": "(1) man's character is what is called a demon; and, inversely, (2) what is called man's character is really a demon."[15]

Many of the above mentioned features of the daimon can be gathered together under the topic that is named *liminal* in the anthropological literature; the daimon has a borderline character, it is categorically interstitial, it is frightening and fascinating, something acting in person but not recognised as a part of his or her self, and positioned in a conceptual scheme with internal tensions and ambiguities. Arnold van Gennep introduced the term "liminal" in his classic study *The Rites of Passage* (1909) and applied it to describe the transition periods in various cultures. Anthropologists have de-

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[12] Vernant 1969; for a fuller treatment see Vernant - Vidal-Naquet 1973.
[13] *Seven* 756-7; Aeschylus 1961, 111.
[14] Vernant 1969, 112.
[15] Ibid., 113. See also below: Vernant's reading strategy is discussed in page 72.

scribed how traditional societies organised life and reality into meaningful units and orders; an individual's life, for example, would be divided into separate periods. The powers of chaos were constantly surrounding and swaying such ordered life, and they were acknowledged – given a symbolic role and function – in the rites of passage. Van Gennep's examples include territorial passages, times of pregnancy, birth, initiation into adulthood, marriage, and finally funeral rites. He subdivides the rites of passage into rites of separation, transition rites, and rites of incorporation.[16] These form together a symbolic representation (and appropriation) of a potentially threatening break of order: after the separation from the old order and before the integration into a new one there exists a special moment, *limen* ('threshold' in Latin). The significance of the moment is dramatised to emphasise the consequences of the transition; the initiation rites often involve a period of separation as the "old self" of the initiate is considered dead. The presence of something sacred, supernatural and terrifying, is suggested; sometimes daimonic beings are faced in this dangerous phase. After undergoing all the ordeals, the initiate is reborn in his or her new role in the community.[17] On the imaginative level, an alternative level of reality is evoked during these periods, one with different rules than the profane one.

The liminal state exists between orders, or systems of meaning, and it has continued to inspire research. Victor Turner has called it "anti-structure" in his study *The Ritual Process* (1969). In his view, the exceptional status of the anti-structure has important regenerative and creative significance. A male shaman dressed as a woman, or the prankish devils or skeletal figures in carnivals all break the normal order of things, but they also vent the pressures within a community in a particular, limited ritual.[18] Turner relates the liminal to our own time and culture; he thinks that one single system of rituals has fragmented in our society into different cultural forms, some of them with *liminoid* potential. The liminoid features of art, sports occasions and other forms of entertainment (Turner mentions such customs as Halloween) are filtered through their more playful and marginal character.[19] Applying the liminal thematics to the needs of cultural criticism, Mary Douglas' study *Purity and Danger* (1966) has proved especially influential. She has stimulated many writers to pay special attention to the way identity is produced by articulating the limits of such an identity, and by rejecting or suppressing transgressive figures.[20] The attitude towards liminal areas has not always been as tolerant as in the case of the ancient Greek daimon. I return to these aspects in chapter two, in the discussion of the "daimonic."[21]

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[16] van Gennep 1909/1977, 10-11.
[17] Ibid., 65-115.
[18] Turner 1969/1987, 166-68. See also Doty 1986, 81-95.
[19] Turner 1981, 162; 1969/1987, 172; Doty 1986, 93-95.
[20] Douglas 1966/1991; see also e.g. Stallybrass - White 1986/1993, 193-94.
[21] See below, pages 65-80.

AMBIVALENT DEMONS IN THE FOLK TRADITION

The florescence of the daimonic in the Greek poetry and thought was a product of particular historical conditions, and tied in particular to the potential interactions and tensions between the old and new ways of conduct and thinking in fourth century Greek societies. The dark forms of liminal imagery, however, are older, and used in many different historical situations by different cultures to present the painful dynamism evoked by deep conflicts. There are no reliable sources available to record the oral tradition and the folk beliefs connected with demons in antiquity, but demonic figures are useful and important as opponent figures even nowadays in many (mainly oral) cultures.

The Bengali culture of modern Bangladesh and the state of West Bengal in India is a good example. Many of the stories told in this area gain narrative momentum by juxtaposing humans with supernatural beings, such as *devata* (deities), *bhoot* (ghosts) and *rakshash* (demons). An important feature of the Bengali society is the ambivalent position of women; the meaning of family is essential, and woman holds a central position in family life. At the same time, however, the position of women is dependent and subordinate to men. As Sayantani DasGupta and Shamita Das Dasgupta write, "the construction of Bengali womanhood is inherently oppositional in character: simultaneously powerful and powerless."[22] It is easy to relate this social condition to the fact that Bengali folk tales portray female demons in abundance. In the title story of the collection of folk tales by the DasGuptas, *The Demon Slayers*, a powerful *rakshashi* is the wife of a king, and mother to one of two brothers (who are the double protagonist of the tale). The complicated and fantastic plot of the story offers an opportunity to explore some of the fears evoked by negative potentials in powerful women – as a threatening wife this demon paralyses her husband and rules his kingdom, and as a punishing mother-figure she devours her own child. The *rakshashi* is eventually destroyed only by the joint operation of the reborn brothers, the one human, the other half-demonic.[23] The demonic imagery and narratives are here employed to give a mythological shape to the tensions and conflicts inherent in the social structure.

From the earliest written evidence, literary demons have an ambivalent role. Neil Forsyth has studied the early history of the demonic from the standpoint of the oppositional structure in his book *The Old Enemy* (1989). There were many stories told about the mythical king Gilgameš by the ancient Sumerians, and later by the Assyrians and Babylonians. In his quest for immortality he had an important battle with a monstrous opponent (named Huwawa or Humbaba), and Neil Forsyth has seen this as the earliest record of a confrontation with a demonic adversary. It is an important characteris-

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[22] DasGupta 1995, 9.
[23] Ibid., 21, 137-46. – For more on the demonisation of the female, see below, chapter four.

tic of demons that they cannot be rejected off-hand; they are marked by a supernatural threat which makes them mediators of special meanings. In the case of Gilgameš, his fight with the demon launches his final perdition; Huwawa was actually a servant of the supreme god Enlil, and the quest that had initially seemed a success, ends in Gilgameš resigning himself before the power of death.[24] Fighting with the demon initiates a conflict in the ancient story that finally questions the king's ability to tell right from wrong, and to know his own limits (and limitations). The ambivalence of the demon in the case of Gilgameš is further heightened by the fact that, according to the Sumerian lists of kings, Gilgameš' own father was a *lillu* demon.[25]

In order to understand the various functions of the demonic tradition, it is important to pay special attention to this intimate connection that demons have with an individual self. There are many reasons to believe that interaction with spirits, especially the possession behaviour, has been an important part of many times and cultures. T.K. Oesterreich's pioneering study *Possession: Demoniacal & Other* (1921) makes this point most forcibly. As Raymond Prince has noted, for a long time Western anthropologists documented cases of voluntary possession (in which individuals seek possession) without being able to explain why anybody would desire such a state.[26] The Western conception of demons has long been exclusively negative and dismissive, and this has not failed to leave its mark in the history of scholarship. A quotation from Cyril of Jerusalem, a fourth century Christian author, illustrates the discourse that set the tone for anthropological accounts of possession, too, far into the nineteenth century:

> the unclean devil, when he comes upon the soul of man ... comes like a wolf upon a sheep, ravening for blood and ready to devour. His presence is most cruel; the sense of it most oppressive; the mind is darkened; his attack is an injustice also, and usurpation of another's possession. For he tyrannically uses another's body, another's instruments, as his own property; he throws down him who stands upright (for he is akin to him who *fell from heaven*); he perverts the tongue and distorts his lips. Foam comes instead of words; the man is filled with darkness; his eye is open yet his soul sees not through it; and the miserable man quivers convulsively before his death.[27]

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[24] Enkidu, the friend of Gilgameš asks him: "Why must you set your heart on this enterprise?" Gilgameš answers: "Because of the evil that is in the land, we will go to the forest and destroy the evil; for in the forest lives Humbaba whose name is 'Hugeness', a ferocious giant." (Sandars 1971, 69.) The designation of the adversary as "evil" removes the need for any other consideration.

[25] Forsyth 1989, 31-43.

[26] Prince, "Foreword"; Crapanzano - Garrison 1977, xi.

[27] Cyril, in Oesterreich 1921/1974, 7; Vincent Crapanzano points out how this basic attitude can still be found in Edward Tylor's 1871 description of the possessed ("Introduction"; Crapanzano - Garrison 1977, 5-6).

The trance state (or epileptic fit), which is here depicted in extremely negative terms, has a different character for the many shamanistic cultures that have survived from antiquity into our time. Many oracles received their messages in a similar trance from gods or from intermediary spirits, daimons. Often the spiritual, mental and physical health of a society was in the hands of a shaman, who used trance states and interaction with spirits to solve problems and effect cures.[28] It is possible to differentiate between spirit possession, spirit mediumship and shamanism according to the degree of control in the behaviour; the possession metaphor is, however, very flexible and it is impossible to draw any rigid lines between 'victim' and 'master' in a typical situation.[29] Spirit possession can be interpreted as harmful and caused by evil spirits, or beneficial, or ambiguous in its status, but in any case it is a universal phenomenon that offers ways to dramatise the (dis)integration of the self and the social group. I.M. Lewis has paid special attention to the way women and socially oppressed groups utilise possession behaviour to force their societies into facing their strain and bad feelings.[30]

Spirit possession is effective as a "protest" because it is not perceived as an offence on part of the possessed; he or she is the victim and the real subject of antagonistic behaviour is the demon. As far as all social interaction is based on acceptable behaviour coded in "social roles" that individuals respect, the possession by a demon initiates a crisis of representation. Instead of mimicking "a good wife," "a dutiful son," or some other accepted role, the possessed starts to imitate completely different ideas in her or his behaviour. Bruce Kapferer has analysed this process in his article "Mind, Self and Other in Demonic Illness" (1979). Following the work of G.H. Mead, he sees "Self" as a social construction, and demonic possession as a radical way to alter the reality that is constructed between social selves. Typically in this process, the abnormal behaviour of the patients is attributed to a demonic or ghostly attack, and an exorcism ritual is staged in order to return the patient from the world of the supernatural to that of ordinary people. According to Kapferer, this means that the initial Self of the patient is negated (in a "loss of Self") and then reconstructed in a ritualistic interplay. The exorcism ritual negotiates with the reality as perceived by the patient (the terrible and chaotic world of demons) and offers ways for a "nonhuman Self" to come into contact with a social Self.[31]

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[28] In Greek Pythagorean thought the demon was closely identified with the soul in the context of shamanistic practices. Following M. Detienne, Søren Jensen writes: "To separate the soul from the body [an important element in the shamanistic technique] is precisely to create or realize the immanent demon. It is, in a sense, to become a demon" (Jensen 1966, 72). In this line of thinking, demons were closely associated with knowledge.

[29] Raymond Firth, "Individual Fantasy and Social Norms: Seances with Spirit Mediums" (*Tikopia Ritual and Belief*, 1967); quoted and commented in Crapanzano - Garrison 1977, 9-10.

[30] Lewis 1971/1989, 26, 90-113.

[31] Kapferer 1979, 110-19.

It should be noted, that demonic discourse is not the exclusive frame of reference when traditional societies deal with possession. Kapferer, who has witnessed over fifty exorcism rituals in Sri Lanka, states that "reasons for demonic intervention are sought at work, disputes over land and status, in political and intercaste hostility, in the failure to fulfill ritual responsibilities, and so on."[32] Demons are a powerful element in mythical thought, but, in practice, they are only one of the elements that traditional societies use to make sense of and to organise some otherwise chaotic and pathological conflict situations. The narratives and rituals which transmit this tradition from generation to generation are conventional, but the exact meanings of demonic elements are bound up with the specific conflicts at hand.[33] Nevertheless, the structure and logic of the situation remains rather stable: demons are ambiguous or evil figures who act as embodiments of conflicts. They give voice and mythical guise to such problematic and rejected sides of subjectivity that cannot be directly incorporated as a part of social Self. Therefore they are ambivalent – they are simultaneously hideous opponents and enemies of humanity, and something very intimate and close to the tormented individual, too. Kapferer notes that a demonic possession creates "an energy," or "an intensified sense of the Other," and this can be interpreted as meaning both the social Other (of the society as a whole) and the nonhuman Other (possessing the patient).[34]

INHABITANTS OF LIMITS

Demons are needed to dramatise limits. Ivan Karp has written:

> The spirits themselves are preeminently creatures of the wilderness. Underlying the rituals of possession is an attitude and concept of the bush as containing disordered potentiality, which is ordinarily kept separate from the home because of the danger of disorder but which must be brought into contact with order in order to revive a failing world.[35]

The contrast between order and chaos is one that is frequently employed in order to decipher demonic imagery. Many creation myths portray the beginning of the universe as a victory over ruling chaos. In the Mesopotamian cosmogony *Enuma Elish* Tiamat was the mother of gods, but also a primordial monster. She is portrayed as a dragon who was eventually destroyed by her children, and her body was cut up to create the world. In Hesiod's *Theogony* Chaos is the abyss before the time of gods and order; she is also the primeval goddess who gives birth to Night, Erebus (Darkness), Tartarus (Hell), and Eros. Robert Detweiler, who has summarised these myths

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[32] Ibid., 121.
[33] Of shamanistic world view, mythical thought and its metaphors, see Eliade 1951/1989 and (in Finnish) Siikala 1992 (especially pages 38-53).
[34] Kapferer 1979, 122.
[35] Jackson - Karp 1990, 88.

in his article "From Chaos to Legion to Change: the Double Play of Apoca-
lyptic and Mimesis" (1990), claims that horror of the meaningless, of the
unformed, is a more profound threat than even that of suffering and death.
"If the world could have a plan, suffering and death might have meaning, but
chaos is disorder, planlessness, and prevents meaning."[36]

The most notable feature in the iconography of demons is their hetero-
geneity; there is no fixed set of features that would define a demon. Instead,
they may adopt whatever monstrous attributes suit the occasion. In that
sense they are "formless." However, there are some tendencies that struc-
ture the demonic, and which help to interpret demons' roles and functions.
For example, in the demonologies of many cultures the demonic beings are
predominantly presented in human forms marked with the features of ani-
mals: horns, wings, long teeth, and so on. This can be connected with the
fact that animals reigned in the wilderness outside the boundaries of human
settlement. For a very long period of time people had to compete with ani-
mals for survival; a confrontation with a dangerous predator could easily
lead to death. This antagonism could not have passed without leaving its
traces in the symbolic sphere of our cultures. The ambivalent value of the
surrounding nature was figuratively embodied in spirits that could assume
animal shapes – both gods and demons have been figured as animals.[37] They
have stood as signs for the terrifying unknown powers looming outside the
bounds of community. Mary Douglas writes that "the ideal order of society
is guarded by dangers which threaten transgressors."[38] The powers of chaos
have been needed to articulate the boundary line between the spheres of sig-
nificance and nonsignificance.[39]

Folk traditions have ample stories about demons, and according to
most of them demons are monstrous beings whose aim is destruction and
death. The primitive threat associated with demons is most evident in ac-
counts of demons capturing and eating humans – they act like predatory
beasts. The specific horror associated with these mythical beings, though, is
not equal to the pragmatic and realistic fear stirred by dangerous animals.
Rather, it is an irrational mixture of horror and fascination evoked by a sug-
gestive idea: a being combining human and animal characteristics in a het-
erogeneous mixture. In its monstrous composition the demon is a violation

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[36] Detweiler - Doty 1990, 1-3.

[37] Anthropology traditionally used to apply the term 'animism' to characterise reli-
gious features similar to those of the ancient Egyptians. See G. Foucart, "Demons and
Spirits (Egyptian)" in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (1911, 584-90; based largely on
Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*).

[38] Douglas 1966/1991, 3.

[39] While finishing this work, I came across *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (1996, ed-
ited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen) which outlines starting points for the study of monsters
adopting a theoretical approach that has many similar emphases to this study. (The focus
of its essays is the discourse on monstrosity in the Middle Ages and early modern pe-
riod.) See especially "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (ibid.,
3-25).

of the basic boundaries that produce identity; the separation of the human "us" and the animalistic "them" is presented as dangerously confounded in this distorted figure.

T.O. Ling, in his study of Theravâda Buddhism, has gathered together some central features of demons from the rich demonology of India's folklore. For the most part, demons inhabit deserted places, outside the community. They are at their most active during the night. Their man-eating habits, inhuman strength and terrifying appearance (red eyes, hairiness, sharp teeth, plus some supernatural attribute, such as casting no shadow) mark their demonic nature.[40] In other words, they are complete opposites of the common, civilised human beings. Edward Langton has noted how places that were formerly populated, but now desolate, are especially susceptible to be inhabited by demons.[41] There seems to be a structural logic at work, one which situates demons at the "grey zone" between two different systems of order; those of the human world and nature. A ruin or a graveyard as a *topos* expresses analogous logic compared to the logic characterising most descriptions of demons: human reality is brought to its limits and faced (and mixed) with something Other. Ruins and graveyards retain signs and traces of meanings that are going through a transition into something else, and this "margin of the unknown" is utilised in demonic discourses.

The interest in these marginal areas and figures has endured, even up to our own days. As an important recent example, Noël Carroll has incorporated the anthropological insights of Mary Douglas into his work, *The Philosophy of Horror* (1990). His starting point is the thriving modern horror culture with its innumerable monsters and supernatural threats. A classic horror monster, such as Dracula, elicits strong reactions in those mortals it faces, both in its novelistic and movie incarnations. Carroll names this reaction "art-horror" and divides it into three distinct components: the *thought* of such monster as Dracula has properties which make the audience feel abnormal, *physical agitation*, and it evokes a *desire to avoid* the touch of such monsters. The most important properties that evoke this reaction are the monster's credible presentation (that it is "possible" even if not really existing in reality), and that it is regarded as both *threatening* and *impure*.[42]

The impurity of the monster is not literal dirtiness but a conceptual feature derived from Mary Douglas's theory. Carroll suggests that "an *object* or *being* is impure if it is categorically interstitial, categorically contradictory, incomplete, or formless." His examples include beings that are both living and dead: ghosts, zombies, vampires, mummies, the Frankenstein's monster. Other entities "conflate the animate and the inanimate: haunted houses, with malevolent wills of their own, robots, and the car in [Stephen] King's *Christine*. Many monsters confound different species, too: werewolves, humanoid insects, humanoid reptiles, and the inhabitants of Dr. Moreau's is-

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[40] Ling 1962, 16-18.
[41] Langton 1949/1982, 5.
[42] Carroll 1990, 27-8. Italics in the original.

*Assyrian-Babylonian demon of disease and evil (after a wall carving
at Nineveh; Lehner - Lehner 1971, 1).*

land [in H.G. Wells's novel]."[43] Carroll comments in this context on the
demonic:

> Horrific monsters often involve the mixture of what is normally distinct.
> Demonically possessed characters typically involve the superimposition of
> two categorically distinct individuals, the possessee and the possessor, the
> latter usually a demon, who, in turn, is often a categorically transgressive
> figure (e.g., a goat-god).[44]

Modern horror seems to follow a similar structural logic in its interest
in ambivalent objects as the "traditional" cultures; such things that violate
the boundaries of some deep conceptual schemes evoke specially intense re-
actions. Good candidates for such a position would situate themselves am-
biguously at the limits of categorical oppositions, as "me / not me," "inside /
outside," "living / dead."[45] The demonic tradition has been eager to exploit
all of these – as my analyses in the second part of this study also point out.

Carroll's serious and systematic probing into the logic of such creations
as "The Creature from the Black Lagoon" or "Green Slime" has its undeni-

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[43] Ibid., 32.
[44] Ibid., 33.
[45] Douglas 1966/1991, 121-28; Carroll 1990, 31-2.

able virtues (such as pointing out that there really is some logic in these areas), but it also has its drawbacks. Perhaps the most serious of these is Carroll's inability to link his theory of art-horror convincingly to an explanation as to why many people find these horrors irresistible. Carroll writes:

> The argument has been that if horror is, in large measure, identified with the manifestation of categorically impossible things, works of horror, all things being equal, will command our attention, curiosity, and fascination, and that curiosity, as well, can be further stimulated and orchestrated by the kind of narrative structures that appear so frequently in the genre. Moreover, that fascination with the impossible being outweighs the distress it endangers can be rendered intelligible by what I call the thought theory our emotional response to fiction, which maintains that audiences know horrific beings are not in their presence, and, indeed, that they do not exist, and, therefore, their description or depiction in horror fictions may be a cause for interest rather than either flight or any other prophylactic enterprise.[46]

From the perspective of this study, informed as it is by research of demons and the demonic in their various functions in different cultural contexts, I have to consider this explanation as somewhat unsatisfactory. Stories and dramatic performances inspired by threatening supernatural entities fascinate and terrify even such audiences that consider such beings as "real" and actual parts of their world view.[47] An exorcist who explains the patient's symptoms in terms of demonic discourse aims to cure by convincing; running away from him would do no good. Carroll attacks radical theorists' (such as Rosemary Jackson's) attitudes that horror's (or fantasy's) ability to question cultural categories is subversive or emancipatory – according to him, culture should be celebrated as "a means by which we come to know reality." He also adds that many of the divided selves in the fantasy or horror genres just "literalize popular religious and philosophical views of the person (as divided between good and evil, between reason and appetite, between human and beast)."[48] The implication is, that a reading which derives from horror some form of the critique of subject, or unitary self, is a conventional, perhaps even reactionary attitude, and therefore not a really interesting way to proceed. My hope is to prove in this study something of the opposite; it is an important feature in the tradition of demons and the demonic (which has played a central part in the creation of horror as a genre) to offer means of exploring the limits and limitations inherent in our subjec-

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[46] Ibid., 206.

[47] Belief in demons and the supernatural continues to exist even among contemporary, dominantly non-religious people; various "demonic attacks" are from time to time treated in the popular press and media, and the need to believe in them seems to sustain even the most severe contrary evidence. See, e.g. the account of the hoaxed "Amityville" case in Nickell 1995, 122-29.

[48] Ibid., 178.

tivity.[49] A simplifying statement like 'we enjoy them because they are frightening but not real' is not doing justice to the full complexity of the demonic tradition.

This can be best demonstrated by a reading of the Christian attitudes to demons, which form a central part of our heritage in this area.

THE CHRISTIAN DEMONIC: THE NEED FOR AN OPPONENT

The Christian demonological tradition is a complicated product of promiscuous historical sources. It is usually maintained that ancient Israel was a strictly monotheistic society, and that this monotheism was inherited by Christianity as an element that separated it from the pagan environment. The situation can also be interpreted in different terms; polyphonic, polytheistic impulses were repressed, but they actually found a new expression in the area of the demonic. Mary Douglas refers to the classic study by Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (1889), which claims that the ancient Semitic religions had two characteristics: "an abounding demonology, rousing fear in men's hearts, and a comforting, stable relation with the community god. The demons are the primitive element rejected by Israel; the stable, moral relation with God is true religion."[50]

There is no clear adversary figure for God in the Old Testament. From the Christian perspective, this can be interpreted as nondifferentiation: the demonic elements were not separate, but a part of the figure of God. Yahweh in the Old Testament is a coincidence of opposites in himself; he is an active, personal and frightening power, capable of destruction as well as creation.[51] As God is presented as saying in the book of Isaiah: "I form light, and create darkness, I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*."[52] The book of Job tackles the problem of suffering and evil explicitly, and it affirms the destructive potential as an important element in God's greatness. As a ruler of all cosmos he governs both rain and storms, he has created all the animals, from the wild goats to the eagle. As the mightiest of his creations, however, God presents the monstrous Leviathan: "His breath kindles coals, and a flame comes forth from his mouth."[53] The monster's strength and fierceness finally proves God to be beyond and above all human understanding – and beyond the moral standards of Job, too.

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[49] For an introduction into the demonic in the horror genre, see below, chapter four.

[50] Douglas 1966/1991, 17. An alternate interpretation holds that there are relatively few demons in the Old Testament, and that "devils infected Judaism" only sometime between 150 B.C.E. and 300 C.E. (Messadié 1993/1996, 234.)

[51] Cf. Russell 1988, 28-30; *Encyclopedia of Religion*, q.v. 'Demons'; *A Catholic Dictionary of Theology*, q.v. 'Devil.'

[52] Is. 45:7. The "Authorized King James Version" used here. ("Revised Standard Version" translates this as "I make weal and create woe.")

[53] Job 41:21.

The figure of Satan, who makes one of his rare appearances in the book of Job, is part of Yahweh's court (*bene ha-elohim*, "the sons of God"); the association, for example, between the snake of Paradise and Satan is a later interpretation. Satan did not really have an independent role in the Old Testament.[54] The Hebrew word, '*satan*,' derives from the root meaning "oppose," "obstruct," or "accuse." 'Satan' appears in the Old Testament numerous times as a common noun referring to a human opponent, or even to an obstacle on the road.[55] Satan was an instrument of God, an angel carrying out destructive and opposing tasks – the divine accuser. Destructive potential was an important part of the character of Yahweh, the God of an aggressive nomadic tribe. In the Old Testament's words:

> For I lift up my hand to heaven,
> and swear, As I live for ever,
> if I have whet my glittering sword,
> and my hand takes hold on judgment,
> I will take vengeance on my adversaries
> and will requite those who hate me.
> I will make my arrows drunk with blood,
> and my sword shall devour flesh –
> with the blood of the slain and the captives,
> from the long-haired heads of the enemy.[56]

The historian Jeffrey Burton Russell has written the most comprehensive modern study of the Devil in his series of books *The Devil* (1977), *Satan* (1981), *Lucifer* (1984) and *Mephistopheles* (1986). He comments on the different theories of Devil's origin, arguing that the best historical explanation would interpret the development of this idea as "the personification of the dark side of the God, that element within Yahweh which obstructs the good."[57] Any historical account of the origin and development of an independent figure of evil should also include such foreign influences as Persian Zoroastrianism or Hellenism on late Judaism and early Christianity.[58] There is no room, nor need, for a comprehensive presentation in this study; it suffices to notice that there were internal tensions in the Jewish religion focusing on the morally ambivalent character of Yahweh, as the life and values of his people went through a change. Less ambiguous moral standards were needed, and dualistic impulses offered a solution. However, they were never

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[54] See, e.g., Kurtén 1992, 6. For a more thorough discussion, see Russell 1977/1982, 174-220; 1988/1993, 28-42; McGinn 1994, 22-6.

[55] Russell 1988/1993, 33. "So Balaam rose in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. But God's anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as his adversary [*satan*]." (Num. 22:21-22.)

[56] Deut. 32:41-42.

[57] Russell 1977/1982, 176-7.

[58] Russell gives a concise and clear account of this in his *The Prince of Darkness* (1988/1993); see also McGinn's *Antichrist* (1994) and Bernstein's *The Formation of Hell* (1993).

fully developed in the Old Testament, and it remains for Yahweh both first to "harden the heart" of Pharaoh, and then to punish him for not yielding.[59]

The Christian demonological tradition is mostly derived from Jewish apocalyptic literature, written from 200 B.C.E. to 100 C.E. These writings were never included in the official religious canon (they were called *pseudepigrapha*, "false writings"), but they were nevertheless popular and had a wide influence. Their historical context was the sufferings and humiliations under Syrian and Roman occupation, and their subject matter is acutely concerned with the power of evil in the world. The Apocalyptic (i.e. "Revelation") of their content was centred on visions of the end of this world; they reformulated the previous religious tradition radically in many ways. During this period, two significant traditions of interpretation were developed.

The first takes off from the brief mention in Genesis which relates that "the sons of God" were drawn to daughters of men, married them and how they created a mixed offspring (the *Nephilim*, or giants of old).[60] An early apocalypse called the "Book of Watchers" (1 Enoch 1-36) evolves this into a detailed account of two hundred corrupted angels who marry human women as an act of rebellion against God. The ancient combat myth is incorporated into the tale in an account of a leader (called variously Semihazad or Asael), who heads this revolt. Alan E. Bernstein summarises the tale as follows:

> After this vision [of the angels' eternal punishment] in his dream, Enoch was rapt before the divine throne (14.8–25), where God explained that the Watchers had "abandoned" their spiritual, eternal lives, in order to defile themselves with women, with flesh and blood. They had not needed wives in heaven, "for the dwelling of the spiritual beings of heaven is heaven" (15.7). But their offspring were now of the earth, and they would live on the earth and in it. From the bodies of the Watchers had come evil spirits (15.8–10), which would oppose the human offspring of the women until the consummation of the age (15.12–16.1). Because they had revealed some of heaven's mysteries to women, the others would be hidden from them and, for their betrayal, they would "have no peace" (16.3).[61]

The mythical unity of the Jewish-Christian heritage became gradually divided, and a war in the heaven began to mirror the conflicts at earth. It is especially interesting from the viewpoint of demonology to note how the demons were doubled even at this early state: there were (1) the fallen angels who had names and active personalities, and (2) the anonymous "evil spirits" who were created in intimate connection with corporeal reality. This duality would stay and develop in the later Christian tradition; the "high demonic" discourse is concerned with the "Prince of Darkness" and his fallen angels –

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[59] Ex. 7-12. – See Räisänen 1972 for a comparative study of the idea of divine hardening in the Bible and the Koran.

[60] Gen. 6:1-4.

[61] Bernstein 1993, 184-85. *The Other Bible* (Barnstone 1984, 487-94) contains selections of this text in English translations. Cf. also Russell 1988/1993, 31-5; McGinn 1994, 24-5.

and the "low demonic" contains the folk tradition of anonymous demons inflicting harm and spreading disease in the world.[62]

The second apocalyptic interpretation of the Old Testament did not emphasise the carnal lust of angels as the reason for their rebellion; instead, it concentrated on individual pride. A parable in Isaiah offers a starting point here: the fallen king of Babylon is mocked by comparing him to the morning star (Lucifer) that is wiped into invisibility by the rays of the rising sun.

> How are you fallen from heaven, O Day Star [Lucifer], son of Dawn!
> How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!
> You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north;
> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I make myself like the Most High.'
> But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit.[63]

The original meaning of the parable had been lost (or ignored) by the Apocalyptic period. "Lucifer" became an important angel who turned away from the position assigned by God, and "conceived of an impossible thought, to place his throne higher than any clouds above the earth, that he might become equal in rank to any power." This "impossible thought" of an angel valuing himself above anything else roused the wrath of God, and the rebel with his cohorts was cast from heaven.[64] The theme of a battle in heaven and the fall of angels was explored in several apocalyptic texts, and it is also referred to in the New Testament: "And he said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."[65] Yet, the actual accounts of the battle were never canonised.

The Christian conception of evil was formed in this apocalyptic context. An active personification of evil highlights the significance of struggle and choice. Jeffrey Burton Russell has pointed out that Christianity systematises the complex materials of the apocalyptic literature in its Devil. The universe is in a state of war, Christ commanding the troops of light and Satan the armies of darkness. If one is not following Lord, one is under the rule of Satan. With his terrifying powers, Satan becomes almost another, dark god, ruler of this world; he tempts Christ by showing him the kingdoms of the world and promises: "All these I will give you, if you will fall

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[62] The "low" tradition finds its mythical expression in the story of lust, the "high" in the narrative of excessive individuality and pride. Everett Ferguson (1984, 70, 75) discusses these accounts and notes how the influential version of Milton was based especially on the latter.

[63] Is. 14:12-15. – For the origins and evolution of ideas concerning Hell, see Bernstein 1993 and Turner 1993.

[64] "The Book of the Secrets of Enoch" (2 Enoch); quoted in Russell 1988/1993, 35. See also the translated selections in *The Other Bible* (Barnstone 1984, 4-9, 495-500; the relevant section on page five).

[65] Lk. 10:18.

down and worship me."[66] The cosmos itself is in tension between light and darkness, good and evil, spirit and matter, soul and body. The only thing averting complete dualism, however, is the faith in the second coming of Christ and the final defeat of the Devil's dominion. This victory has been announced, and outside the temporal universe it is already a fact. The division of the world in two is healed, and united in a more profound sense as the common time of this world is replaced by sacred time.[67] This solution means also the consolidation of a tension: the ideally perfect world of Jesus is defined by its difference from reality – which stands as a proof of Satan's power.

These tensions in the sense and symbolic structure of the cosmos did not come from nowhere. Job, in his righteous questioning of his suffering, is already leading the way toward new dimensions of self-assertive individuality. Critics have been quick to note this; Hannes Vatter's Jungian interpretation explains the lasting attraction of the rebelling Devil by discussing the needs of psychic differentiation. Satan can be seen as an archetypal image of the individuation process that breaks the "original harmony" into the will of Self (Satan) and the will of Other (God). Vatter emphasises further that this sort of demand for originality has been especially accentuated in the areas of artistic creativity.[68]

There are good reasons for reading the demonic in Christianity in terms of ambivalent individuality. These are particularly related to the role of the demons as ambiguous guardians of limits. Elaine Pagels has highlighted the internal tensions of early Christianity to explain the need for strong demonological elements. Pagels reads the gospels as wartime literature, created under the Roman power during the cruel oppression and defeat of the Jewish nation. She rejects faith in their historical accuracy, and instead sees a consistent tendency to create an identity for "God's people" by rejecting others as "Satan's people." The gospels were created in order to persuade, to express the views of a group which essentially was (in those days) a suspect minority. Pagels thinks that there are no convincing reasons to believe that the Jews were responsible for killing Jesus, with the Romans acting just as their reluctant agents. The Roman governor Pilate was famous for ordering "frequent executions without trial," but the trial scenes incorporated in the gospels indict the Jewish leaders for Jesus' death. Pagels writes:

> The gospel writers want to locate and identify the specific ways in which the forces of evil act *through certain people* to effect violent destruction […] – the violence epitomized in the execution of Jesus, which Matthew sees as the culmination of all evils. The subject of cosmic war serves primarily to interpret human relationships – especially all-too-human conflict

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[66] Mt. 4:9.

[67] Russell 1988/1993, 49-50.

[68] Vatter 1978, 16-7. – C.G. Jung has written that the figure of Christ is "so one-sidedly perfect that it demands a psychic complement to restore the balance" (*Aion*, 1951; CW 9 [Part II], 42).

– in supernatural form. The figure of Satan becomes, among other things, a way of characterizing one's actual enemies as the embodiment of transcendent forces. For many readers of the gospels ever since the first century, the thematic opposition between God's spirit and Satan has vindicated Jesus' followers and demonized their enemies.[69]

Pagels's analysis draws out a story of mutual hostilities between groups that were all oppressed, but who channelled their most acute hatred against each other – "here, as in most human situations, the more intimate the conflict, the more intense and bitter it becomes."[70] Leadership and religious authority was the question in first century Jewish communities; Jesus' execution needed an explanation and his followers found it in the demonic nature of those who did not accept Jesus as their Messiah. Ironically, the Christians themselves were soon accused of demonic crimes. Their secret gatherings were characterised according to a similar demonising formula: Christians were rumoured to murder children in their meetings, drink their blood and eat their flesh, and to indulge in sexual orgies. In their sectarian quarrels, the Christians, in their turn, would accuse other Christians (the "heretics") of similar deeds. Norman Cohn has described in his work *Europe's Inner Demons* (1975) how this formulaic fantasy was developed, incorporated into the Christian view of Satan, and finally accepted as a doctrine by the authorities. At the end of the Middle Ages it finally became an autonomously functioning mechanism, as tortured people were forced to confess their alliance with Satan according to a formula, and these confessions, in turn, lead to new charges.[71]

DEMONS OF IDENTITY

Internal antagonisms seen in social and historical context can be very enlightening. They serve to highlight how significantly demonic opponents are entangled in the definition of self through negation; demons are something so close to "us" that they have to be most forcibly rejected, otherwise the limits could become blurred, the right and wrong identity indistinguishable. As Christianity adopted Hellenistic elements and separated the higher reality of ideas from the lower and corruptible material word demonic discourses gained fresh applicability.

The ambiguous play of rejection and desire circulating around demons in the New Testament can best be illustrated by an example. The following text extracts the most prominent confrontation between Jesus and demons from the gospel of Mark (cf. analogous versions in Matthew 8:28-34 and Luke 8:26-39). It is enhanced by the key concepts in original Greek, pro-

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[69] Pagels 1996, xxii, 8, 10, 13 [quotation]. Pagels's italics.
[70] Ibid., 15.
[71] Cohn 1975/1993; cf. Kleits 1985, Roper 1994.

vided by Ken Frieden's article "The Language of Demonic Possession: A Key-Word Analysis."[72]

> They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Ger'asenes. And when he [Jesus] had come out of the boat, there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit [*pneumati akathartô*], who lived among the tombs; and no one could bind him any more, even with a chain; for he had often been bound with fetters and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the fetters he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the mountains he was always crying out, and bruising himself with stones. And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him; and crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For he said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit [*to pneuma to akatharton*]!" And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." And he begged him eagerly not to send them out of the country. Now a great herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they [all the demons; *pantes oi daimones*] begged him, "Send us to the swine, let us enter them." So he gave them leave. And the unclean spirits [*ta pneumata ta akatharta*] came out, and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.
>
> The herdsmen fled, and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. And they came to Jesus, and saw the demoniac [*daimonizomenon*] sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their neighborhood. And as he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons [*ho daimonistheis*] begged him that he might be with him. But he refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." And he went away and began to proclaim in Decap'olis how much Jesus had done for him; and all men marveled.[73]

The interesting logic of this story has been extensively analysed; the whole anthology of writings collected in *The Daemonic Imagination* takes this episode as its starting point; *The Scapegoat* by René Girard is another example. Ken Frieden pays special attention to the polyphonic character of the text in his article: the New Testament tells about events in occupied Palestine in Greek (mixing in occasionally some words of Aramaic). The text itself is "possessed" by foreign influences – as Palestine was occupied by the tenth Roman legion. Some phrases (such as "the Most High") are translations from Hebrew, *satan* is sometimes retained, sometimes translated with *diabolus* (slanderer, accuser). The Greek substantives *daimôn* and *daimonion* were already used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Sep-

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[72] Frieden 1990.
[73] Mk. 5:1-20.

*Christ exorcising a demon (from a thirteenth-century Armenian gospel;
Russell 1988/1993, 34).*

tuagint) to denote foreign gods or spirits with a negative connotation. According to Frieden, the gospels modify and alter the existing meanings by "employing the words *daimones* and *pneumata* to denote independent evil spirits, rather than false gods worshipped by idolaters" – not to mention the ambivalent divinities of archaic Greek culture.[74] The New Testament text is both using old words to convey its message, and modifying their meaning, or fighting against the old significancies, at the same time.

How does this relate to the subject matter of the quoted scene? Jesus' activity in this fragment is fundamentally shamanistic: he performs a cure by his mastery of spirits. Shamanism, consultation of spirits, and similar techniques were part of folk religions and were popular among the Pagans; there

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[74] Frieden 1990, 45.

was a danger in Jesus' action, pronounced by the scribes of Jerusalem, who claimed: "He is possessed by Be-el'zebul, and by the prince of demons he casts out the demons."[75] There was no need for an exorcist in the Old Testament, with its ambivalent Yahweh.[76] The frame of reference in the New Testament is not the tribal or nationalistic context of Israel; instead, Jesus is presented as a universal figure with answers to a troubled individual. There is a real *need for demons* in the gospels; they are the universal opponents of a universal Messiah. The Jewish clergy turns against Jesus – but the demons are described as declaring: "You are the Son of God!"[77] They recognise the divine identity of Christ, and are necessary for the divine/demonic logic of the gospel narratives. As the gospel text is intertwined with Pagan concepts and Pagan ideas, so there is a profound ambivalence towards demons in the narrative.

The repeated references to the "impurity" of the possessing spirits is another interpretative guide for the meaning of demons. The impure elements confound the limits of some important cultural categories, and Jesus performs a catharsis at these boundaries through his actions. The key-word is "purity": there should remain no ambivalence after this story. The unpredictable and chaotic features of Yahweh verged on the bestial in such declarations as "my sword shall devour flesh," quoted above; in an act of Oedipal textuality, Jesus is expelling such elements in pigs, which are then destroyed. God the Father still had his demonic side, but his Son is here shown as repudiating demonic elements, and destroying them. This process can also be interpreted in Jungian terms: the New Testament narratives of Son supply answers to the ethical and psychological questions evoked by the Old Testament tradition.[78] The story contributes to a model for constructing proper, Christian subjectivity. In this process, it is necessary to recognise the existence of chaotic impulses, and then to repulse them. The modern critics, however, have started to claim that such elements cannot ever be totally dismissed; *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986) by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, for example, pays special attention to the enduring role of the pig as a beastly "Other," a necessary element in our cultural vocabulary.

René Girard's analysis in his book *The Scapegoat* (1982) goes in somewhat the same direction. He compares the basic structure of Christ's passion to the *Pharmakos* ritual in ancient Greece: a sacrificial victim is taking the sins of society with him. There is an analogous ritual described in the Old Testament. Aaron is given orders to cast lots upon two goats, "one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for Aza'zel." Azazel's goat was sent to wilderness to "be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement over it

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[75] Mk. 3:22. – See the discussion on "Beelzebub" below (page 48).

[76] An interesting vestige of the shamanistic practices is related in 1 Samuel (28:3-25): the "Witch of Endor" acts as a medium, and evokes the spirit of Samuel on Saul's request.

[77] Mk. 3:11.

[78] See Jung, *Answer to Job* (1952; CW 2).

[…]."[79] Girard reads the scene from Mark along these lines as a story of collective guilt and ritualistic atonement. There is some evidence in the story to justify this; the demons made the man run into wilderness and graveyards, even if the Gerasenes had repeatedly tried to fetter him. Girard notes on scapegoats how these "victims are the spontaneous agents of reconciliation, since, in the final paroxysm of mimeticism, they unite in opposition to themselves those who were organized in opposition to each other by the effects of a previous weaker mimeticism."[80] Girard sees a close connection between language and violence, and mimeticism is for him the original source of all man's troubles; in this case, at least, mimetic logic seems to be at work.[81] After all, the Gerasenes turn against Jesus after he has deprived them of their demons (and their livelihood in pigs, as well, but Girard does not put weight on that factor). The demonic Other is important for society, and Jesus' cure of the demoniac takes away their mimetic symbol of violence and chaotic limits – the functions that the possessed man had repeatedly performed in his madness.

Another example of Christian possession narratives from a completely different historical context serves further to emphasise the ambivalent functions of demons. The possession epidemic in Loudun, France, began with the possession of Jeanne des Agnes, an Ursuline nun, in 1633. The case is relatively well documented and has received ample attention, in *The Devils of Loudun* (1952) by Aldous Huxley, *La possession de Loudun* (1970) by Michel de Certeau, and in the analysis by Sarah E. Miller. Jeanne and her exorcists believed her to have been possessed by seven different demons (Grésil, Aman, Asmodée, Leviathan, Balaam, Isaacaron, and Béhémot). In time, the entire convent of nuns became possessed, and one of the exorcising priests became insane and died. Jeanne and the other nuns had had dreams of Urban Grandier, and accused him of bewitching them and making them fall in love with him. Grandier was tried in court and burned at the stake. Jeanne's spectacular disorders, however, remained; she became victim of a supernatural pregnancy, tried a self-inflicted Caesarean, but God himself stopped her. After the demon Isaacaron was made to confess (with Jeanne's mouth) the

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[79] Leviticus 16:8-10. See Langton 1949/1982, 43-6.

[80] Girard 1982/1989, 165.

[81]   Girard writes of the need for a "monstrous double" as a fundamental element needed to enter the cultural order; "social coexistence would be impossible if no surrogate victim existed, if violence persisted beyond a certain threshold and failed to be transmuted into culture. It is only at this point that the vicious circle of reciprocal violence, wholly destructive in nature, is replaced by the vicious circle of ritual violence, creative and protective in nature." (Girard 1972/1989, 144.) – Another, less polemical, view on mimeticism is presented by Kathryn Hume in her *Fantasy and Mimesis* (1984); she proposes that literature is the product of two impulses, fantasy and mimesis. The desire to imitate with verisimilitude is as fundamental and common as is the opposite desire to "change givens and alter reality – out of boredom, play, vision, longing for something lacking, or need for metaphoric images that will bypass the audience's verbal defenses." This is what we identify as fantasy, but these impulses typically mix and coexist. (Hume 1984, 20.)

demonic nature of the pregnancy, Jeanne has "an oral miscarriage" and vomits blood. For several years Jeanne strove towards penitence, beating herself, wearing a belt of spurs, lying on thorns or fiery coals. Jeanne's spiritual battle was visible in the sufferings of her body, and finally, after the demons departed one by one, their signs were replaced by a series of divine names (e.g. "Jésus", "Maria") appearing miraculously in her palm. Sarah E. Miller recounts how Jeanne made "a triumphal pilgrimage" through France. The country was tortured by plague and religious schisms between Protestants and Catholics. Jeanne was admitted even to cities closed in fear of plague; she carried signs that had made her a "public monument bespeaking the power of the Catholic God."[82]

Jeanne's story has been read in many ways. One of these would be to emphasise political and religious conflicts and see Jeanne's illness as their dramatisation – the victimisation of Urban Grandier is an important subplot in this direction. In an other kind of reading, the demonic voices and effects experienced by Jeanne would be interpreted as conflicting impulses and demands heightened by Jeanne's sensitivity. In her *Autobiographie*, Jeanne notes how she and her demons are indistinguishable: "un demon et moi estoit la mesme chose."[83] This "moi" is profoundly problematic, starting from the ambiguous status of Jeanne's *Autobiographie*; her nineteenth century doctors and editors simultaneously claim that Jeanne was illiterate, and that she was unconsciously but knowingly altering the facts – she could not have written the text, which, however, is full of her mistakes, that her editors have to put right.[84] Luce Irigaray's view of women's role as empty mirrors permitting man's speculation is both fortified, and (partially) critiqued by Jeanne's seventeenth-century story.[85] Sarah E. Miller unlocks "Jeanne's" text by applying the psychoanalytic theory of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. In this theory it is possible to have symptoms from events that have never happened; they are inherited anxieties and fears transmitted by the introjection and incorporation of language.

> The first step in the child's achievement of figuration, according to Abraham and Torok, occurs in the empty mouth [...] – a hunger which is filled by words [...]. Language is from the very beginning figural. Words arrive to replace the missing breast. [...] The proper passage through these steps constitutes introjection. The first time the breast is missed, the literal swallowing and assimilation of objects becomes the figurative enlargement

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[82] Miller 1988, 2-5.

[83] Soeur Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie d'une hystérique possédée*, Annoté et publié par les docteurs Gabriel Legué et Gilles de la Tourette (1886); quoted ibid., 5.

[84] Ibid., 6.

[85] See Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974/1986), especially "La Mystérique" (pages 191-202). Irigaray's female mystic ("perhaps") finds her "purity" again, after "the most shameful and degrading behavior" (ibid., 199). Miller notes that Jeanne articulated no such optimism. "For Jeanne to cleanse and empty her 'I,' she must empty it of itself, remove the 'I' in all its stains from the 'I'; the ideal state would be one in which self-referentiality could find no footing." (Miller 1988, 9.)

of the "I," as it expands to include objects transfigured into words that belong to and are inherited from the mother [...].[86]

Jeanne's troubles focus on oral problems: she confesses her sinful thoughts, spews out blasphemies as a demon, vomits blood on the floors of mother Church. She is giving, in fact, a perfect display that she cannot swallow something – the conflicts between her desires and the Christian vocabulary of sin, of the impurity of the female body and a women's proper silence are driven in a nauseating struggle. The constant self-inflected violence towards Jeanne's body gives an impression she is trying to eliminate her impure corporeal side. One needs only to think of another seventeenth-century writer, René Descartes, to find the same impulse to see identity as something totally independent of anything corporeal: the self was (or should be) "entirely distinct from body."[87] The demons tormented Jeanne with visions of unborn or dead children, they threatened to bring her a dead infant, indicating that she was "blessé" and had killed her own child. Miller's analysis follows Abraham and Torok's theory, and sees Jeanne's trouble as a failure of introjection; her incorporation materialises in fantasmatic children, indicating a desire that had been banned from introjection.[88] A prolonged exorcism and bodily torture was needed to incorporate Christian vocabulary properly into Jeanne's self; the dialectic of possession and exorcism dramatised the limits of female identity as imposed by the society. In the process, Jeanne became a public display of some of the complexities implicit in such a Christian self, of its conflicts and their eventual reconciliation.

THE GROTESQUE OTHERS

The examples taken from the Christian demonic tradition in Europe demonstrate an ambivalence that did not always serve the aims of theological clarity; instead, various social and psychological conflicts could find their dramatic expressions in demonological discourses. Partly this is inherent already in the starting points of Christian demonology. As Edward Langton writes in his study *The Essentials of Demonology* (1949), ancient Semitic demonology was never completely suppressed by the Yahwistic movement. There are numerous points in the Old Testament that suggest popular attention and worship for ambiguously divine or demonic beings like the hairy *Se'irim*,[89] or which mention the curious ceremony of *Azazel* (scapegoat), or fear of *Lilith*, the night demon.[90] The formidable aspect of Yahweh was emphasised, but the existence of other gods was not totally rejected – they

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[86] Miller 1988, 11; she refers here to the essay "Introjection – Incorporation" by Abraham and Torok (in *Psychoanalysis in France*, 1980).
[87] Descartes 1637/1985, 54.
[88] Miller 1988, 12.
[89] Mentioned in Leviticus 17:7 and 2 Chronicles 11:15.
[90] Alluded to in Isaiah 34:14 ("the night hag"), and portrayed at length in the Rabbinic literature. (See, e.g. *Lilith ou la mère obscure* by Jacques Bril [Paris, 1981].)

were reduced to the rank of demons.[91] The Christians applied a similar approach. The fascinating and fecund narratives and imagery developed by the heathen peoples were adopted as elements of the Christian demonic.

The mirroring relationship between "us" and "them" is nothing new in the history of cultures. The legacy of the ancient Indo-Iranian religion is a particularly good example; this religion had two sets of gods, the asuras (or ahuras) and the devas (or daevas). Zoroastrianism and the Hindu mythology in India were inheritors of this divine duality, and interestingly later developments went into opposite directions: the 'demon' in Avesta is *daeva*, as in the Sanskrit *deva* means 'deity.' The names have been preserved, but the gods of the one people have become demons of the others.[92] Jeffrey Burton Russell writes about this process that "when a culture replaces one set of gods with another, it tends to relegate the losing set to the status of evil spirits."[93] Even if this does not always happen, it is one of the most basic mechanisms generating demonic figures and myths.

The conflict between early Christianity and paganism largely centred on the polytheistic features of the surrounding religions. Many of them still carried traces of magical thinking (or "animism") with them, and "gods were smaller": they took care of some specific tasks or spheres of life.[94] From the perspective of competition it is no surprise that the plurality and the practical (or "magical") interests of the religious rivals became demonised and evil. Among the older religious adversaries was Baal, the popular god of the Canaanites, who was also known as "Baal-ze-boul" (Lord of the House). Under the name of "Beelzebub" this god has become known as the "chief of the devils" for the readers of the New Testament.[95] However, the role and imagery of the demonic was actually adopted from older religions. The Bible contains accounts of God slaying Leviathan, "the dragon that is in the sea," and Christ is depicted as a warrior that defeats a seven-headed dragon.[96] This element is taken from Canaanite mythology: Leviathan was a seven-headed

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[91] Langton 1949/1982, 52.

[92] "This direct opposition between the Indian and the Persian terms is generally ascribed to a presumed religious schism in pre-historic times between the two branches of the Indo-Iranian community" (A.V. Williams Jackson; *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, 620).

[93] Russell 1988/1993, 8.

[94] Javier Teixidor remarks in his study *The Pagan God* on the tendency of scholars to overemphasise the significance of the classical authors as guides to ancient religious life. The study of the actual inscriptions that can be found among ruins points out that the mystery religions, for example, never were that important for "the uneducated masses." Theological coherence was not essential, and the gist of religious life was the altar, the ritual and the sacrifice. Often the inscriptions end by saying that the offering was made "because the god has listened to the prayer." Practical and material questions were of paramount interest, and often local cults, even the worship of demons, were accepted in the temples dedicated to some higher god. (Teixidor 1977, 3-6, 116.)

[95] See Mt. 12:24, Mk. 3:22, Lk. 11:15. In *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie "Baal" is given new life as the name of the poet who opposes the power of Prophet. (See chapter ten.)

[96] Is. 27:1, Rev. 12:3-20:3.

serpent destroyed by Baal.[97] Reference to the (dangerous and chaotic) sea goes back to the goddess Tiamat in Babylonian mythology. The most distinct features of the popular Christian conception of evil were nevertheless taken in from the Greeks. Jeffrey Burton Russell writes:

> A few Greco-Roman deities had direct influence on the Devil. The Christians associated all the pagan deities with demons, but Pan more than others. Pan was feared for his association with the wilderness, the favorite haunt of hostile spirits, and for his sexuality. Sexual passion, which suspends reason, was suspect to both Greek rationalism and Christian asceticism; a god of sexuality could easily be identified as evil, especially since sexuality was linked through fertility to the underworld and death. Pan, hairy and goatlike, with horns and cloven hooves, was the son of Hermes. A phallic deity like his father, he represented sexual desire in both its creative and its threatening aspects. Pan's horns, hooves, shaggy fur, and outsized phallus became part of the Christian image of Satan.[98]

Demonic imagery in its popular form adopted Pan within the satirical (or, indeed, "satyrical") discourse or expressive register that this figure had been associated with in antiquity. The lascivious spirits of woodlands and field – fauns, satyrs, Priapus and Pan – were essential in the satyr plays that were performed at the Dionysiac festivals. The satyr plays were an important counterbalance to the serious tragedies, and they were written to give comical relief to the audience who had seen a series of three tragedies before it.[99] The satyrs were inhabitants of the borderline between wilderness and civilisation and their appearance corresponded to this role: half-human, half-animal they gave a fantastic shape to the "not-so-civilised" aspects of humanity. The god Dionysus himself may have originally been worshipped in the shape of a great bull, and his bacchanals and festivals were practical opportunities to take part in "otherness" – to experience how one can lose his/herself in animalistic frenzy, madness, or in religious ecstasy.[100] The medieval fantasy of the Witches' Sabbath seems to owe much to this rejected sensual and orgiastic religiousness (the myth of the fallen angels, in comparison, was much more concerned with pride and intellectual questions).

In his study *The Ludicrous Demon* Lee Byron Jennings has focused particularly on this interesting combination of fearsome and ridiculous attributes. His aim is to explain how the grotesque has become an important (albeit often marginalised) part of art and literature. He sees that the power of the grotesque is embedded on its ability to evoke contradictory emotional responses, and to build a new ordering principle to incorporate this tension (an "anti-norm"). Personal identity, the stability of our unchanging environment, the inviolate nature of the human body, and the separation of the

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[97] Cavendish 1975, 11.
[98] Russell 1988/1993, 17.
[99] The only satyr play that has been preserved complete is *The Cyclops* by Euripides.
[100] Many of Dionysus' worshippers were women. See *The Bacchae* by Euripides; also (in Finnish) Simonsuuri 1994, 91-97.

human and nonhuman realms are transgressed and violated in this tradition. At the same time the mode of expression is "low," approaching trivial. Jennings explains that the "grotesque is *the demonic made trivial*."[101] Wolfgang Kayser has made basically the same interpretation by stating that the grotesque is "AN ATTEMPT TO INVOKE AND SUBDUE THE DEMONIC ASPECTS OF THE WORLD."[102] These theories suppose that the nature of the "demonic" is self-evident and can be used as an explanation; however, a more thorough analysis of the demonic has been mostly disregarded.

The comic or the grotesque aspect of the demonic tradition has not been the focus of theological or philosophical attention, but it has had a strong foothold in folk culture. It is possible to see the carnival as an inheritor to the ritual celebrations of so-called pagan societies: the nominal reason for celebrating a medieval carnival was as a preparation for Lent, its actual origin going back to Roman Bacchanalias and ancient fertility rites. In practice these festivals constituted an alternative world order during which time fools were crowned as kings and devils danced on the streets – it was a celebration combining parades, pageantry, folk drama, and feasting.[103] M. M. Bakhtin has been influential in relating the significance of the carnival to literary works which would be otherwise hard to classify, and of establishing the carnivalesque as a broader cultural category. Bakhtin is here important especially because he emphasised the polyphony of these literary works; the literary counterpart of the "high" epic was Menippean satire, which broke down the "epical and tragical integrity" of man and his fate.[104] Literary polyphony is for Bakhtin a metaphor for the inner complexities and tensions that can be traced especially in Dostoyevsky's novels. He wrote about the profound pluralism of Dostoyevsky's world view, and compared it to Dante's vision.[105] Dante broke down the tragic seriousness of his Hell with a comic transgression of the carnivalesque in Canto XXI in the first part, *Inferno*, of his *Divina Commedia*. The combination of extreme human suffering with the clownish behaviour of demons (their departure is signalled with a fart) produces a grotesque mixture of (high and low) registers.[106]

Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have noted that "the primary site of contradiction, the site of conflicting desires and mutually incompatible representation, is undoubtedly the 'low'."[107] The two discourses of the demonic mentioned in this chapter are both contradictory and transgressive, but in different ways: the myth of the fallen angels situates evil in the space be-

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[101] Jennings 1963, 17-19.
[102] Kayser 1957/1981, 188; see also Wright 1865/1968, xiv (an introduction by Frances K. Barasch). Emphasis in the original.
[103] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's study *Le Carnival de Romans* (1979) illustrates the violent and subversive potentialities of the carnival (Ladurie 1979/1990).
[104] Bakhtin 1929/1973, 98.
[105] Ibid., 22. Bakhtin writes about "the communion of unmerged spirits" that the church or the "multileveledness" of Dante's world is able to achieve.
[106] *Inferno* 21:139; Dante 1314/1984, 264.
[107] Stallybrass - White 1986/1993, 4.

tween god and man. In this "high" version the angels, the superhuman be-
ings and messengers between god and man, are depicted as corrupted and
led by an inverse authority, a Dark Prince (as a blasphemous analogue to
Christ, or God himself). The second, "low" discourse articulates evil in
terms that situate it between man and animal, or grotesque body. A demonic
(an irritating, provocative, and trivial, at the same time) mirroring can be de-
tected here: god–man becomes man–dog: the exalted becomes something
abject and vile.[108] The use of demonic figures can usefully be understood as a
particular kind of borderline discourse; as Julia Kristeva writes in the con-
text of the abject, phobia and the splitting of the ego:

> The "unconscious" contents remain here *excluded* but in strange fashion:
> not radically enough to allow for a secure differentiation between subject
> and object, and yet clearly enough for a defensive *position* to be established
> – one that implies a refusal but also a sublimating elaboration.[109]

It should be pointed out that the category of holy implies the existence
of the unholy; that the irreverent *diablerie* is a constant companion to the
pious struggles of the devout. Neither can the two aspects ("lower" and
"higher") of the demonic tradition be clearly separated; instead, intermin-
gling and heterogeneity seem to be the most distinctive aesthetic features of
this tradition both in literature and the arts. The demonic may appear wher-
ever there are unresolved conflicts – in the shape of a hairy devil as well as a
Dark Prince; the devil is called "the father of lies," which underlines the
transformative character of demonic imagery.

As far as these two aspects can never be completely be set apart (as the
"serious" impulse is constantly undermined by grotesque details, and as the
ridiculous hides important concerns) we can speak about one demonic tradi-
tion. This tradition is rich and internally conflicting enough to fertilise even
the most demanding imaginations and minds. Instead of having one fixed
identity, the demon is an inhabitant of borderlands. It is characterised by the
constant tension between the desirable and the repulsive, and also the dis-
cursive use of the demonic figures can be characterised as divided and dis-
cordant. The moral and ontological conflicts of self, dramatic transgressions
of limits, as those between "us" / "them," "inside" / "outside," "desirable" /
"forbidden" are given their conflicting expressions in the figurative and dis-
cursive level. The heterogeneous historical and cultural background of the
demonic elements in modern literature and movies makes it impossible to
establish any tight boundaries for the demonic imagination. The demonic
(in its various forms as separate figures and as a thematic field) is set apart
from the rest of fantastic elements by some reference to this tradition: this
sort of reference acts as an interpretative guide for the reader, who may thus

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[108] See below, analyses of Clive Barker's play and W.P. Blatty's *The Exorcist* (pp. 159-
60 and 192).
[109] Kristeva 1980/1982, 7.

be able to expect questions about good or evil, spiritual or material, identity or falsity etc., to be thematised in the text.

The next two chapters take some distance from the colourful history of demons and engage in more theoretically oriented discussions. The main focus will be on the puzzling nature of the self; the previous introduction has already pointed out how the demonic is positioned as an enemy of a "proper" identity, trouble to the self. To approach the dynamics of this area (of non-identity, break-down of the self and language, of suffering and grotesque bodies) one has to create some understanding of what is negated, or troubled by it.

My analyses dealing with fictional narratives will begin in chapter four. These analyses are not "subjected" to theory; the relationship is reciprocal, and it should be possible for the reader to alter the order here, and read the more theoretical analyses after the analyses of fiction, for example. It could be claimed that the theoretical discourses have poetic and symbolic dimensions of their own, and it is my aim to question the opposition between theory and fiction. The "theoretical" texts dealing with the self and its troubles are also shown as contributing to its poetic and mythical construction.

2. *The Demonic in the Self*

But ancient Violence longs to breed,
new Violence comes
when its fatal hour comes, the demon comes
to take her toll – no war, no force, no prayer
can hinder the midnight Fury stamped
with parent Fury moving through the house.

– Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*[1]

Demons were chasing me, trying to eat me. They were grotesque, surreal, and they just kept pursuing me wherever I went. I was fighting them with some kind of sword, hacking them to pieces. But each time I would cut one into small pieces, another would appear.

– A dream of a patient;
Stephen A. Diamond, *Anger, Madness, and the Daimonic*[2]

THE SELF

The self is a problem. The long history of educated discussion about the human self has not succeeded in producing a consensus. Scholars working in the same discipline do not necessarily agree on the fundamentals when debating how a human being should be understood. This is even truer as we cross disciplinary boundaries. Some think it is not necessary to presume the existence of something like the "self," others consider it more fruitful to approach human existence from different levels of observation altogether. In the area of literature and literary studies, in psychology, as well as in other areas where individual experience is of paramount importance, the self nevertheless continues to raise interest. Even if theoretically disputed as the authorial figure, the self of an autobiography, or the selves of some specific readers, are explored as hermeneutic or phenomenological realities. The role of the self appears no longer as the stable source or centre of meanings, but as a complex construction that is open to history and reinterpretation. This change also makes demons and the demonic in their relationship to self an interesting area for research and re-evaluation.

The self is perhaps best understood as an element of figurative language, a metaphor, as a way of interpreting, representing and unifying something intangible and heterogeneous. The attitudes of the Enlightenment are still a strong undercurrent in our culture, and myths and metaphors are too easily labelled no more than lies or illusions to be debunked. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson among others have studied how metaphors and metony-

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[1] Aeschylus 1979, 131 (*Agam.* 755-60).
[2] Diamond 1996, 238.

mies form coherent systems that help us to conceptualise our experience, and they argue that our conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical. As our communication, thinking and acting are based on this system, the structure and nature of these metaphors is not a trivial matter. In this and the following chapter, my aim is to illustrate how demons and the demonic are connected with the self in some eminent theoretical accounts, and how this connection holds special interest with respect to the contemporary theory of 'textuality.' The evolution I outline here points out how the demons of the self and the *daimons* of tragedy have been transformed into a "demonic textuality" within current theory. Such an analysis can be used as a theoretical background for the readings in the second part of this work. Simultaneously, the fictional texts will help to adopt alternative perspectives, and to question the privileged status of theory. All theory carries its own limits and implied preconditions inscribed into its discourse.

<p style="text-align:center">⋆⊰❋⊱⋆</p>

What does it mean that the self is a figure of speech? In the first place, "the self" constitutes a particular manner of expression, or representation; there is no object "out in nature" that would be mirrored by this concept. According to this view, the self is an imaginative construction, useful and perhaps even vitally important in our daily routines.[3] We perceive ourselves as individuals, and individuals in our culture possess "selves": preferably clear-cut conceptions of who they are, what they want, and why. One's consciousness of one's own being, or identity, is central to this common-sense idea of the self; the physical disposition, the mental characteristics, personality and life history are all commonly seen as contributing to one's sense of individuality, or the self (employed often synonymously).[4]

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[3] Hayden White has emphasised in his *Metahistory* (1973, 33 [note 13], 36), that tropes can work as a means to prefigure problematic areas for the consciousness, prior to analysis.

[4] According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 'self' was originally used only as a pronoun and pronominal adjective (in the sense of the L. *ipse*). The substantive use developed in early Middle-English. The current usage was slowly adopted, firstly in a discourse philosophical in tone: "That which in a person is really and intrinsically he (in contradistinction to what is adventitious); the ego (often identified with the soul or mind as opposed to the body); a permanent subject of successive and varying states of consciousness. 1674 TRAHERNE *Poet. Wks.* (1903) 49 A secret self I had enclos'd within, That was not bounded with my clothes or skin." A little later, 'self' came also to mean "What one is at a particular time or in a particular aspect or relation; one's nature, character, or (sometimes) physical constitution or appearance, considered as different at different times." The negative connotations (with associations to 'selfishness') are prominent, and different compounds derived from 'self' have proliferated from the 17th century to the present day (including such as 'self-accusation,' 'self-condemnation,' 'self-contempt,' 'self-denial,' 'self-judgement,' 'self-repugnance,' 'self-destruction,' 'self-despair,' 'self-slaughter,' etc.) Vytautas Kavolis writes in his article "On the Self-Person Differentiation: Universal Categories of Civilization and Their Diverse Contents" that the "concept linkages of the self-compounds of the seventeenth century suggest a violent clash be-

Individuality carries enormous ideological and legal weight in our culture. Economic and legal systems are based on the assumption that citizens are autonomous individuals, in full possession of themselves, and therefore also legally responsible for all their actions. Philosophy is here the other side of the political; broadly speaking, the "subject" and "subjectivity" evolved into central concepts as political power was given over from the hands of a single sovereign to the "people" – in other words, to the diverse economical and political structures of a modern society, and to the individuals operating within these structures.[5] Michel Foucault extensively studies the historical process whereby the modern individual was produced. The development of "self" meant, among other things, increasing awareness and control by an individual towards his or her own behaviour. Everything in the life of a modern individual came under growing attention and scrutiny – from the organisation of daily life into a regulated timetable to the development of discursive forms for "private" experience, such as sexuality. The individuals were, according to Foucault, "urged to constitute themselves as subjects of moral conduct" during this process; they were involved with "the models proposed for setting up and developing the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformation that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object."[6]

Examination and cultivation of one's own individuality, one's self, has become one of the central concerns for modern individual. "One can never know too much concerning human nature," claimed the anonymous author of *My Secret Life* (1882), a massive autobiography mainly concerned with the author's various sexual experiences.[7] As Nikolas Rose has written, the "citizens of a liberal democracy are to regulate themselves", and in this process they are assisted by different 'techniques of the self,' employed by themselves, or by some of the new classes of professionals dedicated to the examination and manipulation of the self.[8] Rose summarises :

> Through self-inspection, self-problematization, self-monitoring, and confession, we evaluate ourselves according to the criteria provided for us by

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tween the older ('Elizabethan') self-assertiveness and the new ('Puritan') self-criticism" (Kavolis 1984, 137).

[5] The creation of modern subjectivity has received a great deal of theoretical attention, especially during the last three decades. *The Subject of Modernity* (1995) by Anthony J. Cascardi serves as a good example of this discussion. Cascardi takes his starting points from the critique of Western rationalism by Max Weber and Jürgen Habermas, and critically reads the works of such thinkers as Descartes, Hegel, Heidegger, Benjamin, Rorty, and Lyotard. Discussions of art and entertainment, such as Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and the myth of Don Juan, are approached through philosophical discourse, and used partly as illustrations. Theoretical works of this nature are useful as analyses of our intellectual history, but also demonstrate the constant danger – of becoming an endless commentary of only the canonised philosophers and authors.

[6] Foucault 1986, 29.

[7] Quoted in Foucault 1978, 22.

[8] Rose 1990, 10.

others. Through self-reformation, therapy, techniques of body alteration, and the calculated reshaping of speech and emotion, we adjust ourselves by means of the techniques propounded by the experts of the soul. The government of the soul depends upon our recognition of ourselves as ideally and potentially certain sorts of person, the unease generated by a normative judgement of what we are and could become, and the incitement offered to overcome this discrepancy by following the advice of experts in the management of the self.[9]

This self has a close relation with a particular way of thinking. George Lakoff has named as *objectivism* the tradition of thought that could as well be called "classical reason" which holds that "conceptual categories are defined solely by the shared essential properties of their members"; that "thought is the disembodied manipulation of abstract symbols"; and that "those symbols get their meaning solely by virtue of correspondences to things in the world." Lakoff adds that this "view of reason as abstract, disembodied, and literal is well-established."[10] One of the central consequences of the self being part of such a system, is that it has been perceived as an essential and natural component of being. Our thought confronts problems when dealing with such experiences that do not properly fit this idea. The rational, fully autonomous self is in fact a classical *ideal*, and should be perceived as an abstraction, illustrating particular needs and aims – or, a particular ideology. The following comment from Aristotle's *Politics* clarifies this point:

> An immediate indication of this [natural order] is afforded by the soul, where we find natural ruler and natural subject, whose virtues we regard as different – one being that of the rational element, the other of the nonrational. It is therefore clear that the same feature will be found in the other cases too, so that most instances of ruling and being ruled are natural. For rule of free over slave, male over female, man over boy, are all different, because, while parts of the soul are present in each case, the distribution is different. Thus the deliberative faculty in the soul is not present at all in a slave; in a female it is present but ineffective, in a child present but undeveloped.[11]

The subordination of emotions and all other ("lower") aspects of subjectivity to the rational self correspond to the subjugation of slaves, women and children by free men. The definition of subjectivity in terms of the rational soul is a politically motivated fundamental in Aristotelian thought. It

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[9] Ibid., 11.
[10] Lakoff 1987, 586.
[11] Aristotle 1981, 95 [1260a4-13]. – Aristotle can, of course, be approached from different angles, and his theories are open to many interpretations. For a recent defence of *logos* and Aristotle's argument, see the interpretation in Roochnik 1990, 23-45. See also Derrida's article "The Supplement of Copula: Philosophy *before* Linguistics," which points out that Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and his categories can be read as expressing awareness of the metaphoric quality of thought (Derrida 1972/1989).

should be pointed out that the demonic "Other" will make its appearance in the guise of all of these "irrational characters" of Aristotle in this study: female and child embody it in chapters four and five, "slaves" are susceptible to the demonic in chapter eight. Acts of definition produce identity, and it is necessary to understand the logic of exclusion operating in our traditional "self" in order to approach its demonic others. Aristotelian exclusions have been very persistent.

Lakoff opposes the tradition of Aristotelian objectivism with *experiential realism*, which argues that human reason generally complies with the following main principles:

- Thought is *embodied*, that is, the structures used to put together our conceptual systems grow out of bodily experience and make sense in terms of it; moreover, the core of our conceptual systems is directly grounded in perception, body movement, and experience of a physical and social character.
- Thought is *imaginative*, in that those concepts which are not directly grounded in experience employ metaphor, metonymy, and mental imagery – all of which go beyond the literal mirroring, or *representation*, of external reality. It is this imaginative capacity that allows for "abstract" thought and takes the mind beyond what we can see and feel. The imaginative capacity is also embodied – indirectly – since the metaphors, metonymies, and images are based on experience, often bodily experience. Thought is also imaginative in a less obvious way: every time we categorize something in a way that does not mirror nature, we are using general human imaginative capacities.[12]

Other such principles include *gestalt properties* in human thought (our thinking follows an overall structure that is not just an atomistic combination of "building blocks") and *ecological structure* (learning and memory are governed by the overall structure of the conceptual system and what the concepts mean; thought is not just mechanical manipulation of abstract symbols).[13] Lakoff supports his argument with a wide variety of evidence that is not limited to our culture; the fundamentals of language are rooted in the experience of living in the world, not in some transcendental logic.[14] In

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[12] Lakoff 1987, xiv.

[13] Ibid., xiv-xv.

[14] Lakoff's examples include the aboriginal language of Diyrbal, which he uses to point out how conceptual categories are organized according to basic domains of experience, which may be culture-specific. Categories in Lakoff's title, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, belong in the Diyrbal system to the same class. (Ibid., 92-96.) *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff - Johnson 1980) includes further evidence of how even the English conceptual system is replete with metaphors that express cultural inheritance and experience. ARGUMENT IS WAR is a metaphor that is reflected in the use of such expressions as *attack a position, indefensible, strategy, new line of attack, win, gain ground*, etc. Other fundamentals include CONSCIOUS IS UP (UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN), RATIONAL IS UP (EMOTIONAL IS DOWN); the physical basis (erect awareness vs. sleeping lying down) is linked to other elements in a culture (we value control *over* others, who are *lower*) – until it is perfectly natural to say, e.g. "He couldn't *rise above* his *emotions*." (Ibid., 4-7, 14-17.)

our culture, it makes sense to say: "I have a self" – or, "I am my self" – but one should be careful not to suppose one, fixed and objective reality behind these expressions. They are metaphorical in character; in other words, they imaginatively illustrate our traditions of thinking and our experience of living as members of our societies. The self is not an external object in the world: we do not perceive any "selves" in external reality – and David Hume even claimed that when we study the internal reality of our thinking, we always find merely separate ideas and perceptions. We just believe that these heterogeneous elements are unified by the "self."[15]

Hume's refutation of the "self" has not been the last; rather, the main impetus of modern scientific thought has been directed towards discrediting or dissolving the classic idea of a unified, rational self. Why do we then still go on speaking of ourselves and others in these terms? The answer derived from Lakoff and cognitive science (the interdisciplinary study of our conceptual system) is that we have a practical *need* for a self; the figurative way of thinking helps us organise our life and thinking, to communicate and to make perceptions.[16] But when these practical functions are reified into an abstraction that is granted real existence, problems arise; the example of Aristotle's division of soul helps us to become more aware of the necessary tensions and potential conflicts inherent in the construction of a self. The conceptual categories are organised on the basis of some "prototype," a figure that is perceived as the most natural, or basic representative of that category. As the concept becomes defined, certain features are posited as marginal, and others as totally extraneous to this concept.[17] Aristotle's definition of "rational soul" as the privileged element of subjectivity does not treat different people equally. Slaves, women and children become "less human" as the prototype of subjectivity is figured as an autonomous, adult and emphatically rational male.

Demonic imagery can be approached from this viewpoint: as an alternative tradition to figuratively model the dynamics of human existence and behaviour. As the heritage of positivism and rationalism has come under at-

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[15] J.P. Stern makes the following useful condensation of Hume's argument: "Since 'I never can catch *myself* without a perception', and there are no perceptions of a constant and invariable nature of which the self might be a constant and stable bearer, only 'successive perceptions' can constitute the mind. And so, 'setting aside some speculative metaphysicians … who claim existence and continuance in existence for what we call our SELF', Hume affirms 'of the rest of mankind' that we are 'nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement'." (Stern 1990, 3; Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature* [1793], conclusion of Book I.)

[16] Some cognitive scientists closely converge the premises of the study of artificial intelligence. Lakoff opposes the computational models of the human cognitive system. Cf. e.g. *Perspectives on Cognitive Science*, ed. D. Norman (1981); Hautamäki 1988.

[17] Lakoff's examples include *mother* which is, according to him, still defined and organised around the "housewife-mother" stereotype in the United States. A "working mother" becomes defined in contrast (and as a deviation) from the stereotype. (Lakoff 1987, 79-81.)

tack in the so-called "human sciences," and non-Western traditions of thought have extended their influence, demons and the demonic have gained fresh interest. They are particularly important in questioning the integrity of subjectivity.

COHERENCE OF THE SELF

> *It* thinks: but that this 'it' is precisely that famous old 'I' is, to put it mildly, only an assumption ….
> — Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*[18]

"One's self-identity," R.D. Laing has written in a circular manner, "is the story one tells one's self of who one is."[19] When the classic conception of the self as a real, essential substance of a person with claims to the transcendental, has lost its ground, interest in the narrative construction of selfhood has increased. It has become relatively common to perceive the self as belonging to the domains of the aesthetic, and rhetoric, as much as to philosophy, psychology or psychiatry. Stephen Frost, in his work *Identity Crisis: Modernity, Psychoanalysis and the Self* (1991), outlines the general consensus about the self in clinical psychology as something constructed; the self is built up developmentally by linking interpersonal relationships with internal mental structures. The most significant relationships – 'object relations' – are "absorbed as a set of fantasised internal relationships which become the building blocks of personality."[20] The self is an "imagined entity" and we are capable of various different interpretations, or self-representations, of our persons. "Creating a self is like creating a work of art," concludes Frost.[21]

The aesthetic approach to the self carries its own burdens. The cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz has pointed out that the Western conception of "person" is a peculiar idea among world cultures: it is commonly perceived as

> a bounded, unique, more or less integrated, motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgement, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively against other such wholes and against a social and natural background.[22]

When the self is established as an aesthetic object to be fully explored and realised (according to a romantic ideal), other aspects of the self are in danger of being forgotten. The Marxist critic Terry Eagleton thinks that the influential trend of Romantic expressivism is empty of value-judgements;

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[18] Nietzsche 1886/1986, 28 [§17].
[19] Laing 1961/1980, 93.
[20] Frosh 1991, 4.
[21] Ibid., 12-13.
[22] Geertz 1979, 229.

the only imperative is that human capacities should be actualised, however destructive they might be. The aesthetic, in his view, offers the middle-class subject an ideological legitimisation of its own alienation and passivity – in the words of Schiller: "Beauty alone makes the whole world happy."[23]

The principle of unity and coherence is central to classical aesthetic standards.[24] The "distinctive whole" in Geertz's definition emphasises similar standards in our self-conception. The increasing unity of the psyche is an essential goal in many therapeutic techniques; therapists aim at "helping patients reconnect with themselves by establishing or reestablishing an effective relationship between ego consciousness and the unconscious." The link between *heal* and *whole* is not only etymological in this line of thinking.[25] The question of wholeness and integrity for the self, however, has become a subject for theoretical dispute. Foucault wrote about the role of interpretation in the works of Nietzsche, Freud and Marx, claiming that these three thinkers engaged us in an endless self-interpretative task – they built "those mirrors which reflect to us the images whose inexhaustible wounds form our contemporary narcissism."[26] The ideal images of wholeness and unity are threatened and displaced by alternative narratives: people are at least as much products of society and of history, as they are its agents (Marx); psychoanalysis decenters our view of ourselves as subjects conscious of our actions and decisions (Freud claimed that the unconscious is the real power in the psyche); the followers of de Saussure establish language as an autonomous system of differences, transcending the intentions of individual "language users."[27] The work of such radical theorists as Jacques Lacan breaks up classical subjectivity even more: "subject" becomes a deeply divided and decentered structure, and the self (*moi*) a tragic illusion, a misperception of unity where none exists.[28]

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[23] Eagleton 1990, 110-11, 223 (the Schiller quotation from page 110).

[24] See, e.g. Aristotle 1982, 52-3 [1450b-1451a]. The dogmatic adherence to the "rule" of unity was a later, classicistic interpretation of Aristotle; the "three unities" of classicism were those of action, time and place. *De Arte Poetica* by Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus, 65 B.C.E. - 8 B.C.E.) is also an important influence.

[25] Kluger - Kluger 1984, 162.

[26] Foucault 1990, 61.

[27] Cf. Edwards 1990, 25. – The structuralist reading of de Saussure has been mainly interested in the last lecture in *Cours de linguistique gènèral*, which explains the meanings of signs as determined by relationships to other signs. Words can never be taken in isolation, without their difference to other terms in the system. Saussure, however, emphasised in the beginning of *Cours* that "Linguistic structure is only one part of language […]. Language in its entirety has many different and disparate aspects. It lies astride the boundaries separating various domains. It is at the same time physical, physiological and psychological. It belongs to the individual and the society. No classification of human phenomena provides any single place for it, because language as such has no discernible unity." (de Saussure 1916/1983, 9-10.) This suggests a rich and many-dimensional view of our linguistic make-up, certainly not any "Prison-House of Language."

[28] Lacan, "The Mirror Stage" (1966/1983, 1-7). See also Freud, "Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis" (SE 16, 284-85), and Rajchman 1986, 44. Freud positions psycho-

A number of scholars have felt the basic tenets in this demolition as uncomfortably pessimistic. Furthermore, the exposure of the self as fragmentary and internally conflicting, in a sense, only reproduces the anomie of postmodern society on a theoretical level.[29] Marshall Berman has characterised the experience of the modern individual in his study *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (1982) as a tension between the infinite possibilities (for adventure, power, joy, growth) and the vortex of "perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish."[30] Berman differentiates between the experiential reality of living in modernity, and the actual processes of modernisation that have produced the conditions for this experience – industrialisation, urban growth, mass communications and the world market, for example. Literary modernism is an important area of our culture where we can discuss, represent and witness different aspects of this experience, "attempt to find a way of living with continually dissolving realities and fluctuating boundaries."[31]

The need for ways to positively reconstruct new versions of subjectivity, ones that would not be locked into the classic dualisms (soul/body, reason/emotion), has led into partial rehabilitations of the self. Paul Ricoeur's careful formulations in his article "Life: A Story in Search of a Narrator," are illuminating:

> [The] *subject* is never given at the beginning. Or, if it were so given, it would run the risk of reducing itself to a narcissistic ego, self-centred and avaricious – and it is just this from which literature can liberate us. Our loss in the side of narcissism is our gain on the side of the narrative identity. In the place of an ego enchanted by itself, a *self* is born, taught by cultural symbols, first among which are the stories received in the literary tradition. These stories give unity – not unity of substance but narrative wholeness.[32]

Even such moderate claims for the unifying capacities of art are prone to stir disagreement; the disintegration of identities, radical multiplicity and narrative discontinuity are much more preferable goals for many. In Julia Kristeva's thinking, for example, all attempts of establishing a regulated system, or unity are perceived as entangled with the symbolic order (and the Law of the Father, in Lacanian terms); the semiotic (the bodily alternative)

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analysis as the third "wounding blow" to human "megalomania," in the series preceded by the wounds inflicted by Copernicus and Darwin.

[29] 'Anomie' signifies the modern social condition permeated by alienation, caused by the disintegration of mutually accepted codes (originally by Emile Durkheim).

[30] Berman, 1982/1991, 15.

[31] Frosh 1991, 16 (based on Berman 1982/1991, 16-33).

[32] Paul Ricoeur, "Life: A Story in Search of a Narrator" (1987; Ricoeur 1991, 437). This view of self as a narrative construction might be named as the "constructivist" position. See also Bernard Williams's article "Imagination and the self" (Williams 1973/1991, 26-45) which discusses the general distinction between imagining (activity displayed in different forms of narration) and visualising something, especially a self.

can manifest itself only in irruptions, dissonances or rhythmic elements within the symbolic.[33] The pursuit of the experience of 'wholeness' can, however, be defended as a necessary step. It constitutes the alternative, an awareness that is needed to identify dissonances, tensions, or division lines. A parallel example can be taken from Eastern philosophies like Hinduism or Buddhism; the goal is to eliminate the ego, but one has to first achieve a crystallised conception of ego, before one can renounce it.[34] One feels sympathetic towards those feminist critics of French theoretical radicalism who claim that "dissolution of subject" does not properly address their most urgent needs.

THE DEMONS OF DISINTEGRATION

It could be claimed that the structures of the self are already dissolving, and that this is not a pleasurable experience. Charles Taylor, in his study *Sources of the Self: the Making of the Modern Identity* (1989), claims that we need "stories" which provide us with value horizons. These "moral ontologies" offer us frameworks and landmarks to orient our thinking and acting in meaningful ways. Indeed, Taylor claims that

> living within such strongly qualified horizons is constitutive of human agency, that stepping outside these limits would be tantamount to stepping outside what we would recognize as integral, that is, undamaged human personhood.[35]

Loss of meaningful commitments and identifications in life would mean loss of significance. The total lack of stable meanings combined with the disintegration of psychic structures may be lyrical in theoretical prose; in living experience, however, they are more likely to produce pain and fear, feelings of spatial disorientation and different personality disorders, even psychosis. A critic of Taylor might adopt a postmodern position, and argue that between the total lack of structures and one solid structure there lies an interesting middle ground of flexible production of "small narratives" and situated solutions. Even such a "moderately dissolved" condition could probably not completely banish the potential for pain and fear; there might be an inexhaustible source of anxiety rooted in our (post)modern condi-

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[33] See Kristeva, "Signifying Practice and Mode of Production" (*Edinburgh Review* 1976:1); quoted in Grosz 1990, 152. – Luce Irigaray, in contrast, passes the limits of the Lacanian model and thinks that there exists "a discourse or a movement where masculine consciousness and self-consciousness is no longer master" (Grosz 1990, 175). This view renounces the classical subject, or self, because it is conceptually rooted in rationalistic, patriarchal reason, and aims to enable women to claim some place as women, and to defy the discursive domination of phallocentrism (ibid., 173, 176). Even if the construction of subjectivity is superseded by the necessity for a new language, this kind of possibility suggests some hope for more functional ways of thinking about selfhood.

[34] See Diamond 1996, 345n69.

[35] Taylor 1989, 27.

tion.[36] The problematic status of the referent in the structuralist theories has tended to discourage such (perhaps sentimental) considerations – after all, various aspects of the "world" can even be theorised as illusions created by language.[37] Nevertheless, the role of emotions has been central to the critical understanding of narrative art since Aristotle's *Poetics*; Aristotle spoke in these lectures about *eleos* and *phobos* (pity and fear) as central elements in his definition of tragedy – tragedy effecting "a *catharsis* of such emotions."[38] In this, he prefigures several contemporary theories concerning the integrative function of dramatic stories. It is interesting to note the enduring popularity of references to classical tragedy in the psychological literature. Tragic characters are, after all, not only exemplars of "narrative wholeness"; tragic *ambiguity* describes perhaps best the tensions between calm rationality, anxiety, even the murderous insanity with which they are fraught.[39] The role of the emotions, and particularly the incapacity to experience emotions is important in many of my analysed "demonic texts" (see especially chapters six and eight).

Psychoanalysis with its different variations and successors has been in the forefront of addressing the questions about the divisions inherent in the self. Freud developed through his career different models to account for the psychic conflicts, suppressions and breakdowns he witnessed in his patients. With the publication of *Studies in Hysteria* in 1895, Freud (with Josef Breuer) suggested psychogenic reasons for mental illnesses; the organic reasons were replaced by mental conflicts between different elements in the mind. In the early model the psyche was topographically divided between the unconscious, preconscious and conscious areas. Later, a tripartite structural model was adopted (with the id, ego, and superego). Freud used metaphors to illustrate his thoughts, and he compared the id to a horse whose power must be simultaneously shared and harnessed by its much weaker

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[36] Of the irreducible role of 'worry' and 'fear' in the postmodern condition and the multiplicity of language games, see Lyotard - Thébaud 1985, 99-100. Jean-François Lyotard himself has advocated an attitude of "resolute passivity" – potentially a "surrender to the 'other' in language, rather than the attempt to make language a more and more faithful instrument of the human mind" (Connor 1997, 42; the reference is to Lyotard's *The Inhuman* [1991]).

[37] See, e.g. Scholes 1980, 206 ("reference is a mirage of language").

[38] Aristotle 1982, 50 [1449b]. – In *The Politics* Aristotle somewhat clarifies his ideas about art, emotions and catharsis: "Any feeling which comes strongly to some souls exists in all others to a greater or less degree – pity and fear, for example, but also excitement. This is a kind of agitation by which some people are liable to be possessed; it may arise out of religious melodies, and in this case it is observable that when they have been listening to melodies that have an orgiastic effect on the soul they are restored as if they had undergone a curative and purifying treatment." Aristotle clearly separates this sort of people from his ideals: "Now in the theatre there are two types of audience, the one consisting of educated free men, the other of common persons, drawn from the mechanics, hired workers and such-like. For the relaxation of this latter class also competitions and spectacles must be provided." (Aristotle 1981, 473-74 [1341b-1342a].)

[39] Jean-Pierre Vernant's views concerning the tragic ambiguity are discussed below, p. 72.

"rider," the ego.[40] Freud also described the id as "the dark, inaccessible part of our personality," that must be approached with analogies – "we call it a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations."[41]

It is commonplace to think of psychoanalysis as being concerned with purely technical goals (such as the preservation and restoration of mental health) without any moral agenda. As psychoanalysis gained ground as the metadiscourse of modern life, it nevertheless was cast into the role of a moral legislator.[42] Freud's works such as *Totem and Taboo* (1913; SE 13) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930; SE 21) were characterised by deep pessimism towards the oppressive and distorting nature of culture. Ego, or the conscious self, was threatened on both sides in the Freudian model; by the powerful instinctual impulses of the id, and by the attacks of superego morality.[43] The existence of unconscious ideas was in itself enough to render the (complete) integrity of the self into an impossibility. The idea that this divided structure could nevertheless be interpreted, or *read*, was the major Freudian insight. The unconscious has its own mode of organisation ("language," as Lacan later emphasised), and it is structured by the emotional experiences of interpersonal relationships. The opposition between "culture" and "nature" is emptied as the social and instinctual become inseparable.[44]

The imagery Freud employed in connection to the unconscious has its demonic undertones (the *dark part*, the *cauldron*). Psychoanalysis constituted rejection and subversion of the metaphysical terminology of morally and rationally superior "good" versus "evil." In Judeo-Christian tradition evil was a domain laden with sexual and aggressive imagery and prohibitions. Freud opened a means of liberation from guilt and re-assessment of those areas, but sexuality and aggression nevertheless retained their terrible, destructive charge in his writings. James S. Grotstein even accuses Freud and his followers of having "unconsciously demonized the id": the ego has been regarded as unilaterally needing protection from this nameless thing from

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[40] Freud, "The Ego and the Id" (SE 19, 25). The metaphor of powerful "horses" in the psyche which the rational mind has to control is ancient. It appears also in Plato's *Phaedrus* (247b-248c), a dialogue analysed below.

[41] Freud, "New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis" (SE 22, 73); see also the summary on the unconscious and the id in Diamond 1996, 89-95. – Nietzsche's influence in identifying the unconscious cannot be overestimated; he also links it with the demonic and the sexual impulses, even uses the same metaphor: "The central concern with such [Dionysian] celebrations was, almost universally, a complete sexual promiscuity overriding every form of established tribal law; all the savage urges of the mind were unleashed on those occasions until they reached that paroxysm of lust and cruelty which has always struck me as the "witches' cauldron" *par excellence*" (Nietzsche 1872/1990, 25-26 [§ II] – see also below, page 67n56).

[42] Margolis 1966, 146.

[43] E. Mansell Pattison argues that Freud considers morality solely in terms of the superego, and ignores the important functions moral thinking has in consciousness and ego; Pattison 1984, 68.

[44] Frosh 1991, 42.

the netherworld.[45] Subsequent developments in Jungian analysis, ego psychology, object-relations theory, and the psychology of self have all modified the Freudian view of the unconscious and instinctual drives, so that the Oedipal narrative of Freud – the child as a son who secretly fosters desire for his mother and hostility towards his father – now competes with other stories. The reading of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy by the existential analyst Stephen A. Diamond holds special interest in its attempt to interpret the traditionally "demonic" horrors in terms of the "daimonic."

THE TRAGIC DAIMONS

The primary departure Jung made from Freud's theories was concerned with the dominant role of infantile sexuality. Under "libido," Jung unified other strivings besides sexuality, and considered this force as a more heterogeneous form of "psychic energy." The unconscious had two important dimensions for him, the personal and the collective. More concerned than Freud with the individuation process during the growth of the adult personality, Jung saw our psychic life as informed by different mythical (archetypal) patterns.[46] He regarded the libido as consisting of different needs and drives. Because it was an autonomous element of psyche, repression or dissociation of its components could "possess" the individual, forcing him or her into some symptom or behaviour.[47] For Jung, religious and mythical imagery carried important knowledge about how people have experienced this mechanism: "As a power which transcends consciousness the libido is by nature daemonic: it is both God and devil."[48]

In his *Anger, Madness, and the Daimonic* (1996), Stephen A. Diamond is concerned with the "senseless violence" that is perceived as "epidemic" in contemporary American life, dominating daily news, as well as cinema and

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[45] Grotstein 1984, 205, 207.

[46] See Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* (1911-12; CW 5), *The Psychology of the Unconscious* (1917; CW 7, 3-117) and *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (essays collected into CW 9 [Part I]).

[47] Existential theories of psychoanalysis have reacted against the "autonomy" of the unconscious, because this implies a dichotomy between "rational" and "irrational." Jung's archetypes should properly be read as only "partially" autonomous elements – the therapeutic effect of the model, after all, relies on the recognition and integration of such elements as parts of the self. (See Diamond 1996, 104.) – In his lectures, Lacan presents an alternative view: he differentiates (human) libido fundamentally from mere biological function, emphasises that the object of the drive is indifferent, and stresses how the movement of desire is based on lack – "the fact that the subject depends on the signifier and the signifier is first of all the field of the other" (Lacan 1973/1986, 165, 168, 205). The "linguistic" structure of the Lacanian unconscious is involved with the pre-ontological split in the subject and an adjoining indestructible desire (ibid., 20-32). The central role of desire in Lacan's theory makes it diverge radically from any ego- and even self-oriented systems.

[48] Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* (CW 5, 112).

literature.[49] Diamond looks in the works of psychologists such as Freud and Jung, and especially those of the existential psychoanalyst Rollo May, to find models that would facilitate an understanding of bursts of rage, and violent action. Mythical models and concepts are of essential importance: "they speak to us not merely intellectually, but on several different levels of experience at once." For as Rollo May has argued: "Myths are narrative patterns that give significance to our existence."[50]

The Jungian concept (or archetype) of the *shadow* is an important step in understanding the demonic. It was Jung's way of dealing with the effects of sexual and aggressive impulses on the psyche. The "SHADOW," according to Jung, is "that hidden, repressed, for the most part inferior and guilt-laden personality whose ultimate ramifications reach back into the realm of our animal ancestors and so comprise the whole historical aspect of the unconscious."[51] The shadow consists of those parts of the self that are incompatible with the conscious personality; the libido is, nevertheless, in Jung's theory also the origin of creativity. The more the shadow is hidden from con-

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[49] The American context has witnessed a veritable revival of interest in the moral questions and themes in recent years. 'Evil' and 'demonic' are also going through a renaissance in this connection. A popular psychologist, M. Scott Peck, published his work, *People of the Lie*, in 1983. Peck is a Christian, and he argues that the concept of 'evil' should be rehabilitated in clinical terminology to describe people who have serious deficiencies in their capacity to experience empathy towards other people, and who also enjoy putting down others. Peck also values the Christian ritual of exorcism as a cure. (Peck 1983/1989.) Psychoanalyst Carl Goldberg, too, takes "senseless acts of violence" as his starting point in *Speaking With the Devil* (1996). He addresses case histories replete with religious imagery and language, but insists in interpreting them in terms of psychological "malevolence," instead of some metaphysical "evil." Goldberg follows Georges Bataille by maintaining that "malevolence is allowed to grow because it is fostered in a condition of intoxication or madness in which the selfish instincts of childhood predominate and are acted upon with no concern for their consequences to the self or others" (Goldberg 1996, 256.) But he also believes in the analysis of the Trappist writer Thomas Merton: "In actual fact, we are suffering more from the distortion and underdevelopment of our deepest human tendencies than from a superabundance of animal instincts" (ibid., 255). In *The Lucifer Principle* Howard Bloom (1995, 3) contends that "evil is woven into our most basic biological fabric." According to this view, the evolutionary battle of self-replicating systems manifests itself (inevitably) as "evil" acts and suffering at the level of human experience. An author and a professor of literature, Paul Oppenheimer agrees that 'evil' is returning to common use. His *Evil and the Demonic* (1996) is an exploration of the aesthetics of evil in cinema and literature, and also a poetic study of the imagery, atmosphere and language surrounding "monstrous behaviour." All of these authors offer interesting and colourful examples, but not particularly systematic views or theories of the demonic.

[50] May 1991, 15. – In his massive study, *Work on Myth* (Arbeit am Mythos, 1979), Hans Blumenberg develops a theory of myths starting from the lack of biologically adaptive instincts (in other words, his theory opposes the traditional view of the human being as a superior *animal symbolicum*); "By means of names, the identity of such factors [invoking indefinite anxiety] is demonstrated and made approachable, and an equivalent of dealings with them is generated. What has become identifiable by means of a name is raised out of its unfamiliarity by means of metaphor and is made accessible, in terms of its significance, by telling stories." (Blumenberg 1979/1985, 6.)

[51] Jung, *Aion* (1951; CW 9 [Part 2], 266). Emphasis in the original.

sciousness, the more it gives rise to different symptoms. In some cases, under the influence of alcohol, for example, this other personality might temporarily take hold of the individual – who subsequently becomes incapable of understanding his or her own behaviour.[52] The individuation process, as Jung sees it, consists of confrontation and communication between the dissociated parts of the self (for example, coming to terms with the female component in man, *anima*, or male in woman, *animus*); especially in the areas of creativity and satisfaction in life, contact with the "dark" part is important.[53]

In Jung's theory "demonism" denoted the state in which some inadequately integrated complexes take control of the total personality. Because Jung paid attention to the collective level, as well as to individual psychology, he identified a possibility for "collective psychoses of a religious or political nature" – something that the Nazi atrocities during the Second World War seemed to suggest.[54] Rollo May's theory of "the daimonic" has basically a more neutral approach to this problematic area.

> The daimonic is the urge in every being to affirm itself, assert itself, perpetuate and increase itself. The daimonic becomes evil when it usurps the total self without regard to the integration of that self, or the unique forms and desires of others and their need for integration. It then appears as excessive aggression, hostility, cruelty – the things about ourselves which horrify us most, and which we repress whenever we can or, more likely, project on others. But these are the reverse side of the same assertion which empowers our creativity. All life is a flux between these two aspects of the daimonic.[55]

The *daimon* was placed within various interpretative contexts in the previous chapter. It is important to remember here that daimon is a concept from a polytheistic culture, and that it antedates the development of moral or ontological dualism. The daimon suggests an unknown influence that might be benevolent or malevolent; in other words, it is a perfect myth for the ambivalent status of the unconscious. Diamond points out that the roots of modern psychotherapy are in demonology; even Hippocrates, the father of medicine, was originally trained as an exorcist, and, while launching modern psychology, Sigmund Freud exercised a lasting interest in the "demonological neuroses."[56] Discourses on the demonic and those on madness

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[52] Diamond 1996, 96-97.

[53] See Jung, "Concerning the Archetypes, With Special Reference to the Anima Concept" (CW 9 [Part I], 54-72), "Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation" (CW 9 [Part I], 275-89); Stevens 1982, 210-43.

[54] Jung, "The Definition of Demonism" (CW 18, 648).

[55] May 1969/1989, 123. – May's definition carries traces of the Christian discourse on demonic possession; cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, quoted above, page 29.

[56] Freud's interest in witchcraft, possession and similar phenomena may originate from his studies with Charcot. Freud translated Charcot's discussions of the hysterical nature

have an intimate relationship. The main difference here with the ancient beliefs is that in the modern attitude the conflicting influences of the unknown are perceived as "intruders from the unconscious," rather than as supernatural, exterior agents.[57] It is possible to see the demonic as a particular interpretation and modification of the daimonic, developed in a dualistic system of thought; for example, the demonic is situated as "low," as opposed to "high," and "evil" as opposed to "good." It is necessary at first, however, to approach the daimonic, in order to get a background for the ambiguities surrounding demons and the demonic.

The traditional Western imagery of the demonic is condensed in presentations of Hell, that "seething cauldron." Overt sexuality, bestiality and uninhibited sadistic fantasies are just some of the elements figuring in this rich and controversial heritage. In May's terms, the emphatically negative interpretation dominating our sense of "the demonic" tells us about our difficulties in dealing with the ambivalent daimonic. "The daimonic," according to May, "is *any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person*. Sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power are examples."[58] Such self-representations which do not acknowledge the central role of body and emotions, or different needs and cravings (in our thought as well as in life) are particularly threatened by these areas. "The daimonic can be either creative or destructive and is normally both," adds May.[59] In a confrontation with such a phenomenon, the construction of the self as rationalistic and fully autonomous, is questioned both in the areas of its sovereignty, and in its logic; any clear-cut boundaries do not fit any more, and the logic of "either/or" is replaced by mixed categories and "truths" that depend on acts of interpretation. The daimonic presents human thought, emotion and action as fundamentally interrelated.

The existentialism in May's and Diamond's theories manifests itself in the weight they put on *choice*. If daimonic forces are represented, and recognised, they come into awareness; in this way, it should be possible to stop between stimulus and response, and reach toward integrated decisions by preferring a particular response among several possible ones. Freedom is thus not the opposite of determinism. "Freedom is the individual's capacity *to know that he is the determined one*," writes May;[60] it is possible to approach relatively free choices only if one knows as much as possible about the different factors influencing oneself at the moment of decision. As I emphasised in the previous chapter, the daimonic traditionally signifies an experience of limited autonomy; the tragic and epic works of classical Greek poetry portray their characters as crediting their "irrational" actions to the

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of medieval "demono-manias," and referred to these areas in his writings and lectures. (See Freud 1990, 379-81 ["Editor's Note"]; also in SE 19, 69-71.)

[57] Diamond 1996, 60-65; see also Freud 1923/1978 (SE 19, 69-105).

[58] May 1969/1989, 123. Italics in the original.

[59] Ibid.

[60] May 1967, 175. Italics in the original.

influence of daimons.[61] Diamond emphasises that the "cathartic expression" of the daimonic area is not a sufficient reaction to it. The daimonic has to be integrated into one's sense of self, otherwise some powerful areas are always making war against the consciousness.[62] The techniques suggested by Diamond for this process are based on our capacity for dialogue, emotions, and figurative imagination or fantasy.

> One traditional Jungian method utilizing the "structure of consciousness" to dialogue directly with the daimonic is a form of waking fantasy known as "active imagination." In active imagination, the patient may at times be taught to allow images deriving from the daimonic to spontaneously well up into consciousness, permit them to speak, and actively respond to their compelling messages. This technique necessitates a solemn, respectful attitude toward the daimonic, one which takes the daimonic seriously, values it, and honors its voice. With this attitude, Jung's useful but demanding method of confronting the daimonic symbolically, in one's inner world of imagination – that is, conscientiously attending to and amplifying the *imagery* of the daimonic, as it appears in dreams, for example – can provide patients with an alternative to having to "act it out" in the outer world.[63]

Diamond believes that he finds this process illustrated in the *Oresteia* by Aeschylus. This series of plays has been described as a "rite of passage from savagery to civilization."[64] It is the only surviving classical Greek trilogy (it remains without the fourth part, the satyr play *Proteus*). The plot, of course, consists of the most famous murders in the bloody history of the house of Tantalus and Atreus, the killing of Agamemnon on his return from Troy by his wife Clytaemnestra, and the subsequent matricide by their son, Orestes. In the third play, *The Eumenides*, Orestes is being pursued by the Furies (*Erinyes*), spirits of vengeance; the play culminates in a trial where Orestes is acquitted and the Furies are transformed into the Eumenides, the Kindly Ones. Diamond focuses on the individual psyche of Orestes and advocates a psychological reading: "the Furies can be seen as the symbols of Orestes' horrible rage: first, fueling the vengeful, hot-headed murder of his hated mother; then, turning against himself in the form of guilt."[65]

The idea of Justice, *Dikê*, is central throughout the *Oresteia*, and the tragic conflict in it is rooted in the incompatibility of the individual conceptions of justice. In Nietzsche's words, "Whatever exists is both just and unjust, and equally justified in both."[66] Aeschylus depicts a process of mutual recognition and reconciliation; the "irrational" is brought into contact with conscious deliberation and the drive to maintain balance. The discussions

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[61] See above, pp. 24-26.
[62] Diamond 1996, 223.
[63] Ibid., 233-34.
[64] Fagles 1966/1979, 19.
[65] Diamond 1996, 239.
[66] Nietzsche 1872/1990, 65 [§ IX]. – The tragic conflict was theorised in analogous terms by Hegel in his *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Arts* (1835/1988, 1196).

between the leader of the Furies ("the daimonic emotions," in Diamond's reading), Apollo (the god representing consciousness),[67] and Athena (the goddess of good counsel and the personification of the *polis*)[68] dramatise this process. Apollo abjures the guilt of Orestes for matricide on the grounds that "The woman you call the mother of the child is not the parent, just a nurse to the seed [...]. The *man* is the source of life – the one who mounts."[69] The rationalisation is quite transparent, but it is offered as the mythical explanation needed to ward off the taboo of blood-pollution.[70] The Furies, however, go on crying for vengeance, unabated. The conclusion (here considerably abridged) is one of the pivotal moments in classic literature:

> FURIES:
> You, you younger gods! – you have ridden down
>   the ancient laws, wrenched them from my grasp –
> and I, robbed of my birthright, suffering, great with wrath,
>   I loose my poison over the soil, aiee! – [...]
>
> ATHENA:
>   Let me persuade you.
> The lethal spell of your voice, never cast it
> down on the land and blight its harvest home.
> Lull asleep that salt black wave of anger –
> awesome, proud with reverence, live with me.
> The land is rich, and more, when its first fruits,
> offered for heirs and the marriage rites, are yours
> to hold forever, you will praise my words. [...]
>
> LEADER:
>   Queen Athena,
> where is the home you say is mine to hold?
>
> ATHENA:
> Where all the pain and anguish end. Accept it.
>
> LEADER:
> And if I do, what honour waits for me?
>
> ATHENA:
> No house can thrive without you. [...]

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[67] Nietzsche makes this connection: "Apollo is [...] etymologically the 'lucent' one, the god of light [...]. Apollo himself may be regarded as the marvellous divine image of the *principium individuationis*, whose look and gestures radiate the full delight, wisdom, and beauty of 'illusion'." (Nietzsche 1872/1990, 21-22 [§ I].)

[68] E.R. Dodds refers to Athena's original function as the protectress of the Mycenaean kings (Dodds 1951/1973, 54).

[69] Aeschylus 1979, 260 [*Eum.* ll. 665-69].

[70] For an interesting view of how the idea of catharsis might be connected to the Greek blood-mystique, see McCumber 1988.

LEADER:
Your magic is working … I can feel the hate,
the fury slip away.[71]

Diamond points out how the daimonic is respected and valued in this drama. The Furies are invited to have a function in the community, and their destructive power is thereby dissipated. Diamond draws parallels between this symbolic unification and the psychological developments of his patients under therapy. He describes their dreams of demons, or of people metamorphosing into snakes, as expressions of their repressed, daimonic areas.[72] The connection between the creative process and the traditional imagery of evil is beautifully expressed in Aeschylus' drama. The Furies were ambiguous mythical figures, female, sometimes depicted as having their heads wreathed with serpents – in Pythia's lines: "Gorgons I'd call them; but then with Gorgons you'd see the grim, inhuman [...] *These* have no wings, I looked. But black they are, and so repulsive."[73] According to legends, the Furies sprang to life from the blood of Ouranos' genitals as they were thrown into the sea. They connect the regenerative powers of nature to death and the spirits of the avenging dead. The Furies contributed to the later ideas about demons who torment people for their sins, and thereby they gradually metamorphosed into personifications of evil.[74] However, as Robert Fagles notes, "the Furies are a paradox of violence and potential."[75] According to the theory of the daimonic, the demonic figures are related to the self and thus hide behind their "evil face" an original ambivalence – they are not parts of the conscious ego, but they represent powers of the self that have been repressed. A dialogue with these figures is thereby of dual character: it reveals hidden conflicts and brings them into awareness, having thus integrative potential. Diamond further illustrates this connection by giving brief biographical sketches of some twentieth century artists whose psychological conflicts have fuelled their creativity.[76]

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[71] Aeschylus 1979, 266-71 [*Eum*. ll. 792-95, 839-46, 900-3, 908-9].

[72] This dream-imagery is ancient. Dodds mentions that "we know from a treatise in the Hippocratic corpus (*Virg*. 1, VIII.466 L.), that mental disturbance often showed itself in dreams or visions of angry daemons" (Dodds 1951/1973, 57n70).

[73] Aeschylus 1979, 233 [*Eum*. ll. 50-55].

[74] Alan E. Bernstein notes how the "three personified avenging deities" of Plutarch were modelled on the Furies. Plutarch is concerned with the punishment and purification of evildoers in his *On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance*. He argues that the punishing figures and the afterlife (even metempsychosis) is needed to extirpate the evil. (Bernstein 1993, 73-83.) – Jeffrey Burton Russell bestows the (perhaps questionable) honour of "dividing the good gods from the evil demons and shifting the destructive qualities of the gods onto the demons" upon Plato's pupil, Xenocrates (Russell 1988/1993, 25).

[75] Fagles 1966/1979, 22.

[76] These include the film director Ingmar Bergman, who has told how he was psychiatrically hospitalised and put under heavy sedation (in 1949, at the age of thirty-one): "Slowly and imperceptibly, my anxiety disappeared – my life's most faithful companion, inherited from both my mother and my father, placed in the very centre of my identity,

OPPOSING READINGS OF THE CONFLICTING SELF

A different reading is put forward by Jean-Pierre Vernant, whose views on *daimon/ethos* conflict I introduced earlier. He thinks that the integration of the Erinyes does not entirely dispense with the contradictions inherent in the *Oresteia*. Rather, this just establishes an equilibrium, which is based on tensions. A vote was took to clear Orestes from charges, and Vernant emphasises that actually the majority of human judges voted against Orestes – the vote was tied, and only because Athena had cast her lot for Orestes was an absolving verdict reached.[77] In Vernant's reading, "tragic ambiguity is not resolved; ambivalence remains."[78] The mythical past and the young democratic society lay different claims to the fundamentals of the city; these tensions in basic values and conceptions of human subjectivity can be analysed in the dialogue between the chorus (an anonymous collective) and the individualised character (the tragic hero). As I have pointed out, ancient tragedy did not recognise the unity of a person in the modern sense; instead, as Aristotle wrote, the character must bend to the requirements of the action (*muthos*).[79] Vernant claims that the tragic effect of such plays as Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* is constituted by constant reference to two conflicting psychological models, "political psychology" and "mythical psychology." In this way, Vernant comes to his double reading of Heraclitus (discussed above).[80] The tragedy is not pointing towards true integration; instead, it is Vernant' strategy to focus on hidden tensions and to emphasise conflict as fundamental for tragedy and the human condition.

Suzanne Gearhart, in her *The Interrupted Dialectic* (1992), has explored the use of tragedy in theoretical discourse, and noted how criticism, philosophy and psychoanalysis have an ambivalent relationship to it. Many theories privilege tragic literature, find their theoretical insights confirmed by it, but, according to Gearhart, they are also limited by their particular interpretations of tragedy. In the case of Hegel, for example,

> philosophy itself can claim to be higher than tragedy only because it incorporates tragedy into itself, because its own truth has a tragic dimension. The dialectic of tragedy and philosophy is a process out of which philosophy itself emerges as absolute, because of the way it is able to recognize itself in tragedy and merge with it without losing its own identity.[81]

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my demon but also my friend spurring me on. Not only the torment, the anguish and the feeling of irreparable humiliation faded, but the driving force of my creativity was also eclipsed and fell away." (Bergman, *The Magic Lantern*; quoted in Diamond 1996, 295.)

[77] Aeschylus 1979, 264-65 [*Eum.*, ll. 750, 767].
[78] Vernant 1969, 108n2.
[79] Aristotle 1982, 51 [1450a-1450b]. See above, page 24.
[80] See above, page 26.
[81] Gearhart 1992, 2. – The "ancient quarrel" between poetry and philosophy has been discussed in Gould 1990 and Rosen 1988.

Particular theories incorporate readings of particular tragedies, depending on the manner of their relation to questions of (tragic) conflict and identification. Stephen Diamond, a psychotherapist, and Jean-Pierre Vernant, a scholar of literature and history, prefer different tragedies (the *Oresteia* and *Seven Against Thebes*, respectively) because they have different theoretical and practical interests invested in tragedy, and these plays sustain these differing interpretations. As Gearhart argues, tragedy and its interpretations are ambiguous in nature; living at the borderlines of identification and conflict, they do not properly fit inside any single identity or discipline.[82] According to her, tragedy is "less an entity that can be studied from differing theoretical perspectives – be they psychoanalytical, literary-critical, philosophical, or social – than a space in which these different perspectives meet and clash."[83]

The interpretation of the daimonic as an element of the self, that can and should be integrated into a larger conception of the human subjectivity, is at odds with the view that holds conflicting elements as fundamentally irresolvable. Following Gearhart's analysis, the basic attitudes behind these conflicting readings can be seen operating already in the discord apparent in Hegel's reaction to Kant. The status of subjectivity as a representation based on the categories of the mind is the problematical question this discussion addresses; in the chapter titled "On Applying the Categories to Objects of the Senses As Such" in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) Kant speaks about the "paradoxical" quality of the subject as an observer of itself – "how [the inner] sense exhibits to consciousness even ourselves only as we appear to ourselves, not as we are in ourselves."[84] Gearhart follows Gilles Deleuze in interpreting this as a "split within the Kantian subject," an alienation of the acting self from the "I" that is an object of representation for the consciousness.[85]

Hegel's readings of tragedy privilege Sophocles' *Antigone*; he thought that art in general effects reconciliation of the various oppositions of Kant's thought – "between subjective thinking and objective things, between the abstract universality and the sensuous individuality of the will," and between "the practical side of the spirit" as contrasted with "the theoretical"[86] – and *Antigone* was for Hegel the most successful work of art in this. The conflict between Creon and Antigone embodies for Hegel the conflict between the family and the state, woman and man, and, finally, between nature and reason. The third party in the conflict is represented by the chorus, which is the embodiment of the "ethical community" in the play. Hegel conceives the chorus as "the scene of the spirit"; it makes acceptable the tragic conflicts and even the destruction of individuals, because the chorus illustrates the

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[82] Gearhart 1992, 16.
[83] Ibid., 37.
[84] Kant 1781/1996, 192 [B 152-153].
[85] Gearhart 1992, 49.
[86] Hegel 1835/1988, 56.

preservation and continuity of the community.[87] In other words, the Hege-
lian reading of the chorus perceives it as a symbol of non-egocentric subjec-
tivity, in an analogous move to the construction of a Jungian or existential
concept of "self." In Gearhart's words, the Greek chorus, as interpreted by
Hegel, "encompasses the subject, providing a context for it that is both its
other and its own substance, and in this sense it prefigures philosophy in its
harmony and in its reconciliation of self and other."[88]

    Gearhart's criticism of Hegel is that he portrays the conflict between
Antigone and Creon as "ultimately superficial and resolvable."[89] Hegel is,
according to Gearhart and Jauss, "totally ignoring the boundaries separating
the ethical and the aesthetic."[90] This boundary actually proves to be a fluid
one in the case of self-representations. As Kant's paradoxical "objects," con-
ceptual and figurative representations of subjectivity are needed for estab-
lishing ethical relationships, but at the same time they are open to aesthetic
evaluation, as are all representations. One might agree with Stephen Frosh,
that "creating a self is like creating a work of art," but banishing the identity
into the area of the aesthetic just relocates the self and its conflicts, it does
not solve them. There are several possible and equally justified approaches
to the fundamental questions of the aesthetic; when philosophers and psy-
choanalysts write about the healing powers of the aesthetic, they are proba-
bly thinking about such precepts of the classical aesthetics as "unity," "har-
mony," or "consistency between content and form."[91] Different varieties of
modern or postmodern art and aesthetics also take issue with such areas that
are commonly perceived as disruptive, ugly, unsettling or destructive.
Adopting this kind of aesthetic sensitivity, one might claim with Gearhart
that the tragic conflict and heterogeneity in self-representations should
never be reduced, or "solved." There is, however, a danger that the irrecon-
cilable difference is thereby becoming a new, postmodern dogma. One point
where I agree with Gearhart is that the dialogue (or "dialectic") with trag-
edy, or other texts which confront us with the daimonic, cannot settle for
any one theory or perception of it, but has to continually move between
them.[92]

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[87] Ibid., 1211.

[88] Gearhart 1992, 59.

[89] Ibid., 57.

[90] Ibid., 59; Gearhart reformulates the criticism of H.R. Jauss, from his article "Dia-
logique et dialectique" (*Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 89 [April-June 1984]:2).

[91] This is certainly what Hegel valued most highly: "Because drama has been developed
into the most perfect totality of content and form, it must be regarded as the highest
stage of poetry and of art generally" (Hegel 1835/1988, 1158).

[92] Gearhart writes that "The question whether identification is an aesthetic or purely
psychological or social process is virtually as old as the *Poetics*, and if it has been debated
so long and so inconclusively, it can only be that identification, like tragedy, is all of
these things at the same time and never a process characteristic of or determined by one
of them alone" (Gearhart 1992, 16).

NIETZSCHE'S AESTHETICS AS A DISCOURSE ON THE DAIMONIC

Friedrich Nietzsche made the connection between the self, the aesthetic and the daimonic even more explicit when he celebrated the aesthetic transgression of individual existence in his *The Birth of Tragedy* (Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik, 1872). "Apollo" is for Nietzsche the moral deity, a symbol for self-control, and embodies, "in order to observe such self-control, a knowledge of the self." He is the "god of individuation and just boundaries."[93] The opposing force operating in Greek tragedy was, according to Nietzsche, Dionysus. The historical connection between the development of tragedy into an art form and Dionysian ritual was employed by Nietzsche to construct a daimonic reading of tragedy.[94] The violence and ecstasy of the worshippers of Dionysus stood in powerful contrast to the self-possessed and controlled civic ideal; the central ritual in the cult of Dionysus (*sparagmos*) was the tearing apart of a live animal, eating its flesh and drinking its blood. The ritual re-enacts the mystery associated with this god: Dionysus was, according to a myth, killed by the Titans, who tore him apart and ate some of the pieces. Some parts of the god were saved and Dionysus was believed to arise from the dead each year in Delphi. As a symbol of death, disintegration and rebirth, Dionysus was an important fertility god who had the demi-human Pan and satyrs as his companions. Nietzsche interpreted the attraction of the Dionysian as a transgression beyond the "limits and moderations" of an individual. This register of animalistic violence, suffering and ecstasy offers an alternative way to approach existence; not in "Apollonian" images or concepts of clear-cut identities, but by acting out the conflicting or unifying aspects of it.[95] "*Excess* revealed itself as truth. Contradiction, the bliss born of pain, spoke from the very heart of nature."[96] Nietzsche is here inquiring into the metaphysical assumptions inherent in our conception of our subjectivity.

> [...] I feel myself impelled to the metaphysical assumption that the truly existent primal unity, eternally suffering and contradictory, also needs the rapturous vision, the pleasurable illusion, for its continuous redemption. And we, completely wrapped up in this illusion and composed of it, are

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[93] Nietzsche 1872/1990, 34, 65 [§§ IV, IX]. Francis Golffing's translation. I have mainly used here Walter Kaufmann's version, which is scholarly, but often stylistically inferior to that of Golffing.

[94] Nietzsche is building largely on the information in Aristotle's *Poetics*: that tragedy developed from the "impromptus by the leaders of the dithyrambic chorus," and that it was originally "satyric" (*satyrikon*: designed to be danced by a chorus of satyrs; Aristotle 1982, 48-49 [1449a10-11, 23]). Euripides' *Bacchae* is a dramatisation of the confrontation between the Attic society and the arrival of the Dionysian cult. The cult was finally acknowledged, and incorporated in the existing religious institution (the Dionysian rituals ruled the sacred religious centre of Delphi during the winter months, until the return of Apollo in the spring; see Silk - Stern 1981, 179).

[95] Kaufmann translates this term as "Apollinian." I follow here Young (1992/1996, 32-5).

[96] Nietzsche 1872/1967, 46-47 [§ IV]. Trans. Walter Kaufmann.

compelled to consider this illusion as the truly nonexistent – i.e., as a per-
petual becoming in time, space, and causality – in other words, as empirical
reality. If, for the moment, we do not consider the question of our own
"reality," if we conceive of our empirical existence, and of that of the
world in general, as a continuously manifested representation of the primal
unity, we shall then have to look upon the dream as a *mere appearance of
mere appearance*, hence as a still higher appeasement of the primordial de-
sire for mere appearance.[97]

In his study, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art* (1992), Julian Young points
out that the metaphysical theory in *The Birth of Tragedy* comes from Arthur
Schopenhauer. *The World as Will and Representation* (1819) takes Kant's
categories of thought as a starting point, but posits the "will" as a reality
evidenced by the painful striving in nature and human life. Nature is filled
with *bellum omnium contra omnes* (war, all against all, in Hobbes's phrase),
and Schopenhauer was ready to describe this ultimate reality in demonic,
rather than divine terms.[98] Nietzsche pays special attention to the demonic
in his work, but his attitude is more sympathetic to the ambivalence of the
Greek daimonic, than towards the Schopenhauerian perception of the nature
as evil or morally repugnant. Later, as Nietzsche had made his differences to
his former idol clear, he commented that Schopenhauer "remained entangled
in the moral-Christian ideal," seeing the will (and, thereby, nature or "in-
itself of things") as "bad, stupid, and absolutely reprehensible."[99] The Kant-
ian "disinterested" contemplation in an aesthetic experience was for
Schopenhauer as well an important phenomenon; in this experience we
"lose" ourselves, and "we are no longer able to separate the perceiver from
the perception but the two have become one since the entire consciousness
is filled and occupied by a single image of perception."[100] Nietzsche retained
the idea of the integrative function in art, but the "ugliness and disharmony"
of tragic myth, the violence and ecstasy, provided him with a more accurate
aesthetics than the idea of disinterested contemplation. Nietzsche was not
justifying any detached aestheticism as he wrote that "it is only as an *aes-
thetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*";[101] the
Dionysian rite was for Nietzsche an alternative response to the problem of
the self – the model of the ego as an intellectual observer is replaced by a
dynamic fusion at the ecstatic moment of action.

In song and dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher commu-
nity; he has forgotten how to walk and speak and is on the way toward fly-

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[97] Ibid., 45 [§ IV].
[98] Schopenhauer (1819/1969, 275-76) relates how the "wisest of all mythologies," the
Indian, expresses the power of nature in the figure of Shiva, and in his opposed attributes
(the necklace of skulls, and the lingam, the stylised phallus). See also Schopenhauer
1819/1977, 349 and the interpretation by Young (1992/1996, 7).
[99] Nietzsche 1968, 521 [§1005].
[100] Schopenhauer 1819/1977, 118-19; translation by Young (1992/1996, 12).
[101] Nietzsche 1872/1967, 52 [§ V]. Italics in the original.

ing into the air, dancing. His very gestures express enchantment. Just as the animals now talk, and the earth yields milk and honey, supernatural sounds emanate from him, too: he feels himself a god, he himself now walks about enchanted, in ecstasy, like the gods he saw walking in his dreams. He is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art […].[102]

The inversion of the traditional dualism between the subject and object signals also other transgressive features, that Nietzsche is able to perceive in tragedy and the daimonic. He pays special attention to the connection of tragedy to the satyric, and claims that "the satyr, the fictitious natural being, bears the same relation to the man of culture that Dionysian music bears to civilization."[103] Nietzsche's aesthetic interest was directed towards the tension between harmony and dissonance, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, but he emphasises the significance of the discordant, often ignored by classical scholars. The principal target of Nietzsche's attack was not the harmonious Apollonian, but what he called the "demon of Socrates" – the intellectual animosity towards the mythical "truths." The first version of the study was titled "Socrates and Instinct"[104] (in 1870), and Nietzsche wrote that tragedy was destroyed by the conflict between the Dionysian spirit and the Socratic version of rationality.

> Dionysus had already been scared from the tragic stage, by a demonic power speaking through Euripides. Even Euripides was, in a sense, only a mask: the deity that spoke through him was neither Dionysus nor Apollo, but an altogether newborn demon [Dämon], called *Socrates*.[105]

Nietzsche's theory is nowhere presented clearly and unambiguously, but he actually opposed the figure of Socrates on the grounds of a daimonic view of selfhood. As Plato writes in the *Apology*, Socrates was notorious for questioning the wisdom of his contemporaries; when he examined the poets, for example, he concluded that "it was not wisdom that enabled them to write their poetry, but a kind of instinct or inspiration, such as you find in seers and prophets who deliver all their sublime messages without knowing in the least what they mean."[106] Socrates also spoke about his *daimonion*, the inner voice which only dissuaded and warned him from making mistakes; Nietzsche's alternative figure to this "perfect non-mystic" was the satyr, and daimonic selfhood. "The satyr, as the Dionysiac chorist, dwells in a reality sanctioned by myth and ritual," Nietzsche writes.[107] Satyrs are creatures of myths, and, according to Nietzsche, myth is necessary for our existence: "The images of the myth have to be the unnoticed omnipresent demonic guardians, under whose care the young soul grows to maturity and whose

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[102] Ibid., 37 [§ I].
[103] Ibid., 59 [§ VII].
[104] Silk - Stern 1981, 43.
[105] Nietzsche 1872/1967, 82 [§ XII].
[106] Plato 1954/1969, 51 [21b-22e].
[107] Nietzsche 1872/1990, 50 [§ VII]. Here in Golffing's translation.

"The Transfiguration" by Raphael (Vatican Museums).

signs help the man to interpret his life and struggles."[108] There can be no such separation of the rational self from the "errors" of myths and instincts as the Socratic scepticism and Platonic idealism seem to suggest: Nietzsche adopts the figure of satyr to point out the borderline character of selfhood. Half-divine, having also the animal half, this "daimon" of Nietzsche powerfully illustrates those ambiguous aspects of subjectivity that are not in consciousness.

Nietzsche's aim was to consider aesthetics seriously – as the "truly metaphysical activity," he claimed in his original preface.[109] He criticises Schopenhauer, whose metaphysics he otherwise endorses, as sticking with the distinction between subjective and objective in the area of aesthetics;

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[108] Nietzsche 1872/1967, 135 [§ XXIII]. (Trans. Kaufmann.)
[109] Ibid., 31.

Nietzsche claims that we are not "the true authors of this art world."[110] The illusory character of our conception of selfhood is broken down in Dionysian rapture, but art is nevertheless "not merely imitation of the reality of nature but rather a metaphysical supplement of the reality of nature."[111] The myths and illusions of identity are necessary for life, but Dionysian art breaks down these structures producing painful pleasure that Nietzsche likens to that of musical dissonance; the "daimonic truth" reveals our selves as transitory fictions, but simultaneously offers powerful "metaphysical comfort" (*Metaphysischer Trost*).[112] The painful dissolution makes us "look into the terrors of the individual existence," but our simultaneous identification with the chorus as well as the tragic heroes makes us part of the daimonic life force – "In spite of fear and pity, we are the happy living beings, not as individuals, but as the *one* living being, with whose creative joy we are knitted."[113]

Nietzsche illustrates this ambivalent horror with the ancient legend of King Midas hunting and catching the wise Silenus, a companion of Dionysus (an old man with a horse's ears, often identified with satyrs). The king asked him what was man's greatest good, but Silenus was reluctant to answer. As Midas forced him, the "daemon" says (according to Nietzsche): "Ephemeral wretch, begotten by accident and toil, why do you force me to tell you what it would be your greatest boon not to hear? What would be best for you is quite beyond your reach: not to have been born, not to *be*, to be *nothing*. But the second best is to die soon."[114] Another example, this time from the visual arts, is "The Transfiguration" by Raphael (1517, a panel in the Vatican museums). This dramatic painting divides into two, powerfully conflicting and contrasting realms. The upper part of the painting depicts the ascending figure of Christ, bathing in transcendental light as a soothing centre of attention. The lower area is the domain of earthly existence, filled with the wild gestures of the disciples, unable to help the possessed boy.[115] The possessed boy and the figure of Christ reflect on the redemptive role of illusion: it is necessary to transcend chaos and pain into an illusion of "Oneness." Both the Apollonian (conceptual, conscious) and Dionysian (the "outside" of conceptual and conscious) areas need to be recognised, but the latter is

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[110] Ibid., 52 [§ V]. (Golffing translates this as "the true originators of the art realm" [Nietzsche 1872/1990, 41].)

[111] Ibid., 140 [§ XXIV].

[112] Ibid., 59 [§ VII], 108-9 [§ XVII]; cf. Silk - Stern 1981, 191. – The double movement (the simultaneous affirmation of logical opposites) at the epistemological, ontological and moral levels of Nietzsche's theory make it dynamic and complex. David Lenson (1987, 111) characterises *The Birth of Tragedy* as a "revolutionary" work that aims at changing consciousness itself. Alternatively, one might rather say that it changes the way the status of consciousness is conceptualised.

[113] Ibid., 104-5 [§ XVII].

[114] Golffing's translation; Nietzsche 1872/1990, 29 [§ III]. Cf. Nietzsche 1872/1967, 42.

[115] The story in question is narrated in its different versions in Mt. 17:14-20; Mk. 9:14-29; Lk. 9:37-43.

implicitly a more comprehensive and important area for Nietzsche – he perceives in the pain and the demonic possession a way to experience the "sole ground of the world: the 'mere appearance' here is the reflection of eternal contradiction, the father of things."[116]

Nietzsche's reading of the painful and conflicting situation depicted in Raphael's painting differs from the religious interpretation: the figure of Christ embodies one solution, but the main thrust of Nietzsche's thinking goes in the opposite direction. The colliding multitudes of the "low" alternative have a theoretical and existential priority. The "ground of being" connects Nietzsche's reading to the German metaphysical tradition, going at least back into Jacob Böhme (1575-1624), named as "the father of German philosophy" by Hegel.[117] The philosophical-religious dialectic of Böhme was systematised by Hegel's philosophy; the tension between divine *Ungrund* (Abyss) and *Urgrund* (Primal Foundation) leads into Attraction, Diffusion, and (as their synthesis) to the Agony. Dialectical thinking is a conceptual means to capture the dynamic character of nature: as Böhme wrote, of how "life and death, goodness and evil are at once in each thing."[118] This metaphysical theory posits the conflict in the divine ground of being itself – the existence of "evil" is explained as the suffering of God as he yearns for self-realisation.[119] Nature was even more emphatically amoral for Nietzsche, and he also differed from Böhme and Hegel in the question of eventual synthesis, or reconciliation of the primary conflict. It is the paramount Socratic illusion for Nietzsche that thought, "using the thread of logic," could correct the "abysses of being."[120] *The Birth of Tragedy* ends in an exhortation to sacrifice in the "temple of both deities"; the therapeutic illusion (the Apollonian) and the tension, madness and suffering (the Dionysian) are two necessary moments in Nietzsche's daimonic reading.[121] Both must be confronted and recognised without reducing either into the other. These two alternatives of reading are central also in the next chapter, that proceeds to study the demonic and subjectivity in the context of theoretical explorations of 'textuality.'

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[116] Nietzsche 1872/1967, 45 [§ IV].

[117] Nugent 1983, 166.

[118] Böhme, *Hohe und tiefe Gründe von dem Dreyfachen Leben des Menchen* (Amsterdam, 1682); quoted in Carus 1900/1996, 156.

[119] Ibid., 153. – For Böhme's views on the devil and the authorship, see page 280n98.

[120] Nietzsche 1872/1967, 95 [§ XV].

[121] Ibid., 144 [§ XXV].

3. Unravelling the Demonic Text

> The ultimate meaning of desire is death but death is not the novel's ultimate meaning. The demons like raving madmen throw themselves into the sea and perish. But the patient is cured.
>
> – René Girard[1]

TWO KINDS OF TEXTUALITY

As Owen Miller has noted, "a powerful link exists between theories of the self and theories of the text."[2] The criticism of the "life and works" of notable authors has been displaced by increasingly theoretical interest in the more general phenomenon of 'textuality.' Simultaneously the traditional questions pertaining to subjectivity, social or historical context have been opened for reformulation. Michel Foucault's essay "What Is an Author?" is a famous example. It addresses the question of subjectivity in writing from a postmodern theoretical perspective; the idea of the text as an "expression" of an author's thoughts has been superseded by the autonomous play of textuality. "Referring only to itself, but without being restricted to the confines of its interiority, writing is identified with its own unfolded exteriority," Foucault writes in his characteristic intricacy.[3] He also comments that the contemporary inclination towards indifference to authorship is a subversion of ancient tradition – instead of immortalising the subject, writing is now announcing the author's disappearance and death. Nevertheless, the effects of authorship, as Foucault analysed them in his article, are very much operating in commercial, legal and intellectual reality. An author's name is a customary point of departure: it presents ways to define, group together, differentiate or contrast texts to each other. Authorship is also a historical institution working within a particular discourse. The principles of identifying the "author-function" in a discourse have remained quite similar from the time of Saint Jerome (c. 347-420 C.E.), whom Foucault reads as proposing four principles to identify a single author with his proper corpus. Firstly, author equals a constant level of value (an inferior work ought to be excluded from the corpus); secondly, the author is also a field of conceptual coherence (contradictory texts should be taken out); thirdly, this figure also embodies stylistic unity (those works that have expressions not typical of the

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[1] Girard 1961/1988, 290.
[2] Valdés - Miller 1985, xiii ("Preface").
[3] Foucault 1969/1989, 142.

other works, are not works of this author); and fourthly, he is a definite, historical figure (if a passage mentions events that happened after the author's death, it should be regarded as an interpolated text).[4] Foucault makes the following summary of his analysis:

> (1) [T]he author-function is linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses; (2) it does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilization; (3) it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a discourse to its producer, but rather by a series of specific and complex operations; (4) it does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects – positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals.[5]

The "plurality of self" invoked by a text is one of the features of written discourse that theories of textuality confront and radicalise – even to the point of referring to the demonic in textuality. Already in 1972 Foucault perceived some dangers inherent in the "textualisation" of discursive practises. The immediate context was his debate with Jacques Derrida on the status of reason and unreason, specifically in Descartes's *Meditations* (1641). In his thesis, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (1961), Foucault had illustrated the "exclusion" of madness, and its institution as "mental illness," with a reference to Descartes. As Descartes establishes the equation *I think, therefore I exist* ("Cogito, ergo sum"), he considers different possibilities for error in his reasoning: sensory defects, delusions, dreams, even the artifices of a powerful demon. Foucault paid special attention to how Descartes dismisses the possibility of madness from his meditation: "But these are madmen [*amentes*, in the original Latin], and I would not be less extravagant [*demens*] if I were to follow their example."[6] It is impossible, Foucault writes, to be insane and simultaneously a subject of thinking – the madman can only be an object.[7] Five years later, Foucault developed this theme in *The Order of Things* (Les Mots et les choses, 1966):

> For can I, in fact, say that I am this language I speak, into which my thought insinuates itself to the point of finding in it the system of all its own possibilities, yet which exists only in the weight of sedimentations my thought will never be capable of actualizing altogether? […] I can say, equally well, that I am and that I am not all this; the *cogito* does not lead to an affirmation of being, but it does lead to a whole series of questions concerned with being: What must I be, I who think and who am my thought,

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[4] Ibid., 151.

[5] Ibid., 153.

[6] Descartes 1637/1985, 96.

[7] "Ce n'est pas la permanence d'une vérité qui garantit la pensée contre la folie, comme elle lui permettait de se déprendre d'une erreur ou d'émerger d'un songe; c'est une impossibilité d'être fou, essentielle non à l'objet de la pensée, mais au sujet qui pense" (Foucault 1961, 55).

in order to be what I do not think, in order for my thought to be what I am not?[8]

The modern self, or subject, becomes a recent invention under this line of enquiry; "man" becomes fiction rather than a neutral nomination of a fact. Equally, the author is an "ideological product" for Foucault, and he envisions a future where the author-function disappears and the discourses will develop in the "anonymity of a murmur."[9] This dissolution of a unified speaking subject and its replacement by the plurality of anonymous voices presents us with some of the central concerns of post-structuralism, but Foucault never developed a separate theory of textuality. His project is based on the heterogeneity and ambiguity of power, on the multiplicity of forces that make it necessary for thought to address the "unthought" as its foundation. The debate with Derrida clashed over the status of language; whereas Foucault is oriented towards the social and political realities that multiply languages, and exclude some areas of subjectivity and some people from the realm of discursive power, Derrida considers language and thought as inseparably intertwined. "By its essence, the sentence is normal," Derrida argues: "if discourse and philosophical communication (that is, language itself) are to have an intelligible meaning, that is to say, if they are to conform in their essence and vocation as discourse, they must simultaneously in fact and in principle escape madness."[10] Foucault maintains that it is possible to be insane and still have access to language (his literary examples include Hölderlin, Nerval, Nietzsche and Artaud).[11] Instead of some (transcendental) essence of discourse and thought, Foucault is interested in actual discursive heterogeneity and multiplicity, and in the monological attempts to reduce the subject of enunciation into some essence of rationality.[12] Derrida, in Foucault's view, was continuing Descartes's work in abstracting subjectivity from historical or corporeal determinants, and was only interested in protecting the scholarly and limitless "sovereignty which allows it [the master's voice] to restate the text indefinitely."[13] The subject of this intellectual

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[8] Foucault 1966/1989, 324-25.

[9] Foucault 1969/1989, 159-60.

[10] Derrida, "Cogito and the History of Madness" (1968/1978, 53-4).

[11] Foucault 1988, 278.

[12] "Au milieu du monde serein de la maladie mentale, l'homme moderne ne communique plus avec le fou […]. Le langage de la psychiatrie, qui est monologue de la raison *sur* la folie, n'a pu s'établir que sur un tel silence." (Foucault 1961, II.)

[13] Foucault, "Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu" (1972; Foucault 1979, 27; 1961/1979, 602). – The dispute has extended in its numerous commentaries. Bernard Flynn (1989) favours Derrida's view and maintains that Foucault has mixed something that he thought was a historical process with the general principle at work in language as such (the exclusion of unreason). John Frow (1986, 213) characterises the confrontation as a clash between a more complex and more straightforward views on textuality; he claims that Derrida's way of reading is no more "natural" or right than Foucault's, but he admonishes Foucault for confusing the discursive subject with the empirical, speaking subjects. Robert D'Amico (1984) has seen in this encounter a show-down between historicism and hermeneutics. Shoshana Felman (1978/1985, 54) is perhaps most perceptive in her interpretation that

discourse is established in Descartes's *Meditations* through an exercise of thought against an imaginary, deceptive "evil spirit" (*genium malignum*) – the possibility for bodily or "irrational" elements in the foundation of self-hood are rejected. As Descartes summarises his thought in the *Discourse on Method*:

> I thereby concluded that I was a substance, of which the whole essence or nature consists in thinking, and which, in order to exist, needs no place and depends on no material thing; so that this 'I', that is to say, the mind, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body, and even that it is easier to know than the body, and moreover, that even if the body were not, it would not cease to be all that it is.[14]

Foucault interpreted the author as a function of literary discourse – an "author-function" – and, similarly, he reads philosophical discourse as a technique that produces a certain kind of subject. He points out that Descartes's title is "Meditations," and this means not just a simple demonstration of an argument. Meditation aims at modifying the enunciating subject; typically a meditation is a spiritual exercise that alters the state of subject from darkness to light, from impurity to purity, from the clutches of passions to detachment, and from uncertainty to wisdom and tranquillity. "In meditation, the subject is ceaselessly altered by his own movement; his discourse provokes effects within which he is caught; it exposes him to risks, makes him pass through trials or temptations, produces states in him, and confers on him a status of qualification which he did not hold at the initial moment."[15] Text, in other words, may have a dimension as a "technique of the self": it can produce effects on the subject, and reading should pay careful attention to such "subject-effects" – ways in which the state of subject is constructed and mediated to the reader.

Demonic possession is perhaps the most traditional way of explaining madness; the confused and deranged state of madness is made comprehensible and accessible by reference to demons. It is interesting to note how Foucault and Derrida relate to the "evil spirit" and madness in Descartes's discourse. Their readings present us with two different views of textuality and the demonic. The debate on "madness" and "demon" marks the place "beyond language" and the relation of theory to this area. In an interview in the 1980s, when questioned about his relation to his Jewish heritage, to philosophy and ethics, Derrida emphasised that "[d]econstruction is always deeply concerned with the 'other' of language."[16] The manner of engaging with this

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both positions, those of Foucault *and* Derrida, are paradoxical, and therefore "philosophically untenable," but that they nevertheless illustrate the position of a subject contradicted by its own language, constantly overstepping itself, passing out into the other. "Perhaps the madness of philosophy and the philosophy of madness are, after all, each but the figure of the other?"

[14] Descartes 1637/1985, 54.

[15] Foucault, "Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu" (1972; Foucault 1979, 19; 1961/1979, 593).

[16] Derrida 1984, 123.

otherness, however, has been different from Foucault's. Roy Boyne, in his *Foucault and Derrida: The Other Side of Reason* (1990) emphasises this difference by claiming that the relationship to otherness is to the Foucault of *Folie et déraison* the one of a mystic, and to Derrida that of a tragedian.[17] When Foucault wrote his history of madness, he claimed that he was not writing a history of psychiatry (a machinery of appropriation and subordination rather than treatment for Foucault), but of "madness itself" before being captured by knowledge.[18] He is not writing a history of the language of psychiatry (or, "reason"), but an "archaeology of the silence" as madness is denied the right to speak.[19]

Derrida tackles the "madness" of this project, and asks whether an "archaeology" of silence would not still be within an order of reason; if one starts to speak of silence, it is not so silent any more. "[E]verything transpires as if Foucault *knew* what 'madness' means. Everything transpires as if, in a continuous and underlying way, an assured and rigorous precomprehension of the concept of madness, or at least of its nominal definition, were possible and acquired."[20] For Derrida, this means that if Foucault has an idea of madness, then it is also a linguistic idea, all through, and embedded in the system of thought he simultaneously aims to oppose. Derrida interprets our being as embedded in and constituted by our system of signs; this holds true, for example, for the case of memory. Derrida writes in "Plato's Pharmacy" that "Memory always therefore already [a favourite expression of Derrida] needs signs in order to recall the non-present, with which it is necessarily in relation. […] But what Plato *dreams* of is a memory with no sign. That is, with no supplement."[21] The endless lack and line of substitutes for the object of desire in Lacanian theory is matched by Derrida's insistence on the deferral and differing (*differance*) of any fullness of presence, or meaning, and on "supplementarity" as inseparably intertwined in our being.[22] In *Of Grammatology* (De la Grammatologie, 1967) he expands his analysis of this process in Rousseau's *Confessions* as a theory of reading a text:

> No model of reading seems to me at the moment ready to measure up to this text – which I would like to read as a *text* and not as a document. Measure up to it fully and rigorously, that is, beyond what already makes the text most legible, and more legible than has been so far thought. My only ambition will be to draw out of it a signification which that presumed

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[17] Boyne 1990, 54.

[18] Foucault 1961, vii.

[19] Ibid., ii.

[20] Derrida 1968/1978, 41.

[21] Derrida 1972/1981, 109.

[22] Jonathan Culler has summarised Derrida's discussion of supplementary logic in Rousseau ("nature" as supplemented by "education," or culture): "The logic of supplementarity […] makes nature the prior term, a plenitude which was there at the start, but reveals an inherent lack or absence within it and makes education something external and extra but also an essential condition of that which it supplements." (Culler, "Jacques Derrida"; in Sturrock 1979/1992, 168).

future reading will not be able to dispense with [*faire économie*]; the economy of a written text, circulating through other texts, leading back to it constantly, conforming to the element of language and to its regulated functioning. For example, what unites the word "supplement" to its concept was not invented by Rousseau and the originality of its functioning is neither fully mastered by Rousseau nor simply imposed by history of the language. To speak of the writing of Rousseau is to try to recognize what escapes these categories of passivity and activity, blindness and responsibility. And one cannot abstract from the written text to rush to the signified it *would mean*, since the signified is here the text itself. It is so little a matter of looking for a *truth signified* by these writings (metaphysical and psychological truth: Jean-Jacque's life behind his work) that if the texts that interest us *mean* something, it is the engagement and the appurtenance that encompass existence and writing in the same *tissue*, the same *text*. The same is here called supplement, another name for differance.[23]

The famous dictum from this study – *il n'y a pas de hors-texte* [there is nothing outside of the text, or, no outside-text][24] – should be understood in the particular sense Derrida gives to "text," and writing in general. It is a structure always marked by a trace of the other, and he stresses that "[w]riting can never be thought under the category of the subject"[25] – the signified should not be searched beyond textuality, as the "text itself" is its own meaning. This is a position relating to metaphysics: Derrida writes in "The Supplement to Copula" that "'Being' presents itself in language precisely as that which is beyond what would be only the inside ('subjective,' 'empirical' in the anachronistic sense of these words) of a language."[26] Foucault's attempt to voice the silence is for Derrida an impossible claim on the basis of a Heideggerian interpretation of Being.[27] "Language's final protective barrier against madness is the meaning of Being," Derrida claims;[28] everything transpires here as if Derrida knew the meaning of Being. Indeed, he claims that this "transcendental word" is precomprehended in all languages, and that even if this meaning is not tied to a particular word or to a particular system of language, it is nevertheless tied to "the possibility of the word in general."[29]

Boyne writes that where Derrida thinks there is no "outside-text," Foucault would rather claim that there is no outside of history.[30] The decon-

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[23] Derrida 1967/1976, 149-50.

[24] Ibid., 158.

[25] Ibid., 68.

[26] Derrida 1972/1989, 90.

[27] "If we point out that […] Heidegger distinguishes the meaning of 'being' from the word 'being' and from the concept of 'being,' this is the same as saying that for Heidegger the condition for a language's being a language is no longer the presence within it of the word or the concept (*signified*) 'being,' but rather the presence of another concept that remains to be defined." (Ibid., 112.)

[28] Derrida 1968/1978, 309n22.

[29] Derrida 1967/1976, 20-21.

[30] Boyne 1990, 86.

struction of Western metaphysics is a persistent inquiry into our "belong-ing" to the language of metaphysics, and an attempt to discover the "non-place" which would be the 'other' of philosophy.[31] In this sense the relation-ship of deconstruction to philosophy is complex and ambivalent. On one hand, Derrida writes derisively about all the "empiricist" or "non-philosophical motifs" that have constantly tormented philosophy, and "have had nothing but the inevitable weakness of being produced in the field of philosophy [...]."[32] On the other, Derrida grants a special role to the "de-monic hyperbole" (*daimonias hyperboles*); to the constant attempt of phi-losophy to break its own boundaries, the limits of reason. "The historicity proper to philosophy is located and constituted in the transition, the dia-logue between hyperbole [the project of exceeding every finite and deter-mined totality] and the finite structure [...]."[33] The basic difference between the readings of Derrida and Foucault on Descartes and madness reverts to language as related to transcendent Being, or language as related to particu-lar, historical and imperfect, corporeal beings. Derrida's starting point is that Descartes should be read beginning from "the internal and autonomous analysis of the philosophical content of philosophical discourse."[34] Foucault gives no such privileges of autonomy to philosophy, but points out that the concepts that Descartes is using have different (medical, juridical, political) histories, and that the analysis should not disconnect the text from this his-tory and the ideology it furthers.

Dislocation and disruption of established, ideological conceptions and hierarchies is as important for Derrida as it is for Foucault. It is Derrida's emphasis on the primary status of writing in general that makes language in-herently "demonic" for him, instead of making him address some resolvable conflict external to language, one that could be corrected by proper use of it. The theme of supplementarity leads Derrida to look into "the being-chain of a textual chain, the structure of substitution, the articulation of desire and language," into "the abyss," the indefinite multiplication of representation.[35] Therefore he is very interested in how those who have thought and written about language have identified "good" and "evil" aspects in the writing; "the good and natural is the divine inscription in the heart and the soul; the per-verse and artful is technique, exiled in the exteriority of the body."[36] Derrida is principally analysing language in a fallen world: there is only "fallen writ-ing," even if our communication is directed towards the dream of "divine in-scription." The demonic hyperbole of Descartes – the hypothesis of an evil demon counterfeiting everything we know and take for granted – is for Der-

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[31] Derrida 1984, 111-12.
[32] Derrida 1967/1976, 19. Cf. Derrida in the context of Levinas: "[...] *empirism*, for the latter, at bottom, has ever committed but one fault: the fault of presenting itself as philosophy" (1968/1978, 151).
[33] Derrida 1968/1978, 60.
[34] Ibid., 44.
[35] Derrida 1967/1976, 163.
[36] Ibid., 17.

rida an essential philosophical activity: an attempt to think beyond the limits of reason; but, because this is still *thinking*, it is trapped within the bounds of language and reason. The attempt to confront otherness takes a demonic form for Derrida; the project of exceeding the "totality" is possible only in the direction of "infinity or nothingness." Within language and reason we can attempt to think their other – and this is possible only with a "precomprehension of the infinite and undetermined totality" (that can be paralleled with the precomprehension of "madness" that Derrida identified in Foucault's project). Derrida writes:

> This is why, by virtue of this margin of the possible, the principled, and the meaningful, which exceeds all that is real, factual and existent, this project is mad, and acknowledges madness as its liberty and its very possibility. This is why it is not human, in the sense of anthropological factuality, but is rather metaphysical and demonic: it first awakens to itself in its war with the demon, the evil genius of nonmeaning, by pitting itself against the strength of the evil genius, and by resisting him through reduction of the natural man within itself. In this sense, nothing is less reassuring than the Cogito at its proper and inaugural moment.[37]

The demonic nonmeaning is, according to the wider implications of Derrida's theory, lurking everywhere, as our "onto-theological" certainty is threatened by the effects of differance. The difference between "the appearing and the appearance," anticipates all the other differences: something cannot be lived, experienced, and simultaneously understood (represented to consciousness), without the intrusion of a fundamental fracture or spacing, which opens the figurative gates of hell. "Arche-writing as spacing cannot occur as such within the phenomenological experience of a *presence*. It marks *the dead time* within the presence of the living present, within the general form of all presence."[38] So far as the "critique of logocentrism is above all else the search for the 'other' and the 'other of language,'"[39] it is also an engagement with the demonic aspects of language, as interpreted under the general heading of "writing" or "textuality."

TWO STRATEGIES OF READING

Ernest Gellner, a British philosopher, noted in the 1950s how modern philosophy has always found new ways to address the "demon" invoked by Descartes. This demon signifies a radical doubt and mistrust towards everything outside of thinking; 'history' and 'language' are examples of such profoundly doubtful areas – they create illusory "realities" that have to be exposed, controlled and exorcised by philosophical thought.[40] In literary stud-

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[37] Derrida 1968/1978, 56.
[38] Derrida 1967/1976, 68.
[39] Derrida 1984, 123.
[40] Gellner 1974, 3-7.

ies, Constantin-George Sandulescu has proposed a theory of avant-garde texts as "devil's language": modern literature does not aim at (mimetically) representing reality, or at (neutrally) communicating some idea from sender to receiver. Instead, it revels in "communicative sin," and builds texts that are anti-mimetic, anti-communicative, and often profoundly idiosyncratic in their use of language. Sandulescu's archetypal example is Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), which Samuel Beckett characterised by saying: "It is not about something. It is that something itself."[41] Derrida has repeatedly joined his discourse with such texts as those from Blanchot, Ponge, Joyce, Artaud, or Kafka.[42] It is likely that his theories, like all theories, have only a certain area of competence where they are more pertinent than in others (despite any claims of fundamentality or universality by the advocates). Even if it is probably perfectly possible to apply deconstructive strategies to any text, there are many cases where the "subject-effects" of a text (as identified by Foucault in the case of meditations) are more important concerns for textual analysis. The capacity of a text to construct, present and articulate some conception of subjectivity, or self, is an equally important feature of textuality as are its disruptive possibilities (which constantly undermine and deflect any such process). It is finally the task of the reader to activate these different aspects of the text, to resist others while pursuing and building on others – a "total revelation" of the "truth" of the text is, after all, an illusion. This active character of reading as selection and construction negotiates between the different poles of identity for a text; the identity should not be denied, but the identity produced by reading should also address – not deny or reduce – the tensions and conflicts in the text. Owen Miller has made a distinction between intertextual and thematic identity that is relevant here. He writes:

> [...] I would argue that intertextual identity implies some sort of ordering of the texts, whereby the focused text may function as figure to its intertext's ground. Thematic identity, on the other hand, fixes the ground outside the specific texts in a synecdochic fashion, that is as illustrating a more general concern, reflecting a sort of common denominator (differences of moral implication [in his example]) to which they are subordinated.[43]

These two positions identified by Miller are adopted by the reader in order to produce an interpretation, or identity, for the text. It is possible to take a more radical stance on intertextuality than Miller here does. Decon-

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[41] Sandulescu 1988, 7-9. In the word-plays Sandulescu operates with, "D.E.V.I.L." stands for "Device for the Explicit Verbalization of Idiosyncratic Language."

[42] Derrida comments on his relation to these texts in an interview by Derek Attridge: "Those texts were all texts which in their various ways were no longer simply, or no longer only, literary. [...] Their questioning is also linked to the act of a literary performativity and a critical performativity (or even performativity in crisis)." (Derrida 1992, 42.)

[43] Miller 1985, 29.

structive criticism repeatedly questions "identity" in its numerous senses, as an authorial intention as well as in any attempt to restrict the differance of the text by establishing some sufficient "whole," or endpoint for analysis. But even then we could say that there are certain thematic concerns (connected with the aesthetics of difference and discordance) at play in such an activity. In the previous chapters, the therapeutic readings of tragic conflict tended to lean on the Hegelian side in their emphasis on the dialectic and possible synthesis of the conflicting forces; Nietzsche, with his daimonic reading, acts here as a borderline figure as he stressed the aesthetic tension and simultaneous existence of opposites. A total reversal of a therapeutic reading would categorically deny any integrative attempts, celebrate the unrestricted intertextuality and complete lack of meaning (this is not, it should be pointed out, what Derrida pursues in his deconstructive readings). Beyond the differences in terminology, Paul Ricoeur's notion of the "dynamic identity" of the text captures well some of the important concerns in recent theoretical developments of textual identity. For Ricoeur, we identify the identity of the text as an answer to "What [is it]?" – basically the answer is a structuring process, one that concerns emplotment, recognition of underlying paradigms, history and tradition. When we are looking for an identity we are engaging with the text with "narrative intelligibility" that, according to Ricoeur, "shows more kinship with practical wisdom or moral judgment than with theoretical reason."[44] The production of identity comes close to subsuming a question of difference into itself (because differing can be seen as the negative moment of connection); Ricoeur maintains that the identity of the text is "dynamic" as it mediates between numerous "dialectical tensions" – between united plot and fragmented events, between general intelligibility and the concrete goals, means and contingencies of the text, and between the sediments of tradition and "newness" in the work. A dynamic identity emerges in the act of reading as an intersection: the "world of the text" and the "world of the reader" confront, and the reader is "displaced" by the text.[45] The separation between the "outside" and "inside" of the text becomes problematic because of the central place of this intersection; or, as Derrida writes, "The Outside Is the Inside."[46]

The characters possessed by the daimonic in the classical tragedies could function as sites of contradiction and disunity. The main alternatives that were offered in different readings of these conflicting selves are here emerging also as a response to the ambiguous characteristics of the text. "The other of language" is deeply entangled in our conceptions of textuality; in reading something as "demons" or "demonic" in a text one is constantly challenged by opposing demands, similar to those met by Derrida and Foucault in their readings of madness. The fundamental plurality and ambivalence that surfaces in this area (as illustrated in the following chapters) is

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[44] Ricoeur 1985, 177.
[45] Ibid., 183.
[46] Derrida 1967/1976, 44.

open to "thematic" or "therapeutic" reading that aims at an integration, explanation, understanding; this, on the other hand, participates in the "violence of reason" towards its other. The plural is in danger of being made monological. From another viewpoint, however, the complete denial of integrative reading and interpretation amounts to essentialising the conflicting elements in the demonic. Ricoeur's "dynamic identity" of a text is one way of articulating this necessary tension and dialectic between particular interpretations of demons or "demonic textuality" and that "reserve of otherness" that will always remain irreducible. As the "thematic" and "deconstructive" moments of analysis inform each other they do not remain immutable; the awareness of multiple centres of signification and the radical effects of the reader's position or his decontextualising activity shifts the focus from the "truth" of a text to its rhetoric.[47]

Derrida has explored the demonic versus the integrative aspects of language in his essay "Plato's Pharmacy." The point of departure is the questionable metaphysical status of writing in many systems of thought. As Paul writes in the Bible: "the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life."[48] Derrida tackles the myth about writing's origin in Plato's *Phaedrus* and the condemnation it receives there. According to this story (narrated by Socrates in the dialogue), the ancient Egyptian god Theuth first invented writing, along with numbers and calculation and many other things. He brought these inventions before King Thamus (the representative or incarnation of Ammon, the high god of the sun), and the King blamed or praised the usefulness of each one. The discussion of writing was of special interest to Plato, as it is to Derrida:

> [...] Theuth said, "This discipline, my King, will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memories: my invention is a recipe (*pharmakon*) for both memory and wisdom." But the king said, "Theuth, my master of arts, [...] your paternal goodwill has led you to pronounce the very opposite of

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[47] The importance of rhetoric in the text rises from its complex status as a layer of activity and understanding that moves beyond mere syntax and grammar. Wayne C. Booth, in his classic study *The Rhetoric of Fiction* pays attention to the various, often indirect ways the author (in the text) implies something to the reader and thereby persuades him, even if the text at the level of grammar and syntax seems to say something else. According to Booth "the greatest literature" is "radically contaminated with rhetoric," and engages readers with its ambiguous and indirect means. (Booth 1961, 98.) Rhetoric can be given both pragmatic and deconstructive interpretations, the latter here exemplified by Paul de Man. In his article "Semiology and Rhetoric," de Man admits that the exact theoretical distinction between the epistemology of grammar and the epistemology of rhetoric is beyond his powers; he nevertheless points to the importance of the "rhetorical question" to literary studies. The undecidability between a literal meaning and a figurative meaning marks the domain of rhetoric for de Man: "Rhetoric radically suspends logic and opens up vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration." (de Man 1979, 10.) This ignores the more pragmatic aspects of rhetoric in the text (the establishment of "good" and "evil," or sympathy and distance in the use of figurative language or narration, for example).

[48] 2 Cor. 3:6.

what is their [written letters'] real power. The fact is that this invention will produce forgetfulness in the souls of those who have learned it because they will not need to exercise their memories, being able to rely on what is written, using the stimulus of external marks that are alien to themselves rather than, from within, their own unaided powers to call things to mind. So it's not a remedy for memory, but for reminding, that you have discovered. And as for wisdom, you're equipping your pupils with only a semblance of it, not with truth. Thanks to you and your invention, your pupils will be widely read without benefit of a teacher's instruction; in consequence, they'll entertain the delusion that they have wide knowledge, while they are, in fact, for the most part incapable of real judgment. They will also be difficult to get on with since they will be men filled with the conceit of wisdom, not men of wisdom.[49]

Derrida's analysis of this section disseminates its meaning in numerous directions. The main thrust of his argument is joined to the double meaning of the key term, *pharmakon*: it can signify both 'poison,' as well as 'remedy' or 'cure.' By telling his story, Socrates is opposing the practice of replacing "genuine" speech with texts (a discourse on love, ghost-written by Lycias and recited by Phaedrus is the immediate topic of this discussion). This implies a preference of "authorised" speech over the somehow artificial and supplementary writing: the singular meaning of presence over the dangers of differance. Plato exemplifies perfectly the ambiguous suppression of writing that Derrida has also analysed elsewhere; the logic of "that dangerous supplement" in Rousseau's text, for example, is double – "writing serves only as a supplement to speech," according to Rousseau, but it adds only to replace, it intervenes. Nature is innocent and good, and the negative elements of culture alienate us from our innocence – therefore "the negativity of evil will always have the form of supplementarity."[50] The demonic dilemma is that we are cultural beings, and therefore can never really achieve a complete transition beyond this "domain of evil." Derrida is quick to point this out, and he also maintains that the preference of speech over writing in Plato carries ideological undertones, as well. It acts to support the authority of the father, and suppresses non-authorised interpretations or heresies.

> **Socrates**: Writing, Phaedrus, has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when

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[49] *Phaedrus* 274c-275b; translation here stands as it is used in Derrida 1972/1981, 75, 102 (most of the original Greek inserted by Derrida has been omitted). Elsewhere I have used Harold North Fowler's English translation, and the standard Greek edition of this text, both available on the Internet by the Perseus Project (www.perseus.tufts.edu).

[50] Derrida 1967/1976, 144-45.

ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself.[51]

This lack of "protection" of the text is interpreted by Derrida to imply a demand for ideological control. The King in Plato's myth rejects writing, as the "father is always suspicious and watchful towards writing." A written text leaves its author, and the "specificity of writing would thus be intimately bound to the absence of the father."[52] Writing is "orphan," and therefore (working in the absence of its author who can not verify his proper intentions) always open for "ill-treatment" or misreadings.

The fundamental irony of Plato's text, of course, is that it is a written text, itself; Socrates never wrote anything, and it remained for his pupil, Plato, to record the living reality of his teacher's dialogues into writing. The paradox of a text written to denounce writing can be suspected to have its internal tensions, and Derrida exploits these possibilities in his deconstructive reading. As Phaedrus asks for "another sort of discourse," that would be better and more effective than writing, Socrates says that he is thinking the "word which is written with intelligence in the mind [*psuchêi*: mind, soul] of the learner, which is able to defend itself and knows to whom it should speak, and before whom to be silent."[53] The metaphor that Plato is using to describe the "living and breathing word of him who knows"[54] is borrowed from the very thing this dialogue is trying to exclude from the truth. The truth is "written in the mind," and elsewhere Plato had developed a theory of truth and logic as inborn parts of our nature; in *Meno*, Socrates proves how even an ignorant slave boy can solve geometrical problems because the rules of logic are inherent in our thought. We only have to learn how to "unforget" these ideas (in *anamnesis*).[55] The Platonic project aims at recovery of the divine logic and ideas by studying our thinking in purely natural and internal means. In this view, "writing is essentially bad" because it is external to memory.[56] It can not remember the truth, but is only a way of reminding (*hupomnêsai*) those who already have the deeper knowledge; "[n]ot remembering, by anamnesis, the *eidos* contemplated before the fall of the soul into the body, but reminding himself, in a hypomnesic mode, of that of which he already has knowledge."[57] Derrida argues, that this true knowledge is already a sort of writing (as the metaphor "written in the soul" betrays); as *logos* (word, reason) enters discourse, it is always already a sort of mimesis, repetition and reproduction of the absent origin. Platonism, like all forms of reason, are in Derrida's view inescapably involved in the aporia of language and differance: "Differance, the disappearance of any originary presence, is *at*

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[51] *Phaedrus* 275d-e.
[52] Derrida 1972/1981, 77.
[53] *Phaedrus* 276a.
[54] Ibid.
[55] *Meno* 81e-85d. (Cf. *Phaedo* 72e.)
[56] Derrida 1972/1981, 103.
[57] Ibid., 135.

once the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of truth."[58]

The opposition between speech and writing is thus open for deconstruction; speech is not really the autonomous primary term that writing is trying to reproduce, but, instead, we have here two kinds of writing. The legitimate one (speech) is good writing (natural, living, knowledgeable, intelligible, internal, speaking), and stands linked by its opposition to its other (the written text) that is bad – "moribund, ignorant, external, mute artifice for the senses," as Derrida lists.[59] Furthermore, there exists a Greek term etymologically closely related to *pharmakon* – *pharmakos* – that Derrida employs in his reading. *Pharmakos* has been compared to a scapegoat; it was used of "wizards, magicians, poisoners," but also of sacrificial victims that were ceremoniously driven outside the city, fustigated (aiming at their genital organs), and sometimes killed to purify the city. This old ceremony was carried out when a great calamity, like famine or pestilence, threatened the city. As a ceremony of purification, it took place at the boundary limiting city from the threatening other; it addresses the internal/external division and casts the unlucky *pharmakos* into the role of evil, "both introjected and projected."[60] The working of boundaries had a cathartic and calming role, as it addressed those elements of the collective self (the city) that could be the cause of alarm; Derrida suggests that the *logos* of Socrates operated analogously. He is called affectionately *pharmakeus* in Platonic dialogues: a wizard and master of words which have surprising and unsettling consequences, as much as they have curative or reassuring power.[61] Reason is therefore itself a sort of *pharmakon*, an ambiguous kind of cure (exorcism) as it is simultaneously also taking part in the demonic aspects of language it tries to deliver us from. "The demonic speech of this thaumaturge [Socrates] (en)trails the listener in dionysian frenzy and philosophic *mania* [...]."[62] Socratic/Platonic reason, therefore, denounces writing defensively; writing is cast in the role of *pharmakos* and it is identified with the "evil" aspects of language, but actually philosophic reason can never purify itself from its other completely. "The expulsion of the evil or madness restores *sôphrosunê* [wisdom],"[63] but it has to be repeated again and again. Derrida notes that the ritual of *pharmakos* was reproduced every year in Athens, up through the fifth century.[64]

Derrida's reading is remarkable, but it is also decisively one-sided: he strategically refuses to recognise and read the integrative, or healing dimension of Socratic text.[65] Nevertheless, I maintain that these two moments are

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[58] Ibid., 168.
[59] Ibid., 149.
[60] Ibid., 133.
[61] Ibid., 134.
[62] Ibid., 118. Derrida's reference is to the *Symposium*, 218b.
[63] Ibid., 133.
[64] Ibid., 134.
[65] Derrida can hardly be out-smarted as a textual reader of Plato, and this is not in my interests here. The question is rather of giving several elements in the dialogue an empha-

both important for a reading of the demonic – the irresolvable conflict and the pursuit of an integrative interpretation. The demonic in *Phaedrus* not only amounts to attempts to denounce the aporias and differance of writing. Already in the first part of the dialogue Socrates refers to his "spirit and sign" (*daimonion*) that reproves him for his initial mistake: he did not pay proper respect to the subject of their discourse – love, Eros – as he focused only on the rhetoric. "I was distressed lest I be buying honor among men by sinning against the gods."[66] Furthermore, the discussion addresses the fantastic creatures of myths, the Centaurs, the Chimaera, Gorgons and Pegas, and multitudes of beings with "strange, inconceivable, portentous natures."[67] Socrates seems to renounce such myths, but actually his view is more complicated and worth quoting here:

> But I have no leisure for them at all; and the reason, my friend, is this: I am not yet able, as the Delphic inscription has it, to know myself; so it seems to me ridiculous, when I do not yet know that, to investigate irrelevant things. And so I dismiss these matters and accepting the customary belief about them, as I was saying just now, I investigate not these things, but myself, to know whether I am a monster more complicated and more furious than Typhon or a gentler and simpler creature, to whom a divine and quiet lot is given by nature.[68]

Socrates thus associates the question of self, and knowledge of self, to imaginary beings, and also metaphorically models the self he might find through his investigation to "Typhon," or some less frightening creature of myths. The philosophical pursuit of Socrates is thus primarily directed towards a proper understanding of one's self, and the proper comprehension of love (a daimonic force, according to Plato) is essential to this project. Socrates states that love is a kind of madness, but that there are two kinds of madness, "one arising from human diseases, and the other from a divine release from the customary habits."[69] Further, he makes "four divisions of the divine madness, ascribing them to four gods, saying that prophecy was inspired by Apollo, the mystic madness by Dionysus, the poetic by the Muses, and the madness of love, inspired by Aphrodite and Eros, we said was the best."[70] The main problem with the speech written by Lycias and Socrates' response in the beginning of the dialogue was not that the other was written and the other "purely oral," but that they did not proceed in a philosophical manner. Those speeches approached the insanity of love from two different starting points, and consequently recovered two different conceptions of it,

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sis different from Derrida's. Such choices are ultimately derived from different perceptions about the task of the reader. Socrates can be interpreted as addressing exactly these questions of differing interpretations in Plato's dialogue.

[66] *Phaedrus* 242d.
[67] Ibid., 229d-e.
[68] Ibid., 229e-230a.
[69] Ibid., 265a.
[70] Ibid.

"the left-handed" and "right-hand part of madness."[71] "Now I myself," Socrates claims, "am a lover of these processes of division and bringing together, as aids to speech and thought; and if I think any other man is able to see things that can naturally be collected into one and divided into many, him I follow after and walk in his footsteps as if he were a god."[72] The figurative expressions used in speeches to describe love contained some truth of the matter, but the most important element is the analytical method that we can reach only if we maintain some sort of *organised relationship* between the different perceptions or interpretations of the subject. True rhetoric is, according to Socrates, based on philosophy and could carry its name; it is art in the same sense as the art of healing. As *ethical* use of language, it must take into consideration the "conditions," "knowledge and practice" that is gained in the dialectical relationship to other people. It is healing, as it aims to make whole. Nevertheless, it does not amount to "exclusion of madness," in the sense that love is a divine form of madness, and the philosopher is a "lover of wisdom." An alternative reading of the demonic in *Phaedrus* would proceed in these lines to point out that Plato/Socrates is actually trying to recognise the madness in thought and being. This integrative interpretation would also pay special attention to the status of myths in Plato's text, but it would argue that these myths are employed not (at least not only) to bolster the authority of father-figure, but (also, and perhaps more importantly) to protect a healing position toward language, reason and signification. Derrida pays attention to how the Platonic discourse presents philosophy as a way to cure us from the fear of death; in each of us there is a "little boy" who fears death as he fears a *mormolukeion* (a bogeyman).[73] Philosophical self-knowledge should act as an "exorcism" of this bogey, but philosophy can find itself as a cure only if it is a dialogue with the other, and studies the role of otherness in its constitution. It must recognise its potentials and even responsibilities to heal, to try to make whole. This is also an important part in the task of the reader.

How much Platonic philosophy actually was such a dialogue, remains debatable.[74] An integrative reading of the demonic elements in *Phaedrus*

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[71] Ibid., 266a.

[72] Ibid., 266b.

[73] *Phaedo* 77e; Derrida 1972/1981, 120. Derrida points out that there exists a chiasmatic (inverse) relationship between two ambiguous cure/poisons: the writing and the hemlock Socrates drinks as he is sentenced to death. Therefore, Derrida argues, Platonic philosophy as an ambivalent cure of soul by killing the body takes part in the structure and logic of *pharmakon*, permeated by the effects of writing. (Ibid., 127.)

[74] *Phaedo* certainly attempts to present love of wisdom (*philo-sophia*) as leading naturally into death, as cure from the imperfections of body (in his dying words Socrates asks Crito to sacrifice a cock to Asclepius, god of healing; *Phaedo* 118). The Platonic cure can thus be interpreted as a denial of its other, the corporeal imperfections of existence. The *daimonion* of Socrates as something that only inhibited him from making any mistakes, or from attaching himself to the beliefs of other people, acts as a perfect figurative embodiment of this attitude. (Thomas Gould [1990, 242] supposes that Socrates' case was one of "benign paranoia." There has been much speculation on the subject: see L.F. Le-

would nevertheless locate the daimonic as an important aspect of the "dynamic identity" that we can give both to this text, and the self it attempts to construct.

(INTER)TEXTUAL SELF AND THE DEMONIC TEXT

Intertextuality is that concept which has gathered under its heading many of those aspects of textuality that have been thematised above as "demonic." There could hardly be any notion of "textuality" in the sense it is applied here, were there not a wide interest in different forms of intertextuality. There is always danger in the actual analysis of reducing intertextuality into a contemporary version of "source-influence studies," even if theoretical formulations profess more radical intentions. It is my aim in the rest of this chapter to focus on the role of otherness in intertextuality, and on how this relates to my interest in the demonic. Specifically, my reading will find the formulations by Roland Barthes on textuality useful: they illustrate well several aspects of the preceding discussions on the self, the demonic and the text.

The concept of 'intertextuality' was coined by Julia Kristeva in 1967, even if the ideas included in it are derived from many earlier theories. The single most important source for the development of intertextuality as a critical concept was Mikhail Bakhtin, and his thoughts concerning the many aspects of "dialogue" in literature. Soon after her arrival in Paris from Bulgaria, Julia Kristeva began her role as an important intermediary figure by introducing the Russian Formalists and especially Mikhail Bakhtin to Western intellectuals.[75] As the case of 'intertextuality' points out, she was never just a passive conduit of ideas: she actively recontextualised and reinterpreted the elements she introduced.

As Michael Holquist has emphasised, Bakhtin's philosophy is a pragmatically oriented theory of knowledge. It is "one of several modern epistemologies that seek to grasp human behavior through the use humans make of language." Holquist maintains that Bakhtin has a distinctive place among these systems of thought owing to the "dialogic concept of language" Bakhtin proposed as fundamental.[76] According to this view, language is not a phenomenon separate from existence: there are units of existence we call "selves" and units of language ("words"), and both of them share common logic – "nothing *is* in itself."[77] Consciousness is always a relation between a centre (I-for-itself) and everything that is not centre (the-not-I-in-me); *self*

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lut, *Du démon de Socrate: spécimen d'une application de la science psychologique a celle de l'histoire* [Paris, 1836].)

[75] Kristeva's association with *Tel Quel* magazine brought her ideas to the attention of Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and others early on. (See, e.g. Toril Moi's introduction to *The Kristeva Reader*; Kristeva 1986.)

[76] Holquist 1990/1994, 15.

[77] Ibid., 31, 41.

exists only as a relation, it is based on *otherness*.[78] Being is an event that is "unique and unified" (suffering and death operate as constant reminders how existence is thus located), but also *shared*. The event of existence occurs at sites that are unique, but never complete in themselves.[79]

The basic case of dialogue is two people discussing with each other. Bakhtin, however, perceives the communication situation as much more complicated than a simple transfer of meaning via signs from sender to receiver. In lines suggestive of L.S. Vygotsky and Jacques Lacan, Bakhtin emphasises how our words are never just "ours"; language is always realised as the use of language (discourse), and this process is fundamentally permeated by effects of interplay between interlocutors and the history of discourse. This interchange in discourse produces constantly new and potentially subversive meanings. Bakhtin quotes Leo Spitzer on dialogue: "When we reproduce in our speech a small chunk of our interlocutor's utterance, already by virtue of the change of speakers a change in tone inevitably occurs: *on our lips the 'other's' words always sound foreign to us, and very often have an intonation of ridicule, exaggeration, or mockery* [...]."[80] Bakhtin coins several concepts to describe the different dialogical effects: 'polyphony,' 'carnivalesque' and 'heteroglossia.' The decontextualising power of language is approached from a decisively different angle by Bakhtin as compared to Derrida. Bakhtin fully acknowledges how each word is open to radically different meanings by dislocations of context, but he stresses the existence of both "centripetal" as well as "centrifugal" forces in signification. "There can be no dialogical relationships among texts," Bakhtin writes, if one takes "a strictly linguistic approach" to these texts. Bakhtinian dialogism is related to the complex interweaving of the linguistic and the extra-linguistic: he is interested in the "linguistics of utterance," as compared to the structuralist linguistics of sign.[81] It would not be correct, according to this view, to deny the text the powers of its reader and the context of reading. The individual is a site for dialogue between "self" and "other," and meaning is life in tension at the simultaneity of centre and non-centre. Instead of constantly (and basically arbitrarily) debunking the centre, the heterogeneity and differentiation is in Bakhtin's theory posited in a dialogue with the centre; the fundamental unintelligibility of differance is replaced by dynamic and particular comprehensions by subjects that are rooted in social experience. As Holquist writes, Bakhtin has translated Dostoyevsky's vision of the heart of man as a battleground between good and evil "into a proposition that the mind of man is a theater in which the war between the centripetal impulses of cognition and the centrifugal forces of the world is fought out."[82] The

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[78] Ibid., 18, 29.
[79] Ibid., 24-25.
[80] Bakhtin 1929/1973, 161 (quoting Spitzer, *Italienische Umgangssprache*, 1922, pp. 175-76). Emphasis in the original.
[81] Ibid., 151. See also Holquist 1990/1994, 40-50.
[82] Holquist 1990/1994, 47.

demonic can gain fresh intelligibility from this simultaneous existence of resemblance and difference.

Especially important to the subject of this study are Bakhtin's readings of the grotesque and polyphony. Bakhtin perceives the grotesque as an alternative mode of realism, one that has been consistently rejected and excluded from the "high" discourses of our culture. The modern ("Bourgeois") subject relates to his body as the "private," often hidden and individualised area with clear, clean boundaries separating him from others. Grotesque imagery evokes an alternative perception of self as a site of metamorphosis, death and birth, sex and defecation, of growth and becoming. The traditional demonic imagery is at the centre of this domain: the grotesque images are "ambivalent and contradictory; they are ugly, monstrous, hideous from the point of view of 'classic' aesthetics, that is, the aesthetics of the ready-made and the completed."[83] Bakhtin guides us to look at the demonic tradition from a point of view different from the Romantic, individualistic position; he points out that in the "diableries of the medieval mysteries, in the parodical legends and the *fabliaux* the devil is the gay ambivalent figure expressing the unofficial point of view, the material bodily stratum."[84] The carnival was traditionally the event for celebrating this register of expression (and mode of existence, as well, as the production of meaning through expression is inseparable from existence as such[85]). Bakhtin argues in his *Rabelais and His World* (1965) for a positive interpretation of this subversive (sometimes even violent) occasion; according to him, the carnival allows for a "temporary suspension of all hierarchic distinctions and barriers among men and of certain norms and prohibitions of usual life."[86] Bakhtin was specifically interested in the language "which mocks and insults the deity," in profanities and oaths. The ambivalent laughter associated with all these inversions and transgression serves finally a regenerative purpose. It degrades and debases all that is high and spiritual, abstract and ideal; it brings these ideas into the material level and into contact with the body. In Bakhtin's view, to "degrade an object does not imply merely hurling it into the void of nonexistence, into absolute destruction, but to hurl it down into the reproductive lower stratum, the zone in which conception and new birth take place."[87]

Bakhtin's study of Dostoyevsky (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, originally published in 1929) explores the polyphony of literary text from similar starting points. He explores the tension of Dostoyevsky's text as a peculiar mixture of the serious and comical; the text displays a polyphony that cannot be reduced into a single position. The historical development of such dialogic elements in the novel can be seen to derive from the carniva-

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[83] Bakhtin 1965/1984, 25.
[84] Ibid., 40-41. See also pp. 266-67.
[85] Holquist 1990/1994, 49.
[86] Bakhtin 1965/1984, 15.
[87] Ibid., 19, 21.

lesque mode, and particularly from the "serio-comical" genres such as So-cratic dialogue and Menippean satire.[88] Dostoyevsky was the creator of "true polyphony," but these old traditions are important in paving the way for po-lyphony.[89] The essence of polyphony, as Bakhtin sees it, lies in the simulta-neous use of incongruous discourses, positions or value horizons without reducing one to the other; "the combination of full-valued consciousnesses with their worlds." The self or subject is taken into consideration, but not in an individualistic sense, but in its constant dialogue with the other. Bakhtin valued Dostoyevsky so highly, because he thought that Dostoyevsky's nov-els succeed in expressing simultaneously many voices, or consciousnesses without some Hegelian movement of dialectic (merging them under a unify-ing point of view, or developing spirit). He likens this to the way in which the "souls and spirits" do not merge in Dante's formally polyphonic world.[90] The plurality of demons and angels, the spirits of sinners and saints works as an analogy to the heterogeneity of these modern novels, not because Dostoyevsky had somehow failed to achieve a unity, but because such plu-ralism is a powerful way of pointing out how "the consciousness is never self-sufficient; it always finds itself in an intense relationship with other consciousnesses."[91] The polyphony and non-unified heterogeneity highlight the fundamental role of dialogue for both language and the self; different conflicting compounds of high and low discourses, and parodies of sacred texts and rituals have therefore an important role for a Bakhtinian analysis.[92]

Kristeva reformulated Bakhtin's dialogism in textual terms in her article "Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman" (1967).

> Bakhtin foreshadows what Emile Benveniste has in mind when he speaks about *discourse*, that is 'language appropriated by the individual as a prac-tice.' As Bakhtin himself writes, 'In order for dialogical relationships to arise among [logical or concrete semantic relationships], they must clothe themselves in the word, become utterances, and become the positions of various subjects, expressed in a word.'[93] Bakhtin, however, born of a revo-lutionary Russia that was preoccupied with social problems, does not see dialogue only as language assumed by subject; he sees it, rather, as a *writ-ing* where one reads the *other* (with no allusion to Freud). Bakhtinian dia-logism identifies writing as both subjectivity and communication, or bet-ter, as intertextuality. Confronted with this dialogism, the notion of a 'person-subject of writing' becomes blurred, yielding to that of 'ambiva-lence of writing'.[94]

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[88] Bakhtin 1929/1973, 89.
[89] Ibid., 149.
[90] Ibid., 21.
[91] Ibid., 26.
[92] Ibid., 104.
[93] Ibid., 151.
[94] Kristeva 1986, 39.

This formulation goes against the direct confirmation by Bakhtin, that "there can be no dialogical relationships among texts." Kristeva underlines that she replaces the concept of "intersubjectivity" with that of intertextuality, and that her main aim is to capture Bakhtin's notions of 'dialogue' and 'ambivalence' at the intersection of the two axes of discourse – the word as existing both between writer and addressee, and as oriented toward an anterior or synchronic literary corpus.[95] It proved difficult, however, to reconcile the decisively "anti-Saussurean" concept of dialogism with "post-Saussurean" Western theory. Already in *La Révolution du langage poétique* (1974) Kristeva complained that intertextuality "has been understood in the banal sense of 'study of sources,'" and reformulated it in a sense simultaneously more general and more specific: "*intertextuality* denotes this transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another […]" – the demonstrative "this" pointing specifically at the case of the novel as the result of a redistribution of the sign systems of carnival, courtly poetry and scholastic discourse.[96]

There is finally no way of stopping intertextuality of being either reduced into a purely formal study of textual relations, or of being radicalised into the cheerful insanity of unlimited differance, if the reality of suffering and death on the other hand, and the joys and tensions in our corporeal existence are excluded from its theory. Kristeva attempts to ward off these tendencies by the introduction of *chora* (enclosed space, womb) as a counterpart of the *thetic* splitting of the semhotic continuum. Derrida's project is in Kristeva's eyes guilty of not differentiating properly these aspects that must be taken into consideration to become the subject-in-process in the symbolic order. She claims that "in its desire to bar the thetic and put (logically or chronologically) previous energy transfers in its place, the grammatological deluge of meaning gives up on the subject and must remain ignorant not only of his functioning as social practice, but also of his chances of experiencing jouissance or being put to death."[97] In her practice as a psychoanalyst, Kristeva has also developed ethics and epistemology as central to the analytic process. As Toril Moi summarises:

> The analyst, who is under the ethical obligation to try to cure her patients, is not free to say whatever she likes, to engage in a free play of the signifier. Instead there *is* a truth in analysis: a correct intervention or a mistaken one. That this 'truth' may change from day to day and is utterly de-

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[95] Ibid., 36-7.

[96] *La Révolution du langage poétique* (Paris, 1974; pp. 59-60); Kristeva 1986, 111. – Michael Holquist quotes Tony Bennett's clarifying extension of Kristeva's original definition: whereas 'intertextuality' comprehends references to "other texts which can be discerned within the internal composition of a specific individual text," Bennett uses '*inter-textuality*' to refer to "the social organization of the relations between texts within specific conditions of reading" (Bennett and Janet Woollacott, *Bond and Beyond* [London, 1989]; quoted in Holquist 1990/1994, 88).

[97] Kristeva 1974/1984, 142.

pendent on its specific context does not prevent it from existing. The proof of this particular form of truth lies in the cure: if there is not truth in analysis, there will be no cure either. Kristeva's notion of truth, then, emphasizes its effects on the *real*: it is a dimension of reality, not only of the signifier.[98]

Intertextuality is not "freedom to say everything" – that sort of concept would indeed make all textuality inherently demonic, and unable to find any critical power from its endless transgressions and self-reference. Kristeva emphasised early on that dialogism is dramatic blasphemy or banter [*raillerie*; Lautreamont], and has rules of its own (it "accepts *another law*").[99] The particular way Roland Barthes has defined textuality attempts to build on such an oppositional understanding of intertext to produce a particular, demonic interpretation of text.

> The Text is plural. Which is not simply to say that it has several meanings, but that it accomplishes the very plural of meaning: an *irreducible* (and not merely an acceptable) plural. [...] The reader of the Text may be compared to someone at a loose end [the text is a tissue, a woven fabric] [...]; what he perceives is multiple, irreducible, coming from a disconnected, heterogeneous variety of substances and perspectives: lights, colours [...]. All these *incidents* are half-identifiable: they come from codes which are known but their combination is unique, founds the stroll in a difference repeatable only as difference. [...] The work has nothing disturbing for any monistic philosophy (we know that there are opposing examples of these); for such a philosophy, plural is Evil. Against the work, therefore, the text could well take as its motto the words of the man possessed by demons (*Mark* 5:9): 'My name is Legion: for we are many.' The plural of demoniacal texture [should be: "plural *or* demoniacal"; *la texture plurielle ou démoniaque*] which opposes text to work can bring with it fundamental changes in reading, and precisely in areas where monologism appears to be the Law [...].[100]

Barthes's characterisations of the text as a new disciplinary object ("The Death of the Author," 1968; "From Work to Text," 1971) have been popular, and it is important to note how openly these formulations display an ambivalent sympathy and concern with the demonic. Barthes has further emphasised the role of demonic polyphony for his own thought by adopting the same metaphor in his inaugural lecture, as he accepted the Chair of Literary Semiology of the Collège de France. In this speech he discusses how power has traditionally been perceived as a single object; the demonic metaphor offers an alternative – "what if power were plural, like demons? 'My name is Legion,' it could say [...]. Some expect of us intellectuals that we

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[98] Moi, "Introduction"; Kristeva 1986, 17-18. Moi is referring specifically to Kristeva's article "Le vréel" (1979; translated as "The True-Real" in Kristeva 1986, 214-37).

[99] "Word, Dialogue, and Novel"; Kristeva 1986, 41.

[100] Barthes, "From Work to Text" (1971); Barthes 1977, 159-60 (cf. Barthes 1984, 73-74).

take action on every occasion against Power, but our true battle is elsewhere, it is against *powers* in the plural, and this is no easy combat."[101] The Text (in the sense utilised by Barthes in the early 1970s) is an "antidisciplinary object," that shatters disciplinary boundaries, and operates therefore as a "critique of disciplinary reason."[102] The demonic ambivalence marks with its plurality both the effects of power, and the attempts to produce an alternative to the hegemony of the author and his work. The connection between the author and the work is "legal," and it becomes, according to Barthes, an obligation for a textual reader to liberate the signification from its monological, legal state, and to pluralise it.[103] As the traditional conceptions of Power and work are "monist" (singular, reducible to a unified system), the textual reader is reading specifically those aspects that are rejected by the traditional system. In other words, he is reading Evil.

The "demoniacal texture" and plurality of the text are realised in the act of reading, and Barthes's conception of the text as demonic implies also a particular view on the reading/writing self. In "The Death of the Author" Barthes advocates the "removal" of the author, and connects this to the wide interpretation of the intertextual:

> We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.[104]

After this affirmation of anonymity and loss of any integrating subjectivity in the text, Barthes makes a reference to Jean-Pierre Vernant's studies of ambiguity and tension in Greek tragedy. Barthes focuses on the nature of tragedy, stating that

> its texts [are] woven from words with double meanings that each character understands unilaterally (this perpetual misunderstanding is exactly the 'tragic'); there is, however, someone who understands each word in its duplicity and who, in addition, hears the very deafness of the characters speaking in front of him – this someone being precisely the reader (or here, the listener). [...] The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination.[105]

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[101] Barthes, "Inaugural Lecture" (1977); Barthes 1983, 459.
[102] Mowitt 1992, 13, 23 *et passim*. Mowitt operates in his study with the multiple meanings of discipline as 'branch of learning,' and 'set of rules,' or 'control of behaviour.' He sees *pharmakos* (scapegoat) mechanism as a part of the "violence of reason" operating in the academia; the text is blurring the boundaries and thereby resisting the (aggressive) expulsion of the other (ibid., 38).
[103] "Texte (théorie du)"; Barthes 1973b, 998).
[104] "The Death of the Author" (1968); Barthes 1977, 146.
[105] Ibid., 148.

Barthes continues by stressing the anonymity of such a unifying reader: "the reader is without history, biography, personality" – yet such aspects of the reader have been very much in Barthes's interests. The leisurely "stroll" of the reader among the heterogeneity of textual landscape may claim that this subject is "passably empty," but he is nevertheless a certain kind of subject: one with an eye for the multiple possibilities of combination, for the subversive beauties of reading differently. The reader implied by Barthes's theory of the text is a subject with a particular aesthetics.

This link between the text and the self is manifest in Barthes's language and in his metaphors. Barthes responds to a deeply personal dimension of language, as well as to language as an abstract system, as a set of rules and lexical items, or as an alienating and ideological machinery. This has repeatedly captured the attention of commentators; Patricia Lombardo states that the "site" of Barthes always has been language, and that he was already known as the "fanatic of language" in 1947.[106] Michael Moriarty sees the personal meaning of language as a threat to his theoretical purity; the extra-linguistic area is all the time creeping back into Barthes's studies in textuality.[107] Jonathan Culler refers to how Barthes himself has likened his life to his writing ("I am the story which happens to me"[108]) and summaries: "For himself, as for us, Barthes is a collection of writings [...] 'Barthes' is itself a construction formed to order these [contrasting and contradicting] fragments."[109] The mutual intertwining of the text and the self into a peculiar sort of compound (a "textual self") is underlined figuratively by the use of "network"; in an essay titled "The Plates of the *Encyclopedia*" (1964) Barthes analyses "the astonishing image of man reduced to his network of veins."[110] In discussion of the text, Barthes affirms that the "metaphor of the Text is that of the *network* [*réseau*]";[111] and, finally, the image from the Encyclopedia is reproduced at the closing pages of *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, emphasising the role of network as a metaphor of a textual self. This metaphor offers an alternative vision, or model: the solidity of an object is being replaced by a structure of relations. It is an illustration of internal complexity that has been extracted beyond the apparent unity; yet, this nebulous network still maintains an inner logic and organisation. The illustration even retains the form of human body, even if this body has been disrobed of its reassuring familiarity and wholeness. In *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* the author[112] claims he has several bodies – *le corps pluriel* – "I have digestive body, I have a nauseated body [...]. Further, I am captivated

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[106] Lombardo 1989, 16.
[107] Moriarty 1991, 148 *et passim*.
[108] Barthes 1975/1977, 56.
[109] Culler 1983, 114-15.
[110] Barthes 1983, 230.
[111] Barthes 1977, 161.
[112] Barthes plays with the necessarily fictive quality of "autobiography" by delivering his fragments and narratives often in the third person: "All this must be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel – or rather by several characters" (1975/1977, 119).

"The Vascular System" (from the Encyclopédie*; Barthes 1974, endplate).*

to the point of fascination by the socialized body, the mythological body, the artificial body [...]."[113] The textual movement that renounces the idea of unified subjectivity, can, therefore, simultaneously signify a return to the plurality and otherness of body.

The textual network as a site of contradiction and dynamic identity can already be located in the very first writings of Roland Barthes. In his first published article, "On Gide and His Journal" (1942), Barthes pays attention to how André Gide's journal consists of "details" without a single great organising principle – the "*Journal* is not an explanatory, an external work; it is not a chronicle (though actuality is often caught in its web [*trame*: weft])."[114] This becomes a model for Barthes's criticism of Gide, as well:

> Reluctant to enclose Gide in a system I knew would never content me, I was vainly trying to find some connection among these notes. Finally I decided it would be better to offer them as such – notes – and not try to disguise their lack of continuity. Incoherence seems to me preferable to a distorting order.[115]

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[113] Barthes 1975/1977, 60-61.
[114] Barthes 1983, 4.
[115] Ibid., 3.

The textual play celebrates its freedom in fragments and reticular relationships. The tension between the free play and the violence of structure runs through Barthes's work; he is simultaneously tempted by the promise of ordering and decipherment that sign systems can offer,[116] and resists any complete fixation or decipherment of meaning. Barthes's study of textuality is dynamically moving at this interstice between science and myth; the logical endpoint of the former is mathematical language, but this is also "a *finished* language, which derives its very perfection from this acceptance of death." If study of the text is to be able to grasp some "living meaning," it cannot be mathematics, but active production of new connections and meaning – even if this would amount to producing just another myth.[117] The epistemological subject implied here is fundamentally entangled in different sign systems, but also in history and historicity as inscribed in body. The subject or "referent" are not naively denied; rather, they are dislocated in a network of multiple fields of reference. In the case of Gide, Barthes celebrates the plurality of this author that appears in Gide's contradictions, in his refusal to choose among alternatives. According to Barthes this textual self is "a simultaneous being," marked by "fidelity and contradictions."[118] A paradoxical model of literary selfhood appears in this essay: "self" as a product of its "own" fiction, rather than its source. Barthes quotes and produces a dialogue of Gide and Michelet:

> "I wanted to indicate in this '*tentative amoureuse*' the book's influence on the person who is writing it, and during the writing itself. For as it leaves us, it changes us, it modifies the movement of our life … Our actions have a retroaction upon us" (*Journal*, 1893). Compare these words with Michelet's: "History, in the march of time, makes the historian much more than it is made by him. My book has created me. I am its work" (Preface of 1869).[119]

Barthes was deeply fond of Jules Michelet, a nineteenth century French historian, and *La Sorcière* (1862; Satanism and Witchcraft) was probably his favourite among Michelet's studies. Often inaccurate as a work of history, this book is characterised by Barthes (in his preface to it) in terms of its novelistic qualities. The particular manner of achieving this literary status is

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[116] The Eiffel tower, in an essay by Barthes, is one metaphor for this promise: the tower itself is "empty," useless, but it participates in a mythic function – it "fixes, with its slender signal, the whole structure […] of Paris space" (ibid., 246).

[117] Barthes 1957/1989, 193, 195. – The ambivalence towards mathematics is endemic among the humanities; not to repeat any stigmatising gesture, one should point out that the aesthetic dimension inherent in mathematics has been well documented by those with sufficient expertise in this area. (In the words of G.H. Hardy: "Beauty is the first test; there is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics." [*A Mathematician's Apology*, 1941; quoted in *The Oxford Companion to the Mind*, page 9]; cf. also Einstein 1939, 139-41.)

[118] Barthes 1983, 6-7.

[119] Ibid., 12.

worth noting: "Novelistic existence is established the moment the witch is provided with a body, scrupulously situated, abundantly described."[120] As the body is inserted into history in all its particularity, the narrative function takes over from a (detached) analysis. Michelet is able to speak of the satanic and the magical as real, as he replaces (rational) causality with a logical and poetic link – establishing, according to Barthes, "a new rationality."[121] Michelet the historian mixes with his work, makes himself "a sorceror, a gatherer of bones, a reviver of the dead; he took it upon himself to say *no* to the Church and *no* to science, to replace dogma or brute fact by myth." This discredited historian becomes to Barthes "at once a sociologist, an ethnologist, a psychoanalyst, a social historian; […] we can say that he truly anticipated the foundation of a general science of man."[122]

This fascination with transgressive writing is transcribed in the concept of Text, as Barthes explores structuralism and semiotics in the 1960s and 1970s. The emphasis on the demonic quality of textuality thus signifies several important concerns: the idea of subject and object of knowledge as inseparable; the logic of both/and (the contradiction), instead of either/or; emphasis of body as the site of inscription; and the ethical concern to "liberate" the repressed areas of signification from any monological order. This plurality carries with it an undeniable ambivalence, as might be expected from the area that is the location for limits of subjectivity, and for pleasure in all its irrepressible movement. "The pleasure of the text," Barthes writes in his book of the same name, "is that moment when my body pursues its own ideas – for my body does not have the same ideas I do."[123] The operations of textuality never totally coincide with the consciousness. In his numerous own contradictions Barthes also displays how interwoven with this ambivalence he himself was.[124] When commenting on the connotations of his writing, Barthes even likens his Text/himself to "a little devil," who is engaged in transgressive acts, and simultaneously remains subjected to the Power (as political power, and, ultimately as language):

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[120] "*La Sorcière*" (1959); Barthes 1964/1979, 108.

[121] Ibid., 111.

[122] Ibid., 114-15.

[123] Barthes 1973/1975, 17. Barthes opposes the "epistemic dignity" of some abstract Desire to the actual enjoyment (pleasures) that are constantly actualised in reading.

[124] Barthes can claim (in one context) that "text is never a 'dialogue' […]; the text establishes a sort of islet within the human – the common – relation, manifests the asocial nature of pleasure (Barthes 1973/1975, 16); in another context it might be equally true that "Text is that *social* space which leaves no language safe, outside […]" ("From Work to Text"; Barthes 1977, 164). The relationship of the demonic text to the social space is charged with tensions and contradictions. Barthes writes both that "literature […] is absolutely, categorically *realist*," and that "literature is fundamentally, constitutively unrealistic; literature is unreality itself" ("Inaugural Lecture" [1977]; Barthes 1983, 463; and "Literature Today" [1961]; Barthes 1964/1979, 160). These are but a couple of examples of the ways Barthes has been able to "contradict himself" in his pluralistic and heterogeneous writings.

> He [Barthes himself] had written "The text is (should be) that uninhibited person who shows his behind to the Political Father" (*Pleasure of the Text*). One critic pretends to believe that "behind" has been substituted for "ass" out of timidity. What happens to connotation here? A good little devil doesn't show his ass to Mme MacMiche, he shows her his behind; the childish word was necessary, since we were concerned with the Father. To read in any real way, then, is to enter into connotation.[125]

Demonic imagery and language is peculiarly suitable for such purposes; the demonic is suggestive of elements or impulses that are inappropriate for a subject or work if conceived as a monological unity, but are, nevertheless, parts of a "textual self" in a plural and more comprehensive sense. Devils and demons also convey the sense of conflict, and opposition to power, that is important for heterogeneous and transgressive forms of textuality (these features of demons are explored further in the following chapters). Barthes has identified such conception of text as marked by Evil, and suggested that the self implied by textual reading is analogous to "the man possessed by demons." Such characterisations carry negative connotations that are important starting points for analysis; the textual or subjective phenomenon that is described with demonic terms is always somehow an unhappy one (*dysdaimonic*, rather than *eudaimonic*). It implies a subject's entanglement into the structure that defines and determines it, and a simultaneous struggle with this structure. In a text, it takes the form of blasphemous intertextuality, conflicts and contradictions in the production of any textual identity, or self. The determined form of subjectivity can fight the powers of self-definition, but this also means that it deforms and decomposes itself in the process; the fundamental redefinition amounts to a perception of self in terms of deformity, monstrosity, the demonic – as the logic of this self-perception is nevertheless ruled by the structure it attempts to deny. This painful paradox can be posited at the heart of this study.

<p align="center">❦</p>

Developing strategies for reading the demonic in the text, these last two chapters have explored a number of theories, multiple readings of multiplicity. Theories and fictions, these texts have both interpreted the manner in which subjectivity should be understood, and taken part in constructing (and deconstructing) different narratives of it. Rather than finding any "ready-made" answers from the theory, my line of argument has emphasised the task of the reader: no matter what is the agenda of a particular theory, it is finally up to its reader to contextualise it, and to make it work for his or her concerns. My particular focus has been on the role that demons and the demonic are given in these theories.

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[125] Barthes 1975/1977, 79.

Both the theories of the self and theories of the text have bifurcated into two main alternatives: theories either tend to reconcile and resolve possible conflicts and contradictions into some "positive identity," or favour such conflicts, treasuring their expressive and subversive potentials.

To my mind, the demonic can be most fruitfully read in the tension and undecidability of these alternatives. The blasphemy, heterogeneity and conflicts of this area challenge interpretative activity and bestow a sense of urgency on attempts to reach a "healing interpretation." Yet, such an interpretation can never be total, or complete, if it is to be faithful to its demonic subject matter; if a demonic text can harbour a "textual self," such an identity can only be polyphonic, contradictory – possessed by "many voices."

The second part of my study explores the demonic in various popular texts that can be identified as "fictions" in a more traditional sense. The next chapter operates as a short introduction to the demons in horror literature, chapters five to eight discuss examples taken from this genre, whereas the remaining two analyses are dedicated to the developments outside horror as a genre.

PART II

4. Demons of Horror:
Intimations of an Inner Alien

> What is hell? Hell is oneself,
> Hell is alone, the other figures in it
> Merely projections. There is nothing to escape from
> And nothing to escape to. One is always alone.

– T.S. Eliot, *The Cocktail Party*[1]

TEXTS OF TRANSGRESSION

What is the role of demons, or supernatural in general, in horror? It could be argued that there cannot be Gothic horror without some element of supernatural threat, but this characteristic is not enough to define a genre in itself. "Horror" is an emotive term, and essential to understanding of this genre – one that is increasingly known by this appellation only, without the "Gothic" prefix.[2] A touch of supernatural was customary in the classic Gothic literature, which usually is dated from 1764 (publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*) to 1820 (the year of Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*). Both of these "signposts" have their share of the supernatural; Walpole's story has its animated portrait and mysterious pieces of a giant suit of armour, Maturin a supernaturally empowered character who is under a diabolical contract.[3] To evoke the horror that separates Gothic from other atmospheric romances, classic horror stories depict or suggest something otherworldly. The borderline between realistic, or non-magical, and supernatural story-lines has received particular theoretical attention, as in the theory of Tzvetan Todorov.[4] A

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[1] Eliot 1950, 87.

[2] See, in this context, particularly Noël Carroll's theory of horror; discussed in the first chapter (page 33-36).

[3] Walpole 1764/1966; Maturin 1820/1989. (John Melmoth the Traveller, Maturin's cursed title character, "obtained from the enemy of souls a range of existence beyond the period allotted to mortality" and many special powers, but his efforts in tempting others to exchange their destinies with him proved curiously futile in the end [ibid., 537-8]. The most demonic feature of this novel is perhaps finally the way its "sermons" and "blasphemies" become "dangerously entangled" [see the introduction by Chris Baldick, page xvi].)

[4] Todorov defines his category of "fantastic" on the basis of reader's vacillation between supernatural and non-supernatural explanations. The pure fantastic, according to him, should be understood as the median line between the domains of "the uncanny" and

brief look into the specific character of the horror genre is needed here to create some interpretative context for the demonic elements discussed.

A considerable amount of critical energy has been spent on the task of defining Gothic as a genre. Typically this has produced lists of Gothic devices – Eugenia C. DeLamotte has named this a "shopping list" approach.[5] A haunted castle is a traditional element, as are a mysterious hero, or villain, and a virtuous lady in distress. In her work *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (1979), Elizabeth MacAndrew portrays a lineage of writers occupied by the common interest (evil as an inner, psychological reality in man), borrowing Gothic devices from each other, and introducing new ones.[6] *The Castle of Otranto* characterises well the initial nucleus of "Gothic features," later works added tormented monks, monsters and mad scientists, ghosts and devils, witches and vampires, and even distanced themselves from the medieval settings in favour of contemporary reality. As Anne Williams writes in her *Art of Darkness* (1995), the history of Gothic has produced a plenitude that persistently oversteps all defining boundaries. There does not seem to be one definitive feature that would serve any attempt at a conclusive definition; even groups of features arranged by "family resemblances" tend to become strained. Williams advocates George Lakoff's theory concerning the concept of category as a cognitive structure. According to this view, the individual items do not necessarily share any "essence," or even family resemblance, with each other, if they belong to the same category. The categories are, instead, produced in accordance with certain principles of cognitive logic: "These principles, taken together, will predict the *structure* of a category, but not its specific content."[7]

Modern studies of horror are not so interested in finding definitive boundaries of genre, or in inventing new subgenres in order to assimilate the constant flux into some Aristotelian order. They are more engaged with the inner dynamism of the genre, relying on the readers' ability to recognise and relish even unorthodox works as parts of the tradition. Williams argues that the structure that organises Gothic horror as a category is its representation of "ambivalently attractive" otherness. The initial impulse to portray medieval settings (or examples of "primitive" magical thinking, or exotic elements

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"the marvellous." Todorov 1970/1975, 25-31, 44. Todorov's definition is emphatically cognitocentric (in favour of purely intellectual and epistemological criteria) and excludes almost all actual literature. Cf. Darko Suvin's definition of science fiction, below, pages 205-6.

[5] DeLamotte 1990, 5. Eino Railo's classic study, *The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism* (1927) has become a typical representative of scholarship that catalogues the different components that "make up" this genre.

[6] MacAndrew 1979, 5-9, *et passim*.

[7] Williams 1995, 12-18 (quotation from page 18); Lakoff's theory is discussed above, pp. 57-8. – Robert Miles argues that Gothic should be approached as a particular aesthetic, rather than a genre. Developed in the 'Age of Sensibility' it was ideologically charged from the beginning, giving a discursive form to "an idealized, culturally compromised, self, exaggerated and repudiated, explored and denied" it was above all "an aesthetic of change." (Miles 1993, 30-33.)

from the Orient) was aimed at confronting contemporary social reality and its "urbane, civilised self" with their "uncivilised" other. After this, the principle of chaining leads from one element to another.[8]

Williams's emphasis on the role of otherness is shared by several recent studies of horror. In her *Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion*, Rosemary Jackson speaks of "desire for otherness," and claims that "the history of the survival of Gothic horror is one of progressive internalization and recognition of fears as generated by self."[9] Eugenia C. DeLamotte, in her study *Perils of the Night* (1990) takes issue with the Gothic "myth," which she perceives as centred on the "distinction between me and not-me."[10] She claims that "Gothic terror has its primary source in an anxiety about boundaries," and that this anxiety (experienced in such different spheres as psychological, epistemological, religious, and social) finds in Gothic romance a symbolic language congenial to their expression.[11] The closed space is so central an element in the Gothic vocabulary, that one important recent study builds its interpretation of the tradition using it as the sole starting point.[12] DeLamotte sees the literal boundaries as only one dimension in this tradition's involvement with "anxieties of the threshold." The sound of a door grating on its hinges is the fascinating and terrifying hallmark of horror; something unknown is about to step over the threshold.[13] The dead are going to visit the living, the past is invading the present, madness is starting to mix with reason. Physical violence is finally "a transgression against the body, the last barrier protecting the self from the other."[14] The imperative to break all the boundaries, to confront all imaginable forms of forbidden "otherness," can be seen as the driving force behind the horror genre.[15] The liminal character of the demonic is in intimate relation to this central feature of horror.[16]

Study of the changing faces the horror adopts in its pursuit for "other" can give us insights into wider systems of meaning. As Anne Williams em-

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[8] Ibid., 20.

[9] Jackson 1981, 19, 24.

[10] DeLamotte 1990, 23. Anne Williams thinks that DeLamotte's view of the Gothic is valid at the level of theme, but she criticises DeLamotte for missing several other important dimensions ("such as literary form, the relation between Gothic and 'high Romantic' or other canonical forms, the persistence of popular Gothic and its expansion into non-literary media, and the power of Gothic to elicit certain responses from its audience"; Williams 1995, 16).

[11] Ibid., 13-14.

[12] Manuel Aguirre, *The Closed Space: Horror Literature and Western Symbolism* (1990).

[13] See Mark S. Madoff's article "Inside, Outside, and the Gothic Locked-Room Mystery" for a discussion of this particular image (in Graham 1989, 49-62).

[14] DeLamotte 1990, 20-21.

[15] Fred Botting defines Gothic as writing of excess; "In Gothic productions imagination and emotional effects exceed reason. Passion, excitement and sensation transgress social proprieties and moral laws. Ambivalence and uncertainty obscure single meanings. [...] Gothic excesses transgressed the proper limits of aesthetics as well as social order in the overflow of emotions that undermined boundaries of life and fiction, fantasy and reality." (Botting 1996, 3-4.)

[16] See above, page 26-27.

phasises, "otherness" is always a relative term: other is defined by its exclusion and difference from the dominating centres of signification. Already Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* gave a list of opposites (attributed to the Pythagoreans), which translates heterogeneous reality into manageable divisions:[17]

male	female
limited	unlimited
odd	even
one	many
right	left
square	oblong
at rest	moving
straight	curved
light	darkness
good	evil

Williams notes how the second column, which starts from "female" and ends with "evil," contains elements associated with a Gothic (or Romantic) aesthetic, as opposed to the "good" and "male" line more in accordance with the ideals of classicism (or, to a lesser degree, with the modern concept of Realism).[18] Feminist criticism has been especially quick to note how the Western inclination to privilege an association of reason with male – a tradition Jacques Derrida dubbed "Phallogocentrism" – also positions female and irrational as a cultural "other." The male/female couple has received ample attention; however, one could claim that such binary oppositions as singular/plural, and stable/variable are equally important in understanding the structure of "otherness" at work in horror.

There are nevertheless some important lessons to be learned about the status of the female in horror. Anne Williams claims that Gothic effectively divides into two separate, but thematically and historically related genres: the male and female Gothic. She opposes female writers' works (from Anne Radcliffe to romance writer Victoria Holt) to such "male" novels as M.G. Lewis's *The Monk*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Stephen King's *Carrie*. Williams points to several differences between the "female formula" and the Male Gothic in narrative technique, in assumptions about the supernatural, and in plot. Whereas female authors often generate suspense from holding to the heroines (limited) point of view and explain "supernatural" in psychological terms, male writers are, according to Williams, more distanced from female characters. The Male Gothic also posits supernatural as "reality" in the text, and prefers tragic endings over the happy closures of the female Gothic romances. Furthermore, Williams thinks that the male point of view (or, ultimately the different cultural positions of men and women) makes

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[17] See *Met*. I, 5 (986a22-986b1) and Williams 1995, 18-19. See also the discussion of contrary principia in the tenth book of *Metaphysics* (1052a15-1059a14).
[18] Williams 1995, 18-19.

Male Gothic liable to combine desire and violence in their descriptions of femininity: "Male Gothic plot and narrative conventions also focus on female suffering, positioning the audience as voyeurs who, though sympathetic, may take pleasure in female victimization."[19]

DESIRABLE DEVILS

Joseph Andriano, in his work *Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction* (1993), comes up with a somewhat more positive interpretation of the status of female "otherness" in the Male Gothic. His starting point is

> the realization that even when a man is haunted by a feminine demon or ghost, he could still be encountering himself – or part of himself. The haunting Other may be a projection of the haunted Self: outer demon is inner daemon, a psychic entity unrecognized as such by the male ego.[20]

Andriano's study uses Carl Jung's concept of archetype, although he denounces some of the essentialist emphases in this tradition. The "post-Jungian approach" is just a reading strategy for Andriano. "The readings [in *Our Ladies of Darkness*] are based on the premise that the anima and the related mother archetype are not signified Givens but rather signifiers [...]." In other words, the meaning of an archetype "derives first from interaction with (and difference from) other signifiers in the text, and second from connotations and associations (from other texts) the reader brings to bear on the text at hand."[21] Andriano's universal intertext is Jung's corpus; he is a Jungian reader, whose task is to seek out signs of archetypes as they are identified by Jung's theory.[22] He believes that such signifiers as 'self,' 'ego,' 'id,' 'anima,' 'animus,' or 'shadow' are of "primordial origin" and "associated with human instinctual drives."[23] According to this view, the culmination of psychological development is in the integration of opposite tendencies and achievement of personal wholeness. Andriano can interpret the frequent association between the demonic and femininity in Gothic along these lines; it is the feminine element in male psyche (*anima*) that holds powers both to enchant and to terrify. "What these men [disconnected with their feminine side] fear most is the crossing of gender boundaries."[24] This interpretation

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[19] Ibid., 102-7 (quotation from page 104).
[20] Andriano 1993, 2.
[21] Ibid., 3.
[22] A different reading of the imagination and of the feminine as a symbol of the Other is *Baroque Reason* by Christine Buci-Glucksman (1984/1994). She analyses the figures and myths of *Angelus Novus*, Salome and Medusa, as "theatricizations of existence" which enables her "Baroque Reason" to deal with the notions of ambivalence and difference inherent in the modern experience. "Baroque Reason" involves and modifies the connection between forms of thinking and aesthetic forms.
[23] Ibid., 4-5.
[24] Ibid., 5.

explains the extremes of Male Gothic starting from the marked dread of men towards the boundaries of their masculine identity. It is interesting to note how Eugenia C. DeLamotte is able to interpret the *Female* Gothic in the same way; she emphasises boundaries of the self as a particular "Women's Theme."[25] If one attempts to combine these views, the readers seem to be unanimous only in their opinion that Gothic is able to address "our" (as opposed to "their") worries, as essential threats to the boundaries of the self.

Andriano's examples and analyses are illustrative of the ambiguous character of the demonic, regardless of whether one is an advocate of Jungian theory or not. The first Gothic text Andriano reads – *Le Diable amoreux* by Jacques Cazotte (1772) – embodies well the deep ambiguity of the demonic elements in horror fiction.[26] This novella (or, the first example of *le conte fantastique*) consists of the temptations of its narrator-hero, a young naval officer named don Alvaro.[27] The young man is bored, and becomes fascinated by necromancy. Soberano, an older officer and cabalist, shows him how to conjure, and Alvaro evokes "Béelzebuth," standing in a pentacle. The demon appears at first in the shape of a huge camel's head, then, at Alvaro's request, takes the form of a spaniel ("une petite fémelle," as Alvaro notes). After this, the demon does different spectacular services for Alvaro, and follows him, variously in the disguise of a page boy ("Biondetto"), or as a seductively beautiful woman ("Biondetta"). In his analysis, Andriano points out that not only is the narrator-protagonist unable to define the demon's gender, or to decide if it really is the benevolent, female spirit it claims to be, or to decide if (s)he is really in love with him – the text itself is thoroughly ambiguous and supports different, conflicting readings. The tale culminates in sexual intercourse between Alvaro and Biondetta (whom he has now learned to love), and the subsequent revelation in bed: "Je suis le Diable, mon cher Alvare, je suis le Diable."[28] Alvaro runs to his mother, renouncing all women and resolved to enter the monastery. At the end a wise doctor tells him that he was tempted in the flesh by the devil, but his remorse has saved him. He should marry a girl her mother has chosen for him – one he would never mistake for the Devil.

Cazotte was aware of the demonological literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and found there a conflict between the Church Fathers and such early experimenting "scientists" as Paracelsus. The former group regarded all utilitarian interaction with the spirit world as dealings with devils; the latter tried to find ways to benefit themselves (and if inter-

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[25] DeLamotte 1990, chapter five. See also below, analysis of vampires in pp. 185-91.

[26] This story is also Todorov's paradigmatic text in his treatment of the fantastic.

[27] I have used the new translation, *The Devil in Love*, by Stephen Sartarelli (Cazotte 1772/1993). ("Don Alvare" in the French original; see Andriano 1993, 11-18, for a summary of the tale. Cf. also Milner 1960a, 67-102; Summers 1969, 224-25.)

[28] In Cazotte 1772/1993, 75; Andriano 1993, 17.

course with spirits was profitable and enjoyable, it was good).[29] The Enlightenment view (that spirits could have no real influence over human affairs) was also gaining favour, and Andriano sees all three views supported by Cazotte's text.

> The pious reader preferring the didactic interpretation [of the dangers of temptation] would take Biondetta as evil, the erotically oriented reader would see her as Sylph [a benevolent aerial spirit], and the "enlightened" reader would take her as the ultimately harmless product of Alvare's overheated brain.[30]

The basic question concerning the nature of the demon is thus articulated ambiguously in the text; the demon oscillates continuously between male and female, which heightens the uncertainty of boundaries, and identities, permeating *Le Diable amoreux*. The association between dangerous or grotesque animals and the Devil was common enough, but why a camel's head?[31] Frightening (and lowly) dogs have been also associated to the infernal powers, but Cazotte's choice was a spaniel, which inspires mixed reactions. Furthermore, the devil's imitation of a woman in love is almost too complete; even when alone, spied from a keyhole by Alvaro, or seriously wounded, Biondetta gives proof of her love. Even her final confession of demonic identity is loving in tone: "mon cher…" Andriano concludes that Cazotte "may have been consciously warning men of the dangers of lawless passion, but he was not 'in complete control of his material'".[32] The traditional materials of *le conte moral* are transformed into something more ambiguous as the demon comes to signify the tempting possibilities and terrors at the borders of identity: the dangers evoked by desire for an openly sexual woman (as opposed to the "moral" relationship with mother, who also represents the Mother Church); or the inarticulate desires and fears surrounding sexual identity (embodied in the confusing double identity of

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[29] The Faustian dilemmas of such interests are discussed below, in chapter eight.

[30] Ibid., 20-21.

[31] "Scarcely had I finished calling when at once a double window opens up above me, at the top of the vault: a torrent of light more dazzling than the daylight pours down from it, and a great camel's head as ghastly in its dimensions as in its form appears at the window; its ears especially were enormous. […] *Che vuoi*? it bellowed [Italian: *What do you want*?]" (Cazotte 1772/1993, 9.) – Andriano suggests influences from the Jewish midrashim and the cabalistic Zohar (which interpret the serpent of Eden as a winged camel), but notes that "[i]n his desire to avoid clichés, however, Cazotte created only more ambiguity" (ibid., 21). (The classic painting of the oppressive presence of the unconscious in the form of a demonic horse's head, penetrating through the curtains of a young girl's dream, *The Nightmare* by Henry Fuseli, was only finished in 1781, and exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1782.) Jones has made interesting analyses of the connection between horse and "night-fiend" (*mare* and the demonic *mara*); he points out the link between riding and sexual intercourse, and notes how the phallic significance can be embodied by the animal's head alone (Jones 1931/1959, 270).

[32] Ibid., 23; Andriano's reference here is to Lawrence M. Porter's article "The Seductive Satan of Cazotte's *Le Diable amoreux*" (*L'Esprit Créateur* 18:2 [1978]: 3-12).

Biondetto/Biondetta). The demon is adapted into the story as a suitably heterogeneous figure. It can pass from an animal into a boy and into a girl, and because the protagonist (and the reader) retain the memories of the previous incarnations, the demonic character is always invested with traces of otherness.

Andriano writes that "boundaries between subject and object break down in this tale. [Biondetta] is Alvaro's own desire."[33] I think it would be more correct to say that the demon in Cazotte's tale questions the boundaries of subject by showing how Alvaro's desires are *not* "his" – in the sense that he would be able to fully comprehend and control his desires, fantasies and fears. In his *Desire and the Devil* (1991), Carlo Testa notes how definitions of desire tend to be circular: typically in the manner "any *production of preference* leading to a choice that *appeals to the self*."[34] Desire is produced by a self on basis of a desire that already is a feature of the self. Jacques Lacan made the link between desire and Other necessary by stating that desire is always desire for the Other; as Other is beyond our full grasp and comprehension, so is "our" desire always escaping our own attempts to make it some law, limits or logic.[35] Testa sees the demonic as particularly well suited for expressing the alterity of desire.

> Desire as fascinating, enslaving, destroying the self – what would best [better?] qualify it to be considered for definition as *demonic*? […] [O]ne of the recurrent names used to designate the Unnameable, the unspeakable paradox of the devil, is, not by chance, its Other Name: *Drugoy* – The Other. […] The devil can […] be seen as a multiple entity capable of self-contradictorily assuming opposite meanings. Its physical Protean attitudes are well-known to the traditional repertoire of literature; these qualities are but an external trace of a moral condition.[36]

Testa addresses the motif of sexual intercourse with a demon by a reference to Ernest Jones's theory: tempting incubi (or, succubi, as the female Biondetta) are for Jones the self's camouflaged way of formulating an "unacceptable desire."[37] Testa claims that the devil figure has the same function in literature: "it expresses the intention to bypass an interdiction." The heterogeneous and conflicting shapes of demons represent figuratively this sort of inner conflicts; "The devil is, among other things, the displaced trace of an internal battle."[38]

Not all prominent demons in horror literature are as desirable as Biondetta. Testa speaks of "the demonic genre," but he is not discussing Gothic; instead, he is interested in those works that portray demonic contracts. The

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[33] Ibid., 25.
[34] Testa 1991, 1. Italics in the original.
[35] See Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious" (1966/1989, 292-325).
[36] Testa 1991, 3.
[37] See Jones 1931/1959, 42, 97.
[38] Testa 1991, 5.

question of hedonism is important in Goethe's *Faust* and other works (by Balzac, Flaubert and Bulgakov) which Testa analyses. However, if one compares the rather articulate tradition of Mephistopheles to the demons in horror, certain features start to become discernible. Devils in Testa's genre are perhaps plotting for the perdition of the protagonist, but there is much more room for discussion than in a typical horror story. The conflict embodied in the confrontation with demonic forces is violent in horror. It is also more often focused closer on the physical, rather than on the intellectual aspect of subjectivity. Even when demonic contracts are dealt with in horror literature, the approach is chosen primarily to evoke suspense, terror, and literally: *horror*. If one studies, for example, Clive Barker's treatment of the demonic contract in his novella "The Hellbound Heart" (and the series of *Hellraiser* movies based on it), one can see the idea of a "contract" giving way to that of a "trap."[39] The same development can be perceived in the recent collection of short stories titled *Deals with the Devil*.[40] To summarise this point, in the horror genre contact with the demonic signals the onset of a painful and frightening ordeal that tests the limits of the protagonist's self and his or her reality.

Andriano's other examples of feminine demonology in horror literature strengthen the connection between inner conflicts and demons. Andriano points out that the protagonist (Ambrosio) in Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) "is reported to be so strict an observer of Chastity, that He knows not in what consists the difference of Man and Woman."[41] As in Cazotte's *Le Diable amoreux*, Lewis's novel portrays ambivalent desire in the shape of a man/woman (Rosario/Matilda), who later is revealed to be a demon. This character's behaviour is also described in a similarly ambiguous manner: the omniscient narrator describes "Matilda's" thoughts and actions as filled with love in the beginning, until she is suddenly revealed to have been "a subordinate spirit," a Devil's tool.[42] Andriano notes that Lewis is carefully orchestrating and manipulating ambivalent attitudes in *The Monk*, sometimes ridiculing "Catholic superstition," sometimes shaking "Enlightenment dismissal of the supernatural. He [Lewis] is simply inconsistent."[43] However, if one reminds oneself here of Testa's observations about the connection between the demonic and the flux of desire, this "inconsistency" becomes a noteworthy feature of a demonic text. Any consistent commit-

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[39] Frank has no exact idea what he is doing in opening the Lemarchand's box that invites the demons. (Barker 1986/1988a.) I refer to this work also in the context of the "engineering demons" of chapter nine (see page 219).

[40] Resnick - Greenberg - Estleman 1994. This collection has its predecessor in *Deals with the Devil*, edited by B. Davenport (New York, 1958.)

[41] Lewis 1796/1983, 17.

[42] Ibid., 440. Cf., e.g., Matilda's soliloquy next to wounded Ambrosio, and her final exhortation to Ambrosio to give up his soul (Ibid., 79, 428-40). Andriano (1993, 37) emphasises that Matilda is revealed to be a *male* demon, but the text does not give enough support for this interpretation.

[43] Ibid.

ment to a system of thought would limit the transgressive powers of narrative; *The Monk* reacts against all borderlines in a truly Gothic manner. "[T]he Gothic experience grows out of prohibition," writes Kenneth W. Graham in his preface to *Gothic Fictions: Prohibition/Transgression* (1989).[44] In the same volume, Anne McWhir analyses the double move in the early Gothic to encourage *both* scepticism and credulity towards the supernatural. She writes of Ambrosio's destruction at the end of *The Monk*, that

> It is the final disintegration of human identity by the forces of inner chaos, and Lewis has far less control over these forces than he pretends to have. His power as manipulator, like Ambrosio's, is limited by the stronger power of his demonic imagery.[45]

The introduction of a demon at the end of the novel seems to provoke conflicting readings among the critics: Andriano claims that "Matilda's ambiguity is too obviously manipulated by Lewis" (as compared to a true archetype), and McWhir says in the quotation above that Lewis fails as a manipulator of his material.[46] All the Gothic excesses in *The Monk* – the scenes of rape, necrophilia, torture – culminate in the figure and speech of the raving demon: "Hark, Ambrosio, while I unveil your crimes! You have shed the blood of two innocents; Antonia and Elvira perished by your hand. That Antonia whom you violated, was your Sister! That Elvira whom you murdered, gave you birth!"[47] The question of authorial control is finally made irrelevant by the text itself; it deals with the devil, and the demonic elements function as interrogators of subjectivity. The individual psychology of Lewis, the author, is only one aspect of the question thematised in this demonic text: where are the limits of subjectivity? All Ambrosio's crimes point back at himself. It could be argued that the devil enters at the end as a disciplinary mechanism of a self-scrutinising subject – the novel can be read as a fantasy of self-exploration. *The Monk* is a study of desires, and of the subject that can generate such desires. The demonic figures (Matilda and the Devil himself) personify the existence of unacceptable desires in the psyche, an irreducible element of otherness. The Devil claims: "Your lust only needed an opportunity to break forth [...]. It was I who threw Matilda in your way; It was I who gave you entrance to Antonia's chamber; It was I [...]."[48] The paradoxical logic of the demonic is opened for analysis: the (unacceptable) desire is part of the subject, but this part has to be renounced by the same subject, into a separate figure. The "I" is revealed to be plural and polyphonic in horror.

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[44] Graham 1989, xiii.

[45] McWhir, "The Gothic Transgression of Disbelief: Walpole, Radcliffe and Lewis" (in Graham 1989, 29-47; quotation from page 42).

[46] Andriano 1993, 37.

[47] Lewis 1796/1983, 439.

[48] Ibid., 440.

The tendency of male fantasies to perceive the demonic in the feminine did not end with these eighteenth-century novels. Nina Auerbach, in her *Woman and the Demon* (1982), has given attention to such works as H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887) and George MacDonald's *Lilith* (1895). She shows how the Victorian imagination was possessed by the tempting and terrible woman, a mythical creature endowed with the disruptive capacity for endless transformations. Auerbach proceeds to make a feminist interpretation that this demonic image was born from the tension between the official weakness of the women, and their actual power.[49] An alternative ("male") interpretation could focus on these texts as male fantasies; those fears, anxieties and aggressions that are bound with female "demons" can be seen as products of the ambiguous status of desire for the constitution of a male self. The disruptive elements in fiction would not be so much directly derived from real women, than from the desire working at the limits, or outside of conscious control. The association of the female with the demonic can thus be interpreted as the male perception of ambiguous desire, inspired by woman as the Other.

The female demon is only one aspect of the demonic in the horror tradition, but it has proved to be an enduring one. Just to pick one modern example, *Ghost Story* (1979) by Peter Straub builds its varying degrees of suspense and terror around a female character, "Eva Galli" or "Alma Mobley." Don Wanderley, the protagonist, both loves Alma, and realises that he has to destroy her; she is a member of an ancient alien race, capable of metamorphoses and of producing nightmarish visions. The novel is very self-conscious in its play with the horror genre, and presents the female demon as a sort of essence of horror; this "woman" exists only to tempt and frighten the male victims in Milburn to death, to act out a "ghost story." Any contract or traditional trade with soul has been eliminated from this demonic tale: it is all about desire and imagination, an exploration of the need to feel horror in front of an abyss of one's own. "You are at the mercy of your human imaginations," this creature explains, "and when you look for us, you should always look in the places of your imagination."[50]

The case of the female demon points out how horror literature explores the borderline of the unconscious. It would be equally possible to gather a continuum of demonic male figures, which would show the ambiguous otherness in male shape. Mario Praz's chapter "The Metamorphoses of Satan" (in *The Romantic Agony*, 1933) makes a start in this direction; he studies how the total otherness of the medieval devil is blended with increasing amounts of (self-)consciousness. The Fatal Men, characteristic of Ann Radcliffe's Gothic fiction, with their "traces of many passions," "habitual gloom and severity," are, according to Praz, descendants of John Milton's Satan.[51] The aspect of the demon as an opponent, an "other voice," that accents the

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[49] Auerbach 1982, 55, 185-89, *et passim*.
[50] Straub 1980, 469.
[51] Praz 1933/1988, 61; the quoted phrases are from Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797).

conflict and combat in the individuation process, was a favourite of the ro-
mantics. It was finally Lord Byron who adopted the Satanic myth as a part
of his personal mythology, and started to "act out" the inner torments both
in his writings and in his private life.[52]

Perhaps the most pertinent description of the central role of the de-
monic in the fantastic literature (and in the Gothic, as one part of it) can be
found in Rosemary Jackson's work. She pays special attention to the uncon-
scious powers and how they have been articulated and explained in litera-
ture. In Gothic, and in fantasy in general, the imagination plays a very im-
portant role; as an opponent of the conscious self (that 'I' we are aware of)
imaginative fiction opens up a dialogue with the 'not-I' (something we do
not see in ourselves, but can imagine elsewhere). Jackson argues that it is
one of the central tendencies of the fantastic to "re-discover a unity of self
and other."[53] "Evil" is an important term in connection to the other; it is
relative and functions as a demonstration of those features that ought to be
excluded from the socially acceptable self. Jackson sees a historical change in
the traditional ways to represent evil and the other:

> Within a supernatural economy, or a magical thought mode, otherness is
> designated as otherworldly, supernatural, as being above, or outside, the
> human. The other tends to be identified as an otherworldly, evil force: Sa-
> tan, the devil, the demon (just as good is identified through figures of an-
> gels, benevolent fairies, wise men). [...]
>   The modern fantastic is characterized by a radical shift in the naming, or
> interpretation, of the demonic. [...]
>   The demonic [in modern literature] is not supernatural, but is an aspect
> of personal and interpersonal life, a manifestation of unconscious desire.
> Around such narratives, themes of the 'I' and the 'not-I' interact strangely,
> expressing difficulties of knowledge (of the 'I') (introducing problems of
> *vision*) and of guilt, over desire, (relation to the 'not-I') articulated in the
> narrative (introducing problems of *discourse*), the two intertwining with
> each other, as in *Frankenstein*.[54]

Even if I would like to argue that the move towards the rejection of the
supernatural is not so complete as Jackson makes it appear, her main argu-
ment is convincing. When supernatural elements are adopted in modern
horror, these "evil powers" tend to maintain an uncanny link with the self of
the protagonist, or victim. Jackson writes in connection with *Dracula* and its
followers, how "otherness is established through fusion of self with some-
thing outside, producing a new form, and 'other' reality (structured around
themes of the 'not-I')."[55] It could be argued that the problematic differentia-

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[52] See ibid., 63-83.
[53] Jackson 1981, 52.
[54] Ibid., 53-55.
[55] Ibid., 59. – H.P. Lovecraft's "unspeakable" horrors are a classic example of the un-
differentiated quality of the terrifying Other; see, e.g., *The Lurker at the Threshold* (Love-

tion/undifferentiation of self from the other is at the heart of the demonic in horror. In the following analyses I shall proceed to read this (almost) illegible division line, starting with a young mother, and her relationship to her baby.

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craft 1945/1988). His "Cthulhu Mythos" with its Old Ones is one of the most important demonologies of classic American horror.

5. Mothering a Demon:
Rosemary's Baby

Pleased to meet you,
Hope you guess my name.
But what's puzzling you,
Is the nature of my game…

– The Rolling Stones,
"Sympathy for the Devil"

THE ANCIENT EVIL ENTERS POP CULTURE

James Twitchell and Anne Williams, among others, have claimed that the twentieth-century Gothic has introduced us to at least one new motif: the "demonic child."[1] The popularity of *The Exorcist*, by William Peter Blatty (analysed in chapter six), and its offspring in movies (such as *The Omen* series) gave the phenomenon wider attention, and different explanations were offered. Stephen King comments on this discussion, and argues that the new horror was rooted in social change. The end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s (King highlights the seven years from 1966 to 1972) were a turbulent period in the United States. Youth culture was developing new discourses and ways of living; rock music, sexual morals, values and attitudes in many ways collided violently with the "social and cultural conscience, commitment, and definitions of civilized behaviour," as understood by the older generations. The Vietnam war developed this issue into a dramatic political confrontation. The new horror was born in this atmosphere of conflict between the young and the old, and King argues that "every adult" in America understood the subtext behind a horror film such as *The Exorcist*.[2] I would argue that these works of new horror have a much wider grasp, even on audiences outside this particular social context. Their use of demonic elements does employ different forms of social unrest as well as individual psychological anxieties, but the "external" and the "internal" are mixed; the demonic reveals elements of the other in the structures of the self.

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[1] Twitchell, 1985, 300; Williams 1995, 18. – It is perhaps more accurate to characterise this as reinterpretation, rather than invention; the straightforward treatment of sexuality and aggression by modern horror powerfully modifies the more subtle associations of children with the demonic in earlier literature (see, e.g., Henry James's *Turn of the Screw* [1898]).

[2] King 1981/1987, 195-97.

Ira Levin's novel *Rosemary's Baby* (1967; "RB") is a vivid portrait of a period, and an ironic dislocation of that portrayal with its introduction of demonic elements. Levin has himself described his intentions as follows:

> I tried to keep [the book's] unbelievabilities believable by incorporating bits of "real life" happenings along the way. I kept stacks of newspapers, and writing about a month or two after the fact, worked in events such as the transit strike and Lindsay's election as mayor. When, having decided for obvious reasons that the baby should be borne on June 25th [1966], I checked back to see what had been happening on the night Rosemary would have to conceive, you know what I found: the Pope's visit, and the Mass on television. Talk about serendipity! From then on I felt the book was Meant To Be.[3]

There had been some novels that tried to incorporate Satanic elements into a realistic, modern setting before, but *Rosemary's Baby* was the first to achieve really wide audiences.[4] Partly this can be explained through the Hollywood connection; the synergy between a bestseller and a successful film was to be repeated in the case of *The Exorcist*.[5] Despite its exotic occult elements this novel is also an exploration of "the common"; the married couple in the vortex of Satanic intrigue could be clipped from any fashionable, modern magazine – a handsome actor with his pretty, young wife. They are people whom it would be very easy to identify with in the reality increasingly mediated and constructed by the mass media.

In the first part of my study I have produced a model of the demonic as a field of heterogeneous figures, and blasphemous strategies that are generally used to articulate indirectly forbidden desires and moral or ontological conflicts of the self. The first goal of the analysis in this chapter is to identify and interpret how this novel articulates otherness, and how it generates different limits, or oppositions, which make transgressions possible. The second goal is to focus on one aspect of this field: how this text functions as a demonic text – that is, how it drives different subtexts or discourses into intertextual conflicts with each other, and produces the particular effect of blasphemous polyphony (as identified above, see pages 102-8). These two goals are here pursued simultaneously; the questions about the self or different transgressions operating in the novel are intertwined with the structure of the text.

The tension between the "believable" (realistic) and the "unbelievable" (fantastic) is carefully controlled in the text. There are different ways for the reader to interpret the progress of Rosemary Woodhouse's pregnancy, until

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[3] Quoted in ibid., 338.

[4] The Frenchman, J.-K. Huysmans, depicted in his *Là-Bas* (Down There; 1891) Satanism as an aspect of urban decadence; also the British author Dennis Wheatley wrote several novels that deal with occult and Satanic elements (including *The Devil Rides Out*, 1934; *To the Devil – A Daughter*, 1953; *The Satanist*, 1960).

[5] *Rosemary's Baby* was directed as a film by Roman Polanski in 1968, immediately following the novel's success, and is very faithful to Levin's work.

the end affirms the supernatural explanation. Rosemary has become victim of a Satanist plot to evoke Satan, to impregnate a woman, and thereby give birth to an Antichrist. However, if we pay attention to how the self of the protagonist is articulated in the text, we can see the idea of a "victim" taking an ironic turn. The borderline between the fantastic and the real becomes leaky; the rejected otherness is not absolutely separate from the self.

The text is loaded with opposites from the very beginning. Rosemary and Guy Woodhouse have already signed a lease for a new apartment ("white cellblock," as Rosemary says), when they are offered a four-room apartment in the Bramford ("old, black, and elephantine," according to the narrator).[6] The vulnerability of the young as contrasted with the tempting powers of the old are implicit already in the married couple: Rosemary is almost ten years younger than her spouse, and it makes her a bit uncertain.[7] Time means also distance – there is a difference and imbalance of power between the male and female in this couple (Rosemary is portrayed as naïve, and Guy can easily hide his true, selfish thoughts and actions from her). The initial set-up in the novel delivers the following series of contrasted opposites:

Old	New
Black	White
Evil	Good
Male	Female

These oppositions are, however, not clear-cut or absolute; it should be noted that it is Rosemary who feels strongly drawn to the "black" Bramford. Guy would settle for the modern apartment they had already agreed to take. Nor can Guy be characterised as an unproblematically "evil" character from the beginning (and, Rosemary is not completely "good"). Rather, the opening setting is loaded with contrasts, tensions and distances which are going to mark the upcoming narrative.

Bramford is one element *Rosemary's Baby* has inherited from the Gothic tradition, and adapted into a contemporary milieu. The Black Bramford is a displaced Gothic castle, planted at the heart of modern Manhattan. This building hides a witches' coven and a history haunted by unexplained deaths. As Rosemary's old friend, Hutch, tries to talk the couple out of moving into Bramford, it is the terror of the *ordinary* that finally seals Rosemary's destiny.

> 'Hutch,' Rosemary said, 'we've tried everywhere. There's nothing, absolutely nothing, except the *new* houses, with neat square rooms that are all exactly alike and television cameras in the elevators.'
> 'Is that so terrible?' Hutch asked, smiling.

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[6] RB, 9-10.
[7] RB, 27.

'Yes,' Rosemary said, and Guy said, 'We were set to go into one, but we backed out to take this.'[8]

The main activity in the novel focuses on the construction of home, and family. Rosemary builds her identity on the traditional role of a wife: she decorates their apartment, cooks, and waits for Guy, who is "away every day like other women's husbands."[9] The house is the traditional Gothic symbol for the mind, or psyche, with its hidden rooms and underground cellars. The Black Bramford, with "all those weird gargoyles and creatures climbing up and down between the windows" is an image of the self, that Rosemary must explore in her road to self-knowledge.[10] The questions surrounding identity are marked by these dark secrets, and thematised ambiguously in the text.

The identity of Rosemary is marked by transition. Before Rosemary became the wife of Guy Woodhouse, she was a Catholic country girl named Rosemary Reilly, from Omaha. Her two names indicate two identities, separated by marriage. Rosemary Reilly grew up in a strictly Catholic family, educated by nuns in "Our Lady," a Catholic school. Rosemary Woodhouse, on the other hand, is living in a city, married to an actor with a Protestant background, and defines herself as an agnostic.[11] There are several possible lines of fracture inherent in this change of identities; particularly, the change from a religious worldview into a secular one remains under suspicion – how deep has Rosemary buried her other side? The dualisms, oppositions and divisions thematised in the text offer starting points for interpreting its demonic elements.

The most striking dualism in the novel is its placement of supernatural elements at the heart of a realistic narrative universe. The ontological make-up of this world is closely related to the questions concerning the individual identities of the main characters. In its most traditional form, the supernatural reality and the mundane reality have been perceived as distinct from each other. Thomas G. Pavel – referring to the studies of Max Weber, Rudolf Otto, Roger Callois, Mircea Eliade and Peter Berger – has concluded that the "religious mind" divides the universe into two separate and different spheres (the sacred and the profane). Pavel has analysed the basic situation of fiction on the basis of "games of make-believe," and the dual structures of religion carry many similarities to those. A game of make-believe that includes the fictional element "dragon" can be called *existentially creative*: it displays a *salient structure* (in the figure of the dragon) which lacks a correspondent in the primary universe.[12] In the context of *Rosemary's Baby*, the devil and the Satanic witches with supernatural powers can be seen as these

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[8] RB, 22.
[9] RB, 26.
[10] RB, 17.
[11] RB, 26, 41.
[12] Pavel 1986, 57.

sorts of creative structure. They redefine the modern milieu through their difference.

Rosemary's Baby is not, however, organised according to this distinct dual ontology. Rather, it dramatises the conflict, or borderline between the religious and mundane spheres. As a work of fiction, Levin's novel plays with the ontological levels with much more freedom than any (solemnly) religious text could do. Pavel notes that whereas "the belief in the myths of the community is compulsory, assent to fiction is free and clearly circum-scribed in time and space." The claims for eternal truth and the solidity of the religious narratives can also be contrasted with the openness of fiction to new constructions. Pavel compares fiction to games; new games always re-main possible.[13] The limit between the fictional and the non-fictional can, however, be transgressed. A work of fiction can have real-life consequences, and (on a more general level) the "fictions of identities" (narrative construc-tions of identity) affect how a personal identity is perceived. Pavel illustrates the transgression of fiction's limits with the myth of Pygmalion, the familiar story of a sculptor falling in love with a statue, and its subsequent coming into life as a woman (Galatea). According to Pavel, "cult and fiction differ merely in the strength of the secondary universe;" if fiction can evoke pow-erful responses, it may also have potential to have real-life consequences.[14] This play between the real and unreal, or, fiction exceeding its limits, plays a significant role in *Rosemary's Baby*.

THE (HAUNTED) BUILDING OF SELF

In addition to Rosemary, the identity of her husband, Guy, is also uncertain, but in a different manner. He has changed his name from "Sherman Peden" into "Guy Woodhouse" for opportunistic reasons (the latter sounds more like an actor's name).[15] The opening chapter of the novel presents Guy as a masterful liar; he is able to squirm out of a signed lease by rehearsing and performing a story of himself being needed in the war effort in Vietnam. The lie plays shamelessly with patriotic values, and implies that Guy could disregard other values, as well. This lie is nevertheless demanded by Rose-mary, and she is, too, intertwined with the Pygmalion thematics. Guy is pre-sented as an unprincipled character, who copes with the modern world by quickly adopting new roles. Rosemary is partly constructing herself an iden-tity, partly she is an object (a Galatea shaped and influenced by others). "I'll make a duchess out of this cockney flower girl yet," her friend Hutch said, and signed her up for a night course in philosophy.[16] The reference, of course, is to George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* (1913), and to the popular musical and movie versions that followed it ("My Fair Lady"; 1956

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[13] Ibid., 61.
[14] Ibid., 60.
[15] RB, 33.
[16] RB, 18.

and 1964). The dualisms of old/young and evil/good are combined here into a confrontation between deception (Guy and the witches) and innocence (Rosemary).[17] One dimension of Rosemary's story is concerned with the need for modern self-consciousness; adoption and construction of different roles are needed if one aims to succeed in modern society. This is, however, also a site for potential ambiguity and confusion: the self-consciously constructed roles have no moral foundation outside of themselves. They could be hiding malevolent intentions.

The unknown is terrifying, but it is also tempting. The dark, elephantine structure of Bramford is alluring to Rosemary: it has a name, and a history. The clinical anonymity of modern apartments is terrifying to her because it signifies a lack of identity – or lack of history (Rosemary's break with her past makes her responsive to this particular fear). Bramford is not only an old building; it has also old occupants. The conflict between the young and the old is very noticeable in this environment. Rosemary becomes an emphatically separate and isolated character, sharply contrasted to all the others. The separation could also mean a positive chance for self-discovery. It should be noted how intimate and personal the demonic elements are in this novel – they are centred on Rosemary's sexuality, her pregnancy and on questions of bodily and spiritual identity. The dark past of Bramford offers a sounding board for Rosemary's own (problematic) past. Rosemary has tried to separate herself from her Catholic past and upbringing; in this sense the experiences in Bramford could be seen as a monstrous "return of the repressed," as the supernatural and religious figures rise in their demonic guise. The Freudian expression can be justified with some evidence of the unconscious being thematised in the text. Despite being the modern, agnostic "Rosemary Woodhouse," a certain part of Rosemary still reacts "automatically": when a young girl (Terry) was found crushed on the sidewalk, Rosemary's right hand made an "automatic" sign of the cross.[18] Similarly, Rosemary's longing to get pregnant leads into questions about the role of the unconscious. Rosemary rejects the use of contraception: "the pills gave her headaches, she said, and rubber gadgets were repulsive. Guy said that subconsciously she was still a good Catholic, and she protested enough to support the explanation."[19]

The pervasive irony in the text is produced through combinations of heterogeneous and conflicting registers. At this point it rises from Guy being simultaneously right and wrong (Rosemary is actually very conscious in her ruse to get herself "accidentally" pregnant). The integration between Rosemary's religiously marked unconscious and her conscious construction

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[17] The master of deception among all the liars is Roman Castevet, the leader of the Satanists. He can adopt almost any role with utmost cogency; he has also changed his name in a playful manner – by creating an anagram from the original "Steven Marcato." (RB, 147.)

[18] RB, 36.

[19] RB, 59.

of identity is defective, but in the world of *Rosemary's Baby* this is not the whole story. The impossibility of a subject to completely "coincide with oneself" is dramatised in this narrative into nightmarish proportions. As the story unfolds, Guy himself becomes a minor player in a Catholic fantasy which can easily be seen as Rosemary's "subconsciously religious" mind extended and enlarged into the supporting narrative.

Rosemary had left in Omaha "an angry, suspicious father," and a whole family who resented her violating the Catholic way of life, in marrying a Protestant, and even doing so in a civil ceremony.[20] The text informs us that Rosemary felt "guilty and selfish" in New York, and this guilt offers a way of reading the subsequent confrontation with the demonic. Freud's theory of demonological neurosis points out that the figure of the Devil traditionally offers a channel for exploring repressed feelings towards the father.[21] Rosemary's situation has recently changed from a child's dependency on her religious family into a young wife's dependency on her husband. The consummation of the latter relationship would be having children together, but Guy is not willing to have this kind of bond. The hidden insecurities and denied religiosity are all given their expressions in Rosemary's confrontation with the demonic. This crisis is set going in the night she finally becomes pregnant. The narration during this key episode is focalised through the drugged consciousness of Rosemary.

> Rosemary slept a while, and then Guy came in and began making love to her. He stroked her with both hands – a long, relishing stroke that began at her bound wrists, slid down over her arms, breasts, and loins, and became a voluptuous tickling between her legs. He repeated the exciting stroke again and again, his hands hot and sharp-nailed, and then, when she was ready-ready-more-than-ready, he slipped a hand in under her buttocks, raised them, lodged his hardness against her, and pushed it powerfully in. Bigger he was than always: painfully, wonderfully big. He lay forward upon her, his other arm sliding under her back to hold her, his broad chest crushing her breasts. (He was wearing, because it was to be a costume party, a suit of coarse leathery armour.) Brutally, rhythmically, he drove his new hugeness. She opened her eyes and looked into yellow furnace-eyes, smelled sulphur and tannis root, felt wet breath on her mouth, heard lust-grunts and the breathing of onlookers.[22]

The fantastic sex scene is closed by a brief dream episode, in which the Pope comes to see Rosemary at Jackie Kennedy's request. In the reality of the novel the intercourse had taken place during the Pope's sermon at Yankee Stadium. Guilty Rosemary tries to speak in a sad voice, "so that he wouldn't suspect she had just had an orgasm." The Holy Father gives his forgiveness, and hurries away.

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[20] RB, 18, 26.
[21] See below, page 151.
[22] RB, 78-79.

This is the only direct confrontation with the Devil in the novel, and therefore of central importance. Again, an ironic (double) reading is invited by the text: Rosemary perceives the situation as an enjoyable love scene with her husband – but the reader is able to see the situation as a rape. The attributes of the raping creature are derived from the early, beastly version of the Christian Devil: it has sharp claws, yellow goat-eyes and a huge phallus. The powerful, phallic beast is emphatically sexual and masculine; it is more arousing than Guy, Rosemary's husband (this is the only occasion in the novel when she is said to be having an orgasm). Whereas Guy has been evading the idea of having children, avoiding the "dangerous days," this creature makes Rosemary pregnant in the first attempt. As the whole novel is called *Rosemary's Baby*, this pregnancy is pivotal for the work. The fantastic intercourse with the Devil is how Rosemary's desire to have a baby is represented in the text, and the Devil becomes a substitute of father – here as the literal father of Rosemary's baby. Psychologically, of course, this situation has its own, peculiar logic; as Rosemary left her own father, she also rejected God

Rosemary (Mia Farrow) studying her scrathes from the previous night (from Rosemary's Baby; *dir. Roman Polanski). © UIP/Paramount Pictures, 1968.*

the Father.[23] Rosemary's modern marriage is haunted by hidden insecurities, primarily caused by the treacherous role-play that she herself is also involved in. Her conflicting impulses – to reject and repress the religious identity, and to hide the uncomfortable aspects of her modern identity – can be interpreted as the inner conflict motivating the use of a demonic figure. The Devil is the Other to both sides of Rosemary's self, an antithesis of God the Father, and an excluded delusion from modern, scientific reality.

Paradoxically, the fantasy of an intercourse with the Devil could have integrating potential for the liminal existence of someone like Rosemary. The demonic figure threatens both the religious and the modern, secular attempts at self-definition, and is therefore able to dramatise their limits. As I have pointed out in the first part of this study, demons as ambivalent opponents and interaction with them (possession behaviour in particular) have been traditionally used to transgress fixed social roles, and to alter social reality. The fiction of *Rosemary's Baby* has incorporated into itself an analogous structure in its pursuit of success as modern entertainment.[24] Rosemary even fits well into I.M. Lewis's observations as to how women and socially oppressed groups, particularly, find in demons some ways to express the inner conflicts of their social selves.[25] Rosemary is powerless and a victim for a large part of the narrative, but there is an interesting development in this area, as she comes to face her own connection with "demonic" powers. An analysis of how the heterogeneity figures in this novel can bring us closer to understanding this process.

The coincidence of the sex scene with the Pope's sermon is one aspect of the blasphemous strategy in *Rosemary's Baby*. The heterogeneous materials that amalgamate in Rosemary's dream – Pope, John F. Kennedy's yacht, black mass, women in bikinis – confuse the limits between holy and unholy. In the context of media celebrities, like Jackie Kennedy, even the significance of the Pope attains an ironic aspect. The Mass is also a huge media event, and Guy claims (with the other Satanists) that it is just "show biz."[26] The repeated references to the assassinated President, John F. Kennedy, and to the conspiracy theories evoke another context which contributes to the irony in the novel. The seriousness of Rosemary's plight is contrasted with scenes of the Castevet couple (the key conspirators) reading a conspiracy book critical to the Warren Report about the Kennedy assassination – or the

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[23] Freud has analysed the psychological role of the Devil as a father-substitute (and God as the idealised father-image) in his article "A Seventeenth Century Demonological Neurosis" (SE 19, 69-105). See also below, p. 151.

[24] There does not seem to be any absolute or clear-cut limits between "mere entertainment" and those discourses that are dedicated to "serious" expression of some culture's concerns or myths. On the contrary, if entertainment grasps the attention of its audience (as *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Exorcist* did) it has found its own ways to address some significant questions.

[25] See above, page 30.

[26] RB, 52.

grotesquely comical *Jokes for The John*.[27] The theme of paranoia is developed in the text with simultaneous ironic intertextual complications on this theme. Guy, to give another example, compares Rosemary's growing distrust and hysteria to Senator McCarthy's paranoid theory of a communist conspiracy infiltrating American society.[28] The status of paranoia and realism is ironically reversed, as Guy's "common sense" is revealed as lies, and Rosemary's real weakness lies in not being paranoid enough.

LOCATING THE LIMITS, DIVIDING THE HETEROGENEITY

The demonic tradition in myth and literature is very rich, and it is significant which of its elements have been woven into this novel. As the setting is a modern, urban milieu, one could presume that a modern version of the Devil would do (a suave, sophisticated Mephistopheles, perhaps). On the contrary, *Rosemary's Baby* confronts us with an animalistic creature which seems mainly capable of wild sex and lustful grunts. The whole motif (having sex with the Devil) is taken from the medieval fantasies of the Witches' Sabbath. Because the literary tradition of a sophisticated Devil is so strong (built and developed by such writers as Milton, Goethe, or Dostoyevsky), this can not be a fortuitous incident. Rather, the primitive Devil illustrates the same underlying structure of heterogeneity and contradictions which characterises the use of opposites young/old, good/evil, holy/unholy. The very ancient and primitive comes here into contact with the modern, and, furthermore, the sexual intercourse makes the whole division problematic. The Devil here is essentially a phallic god, a fantasy of uncivilised (and amoral) sexuality; a fantasy of having sex with a beastly figure is a powerful gesture of transgression, of leaving "civilised" humanity and functioning only in the area of instincts and the body.

One must also ask, whose fantasy this transgression is? Considering this from the character's (Rosemary's) point of view, it is clear that she does *not* desire to have sex with the Devil; rather, this is her worst nightmare. On the other hand, the text lays stress on Rosemary's enjoyment, of her having an orgasm; the scene is articulated ambiguously in terms of both desire and violence. Anne Williams's remarks on the Male Gothic are pertinent here; Ira Levin's novel employs the motif of female victim and demonic sexuality in a manner which suggests both sympathy and pleasure in connection with the rape scene. One possible interpretation could focus on the female victimisation, and read *Rosemary's Baby* as a patriarchal fantasy: Rosemary's naïveté and helplessness fulfil traditional male expectations of female behaviour, and the end of the novel even shows her (though hesitantly) accepting her prescribed position in the Devil's party. However, this would mean simplifying Rosemary's role and her complex links to the demonic elements in

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[27] RB, 56.
[28] RB, 151.

the text. Following Andriano, I shall produce a more "positive" reading of this Male Gothic work.

Andriano emphasised that the female demons in his texts actually stood for the forbidden female elements in the male psyche. Analogously, the masculine Devil in *Rosemary's Baby* is open to various interpretations: it is a symbol of sexuality and may well represent repressed sides of Rosemary's self. The intercourse with the Devil initiates a crisis, which makes Rosemary painfully aware of otherness in her life. However, the demonic Other is not tied to either sex; the Devil is not only an image of irrational, frightening male sexuality. Instead, this Protean figure is able to embody fears towards the body itself. Our biology is, after all, fundamentally "unconscious" in the sense that we have no control nor clear knowledge of the "corporeal" reality inside ourselves.[29] *Rosemary's Baby* gives the internalisation of demonic horror a concrete shape in Rosemary's pregnancy.[30]

The history of demonic imagery is a history of heterogeneity, and the pregnant mother with her coalescence of two organisms is a potent symbol of this condition. It is perhaps the single most important innovation in *Rosemary's Baby* to harness the (often unspoken) uncertainties inherent in motherhood in the service of horror. The demonic Other is now rearticulated as the baby, who is simultaneously a part of Rosemary, and someone else – a liminal being. An important concept for the modern Gothic has been "body horror," which has been applied mainly to the "Splatterpunk" variety of ultra-violent, naturalistic movies and texts following George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), and reaching its culmination in the works of David Cronenberg and Clive Barker. The movies of David Cronenberg illustrate especially well the "internalization and recognition of fears as generated by the self," that Rosemary Jackson has discussed. *Rosemary's Baby* can be seen as an important precursor to such works as Cronenberg's *The Brood* (1979), a bizarre story of an angry mother "expressing" (quite literally) her hatred by giving birth to monstrous killer babies. Cronenberg has himself analysed the impulse behind this variety of horror (and perhaps all horror) as based on the paradoxical division/unity between mind and body: mind is rooted in body, and body, on the other hand, can develop physical illnesses as expressions of mental ill feelings. According to Cronenberg, all cultures have tried to find ways to accommodate and explain this dual reality somehow in their systems of thought, but none has been able to make humans completely whole, unbroken.[31]

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[29] *Gothic Bodies* by Steven Bruhm (1994) explores the spectacle of suffering and other forms of emphatic physicality as an important aspect of the Romantic tradition. He writes that the "obfuscation of boundaries between inside and outside, and the deconstruction of the central self that such obfuscation implies, are most readily accomplished by the pained body whose experience as other becomes so forcefully one's own" (p. 148).

[30] Several scholars have recently paid attention to the way women's procreative power has the capacity to evoke a specifically "internal" horror. See below, page 163.

[31] Cronenberg 1992, 79.

The body/mind division, and its more abstract counterpart, nature/culture, are thematised in *Rosemary's Baby* as uncertainties surrounding Rosemary's pregnancy. Rosemary's doctor (Abraham Sapirstein, also part of the conspiracy) tries to convince her, that pregnancy is a state during which the unnatural becomes natural:

> 'Please don't read books,' he [Dr. Sapirstein] said. 'Every pregnancy is different, and a book that tells you what you're going to feel in the third week of the third month is only going to make you worry. No pregnancy was ever exactly like the ones described in the books. And don't listen to your friends either. They'll have had experiences very different from yours and they'll be absolutely certain that their pregnancies were the normal ones and that yours is abnormal.'[32]

Sapirstein tells how important it is to satisfy all one's cravings during pregnancy; "You'll be surprised at some of the strange things your body will ask for in these next few months."[33] Rosemary's body, in fact, becomes so strange that Rosemary feels alienated from herself. Her pregnancy has made her a concrete embodiment of the conflicts and the heterogeneity permeating the structure of the novel. This can be seen in the pelvic pains she is soon continuously suffering; the disruptive forces start their work in her body. The novel is organised in three parts, and they all develop their conflicts into a climax. The conclusion of the first part focuses the conflicting powers into Rosemary's body: her conscious mind is grateful for the pregnancy and (evoking the memory of the religious "Rosemary Reilly") she makes a wish: "If only prayer were still possible!" Her body, however, has now a "mind of its own;" she realises that she does not only want, but she *needs* the tannis root charm given to her by the Satanists. "The smell of the tannis root had changed; it was still strong but no longer repellent."[34] The reader is made aware that Rosemary is no longer *one* (if she ever was). Instead, her body, her conscious mind, her religious childhood – all sorts of potentially conflicting elements that make up her heterogeneous self – are making her practically a polyphonic battlefield.

In the second part of the novel Rosemary's pains get gradually worse, but Dr. Sapirstein never stops assuring that they are just a part of a "normal" pregnancy – they will go away soon. The ceaseless bodily pain deprives Rosemary of all her strength and initiative. She cannot keep in contact with her friends and drifts under the guardianship of Guy and the Castevets. An important turning point in the novel is the moment when Rosemary sees her image in the side of a toaster; she has been "chewing on a raw and dripping chicken heart – in the kitchen one morning at four-fifteen."[35] This signals Rosemary's degradation into a primitive, weak-willed *object* – a tool used by

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[32] RB, 99.
[33] RB, 99-100.
[34] RB, 96.
[35] RB, 123.

unconscious or unrecognised powers, instead of making conscious decisions by herself. Her counteraction is to organise a party for "young" people. ("This is a very special party. You have to be under sixty to get in," states Rosemary ironically.[36]) She fights to sustain some conscious control and sense of identity in the middle of the struggle raging both in her body and mind. Early in the novel, after all, Rosemary's dream conveys Mrs. Castevet's words: "Anybody! Anybody! [...] All she has to be is young, healthy, and not a virgin."[37] The Satanists have no regard for Rosemary's individuality, they are only interested in her body. The special terror in Rosemary's situation emerges from not being certain if one's body is really one's "own": fully possessed and controlled by the conscious personality. The demonic otherness is transferred from an external threat into symptoms of the internal division (the unclear borderline between "mind" and "body").

The second part gradually builds up a powerful tension between Rosemary's developing initiative and the efforts of the conspirators to keep her under control. Initially, Rosemary gains a remarkable victory by organising her party, rejecting the strange herbal potion Mrs. Castevet prepares for her (or, rather, for the demonic baby in her womb), and finally openly protesting against her treatment. The pain she has been suffering comes to an end at the very moment Rosemary is finally able to state her own will.[38] The conflict between "natural" and "unnatural," however, is not resolved; it is rooted in the inarticulate borderline between 'I' and 'not-I.' This conflict comes into a violent confrontation at last, when the Satanists capture Rosemary after her failed attempt to escape. As she is injected with an anaesthetic and begins to lose consciousness, she can finally see the "unnatural" in her situation: "This wasn't Natural Childbirth at all [...]." The reader can fill in the rest of the irony: neither was her baby going to be "Natural," and – ultimately – Rosemary's life and its discontinuities proved that she was quite "Unnatural," herself.

The third part of *Rosemary's Baby* is short when compared to the other two. It presents the denouement of the plot, and an *Anagnorisis*, a revelation of true identities. Rosemary has lost all her illusions concerning the people surrounding her; they are Others, their goals and values are radically different from hers. Her outburst is violent: "You're lying. You're witches. You're lying. You're lying! You're lying! *You're lying! You're lying! You're lying!*"[39] This is exactly what has been going on during most of the novel. After her realisation Rosemary is ready to adopt an active role – she has recognised who are her opponents, and can define herself by reacting against them. She hides the sedatives her guardians are treating her with, prays, dopes her guard, and arms herself with "the longest sharpest knife" she can find. She is actually behaving like a champion of faith, invoking the power of God in her

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[36] RB, 124.
[37] RB, 42.
[38] RB, 135.
[39] RB, 187.

desperate venture: "*Oh Father in heaven, forgive me for doubting! Forgive me for turning from you, Merciful Father, and help me, help me in my hour of need! Oh Jesus, dear Jesus, help me save my innocent baby!*"[40]

"HE'S MY CHILD" – FACING THE ENEMY

The most scathing irony, of course, has been saved for last. Rosemary's facing her "innocent baby" turns into a shock as she looks upon him/it – unable initially to decide *what* she has given birth to. "A tail! The buds of his horns! […] Those eyes! Like an animal's, a tiger's, not like a human beings! [/] He *wasn't* a human being, of course. He was – some kind of a half-breed."[41] Rosemary had suppressed all suggestions of herself being involved with some forms of otherness even when she was pumping "thin faintly-green fluid that smelled ever so slightly of tannis root" from her breasts.[42] The figure of the demonic child finally makes it emphatically clear that she cannot escape from otherness without destroying herself and everything she loves.[43] Rosemary is dramatically acting out the break or rupture in the structure of subjectivity; in her case the problem of identity is intertwined with questions of religion, which makes the demonic imagery especially appropriate. The potential for internal conflicts in the constitution of self, however, lies at a more general level, inherent already in our acquisition of language. A child is the traditional image of innocence; the demonic child is a startling reminder that this "innocence" is a cultural construction. In the (post)modern world of *Rosemary's Baby* there no longer exists pure Nature, untainted by the uncertainties of language (or culture). The demonic baby with its "buds of horns" and "tiger's eyes" is a powerful image of the threatening and thrilling potentials of transformation in the human make-up. It is a symbol of borderline existence: the impulses from the body ("the animal") or from the collective unconscious ("the supernatural") are constantly threatening the conception of a unified, autonomous subject. The disturbing strains in the demonic baby go, in other words, much deeper than would be explained just by referring to the "shock value" which the novel may have created in the tense, but perhaps more innocent atmosphere of the 1960s.

The interpretation of conflicting heterogeneity as the key element in *Rosemary's Baby* can be amplified by reference to its discursive heterogeneity. The most important subtext in the novel is that concerned with the legends surrounding the Antichrist. Bernard McGinn has followed the development of this tradition from the third century B.C.E. to the present in his

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[40] RB, 192.

[41] RB, 202.

[42] RB, 189.

[43] Rosemary considers this possibility: "The thing to do was kill it. Obviously. Wait till they were all sitting at the other end, then run over, push away Laura-Louise, and grab it and throw it out the window. And jump out after it. *Mother Slays Baby and Self at Bramford.*" But a personal pronoun is quickly displacing "it"; "He was her baby, no matter who the father was. […] Killing was wrong, no matter what." (RB, 202.)

study *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (1994). The Antichrist has been used to direct fear and hatred towards some powerful external enemies, but early on, the real meaning of the Antichrist was to be found "among us," from within. According to McGinn, this is something that has been insisted on by the early Church Fathers, through medieval poets down to modern novelists and psychologists.[44] The special dread associated with this figure comes from the "Antichrist's" necessary intimacy with "Christ" – the most dangerous enemy is the one who masquerades as a friend, the most dangerous lie the one which is almost indistinguishable from the truth. McGinn illustrates this with a quotation from the Letters of John:

> Children, it is the last hour [*eschatê hôra*]. You heard that Antichrist is to come: well, now many Antichrists have made their appearance, and this makes us certain that it really is the last hour. It was from our ranks that they went out – not that they really belonged to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us […]. Who, then, is the Liar? None other than the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such is the Antichrist [*ho antichristos*]: the person who denies the Father and the Son.[45]

This is the first occasion this concept has been used, and the context is one of internal division: there had been a severe split among John's followers (circa 100 C.E.), and the letters were written against these "false Christs and false prophets." Elaine Pagels's study *The Origin of Satan* also emphasises how Satan was perceived in his most hateful form in other Christian sects.[46] The figure of Antichrist traditionally crystallises into itself the motifs of rebellion, blasphemy, and deception;[47] it is interesting to see how *Rosemary's Baby* rearticulates this element in its modern narrative.

When the demonic baby (the "half-breed") is introduced in the final climax of the novel, the language starts to show signs of heterogeneity. The normal prose is infected with the capitalised language of myth, ritual and doctrine:

> She looked at them watching her and knife-in-hand screamed at them, '*What have you done to his eyes?*'
> They stirred and looked to Roman.
> 'He has His Father's eyes,' he said.
> […]
> 'Satan is His Father, not Guy,' Roman said. '*Satan* is His Father, who came up from Hell and begat a Son of mortal woman! To avenge the iniq-

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[44] McGinn 1994, 4.
[45] 1 John 2:18a-19d, 22; McGinn uses Raymond E. Brown's translation (*The Epistles of John*, 1982; Ginn 1994, 55).
[46] See above, p. 40-41.
[47] McGinn 1994, 43.

uities visited by the God worshippers upon His never-doubting follow-
ers!'
   [...]
   'Go look at His hands,' Minnie said. 'And His feet.'
   'And His tail,' Laura-Louise said.
   'And the buds of His horns,' Minnie said.
   'Oh God,' Rosemary said.
   'God's dead,' Roman said. [...] *'God is dead and Satan lives! The year is*
One, the first year of our Lord! The year is One, God is done! The year is
One, Adrian's begun!'[48]

The contrast between contemporary reality and religious myth is so
profound, that the text achieves its most blasphemous effects just by com-
bining these two. Rosemary's pain and anxiety are mixed with the farcical
comments of elderly ladies singing the praises of a mutant baby's tiny horns
or his tail. Stephen King remembers a student comment when he was teach-
ing the book at the University of Maine to an undergraduate class: "ten
years later Rosemary's baby would be the only kid on his Little League team
who needed a custom-tailored baseball cap."[49] The strength of the reader's
identification with the tormented Rosemary enables one to read even this
combination of incompatible elements; the demonic child is not presented
as an unconnected element. Instead, it focuses all of Rosemary's fears, un-
certainties and contradictions into one figure. The Satanic chanting and the
praise to the Antichrist give the confrontation with otherness a discursive
shape. The farcical dissonances make sure that the mythical Other is not ar-
ticulated as totally alien and detached. The final irony lies in Rosemary's
(relatively easy) acceptance of the demonic, when she has finally been al-
lowed to face it, and to see the otherness for what it is.
   Rosemary's thoughts find ways to accommodate her sentiments for the
little demon: "He couldn't be *all* bad, he just *couldn't*. Even if he was half Sa-
tan, wasn't he half *her* as well, half decent, ordinary, sensible, human be-
ing?"[50] Rosemary remains an ambiguous figure even at the end of the novel.
She is seduced to join the Satan's party through her desire to be a mother,
desire to love. At the same time, she is decisively not a victim any more; she
attains a position of authority, and gives the baby a name of her own choos-
ing. "His name is Andrew John. He's my child, not yours, and this is one

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[48] RB, 198-99.
[49] King 1981/1987, 335. – The future fortunes of Rosemary's baby did not trouble only
this student; in 1997, Ira Levin finally published a sequel that offers a closure (sort of) to
the original story. *Son of Rosemary* updates the milieu to that of year 1999, and links the
Antichrist narrative to Millenarian concerns. The paranoia and anxiety of Rosemary's
ambiguity in relations to 'significant others' have remained the same. The final resolution
transforms this sequel into a classical Oedipal fantasy, and may be deemed as betraying
the tenets of the original novel. The 1990s' context shows an increased tolerance towards
'taboo' areas (such as incest, sexuality in general, or drugs) and, subsequently, the relative
lack of interesting tensions connected to these areas.
[50] RB, 204.

point that I'm not going to argue about. This and the clothes. He can't wear black all the time.'[51] The oppositions between what is natural and unnatural (the supernatural, the bestial, all that is rejected from the "normal") break down as the demonic is brought into a dialogue with the conscious and the ordinary. In this sense Satan's baby in Manhattan is able to articulate very well some of the different conflicts and uncertainties lurking in the construction of a modern self.

To summarise the analysis in this chapter, I conclude that *Rosemary's Baby* supports the view that the demonic functions in modern horror in intimate relation to the problematic differentiation/undifferentiation of the self from the Other. The independent, modern and secular identity of Rosemary Woodhouse is attacked and questioned by the demonic otherness both from outside and within her self. In the novel's ambiguous ending, Rosemary is able to find herself as an active agent reacting against the witches, the external threat. At the same time, however, she has to face the otherness from within; her demonic baby is a "half-breed" of herself and the mythical Other. The heterogeneity of the baby articulates the hidden tensions and insecurities structuring her "modern" self. Some of the borderlines between myth and reality, old and new, good and evil are shockingly transgressed and, in this process, their existence as significant cultural categories are both questioned and reconfirmed.

    The next chapter continues such explorations, but without the humour that Levin's novel was still capable of displaying.

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[51] RB, 205.

6. *The Inarticulate Body:*
Demonic Conflicts in The Exorcist

> Several years ago I set out to write a novel that would not only excite and entertain (sermons that put one to sleep are useless), but would also make a positive statement about God, the human condition, and the relationship between the two.

<div align="right">

– W.P. Blatty[1]

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INTRODUCING THE EVIL

The Exorcist (1971; "E") by William Peter Blatty, one of horror's all time greatest bestsellers, starts off with three quotations and three names. The first quotation is from the Bible, from the famous possession narrative in the gospel of Luke (8:27-30). The second is an excerpt from a FBI recording of two Mafia killers laughing and discussing how they had hung their victim on a meat hook and tortured him with electric shocks for three days before the victim died. The third quotation is an account of the communist atrocities towards Christians during the Vietnam war: a priest having eight nails driven into his skull, a praying teacher and his pupils executed in equally cruel and suggestive ways.[2] The three names which follow are Dachau, Auschwitz, and Buchenwald.

    The Exorcist can be read as a relentless exploration of evil, and as an argument advocating religious interpretation of it: evil as a supernatural, malevolent power that is actively operating in our world. The first quotation establishes the general framing of the novel as Christian; the evil is situated and discussed in the Christian tradition, having the demonic possession as its central topos. The second connects the ancient theme of evil as the mythical adversary with contemporary evils: the Mafia and Communism (in the third quotation). The extreme cruelty of criminals and Vietnamese soldiers are paralleled and thereby associated with the inhuman evil power that Jesus was confronting in the possessed man. The violence in these epigraphs is shocking; it is beyond what most people would be able to imagine, even if they have become used to reports of war and crime. They force the reader into an emotional reaction, and legitimise the use of the term "evil" in the

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[1] As quoted in Travers - Reiff 1974, 9.

[2] Dr. Thomas Dooley's report of his experiences of treating refugees from North Vietnam were published in his book, *Deliver Us from Evil* (1956).

contemporary culture, when we are more likely to expect psychological, social or historical explanations, not references to the religious idea of supernatural evil. In this context, the names of Nazi concentration camps operate as statements, too. They affect the reader by evoking images of systematic extermination of men, women and children by a modern, Western state. The overall effect of this opening to the novel is twofold: it establishes the religious position and brings the dilemma of evil into a contemporary and realistic context. On the other hand, the gesture works also in the other direction: contemporary horrors are also made mythical and alien. The criminals and Communists are grouped with Nazis to evoke the mythical figure of the opponent, the demonised Other of Christianity.

The tension between the religious or mythical level and the demand of realism is central to *The Exorcist*. It contributes significantly to the particular, striking effect this book and the subsequent film (1973, directed by William Friedkin) have on the audience. The narrative structure of the novel is seemingly simple, and hides many important complexities that invigorate it at a thematic level. To grasp the attention of the secularised, modern audience with a narrative dealing with the devil and demons, *The Exorcist* employs every available means to make the incredible credible, and to suspend disbelief. The novel is relatively well researched. The basic symptoms of possession, as well as the ritual of exorcism, and the supernatural occurrences during it, are based on documents and accounts of such cases from the history of the Catholic church. Blatty himself presents his role as a documentarian: "I don't think I had anything consciously to do with formulating the plot for *The Exorcist*. The only real work I consciously did was on researching the symptomology of possession and the medical information."[3] Also, when producing his book as a movie, Blatty strongly supported William Friedkin as the director because of his solid live television and documentary experience; Blatty wanted *The Exorcist* to have a "look of documentary realism," and Friedkin was able to provide it.[4] Questions of the mythical and the actual, of faith and disbelief, are inscribed into the tensions that structure *The Exorcist*, and contribute to its numerous demonic conflicts.

THE REAL ENEMY

The pursuit of "authenticity" and the interrelated degree of belief invested in the supernatural phenomena described in the novel and the movie make *The Exorcist* quite a special case in the history of modern horror. It is a religious work of art, but – one might say – a perverted one. It does try to make an apologetic statement about the existence of God but very indirectly; instead of affirming the good, it employs demonology and the Catholic Christian tradition to convince the reader and the film audience of the continuous influence of supernatural evil. The jacket blurb for the original US edition of

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[3] Travers - Reiff 1974, 16.
[4] Ibid., 28.

The Exorcist prominently displayed the author's personal background: William Peter Blatty was educated at Jesuit schools and at Georgetown University. The origin of the novel is in those years, as Blatty was given the topic of demonic possession for an oratorical assignment by his professor, Father Thomas Bermingham (a Jesuit).[5] An article about a contemporary case of possession (a fourteen-year old boy from Mount Rainier, in 1949) especially arrested young Blatty's imagination.[6] Later, as he began writing *The Exorcist* he interviewed the priest who had performed this exorcism, and studied other cases. Members of the Church informed Blatty, and they were also involved in making the movie; the Reverend Bermingham acted the part of the president of the Georgetown University, the Reverend William O'Malley (S.J.) was enlisted as Father Dyer in the film, and the Reverend John J. Nicola (S.J.), the assistant director of the National Shrine, as the exorcism expert on the set. Father Nicola was at the time the priest who acted on behalf of the Catholic Church in investigating potential cases of diabolical possession and deciding the proper procedure.[7] The opinions of the Church about *The Exorcist* were divided, but one can accurately characterise it as an important modern Catholic work – even if it is a personal and controversial rather than an official aspect of Catholicism which it expounds.[8] The last page in the book is titled "About the Author," and it states that W.P. Blatty is the former "Policy Brand Chief of the U.S. Air Force Psychological Warfare Division." Everything underlines Blatty's serious commitment to study de-

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[5] Ibid., 16.

[6] The documents pertaining to this case have been declared secret by the Catholic Church. However, Farther Nicola (assisting on the filming of *The Exorcist*) had access to this information; Thomas B. Allen, in his *Possessed: The True Story of An Exorcism* (1993), documents the sources he has used in this novelistic reconstruction of the original case (Allen 1994, 251-80).

[7] Travers - Reiff 1974, 82.

[8] Peter Travers and Stephanie Reiff report the strong reactions to *The Exorcist* as follows: "Public reaction to the novel ranged from Jane Wyman's taking her priest to task for recommending the novel, to the adoption of the novel as required reading in some Catholic high schools. Lay Catholic publications divided on the question of the book's accuracy. Their dissension was based upon a theological difference of opinion. Blatty's fan mail also ran the gamut – priests wrote to thank him for helping them resolve a problem of faith, many lay Catholics accused him of plunging the Church back into the Middle Ages, and others longed to borrow the instruments of punishment from that same period. But whether the response was positive or negative, one fact emerged – the book remained the topic of many cocktail party 'sermons'" (ibid., 21). – Other reports describe people frequently fainting in screenings, several heart attacks and one miscarriage were reported. According to Stephen Jones, "in Berkeley, California, a man attacked the screen attempting to kill the demon. The number of people seeking psychiatric help increased, church attendance began to rise dramatically, and violence broke out at many screenings." The film was presented in Rome to a Vatican audience, and Blatty has drawn his own conclusions: "The Pope did make a statement shortly after the release of *The Exorcist* reaffirming the Church's position on the existence of Satan as a supreme and intelligent force of evil. I'm sure that had something to do with *The Exorcist*." (Barker - Jones 1997, 41.) Some reassessments of the film (relating to its recent re-release as the "most terrifying film ever") can be found in Kermode 1998.

monic possession as reality: "Mr. Blatty has read every book in English on the subject. [...] In spite of scientific advances since [1921], the subject remains ultimately speculative."[9]

As a work of horror, the popularity of *The Exorcist* was unprecedented: the novel sold over twelve million copies in the US alone, and with the movie version the audience for this exorcism grew to over one hundred million.[10] The critical response has concentrated on the film; with its spectacular special effects and avoidance of theological speculations (those figure more prominently in the novel), the movie has evoked strongly negative estimations. Its starting point, the existence and influence of non-human evil, was dismissed as intellectually un-acceptable, and critics refused to discuss the film on its own terms (something that religious communities were eager to do): *The Exorcist* was dismissed as a sensationalist, hollow exploitation of the dark side of the Catholic tradition.[11] James Twitchell, in his history of the modern horror film, *Dreadful Pleasures* (1985), situates *The Exorcist* in a wider context of modern horror, and notes how it was one of a whole subgenre of works presenting children as incarnations of evil – *Rosemary's Baby* being here the central breakthrough of the subgenre, even if the motif predates it.[12] As mentioned earlier, Stephen King connects the "Exorcist phenomenon" to the conservative fear of the young generation: the profanities

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[9] E, "About the Author." The serious commitment to the battle with Evil was apparent also during the filming of *The Exorcist*; a catholic priest would read a blessing of protection (against evil) as the opening procedure at every shooting location. The declared reason for this was psychological. "Blatty knew that involving the cast and crew in the machinations of the diabolical held open the possibility of malevolent suggestion." (Travers - Reiff 1974, 64.) However, the immersion in Catholicism went quite far – director Friedkin, a non-practising Jew, in one case received Holy Communion with the believers (basically an act of sacrilege; ibid., 33). On the other hand, the theological goals were ambiguously related to the aim to make a blockbuster horror movie; Friedkin states that in editing *The Exorcist* "every attempt has been made to underplay the metaphysics and play up the horror" (ibid., 118).

[10] Sutherland 1981, 30.

[11] Some critical examples: "No more nor less than a blood and thunder horror movie, foundering heavily on the rocks of pretension" (Tom Milne, *Monthly Film Bulletin*); "Spectacularly ludicrous mishmash with uncomfortable attention to physical detail and no talent for narrative or verisimilitude. Its sensational aspects, together with a sudden worldwide need for the supernatural, assured its enormous commercial success" (Leslie Halliwell, *Halliwell's Film Guide*). The emphatically negative perception dominates even contemporary cultural and film studies: "[...] not only is *The Exorcist* a pretentious and rather dull horror film, it displays a remarkably crude conservatism which distinguishes it from more general developments in the genre" (Jancovich 1992, 93).

[12] Twitchell gives as his examples *Village of the Damned* and *Children of the Damned* (based on the *The Midwitch Cuckoos* by John Wyndham), *The Devil Within Her, Fear No Evil, The Haunting of Julia, Possession, The Omen* (*I, II* and *III*), *To the Devil … A Daughter, Grave of the Vampire, Eraserhead, It's Alive, It Lives Again, The Brood, Inseminoid, Scared to Death, The Intruder Within, The Exorcist, The Heretic, Audrey Rose, The Manitou, Demon Witch Child, The Stranger Within, The Sentinel,* and *Alien.* (Twitchell 1985, 297-301.) Many of these suggest even with their names that the evil child expresses a particularly "internal" mode of horror.

and blasphemies spewed out by the possessed girl, Regan, made her a per-
sonification of the disavowal of traditional values by contemporary teenag-
ers.[13] Also John Sutherland, in his study of bestsellers, thinks that the popu-
larity of *The Exorcist* can be best explained by the breaking up of the taboos
concerning children and sexuality. A horror novel or film was a form of
adult culture, offering new ways to explore fears and frustrations about chil-
dren.[14] As a Hollywood screenwriter, William Blatty consciously adopted
the film to supply important context and content for *The Exorcist*. Robin
Wood has studied how the particular "economy of otherness" is always in-
formed by economical and ideological concerns of the film companies in
Hollywood.[15] Apart from film studies, criticism has not been very interested
in this work. Such surveys of the horror literature as *The Gothic Tradition in
Fiction* (1979) by Elizabeth MacAndrew or *The Literature of Terror* (1980)
by David Punter do not deal with *The Exorcist* at all. Such a recent textbook
as Fred Botting's *Gothic* (1996) does not accept Blatty's work into its bibli-
ography.

   The Exorcist is able to provoke strong reactions, and the critical dis-
missal is perhaps one symptom of the particular manner in which the de-
monic is employed. Rosemary Jackson, in her discussion of the subversive
potentials of the fantastic, renounces the "moral and religious allegories" of
"faery," or romance literature (in the best-selling fantasies of C.S. Lewis,
J.R.R. Tolkien and Ursula Le Guin, for example) and claims that they move
away from "the unsettling implications which are found at the centre of the
purely 'fantastic'" into some religious longing or nostalgia. She writes that
this popular fantasy thus defuses "potentially disturbing, anti-social drives"
and retreats from any "profound confrontation with existential dis-ease."[16]
Because of the (supposedly) "reactionary" political-religious agenda of *The
Exorcist* it is perhaps hard to come to terms with the ways its transgressions
operate – the Enlightenment project of scientific emancipation from "super-
stitions" is the complete opposite of the goals of this work. Jackson's evolu-
tion of the demonic from an external power into an aspect of self, "self *as
other*" (see above, chapter four), is reversed in Blatty's narrative; the mature

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[13] See King 1981/1987, 196-7. In her study of the generation gap, *Culture and Com-
mitment* (1970), Margaret Mead characterises the 1960s as a time of rupture in the area of
shared values in the American society; the dominant feeling among the younger genera-
tion was that the previous generation could not give any reliable guidelines for moral
choices (Barnouw 1963/1973, 454). The question of a generation gap is addressed in the
opening pages of *The Exorcist*: the sensibility of Regan's mother is characterised by her
instinctual rejection of the empty "slogans" and stupidity of the student insurrections.
"*How come?* she now wondered. *Generation gap? That's a crock; I'm thirty-two. It's just
plain dumb, that's all, it's …!*" (E, 13). William G. Doty has written how periods of
cultural fragmentation threaten social structures and may produce a conservative
reaction, "leading to an almost magical reaffirmation" of the mythical order (Doty 1986,
26). This debate on order and chaos is incorporated as an element in *The Exorcist*.
[14] Sutherland 1981, 59-68.
[15] Wood 1986, especially pp. 70-94.
[16] Jackson 1981, 9.

acceptance of otherness as an element of the self is contrasted with the mature acceptance of the existence of the unacceptable. The religious self structuring the psychic drama of *The Exorcist* is based on the incompatibility of good and evil: it is an ethical and existential imperative for such a selfhood to prohibit good and evil from blending. Any attempt to understand a religious work from inside the scientific tradition should hold this in mind: words like "truth" and "knowledge" are thematised differently, and moral values (the existence of absolute Good, as well as Evil) are not just arguments to be proved or disproved – their existence stands as the most fundamental foundation of the religious mind. The operation of the demon in *The Exorcist* can be approached from this starting point.

ANXIETIES IN THE MALE GOTHIC

"Religious longing" and "potentially disturbing, anti-social drives" both drive *The Exorcist*, and contributing to its tensions. The possession of Regan takes the form of gradually intensifying transgressions and transformations: a pretty eleven-year-old with furry animals and freckles metamorphoses into a foul-mouthed being with sinister powers and malevolent intelligence. Possession is in this process connected with adolescence, problems with school, carelessness with one's clothes, then to awakening sexuality and "adult" language. The biological foundations of a human being are encountered in the form of the body, bodily functions and transformations of the body, as in growing up, getting old, and falling sick. The disturbing and "anti-social" dimensions of human existence are confronted and they are given a name and a voice – or rather, *voices*, as the demonised otherness is especially threatening in its chaotic plurality. In a manner firmly within the Gothic tradition, *The Exorcist* engages in transgressive and potentially subversive displays, such as the possessed girl masturbating with a crucifix, in order to re-establish normal order and a religious ideology in the end. This feature of the Gothic has been likened to that of pornography: it tends to "buttress a dominant, bourgeois, ideology, by vicarious wish fulfilment through fantasies of incest, rape, murder, parricide, social disorder."[17] *The Exorcist* is also a clear example of the Male Gothic tradition, as defined by Anne Williams; it has multiple points of view, it insists on the supernatural as a "reality" of its narrative universe, it has a tragic plot and it focuses on the possessed Regan, on her tortured and mutating female body, as an object observed with a horrified, male eye/I. The daimonic, threatening impulses take the form of a female demon in the male psyche, as Joseph Andriano has argued. A male reading of this horror fantasy has to be aware of the underlying pursuit of symbolic and psychic unity, ask whether it is achieved in the text, and – if it is – at what cost.

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[17] Ibid., 175. See also Williams 1995, 106.

The most significant opponent of the demon in the ritual of exorcism is the priest; he stands for the Church, and exercises the apostolic authority granted by Christ to cast out unclean spirits in his name.[18] The relationship between Father Karras, the Jesuit and the modern man, and the possessed child brings forward the most acute conflicts empowering the demonic in the novel. The conflicts are framed as universal – *The Exorcist* opens with a section in Iraq, as Father Merrin confronts signs of "that Other who ravaged his dreams," embodied in a statue of the demon Pazuzu.[19] In another narrative continuum, Regan's mother, actress Chris MacNeil faces "the ancient enemy" as well in a dream, about death: "she was gasping, dissolving, slipping off into void, thinking over and over, *I am not going to be, I will die, I won't be, and forever and ever* […]."[20] The warring mind of Father Karras incorporates these two fears, the demon of "sickness and disease" with the existential fear of meaninglessness of life without the transcendental. He has lost his faith, and the lack of supernatural salvation makes the materiality, the cruelty and the imperfection of the world unbearable.

> [Karras:] "[…] *I'm having problems of my own. I mean, doubts.*"
> "*What thinking man doesn't, Damien?*"
> A harried man with many appointments, the Provincial had not pressed him for the reasons for his doubt. For which Karras was grateful. He knew that his answers would have sounded insane: *The need to rend food with the teeth and then defecate. My mother's nine First Fridays. Stinking socks. Thalidomide babies. An item in the paper about a young altar boy waiting at a bus stop; set on by strangers; sprayed with kerosene; ignited.* No. Too emotional. Vague. Existential. More rooted in the logic was the silence of God. In the world there was evil. And much of the evil resulted from doubt; from an honest confusion among men of good will. Would a reasonable God refuse to end it? Not reveal Himself? Not speak?
> "*Lord, give us a sign….*"
> The raising of Lazarus was dim in the distant past. No one now living had heard his laughter.
> *Why not a sign?* […]
> The yearning consumed him.[21]

The principal task of religion in Karras's mind is to transgress the material universe: his Manichaean version of Catholicism perceives the material world as a series of humiliations for a spiritual being. The images that are

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[18] See Matt. 10:1; Mk. 6:7; Lk. 9:1. – It should be pointed out, that from the Christian perspective the mere name of Jesus is not enough (actual faith is needed); "The Acts of the Apostles" narrates how some Jewish exorcists tried to use Jesus' name, but were beaten by the demoniac (Acts 19:13-16). (On the other hand, see also Lk. 9:49-50.)

[19] E, 5, 7. – Previously an obscure ancient god/demon, Pazuzu has become a prominent symbol of the Other, because of this appearance in *The Exorcist*. See, e.g. the appearances in Clive Barker's play and Christopher Moore's novel (discussed below, pp. 195 and 287).

[20] E, 14.

[21] E, 48-49. The italics in the original.

torturing him are significantly lacking in human warmth. Julia Kristeva, in her study of abjection, points out the complexities involving the borders of the body in the establishment of subjectivity: the body extricates itself from dead matter, waste, defilement, shit, and the subject perceives itself in this act of exclusion. According to Kristeva, this demarcation of the abject from what will be a subject and its objects is primal. The subject experiences discomfort, unease and dizziness in the face of original ambiguity: there has to be an Other before "me," "an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be."[22] This ambiguity is closely connected with the status of our human body. Kristeva also points out that abjection is an important power structuring all religious systems, and when Christian sin once integrated and named abjection into its totalising dialectic (of lapse and confession), the contemporary "crisis in Christianity" elicits "more archaic resonances that are culturally prior to sin."[23] This suggests some important lines of analysis in Father Karras's case.

THE ABJECT AREAS

The "*need to rend food with the teeth*" is an expression that does not just denote eating: it also alludes to the beastly inheritance of our biology. Thus, it thematises the heterogeneous borderline of human and animal. This sensitive division line becomes apparent later, in the course of Regan's possession. The expression "*defecate*" implies the abject impurity connected with the orifices of the human body; the openings of the body and the material moving into the body and issuing from the body confound the limit between the self and the other. As Bakhtin noted in his study of Rabelais, the mediaeval diableries engaged the ambivalence of bodily existence with grotesque, demonic forms – the mouth, the belly, the arse were exaggerated and combined with debasing gestures such as the slinging of excrement or drenching in urine. Bakhtin writes that "such debasing gestures and expressions are ambivalent, since the lower stratum is not only a bodily grave but also the area of the genital organs, the fertilizing and generating stratum."[24] Classical and the realistic aesthetics did not allow such expressions of the ambivalent and the monstrous, but in contemporary horror the diablerie returns – even in its grotesque-comical forms as in the outrageously funny violence of Peter Jackson's films.[25] The grotesque manifestations of the

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[22] Kristeva 1980/1982, 10.

[23] Ibid., 17.

[24] Bakhtin 1965/1984, 148. – Susan Bordo has outlined the history of the body as "alien," as the "not-self"; it is experienced as "confinement and limitation" (a "prison," a "swamp," a "cage," a "fog" are all used to characterise it in Plato, Augustine, and Descartes). The body is the enemy – "the body is the locus of *all that threatens our attempts at control*" (Bordo 1993, 144-45 [italics in the original]).

[25] The first one was (accurately) named as *Bad Taste* (1988). His third direction, *Braindead* (1992) carries the style ("zombie splatter") even further.

body and the "lower stratum" also have their ample expression in *The Exorcist*.

The particular interpretation given to the demonic in *The Exorcist* combines the ambivalent and abject dimensions of the liminal in subjectivity to religious thematics. All the wrongs and imperfections of the world are assembled together in Karras's stream-of-consciousness, until his mother's poverty, stinking socks and thalidomide babies lead in their random, carnivalesque logic to the expression of extreme evil: the cruel killing of "a young altar boy." Here, as well as in the last of the initial epigraphs, the religious interpretation of violence is suggested by its object. It is the violence towards an innocent child, and especially a *Christian* child that *The Exorcist* is highlighting. The implied reader should here pick up the cue, complete the suggested connection and come up with the religious answer to the problems of our existence – the spiritual, the Christian, the Good and the God are the implied opposites of the manifest reality (the material, the anti-Christian, the Evil, the devil). This is certainly what the protagonist, Father Karras, seems to be looking for. The actual reader is, of course, free to situate this answer in a wider interpretational context, and to "read against" the ways *The Exorcist* offers itself to be read. For a demonic text, such tensions in reading might even be imperative.

The demonic figures powerfully in the world of *The Exorcist*, and there are but few chances to overcome its dominion. It is the hellish world of the concentration camps' smoking furnaces that stands in the background of this drama. The continuous, unjustified suffering of the innocent is a central theme; in the sequel, *Legion* (1983), Blatty uses the same motif – a young black (and mute) Christian boy is crucified with extreme cruelty. Detective Kinderman (Kinder-Man, "children's-man": name suggesting a sympathetic character) is ready to pursue his search for the source of evil to the highest levels, literally: "*I will find your murderer, Thomas Kintry* [Kinderman thought]. Even if it were God."[26] This will open up another possibility for interpreting the transgressive excesses Regan's demonic possession will reach; the repressed anger towards God, the Father. Freud applied his theory of the Oedipal complex to the case of "demonological neurosis" to point out, firstly, that God is a father-substitute – "he is a copy of a father as he is seen and experienced in childhood" – and, secondly, that the Evil Demon personifies the corresponding feelings of fear and anger towards the father.[27] Father Damien Karras is a deeply demonic figure also under Freudian analysis: his thoughts reveal a male psyche torn between idealised childhood love towards God the Father, and the rage and humiliation evoked by the imperfections and evils that actual life turned out to be. A psychological interpretation at the level of character psychology would suggest that Karras's anger needs an outlet, and that the demon would offer a particularly suitable

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[26] Blatty 1983, 20-21.
[27] Freud SE 19, 85 (Freud 1923/1978). Ernest Jones discusses the Devil from the Freudian perspective in his *On the Nightmare* (1931/1959, 154-189).

way to attack the "unreasonable" father-figure, who refuses to answer, or to stop the evil.[28]

STRUCTURING THE FEAR

The narrative structure of *The Exorcist* is simple and efficient. It could be described as "cinematic"; the chapters are quite short and cut straight into the middle of action, the suspense is gradually developed, until some shock climaxes the narrative in the last lines. The next chapter moves the narrative focus elsewhere and starts building up the tension towards the next drama-turgical blow.[29] The book divides into six sections: Prologue ("Northern Iraq"), the first part ("The Beginning," three chapters), the second part ("The Edge", five chapters), the third part ("The Abyss," two chapters), the fourth part ("'And let my cry come unto thee…,'" one chapter), and the Epilogue. The Prologue is loaded with ominous details and builds historical perspective: it is situated by the ruins of Biblical Nineveh. The first part re-locates the omens in contemporary America. Regan's mother hears rapping sounds from the attic: "Alien code tapped by a dead man," is the metaphor used by the narrator.[30] After introducing Chris, Regan and their social mi-lieu, and, in a separate thread, Father Karras, the part concludes with the first manifestly supernatural occurrence: Regan is shaken violently in her bed as the mattress starts to quiver.[31] The second part builds Regan's posses-sion into a demonic spectacle step by step: Regan calls her father a "cock-sucker" and remembers nothing of it afterwards;[32] she undergoes thorough medical and psychiatric examinations and is diagnosed as suffering from a rare "syndrome," named as "somnambuliform possession."[33] Her beastly symptoms appear in increasingly violent and spectacular forms; in the first scene she adopts the demonic voice and calls herself (or the demon calls Re-gan's body) a swine:

> "The sow is *mine*!" she bellowed in a coarse and powerful voice. "She is *mine*! Keep away from her! She is *mine*!"
> A yelping laugh gushed up from her throat, and then she fell on her back as if someone had pushed her. She pulled up her nightgown, exposing

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[28] The connection between blasphemy and unconscious "rebellion" is discussed in the novel; someone had desecrated the church and left a typewritten account of "an imagined homosexual encounter involving the Blessed Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene," in per-fect church Latin. A "very sick priest" is suspected, Father Karras is interviewed, and soon after that he is relieved of his duties as counselor and ordered to "rest." (E, 90-91.)

[29] Shock, violence and transgressive behaviour has always been an important feature of possession phenomena. Shock effects were adopted into possession films already in the first representative of the genre, the Yiddish *Dybuk* by Michael Waszynski (1937; see Paxton - Toradello 1993). About the subliminal images used in the special effects of *The Exorcist*, see Lucas - Kermode 1991, and Kermode 1991.

[30] E, 12.

[31] E, 79.

[32] E, 94.

[33] E, 166.

her genitals. "*Fuck* me! *Fuck* me!" she screamed at the doctors, and with both her hands began masturbating frantically.

Moments later, Chris ran from the room with a stifled sob when Regan put her fingers to her mouth and licked them.[34]

Regan also meows like a cat, barks like a dog, neighs like a horse, and – to complete the demonic association with the "lower" animal kingdom – she walks "spiderlike," body arched backwards with her head almost touching her feet, "her tongue flicking quickly in and out of her mouth while she hissed sibilantly like a serpent."[35] The initially sketched family with its signs of "normalcy" (the divorced mother and a perhaps pampered daughter) acts as the background, which is contrasted with the shocking figure that reverses the normal configuration. A child, as culturally taboo in connection with sexuality, is sexualised; the innocent is thereby presented as somehow "corrupted," and evil. The structure of accumulating shocks exploits the same principle of inversion elsewhere, too. The second part introduces the traditional detective plot with the murder of director Dennings and the entrance of aforementioned detective Kinderman. Burke Dennings is found dead at the feet of steep stairs under Regan's window, his head turned completely around, facing backward.[36] Detective Kinderman connects the peculiar death with the recent desecrations of churches; this hypothesis is further certified as the expert (Father Karras) and an excerpt from a "scholarly work on witchcraft," inserted in the text, recount as historical truths some of the most sexually striking witchcraft fantasies connected with Satanism and Black Mass.[37] The manner of Dennings's death is linked to the way the "de-

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[34] E, 107-8.

[35] E, 118-19.

[36] E, 146.

[37] E, 144-45, 157. As discussed in chapter one, such critically acclaimed scholars as Norman Cohn approach most witchcraft fantasies as culturally powerful myths about frightening "others" among us; the descriptions of the sexually perverse orgies are formulaic, not verified by reliable evidence, and preserved and reproduced in literature (Cohn 1975/1993, 73-5). The popularity of such works as *Rosemary's* Baby or The *Exorcist* can be also connected with the combination of American forms of paranoia and fundamentalist religiosity; since the 1960s stories of Satanism in the USA began gaining more and more weight, until in the 1980s it surfaced in the form of accusations and trials. Debbie Nathan and Michael Snedeker describe in their book the widespread belief in the claim that there exists "a massive conspiracy of secret satanist cults that have infiltrated everywhere in the society, from the CIA to police stations to judges' chambers and churches. The devil worshippers have even secreted themselves in day-care centers and preschools, the story goes, where they pose as teachers." During the ensuing legal proceedings children's testimonies "typically included accounts of being raped and sodomized with weapons and other sharp objects […], of participating in the slaughter of animals and human infants, of being kidnapped in vans, boats, and airplanes, of hearing threats that their parents would be killed if the abuse were disclosed, and of suffering these tortures while the perpetrators engaged in devil-worshipping rituals." (Nathan - Snedeker 1995, 1-2.) Gerald Messadié states that "what the American Satanist myths reveal most clearly is a collective mental crisis." The sort of media interest bestowed on these cases suggest that "the myth of Satan serves only as the pretext for pornography,

mons broke the necks of witches," to the "demonic assassins," the desecrations, and the idea of a "sick priest."[38] The inversion of Christianity is given literal embodiment in the inversion of the head – the physical violence and sexual perversity are connected with evil. Implicitly, the opposite of evil is defined as non-physical (the spiritual) and as definitely non-sexual. There are no positive sexual relations described in *The Exorcist*.[39]

RAPING A CHILD

The second part is climaxed by the novel's most striking shock, the scene which has become the hallmark of *The Exorcist* in its abject sexuality and violence. The original personality of Regan makes its last verbal attempt to resist the power of possessing evil; the penetration of a religious element into Regan's body has been given a painful expression in the following key section:

> [...] Regan, her legs propped up and spread wide on a bed that was violently bouncing and shaking, clutched the bone-white crucifix in raw-knuckled hands, the bone-white crucifix poised at her vagina, the bone-white crucifix she stared at with terror, eyes bulging in a face that was bloodied from the nose, the nasogastic tubing ripped out.
>
> "Oh, please! Oh, no, *please*!" she was shrieking as her hands brought the crucifix closer; as she seemed to be straining to push it away.
>
> "You'll do as I *tell* you, filth! You'll *do* it!"
>
> The threatening bellow, the words, came from *Regan*, the voice coarse and guttural [...].
>
> [...]
>
> Then abruptly the demonic face once more possessed her, now filled her, the room choking suddenly with a stench in the nostrils, with an icy cold that seeped from the walls as the rappings ended and Regan's piercing cry of terror turned to a guttural, yelping laugh of malevolent spite and rage triumphant while she thrust down the crucifix into her vagina and began to masturbate ferociously, roaring in that deep, coarse, deafening voice, "Now you're *mine*, now you're *mine*, you stinking cow! You bitch! Let Jesus *fuck* you, *fuck* you!"
>
> Chris stood rooted on the ground in horror, frozen, her hands pressing tight against her cheeks as again the demonic laugh cackled joyously, as Regan's vagina gushed blood onto sheets with her hymen, the tissues ripped.

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sadism, and [...] mythomaniacal fantasies" (Messadié 1993/1996, 317). The particular mixture of anger, loathing and prurient fascination suggest social and moral anxieties as well as circuitous means for satisfying suppressed desires. (For some social explanations, see Nathan - Snedeker 1995, 29-50.)

[38] E, 152-3.

[39] The only possible exception, Sharon's (Chris's "blonde secretary") relationship to her lawyer-boyfriend (the "horseman") is explicitly removed from family life into the (morally questionable) domain of something paid for and temporary; "Sharon needed a place to be alone, Chris then decided, and had moved her to a suite in an expensive hotel and insisted on paying the bill." (E, 24.)

> [...]
> [Chris] thought she saw hazily, in a swimming fog, her daughter's head turning slowly around on a motionless torso, rotating monstrously, inexorably, until at last it seemed facing backward.
> "Do you know what she *did*, your cunting daughter?" giggled an elfin, familiar voice.[40]

The outrageous violence towards a child has been designed to rouse anger towards the demonic perpetrator. When producing the movie version, Blatty himself advocated powerfully that the masturbation scene should be included: "That was the most horrible thing that came to my mind, and that's why it is in the film."[41] The combination of a girl's body, sexuality in the form of ambiguous rape/masturbation, murderous violence, and religious sacrilege mark the commencement of the possession proper, and guide the reading of demonic conflicts in the future. The scene also highlights the moral dilemmas facing the reader of Male Gothic fiction; the actions may be attributed to a demon, but it also subjects the female victim to sadistic sexual exploitation by a characteristically male villain. The violation is also graphically described and sanctioned by the male author, and directed to the gaze of the male-dominated horror audience. In the US, the counterreaction to pornography led into demonisation of male sexuality itself; "Fucking," the feminist critic Andrea Dworkin wrote in 1976, "is the means by which the male colonializes the female."[42] The grotesque and phallic figure of the demon Pazuzu hovers behind young Regan's bed; the actions of exorcising (male) priests around this same site of battle contribute to the interpretation of Evil in *The Exorcist* as demonised male sexuality. *The Exorcist* is first and foremost a work of horror, and it aims to unsettle the reader in various ways; demonic male sexuality has been an essential feature of the genre since *The Castle of Otranto* or *The Monk*. As an interpretation of the male self to the male audience, the Male Gothic evokes particular forms of abjection – ambivalent recognition of self in its other – that combine the fascinating and threatening dimensions of desire for a male reader. As Testa pointed out, desire is both an expression of the self, and potentially a destroyer of self. The uncanny movement between simultaneous male self-recognition and self-rejection empowers the demonic conflicts in *The Exorcist*.

In her book *The Monstrous-Feminine* (1993), Barbara Creed offers an alternative, feminist reading. She writes that in *The Exorcist* possession "becomes the excuse for legitimizing a display of aberrant feminine behaviour which is depicted as depraved, monstrous, abject – and perversely appeal-

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[40] E, 189-91.
[41] Travers - Reiff 1974, 83.
[42] Andrea Dworkin, "Sexual Economics: The Terrible Truth" (published in *Letters from a War Zone*, 1989); quoted in Nathan - Snedeker 1995, 41. For demonisation of males, see also a recent, provocative study, *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence* (Wrangham - Peterson 1996).

ing."[43] She raises the interesting question about the way *The Exorcist* uses woman's body to represent its central conflict. Her analysis of this conflict, however, is from my perspective quite disappointing. She has obviously not read the novel, and therefore builds her interpretation only on the material that found its way into the movie version.[44] Creed insists that the most central struggle in *The Exorcist* is "between men and women, the 'fathers' and the 'mothers.'"[45] To support this claim she heavily emphasises the role of some minor characters (old "hag" figures that do not appear in the original novel) and builds a theory that Regan is actually possessed by a "'female' devil" and that the source of the demonic could thereby be situated in the mother-child relationship. She defends this claim through the fact that the voice of the demon was that of actress Mercedes McCambridge, a woman.[46] The relationship between mother and a child holds special significance in *The Exorcist*, but Creed's interpretation, to my mind, almost completely ignores the most important aspects of the particular conflicts that empower the demonic in this work. Her interpretation is also somewhat unconvincing as a reading of the film: the masculine, phallic figure of the possessing demon (Pazuzu) is visibly displayed both in the beginning of the film, and made to appear behind the possessed Regan in the exorcism sequence.[47] Creed does not mention the significant amount of sickness portrayed in the connection of male figures: the trembling hands of old Father Merrin as he gropes for nitro-glycerine pills in the pain of his heart disease; the blind man being led; the man with a cataract in his one eye – just to mention some ex-

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[43] Creed 1993, 31.

[44] Creed writes of the masturbation scene that it "is not clear if the blood is menstrual or caused by self-mutilation although we do know that Regan has just entered puberty" (ibid., 35). The quoted section from the novel explicitly mentions that Regan's "vagina gushed blood onto sheets" because the tissues of her hymen had been ripped. This underlines the religious character of this particular form of violence (the Catholic prohibition of premarital sex and the mythical importance connected with feminine virginity being here the immediate concerns). Creed also supposes that Regan is celebrating her thirteenth birthday (ibid., 40) during the narrated episodes (actually twelfth).

[45] Ibid., 37.

[46] Ibid., 38-9. – The director's explanation for the use of female actor was that "I decided a woman should do the voice instead of a man because I felt it would be more in keeping with the fact that it was a little girl that was possessed" (Travers - Reiff 1974, 196).

[47] The essential and necessary connection of the demonic with the female becomes problematic also on other grounds. The original 1949 case of possession that Blatty was using was centred on a 14-year old boy. Blatty explains that he met with the exorcist of that case, and that afterwards the exorcist "wrote to me and implored that I not write anything that would connect the victim in the case to the material in my novel. I thought he was going far, far overboard, but I decided to change the character from a boy to a girl." (Travers - Reiff 1974, 17.) One might suspect that this is not the only reason; Blatty has here made a conscious choice to have a female victim subjected to the demonic male power, which is typical for the Male Gothic tradition. There are male child-demons in contemporary horror, as well. The cool menace emanating from little Damien (Father Karras's namesake) in *The Omen*, for example, nevertheless reveals even more clearly the carnivalesque power embodied by the figure of the possessed Regan.

amples from the first minutes of the movie version. The demonic in *The Exorcist* can not be reduced to the conflict between sexes, even if the female body and sexuality (both male and female) play special roles in it.

Statue of Pazuzu (Collections of Musée du Louvre).

"THE TROUBLE WITH THE SIGNS IN THE SKY"

The third part of the novel, "The Abyss," centres around Father Karras and his investigation. The problematic status of religion is thematised in Karras's search: he has to find evidence of a demon, a bad spirit, acting in Regan, but since he is a secularly trained scientist (a psychiatrist) as well as a priest, he always finds "natural" reasons for counterevidence. As he posits such "supernatural" phenomena as telepathy or telekinesis among "natural," not spiritual phenomena (they are studied by scientists as expressions of "paranormal" faculty or energy), his search for "genuine signs" is in danger of be-

coming futile. The role of different signs and omens is so central in *The Exorcist* that the whole work can be interpreted in those terms. Noël Carroll, in his *The Philosophy of Horror*, takes *The Exorcist* as his paradigmatic example of the "complex discovery plot": the classic structure underlying many narratives of horror (including *Dracula*, *Jaws*, *Carrie*, *The Omen* etc.). In this structure the opponent, such as a monster, or evil power, is assumed to be separate from the protagonists of the story. The plot divides into four phases or functions: onset, discovery, confirmation, and confrontation. The onset of horror gives the first signs of evil presence to the audience. In the phase of discovery the presence of the monster is revealed to someone in the story, but it yet has to be proved to yet another, initially sceptical party before the actual resistance can begin. This is what is accomplished during the confirmation phase, and the confrontation acts out the actual fight against the opponent figure.[48] Carroll situates the confirmation in *The Exorcist* in "The Abyss"; if the Prologue and the Epilogue are merged to the first and the last chapter, respectively, the remaining four parts of *The Exorcist* could well have functioned as the direct inspiration to Carroll's theory, so nicely they fit this model. The religious engagement with the opponent cannot start before the authority figure has been convinced – even if the medical authority in the second part had already ended up recommending the ritual of exorcism. As Carroll writes, "an extended drama of proof preoccupies the text."[49]

Karras, the psychiatrist, is concerned with the integrity of psyche – his goal is to study the demonic personality as an expression of Regan's psychic conflicts and find ways back to unity. Karras, the priest, is concerned with Regan's soul, the immortal nucleus of her self – his goal is to face the enemy and to expel it from the body it has misappropriated. On the surface, it seems that Regan is the one with problems and the one who has an element of her mind dissociated from its whole. Karras, however, is an equally divided personality, and because he is acting as the protagonist and the exorcising subject (Regan as his restrained object) his dilemmas of integrity and rejection, faith and knowledge relate in important ways to the central themes and structures of the work.[50]

The "drama of proof" is not confined to the third part of the novel. From the beginning, the reader is offered signs and omens that could suggest the presence and influence of supernatural evil. At the same time, the reader is also given contrary clues that suggest a "natural" explanation. These opposing elements in the text position reader into the divided and

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[48] Carroll 1990, 99-103.

[49] Ibid., 105.

[50] Blatty: "My typist had been working on the novel. She didn't offer any editorial comment, so halfway through I asked for her reaction. She said, 'They're after him.' I said, 'Who?' She said, 'You know, them. They're after Father Karras.' Well, she picked up on what half the readers do not – that it is Karras, not the little girl. Karras was going to be lost forever or he was going to be saved. This is his crucible." (Travers - Reiff 1974, 15.)

conflicting role that Father Karras then occupies as the reader's representative. For example, the early behaviour of possessed Regan and the initial manifestations of evil hint at psychological motivations, Regan's parents have divorced, she might be feeling unconscious guilt and, as well, the demonic first appears as a "fantasy playmate" named Captain Howdy (perhaps after "Howard," Regan's father).[51] The reader is also explicitly told that before the full-fledged possession phenomena start to manifest themselves, a book describing these matters "disappears" – supposedly Regan takes it and reads the descriptions.[52] The natural and supernatural explanations start warring. The dialectic between the unexplained and the possible answers is another important feature of horror; Carroll calls it "erotetic narration."[53] A horror story creates suspense and an important dimension in it is the unknown: the narrative evokes a series of questions in the reader, and his interest in the plot has much to do with the manner it answers these questions.[54] The medical, psychological and religious explanations form a three-partite structure in creating the "answer" of *The Exorcist*.

The medical answer suggests a biological explanation: Regan has some organic dysfunction in her body, like a brain lesion. The medical solution is articulated through the use of medical instruments and drugs. The graphical violence these physical remedies inflict on Regan's body are explored especially in the movie version: spinal fluid, mixed with blood, spurts during a lumbar puncture. The violent movements and noises of arteriographic machinery reach diabolical dimensions. The names of medication gain occult resonances: *Ritalin*, *Librium*.

In the next phase the occult character of healing rituals is underlined even further. The psychiatric treatment is staged as a session with Regan answering questions under hypnotic trance. The theme of diabolical inversion is evoked: the demonic personality gives his/her answers in English, but it is spoken backwards. No one (except perhaps the reader) notices the messages hidden in Regan's "gibberish" (decoded between the square brackets in the following dialogue):

> "Who are you?"
> "Nowonmai," she answered gutturally. ["I am No-one."]
> "That's your name?"
> She nodded.
> "You're a man?"
> She said, "Say." ["Yes."]
> […]
> "Where do you come from?"
> "Dog." ["God."]

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[51] E, 37.
[52] E, 104.
[53] Carroll 1990, 130-36.
[54] See also *Terrors of Uncertainty* (1989) by Joseph Grixti; this study adopts the Todorovian stance that cognitive uncertainty is central for the analysis of horror.

"You say you come from a dog?"
"Dogmorfmocion," Regan replied. ["No. I come from God."][55]

The inversion of "God" into "dog" exploits precisely that sort of blasphemous and carnivalesque possibilities that the demonic tradition seems to invite (see later, in the analysis of Clive Barker's play, for a similar case).[56] The serious and comical mix in a way that particularly points towards the ambivalent status of "holy," and may evoke disconcerting effects on a reader with (perhaps suppressed) religious sentiments. In *The Exorcist* the lines that the demonic voice delivers backwards seem to convey a more "truthful" or "deeper" knowledge about the demon and the condition of the possessed Regan (the speaker is in those cases either unconscious, or, as in this case, hypnotised and thereby in contact with "the unconscious"). The demon is actually saying that he is "from God," and thereby hinting that the evil is the property and responsibility of God the Father. That the psychiatrist hears this as "dog," has blasphemous implications, operating as a transgressive gesture: it debases the holy and continues the tendency to demonise biology. The animal operates here, as in Regan's demonic displays, as the symbol of inverted spirituality, or divinity. The "psychiatric ritual" is carnivalised even further when the possessed Regan grasps his/her hypnotist by the testicles; Freudian reductionism (that everything in human behaviour is derived from sexual impulses and conflicts) is ridiculed in a violent and graphical manner.[57]

The third answer, articulated through the ritual of exorcism, is the one *The Exorcist* is aiming at. The drama of proof in "The Abyss" confronts Father Karras with the hard task of confirming the demonic presence, and also introduces the reader to new aspects of the demonic personality. The task is to isolate some indubitable sign of inhuman influence; as *The Roman Ritual* quoted in the novel puts it in its rules for exorcists – "verifiable exterior phenomena which suggest the idea that they are due to the extraordinary intervention of an intelligent cause other than man."[58] Since Karras thinks that

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[55] E, 124.

[56] See below, p. 192. – The use of inversion to denote entrance into the demonic, alternate order of things is an ancient gesture, used by shamans dressing up as women to consult spirits, or in carnivals where a fool will be king. A famous example from modern literature can be found in the infernal "Circe" chapter closing the second part of *Ulysses* by James Joyce. Among its torrent of polyphony "The Voice of All the Damned" calls: "Htengier Tnetopinmo Dog Drol eht rof, Aiulella!" And the voice of "Adonai" responds: "Dooooooooooog!" This dialogue is then mirrored in the exchange between Adonai and "The Voice of All the Blessed." (Joyce 1922/1949, 584.)

[57] E, 126.

[58] E, 225. – "De Exorcismus et supplicationibus quibusdam," a new version of the ritual was approved by Pope John Paul II on October 1, 1998, and officially released by the Vatican on January 26, 1999. The new version replaces one which was issued as a part of the Roman Ritual of 1614. It continues to recognise the existence of the Devil and the reality of the diabolical possession, as well as to confirm the victory of Christ and the power of the Church over the demons.

"paranormal" activity is tied to the psychology and physiology of man, it constitutes no proof. The demonic personality supplies abundantly evidence – it converses in Latin and speaks about its "time in Rome" with intelligence and rhetorical flourish; it refers to Christian demonology and calls itself the devil, "prince," and refers to the plurality of the New Testament demoniac ("a poor little family of wandering souls" with "no place to go"); the souls of the dead seem to make appearances (the murdered Dennings, Karras's mother); it reads thoughts and knows the hidden secrets.[59] This is to no avail: as the demonic voice states, it is giving Karras evidence, but also always some reason for doubt – and it is always possible for an intelligent sceptic to find counterarguments. "That is why I'm fond of you," the demon states with obvious ironic relish. "That is why I cherish *all* reasonable men."[60]

Scientific scepticism and rationalism have here become effectively demonised. They are on the side of evil, stopping people in their efforts to believe, and save their souls. The literary model for the interpretation of diabolical as inner scepticism is to be found in Dostoyevsky; the words of the demon have an echo of the devil in Ivan's delirium: "I have been leading you between belief and disbelief alternately, and in doing so I have had my own purpose."[61] *The Brothers Karamazov* is an important subtext for Blatty, and it is prominently referred to in numerous places of *Legion*.[62] The reader of *The Exorcist* is lead to the position where reason starts to appear deeply dubious, and obstructing Karras in his task to help the suffering girl. There is profound irony in the text as the demon reminds Karras, the psychiatrist, that the role of the unconscious should not be forgotten.[63] The implied reader realises that the evil spirit is toying with Karras, ridiculing him, and that Karras's loss of faith has made him an easy target for the enemy. Reason alone, Karras's case seems to prove, is not a sufficient basis for human life. One has to have some other foundation.

GROPING FOR FOUNDATION

The solution that Karras finally finds is interesting, because it joins together several aspects touched upon in this analysis. Karras's attempts to find proof of the demon are centred on language. Almost all characters of the novel, including Chris, Regan's mother, even the Jesuit priests, are using "adult language," that is, profanities with either a religious or sexual character. "Jesus Christ," "Hell," "for pete's sake" mix with expressions such as "fucking," "cunting," or "ass" in people's speech as well as in their reported

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[59] The three discussions with the demonic personality that take place in the confirmation phase: E, 203-8, 232-39, 265-67.
[60] E, 237, 267.
[61] Dostoyevsky 1880/1993, 745.
[62] Blatty 1983, 9, 12, 248-50. A possible structural relationship can also be noted: *The Brothers Karamazov*, after all, is subtitled "A Novel in Four Parts and an Epilogue."
[63] E, 266.

stream-of-consciousness. The heterogeneity and blasphemous nature of this language points toward the modern condition: nothing is sacred any more.[64] The voice of the demon is just an amplified and exaggerated version of the same mixture; the demonic language is playing with all the signs indiscriminately – it transgresses the limits of the holy and the profane, the significant and the senseless, and aims only at chaos and despair. The linguistic analysis of the demonic voice as compared to Regan's own does not reveal the conclusive evidence of two distinct personalities: the "cold" analytical mind is unable to reach resolution. However, as Karras listens to Regan's own voice (a taped message to her father), he momentarily finds certainty: "through the roaring of blood in his ears, like the ocean, as up through his chest and his face swelled an overwhelming intuition: *The thing that I saw in that room wasn't Regan*!"[65] Karras is spurred to stop ruminating by the thought and image of his recently deceased mother; the mother is identified with Regan – "The eyes [of his mother] became Regan's … eyes shrieking … eyes waiting…. [/] '*Speak but the word*….'"[66] Significantly, his mother was illiterate; a Greek immigrant, she was unable to either read or write any English.[67] When Karras is lost in his futile attempts to find the significant sign among the torrent of demonic communication, he comes across a faded language exercise book that Mary Karras had used in her "adult education": letters of alphabet, over and over, and then an attempt at a letter:[68]

    The facsimile of "mother's handwriting," with its shaky and wavering line, intrudes itself among the printed line of intellectual thought, among arguments and counterarguments. It bears the mark of his mother's body, her shaking hand and the emotional tie that Karras feels as painful guilt; as a priest, he has not been able to help his mother in her poverty, nor get her better treatment as she was dying in a mental institution. The problem of faith Karras is experiencing is connected with the body, and specifically the maternal body – religious faith has emerged as love, as the elevated, pure and spiritual form of love that also functions as an escape from the imperfections and "dirt" of the "low" domain of bodily love. Karras's thoughts and perceptions in his mother's apartment warrant such an interpretation:

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[64] In the movie version the swearing is even more striking, as is the use of alcohol and cigarettes; all the adult characters appear to be neurotic chain-smokers. – See also the discussion on the sacred and the blasphemy in chapter ten.

[65] E, 229.

[66] E, 228.

[67] E, 47.

[68] E, 227-8.

> He went to the bathroom. Yellowing newspaper spread on the tile. Stains of rust in the tub and the sink. On the floor, an old corset. Seeds of the vocation. From these he had fled into love. Now the love had grown cold. In the night, he heard it whistling through the chambers of his heart like a lost, crying wind.[69]

In her study *Monstrous Imagination* (1993), Marie-Hélène Huet has researched how the female power of procreation has also been regarded with fear through ages. There is a possibility of monstrosity connected with the biological process of procreation, and the ensuing anxiety demands some explanation. One old one is that "monsters were signs sent by God, messages showing his will or his wrath."[70] The monstrously metamorphosing body of the possessed Regan is a sign of abjection; the language of the body is inarticulate and terrifying. Kristeva registers the possibility that it is only by "separating the speaking being from his body," that the latter can "accede to the status of clean and proper body, that is to say, non-assimilable, uneatable, abject." She notes how the fear of "the uncontrollable generative mother repels me from my body": the speaking subject operates on the symbolic level, and fear of pollution is in many cultures a necessary accompaniment for the establishment of subjectivity. "Non-separation would threaten the whole society with disintegration."[71] Father Karras attempts to listen to the chaotic stream of multiple voices emanating from the body, but he is horrified, baffled and cannot find meaning in what he hears.

> [*The backward demonic voices in the tape:*] … danger. Not yet. [indecipherable] will die. Little time. Now the [indecipherable]. Let her die. No, no, sweet! it is sweet in the body! I feel! There is [indecipherable]. Better [indecipherable] than the void. I fear the priest. Give us time. Fear the priest! He is [indecipherable]. No, not this one: the [indecipherable], the one who [indecipherable]. He is ill. Ah, the blood, feel the blood, how it [sings?][72]

Karras's separation from bodily, profane reality, as well as his celibacy and vow of poverty are essential components for his priestly identity. When society supports the division between the sacred and the profane this separation can have its positive, structuring meaning. However, this border does not hold in the world of *The Exorcist*, as the medley of religious and sexual obscenities, professional jargons and sacred texts exhibit on the linguistic level. The language of student rebellions, a telephone call about Karras's mother's illness, the pathologist's report, foreign religions, books by psychologists, books about witchcraft, the Holy Scripture: the various materials

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[69] E, 47.
[70] Huet 1993, 6. – Mary Russo's *The Female Grotesque* (1994) suggests further possibilities for analysis.
[71] Kristeva 1980/1982, 78-9.
[72] E, 273.

do not contribute to each other, they war and invalidate each other – the stylistic surface of *The Exorcist* is fragmented and heterogeneous. The clear-cut identities and domains separated by distinct borders are threatened; the Word of God is replaced by demonic textuality, a chaotic play of various competing discourses with no stable foundation. To quote Kristeva again, in a world "in which the Other has collapsed, the aesthetic task – a descent into the foundations of the symbolic construct – amounts to retracing the fragile limits of the speaking being, closest to its dawn, to the bottomless 'primacy' constituted by primal repression."[73] The section titled "The Abyss" concludes as Karras is faced with another handwriting. On the chest of the unconscious, restrained Regan letters appear – a "bas-relief script rising in clear letters of blood-red skin."

Two words:

help me

"That's her handwriting," whispered Sharon.[74]

This "bodily writing" is intimately connected with the mother-child relationship; after all, Karras's own inarticulate, sick mother had been desperately trying to write to him. At the bottom of the Abyss Karras faces the demonic Other, only to find the repressed body – the body taking the figure of a child in need of love and protection. After reading the message, the first thing the next morning, Karras proceeds and asks for permission to seek an exorcism.

FACING THE DEMONIC RIFT

The open confrontation that occupies the remaining part of the novel basically just affirms the intuition reached at the end of the confirmation phase. The fourth part, "And let my cry come unto thee…," describes the actual exorcism. It is the culmination of *The Exorcist* as a religious work; it is characteristic of the demonic conflicts operating in it, that the ritual actually fails. The end of the novel tries hard to make Father Karras a Christ-like figure and hero of faith. When Karras's friend, Father Dyer, ponders on what he last saw in the eyes of the dying man, he remembers "a look of joy" – "a deep and fiercely shining glint of … triumph?"[75] The value of priesthood is reconfirmed; the healed Regan looks at his round Roman collar and impulsively kisses the priest. The fact is, nevertheless, that the exorcism went wrong precisely in the way Karras feared it would: both of the exorcising priests ended up dead, Father Merrin after heart attack, Father Karras

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[73] Kristeva 1980/1982, 18.
[74] E, 277.
[75] E, 339.

Father Karras (Jason Miller) observing, as Sharon (Kitty Winn) presents him with the writing on Regan's chest. From The Exorcist *(dir. William Friedkin).*
© Warner Bros., 1973.

after becoming possessed and making a suicidal jump by charging through the window.

Andriano argued that the frequent association between the demonic and femininity in the Male Gothic is connected with fears of male identity – the "anima" is rejected and repressed because it threatens gender boundaries. Possession behaviour is an ancient way of confronting the repressed and conflicting areas of the psyche by engaging in transgressive behaviour. Horror culture is a contemporary, liminoid area where it is possible to deal with similar activities under the guise of entertainment. *The Exorcist* combines these two, and puts into use some essential threats to the self – on a general level, the uncertainty of body as the defective, and yet necessary, "supplement" to the mind. In a more specific analysis, the male psyche in connection with Christian and Catholic identity and the menaces of the modern word open up as the arena for this drama.

The male identity of Karras is reinforced in several points in the text; as Karras unbuttons the sleeve of his starched white shirt, and rolls it up, he

exposes "a matting of fine brown hairs on a bulging, thickly muscled fore-arm."[76] Damien Karras is not only a priest and a psychiatrist, he has also been a boxer in his youth, and still, after physical exercise "the heave of his rock-muscled chest and shoulders stretched his T-shirt."[77] When the two priests march in silence to commence with the exorcism the narrative is focalised through Chris MacNeil's consciousness: "Chris felt deeply and strangely moved. *Here comes my big brother to beat your brains in, creep*! It was a feeling, she thought, much like that. She could feel her heart begin to beat faster."[78] Even though the acknowledged aim appears to be a spiritual encounter with the forces of evil, the spiritual is constantly replaced by a much more physical sort of heroism. It is useful to make a comparison here to an important modern work in Christian demonological fiction, *Screwtape Letters* (1942) by C.S. Lewis. Despite all the modern features and pervasive irony of this work, the "happy ending" (as the young male protagonist dies before he succumbs to sin) really makes sense only within the Christian doctrine of salvation and the kingdom of God. Father Karras, in contrast, cannot let Regan die, even if she is theologically "safe": the demon cannot touch the will of the possessed and Regan is thereby free from sin – her death would just mean eternal life.[79] As the demon declares that it aims to kill Regan by exhaustion – her heart is weakening – and after the heart of Father Merrin fails, Karras ends this cardiac drama by physical fight. He does not, after all, believe in spirits or afterlife: it is only appropriate that he fights his own demons with his own flesh.

> "*You son of a bitch*!" Karras seethed in a whisper that hissed into air like molten steel. "You bastard!" Though he did not move, he seemed to be uncoiling, the sinews of his neck pulling taunt like cables. The demon stopped laughing and eyed him with malevolence. "You were losing! You're a loser! You've *always* been a loser!" Regan splattered him with vomit. He ignored it. "Yes, you're very good with children!" he said, trembling. "Little girls! Well, come on! Let's see you try something bigger! Come on!" He had his hands out like great, fleshy hooks, beckoning slowly. "Come on! Come on, loser! Try *me*! Leave the girl and take me! Take *me*! Come into …"[80]

The evil in *The Exorcist* is connected with lack of love and lack of faith, basically emotional problems not to be resolved by purely rational and intellectual means. Karras is disgusted by the ugliness and imperfections of the life with his mother that he had left behind; an early confrontation with a filthy alcoholic presents the reader with Karras's inability to love this wretched figure who stammers "I'm a Cat'lic," and demands Christian

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[76] E, 209.
[77] E, 148.
[78] E, 300.
[79] E, 311.
[80] E, 328.

love.[81] Later, during the exorcism, Father Merrin explains that the demon is exploiting this particular problem in his case as well: "Certain people … repelled me. How could I love them?" The demon in *The Exorcist* is designed to strike this problem: "the demon's target is not the possessed; it is us … the observers." Merrin continues the explication:

> I think the point is to make us despair; to reject our own humanity, Damien: to see ourselves as ultimately bestial; as ultimately vile and putrescent; without dignity; ugly; unworthy. And there lies the heart of it, perhaps: in the unworthiness. For I think belief in God is not a matter of reason at all; I think it finally is a matter of love; of accepting the possibility that God could love *us*….[82]

The character of Father Merrin is inspired by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), a Catholic priest and scientist. In the world of *The Exorcist* Father Merrin – "the philosopher-paleontologist! the soaring, staggering intellect!" – has the last word. The material world appears as the problem, and Merrin has striven in his books to develop a theory that matter is still evolving, destined to be spirit and join to God.[83] A non-authorial reader is free to interpret the coldness of the grave, the stench of decay surrounding the possessed body of Regan as expressions of a particular demonic conflict, the religious refusal to love the body that is waging war against suppressed male desires – a traditional and powerful conflict in Christianity. This is amply evidenced in the wrathful Christian and Gnostic writings, which characterise the body as the "grave of soul," and especially describe the abject physicality of the female body.[84] When Karras lets his anger burst out, he, for the first time in the novel, dares to touch Regan and simultaneously emotionally react to her. It is symptomatic that he can do this only by violently attacking her – or the demon that he identifies as embodied in her.

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[81] E, 46.

[82] E, 311.

[83] E, 287.

[84] The basic conflict with corporeality is manifest in St. Paul: "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good, so then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it." (Rom. 7:14-19. See also 1 Cor. 7: "It is well for a man not to touch a woman.") The Christian relationship and battle with evil "flesh" is a complex history; Brown 1988 is a remarkably understanding and compassionate reading of sexual renunciation in early Christianity. For a classic document of ambivalence towards the female sexuality, see "Letter to Eustochium" by St. Jerome (Letter 22 in Jerome 1963, 134-79). Misogyny in Western (and Christian) history is now widely discussed, especially in feminism (see such works as *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature* [1966] by Katharine M. Rogers, *The Gospel According to Woman: Christianity's Creation of Sex War in the West* [1986] by Karen Armstrong, or *The Dark Side of Christian History* [1995] by Helen Ellerbe).

The cathartic ending of *The Exorcist* as a demonic text is necessarily also tragic. Karras faces in the end his daimonic impulses and dares to confront them, and to recognise the demonic conflict as his own. This particular tragedy does not end in *eudaimonia*; the power of the daimonic is represented as too destructive for integration into Karras's conflicted identity as a man and as a Christian. His spiritual integrity is salvaged, but only in the death of his body. The dualistic conflict is represented as a fundamental rift in the ground of the self; full self-recognition also means self-destruction.

My analysis of *The Exorcist* has focused on the role of Father Karras, and on the ambiguous "textual self" that this novel constructs. Like Karras, who is trying to find faith in the love of God, but is continuously possessed by disgust and hatred towards the body and the material world, *The Exorcist* attempts to "make a positive statement about the God" but ends up demonising the human condition.

The demon possessing young Regan effectively articulates conflicts in identity, but not Regan's. She is a medium for the anxiety towards the feminine and the corporeal to burst out. It is the abject relationship of an insecurely male and religious self to his own, rejected and repressed desires that, in the final analysis, possesses the pages of *The Exorcist*.

The next chapter analyses Anne Rice's vampire novels and changes the point of view to the "other side" – that of the monsters themselves.

7. *Good at Being Evil:*
the Demons of The Vampire Chronicles

Az,
the evil mother of all demons,
grew angry and raged
for her own purposes.
From the dirt of male and female demons
she made this body and entered it. […]
She created the body as a prison
and chained the grieving soul into it.

– "Adam, Child of Demons"
(A Manichean Creation Myth)[1]

NATURALISTIC SUPERNATURAL IN HORROR

The early 1970s were a time of renewal for the demons. They had a prominent role in the redefinition of horror fiction that was taking place in those days. The general thrust was that somewhat romantic and formulaic old horror was being replaced by realistically depicted violence and by stories that took their inspiration from the fears of insanity in an increasingly anonymous world. Alfred Hitchcock's two classic films of the 1960s, *Psycho* (1960) and *The Birds* (1963) were indicative of this movement towards monsters that had different sort of claims on realism and even credibility than what had been the case before. This new style was especially striking in the movies – the comfortless graphic realism of *The Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) caused shocks and later campaigns to ban horror in home videos – but the new horror movies concerned with the demonic had their origins in novels. The movie adaptations of *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *The Exorcist* (1971) were exceptionally straightforward: the novels themselves were situated in contemporary America and written in documentary style that abandoned the twisted prose of some earlier horror in favour of low key presentations of natural and supernatural events. Even details like the rhythm of the text, its division into chapters and the distribution of sudden, "shock" effects into the text make these novels "cinematic." Also traditional monsters, such as vampires, were in for a change in this redefinition of horror fiction. The aesthetic subversion reflected a change in attitude; one indication of this was the interest in

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[1] *The Other Bible* (Barnstone 1984, 45).

"turning the tables" by letting the narrative focus and point of view shift to the side of monsters, instead of their hunters. In the case of vampires, in 1975 *The Dracula Tape* by Fred Saberhagen lets Dracula tell his own story, and to prove himself more humane and sympathetic than the humans hunting him.[2] The time was right for an even more radical rewriting of the stereotype; Anne Rice had already worked on a short story about a vampire giving a taped interview in 1969, and developed it into a completed novel in January 1974.[3]

The first part of Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*,[4] *Interview With The Vampire* (1976) took almost twenty years before it was translated into a movie version (1994, by Neil Jordan), but this is not to blame the novel itself: it is cast in an emphatically realistic and documentary mode. As its title indicates, Rice took this most popular and most traditional of horror movie monsters, the vampire, and put it through an interview.[5] During an all-night discussion the vampire (named Louis de Pointe du Lac) sheds light on his life and tells about his loves and fears and aspirations, much like any modern celebrity in an in-depth interview. The basic attitude is aptly captured by another celebrity of the "new horror," Clive Barker: "To deny the creatures as individuals the right to speak, to actually state their cause, is perverse – because I *want* to hear the Devil speak."[6] Anne Rice's vampires are very self-conscious individuals, and the demonic element in their immortal lives puts this *individuality* into double illumination. Focusing on these characteristics, I am going to concentrate in my analysis on the metaphorical capacities of the vampire.

As a metaphor, the vampire has been fertile in many discussions of modern society and individuality. Perhaps the most famous case is Karl

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[2] See Auerbach 1995, 131-32. – The essay and anthology of texts collected in Frayling 1992 make up a good introduction to the literary history of vampires. See also Barber 1988 for the social and psychological history behind the "vampire myth." Carter 1989 is an informative bibliography of vampire literature, drama, and criticism.

[3] Ramsland 1995, 207-8; Riley 1996, xv. A version of the original short story (dated in August 1973) is printed in Ramsland 1995, 553-72.

[4] The series reached a momentary conclusion in its fifth part; I use the following abbreviations in the references: *Interview with the Vampire* (IV; Rice 1975/1996), *The Vampire Lestat* (VL; Rice 1985/1986), *The Queen of the Damned* (QD; 1988/1989), *The Tale of the Body Thief* (BT; Rice 1992/1993), *Memnoch the Devil* (MD; Rice 1995). It should be noted that because of the considerable length of the series (the five books amount to 2370 pages), it has not been advisable to paraphrase the story-line of them all. I have concentrated in my analysis on the most outstanding features of Rice's demonic vampires. (*Pandora*, published in March 1998, leaves the narrative of Louis and Lestat and opens a new series "New Tales of the Vampires," exploring the lives of interesting minor characters from the *Vampire Chronicles*. The latest addition is *The Vampire Armand* [October 1998], which returns to the popular *Vampire Chronicles* subtitle.)

[5] Rice: "I was just sitting at the typewriter wondering what it would be like if a vampire told you the truth about what it was like to *be* a vampire. I wanted to know what it really feels like." (Ramsland 1995, 207.)

[6] Clive Barker, interview with Phil Edwards ("Hair-Raiser," *Crimson Celluloid* No. 1/1988; Barker - Jones 1991, 11). This claim is discussed below, page 193.

Marx's use of the vampire as a metaphor for the inhuman qualities of capitalism: "Capital is dead labour that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks."[7] The problematic aspects of modern existence could be interpreted through the vampire metaphor; inequality of individuals, and the whole basic setting of a capitalistic society – instead of being a member of a clan, a village, or a guild, a modern (capitalist) individual is conceived as a "lonely predator." The ability to make one's own fortune and to outwit competitors has become essential. On the other hand, the psychoanalytical attention to the vampire has concentrated on sexual explanations: in his classic study, *On the Nightmare*, Ernest Jones interpreted the vampire as a symbol for forbidden desire. According to him, the myth is based on the mixed feelings of desire and hate towards one's parents in early childhood, and on the guilt of the living when they think of the deceased. But, he also notes how important the metaphorical connotations of the vampire are; "a social or political tyrant who sucks the life from his people" and "an irresistible lover who sucks away energy, ambition or even life for selfish reasons" are his two important examples.[8]

For the continuing existence and renewal of this archetypal monster, its ability to stimulate new, and sometimes contradictory, metaphorical associations is essential. In this chapter, I will at first explore the overt connection of Rice's vampires with demons, and then proceed into an analysis of the different aspects of ambivalence and heterogeneity in the texts. I shall finally parallel the self-conception and interpersonal relations in the texts to the paradoxes or inconsistencies this series displays in different aspects of its textuality. My hypothesis is that the demonic imagery used in the *Vampire Chronicles* signals conflicts both in regard to how the characters perceive themselves, and in the production of the "textual identity" of this series.

DEMONIC VAMPIRE AS A FIGURE FOR MORAL AMBIVALENCE

In folk beliefs vampires were often connected with the Devil, and even more often with undefined demonic forces.[9] However, in literature, not all vampires are Satanic; they are not unproblematically evil and repugnant – something desirable is always intermingled. There even exists a tradition of vampire friends where the motif of bloodsucking is indicative of intimacy and vulnerability.[10] This ambivalence has always hinted at the polyphonic demon

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[7] Marx, *Das Kapital* (1887; Chapter X); quoted in Leatherdale 1985, 216.
[8] Jones 1931/1959, 98-130 (quotation from page 125); also in Frayling 1992, 398-417 ["On the Vampire"].
[9] Cavendish 1975, 57; Barber 1988, 29-38.
[10] Nina Auerbach's study *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1995) focuses on this particular feature (its title parodies *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, the popular 1970s guide by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective). It is also hard to imagine children's vampire books like *The Little Vampire* (by Angela Sommer-Bodenberg) without this aspect of the tradition. However, the traditional image of the demon has been transformed into loveable and cute in some works of popular culture, too, as in the computer game *Litil Divil*

behind the hideous monster. In the *Vampire Chronicles* the connection be-
tween vampires and demons is overt and central. "Demon" and "fiend" are
constant figurative synonyms for Rice's vampires; even if early in the series
all the central characters (including the older vampires) verify that they do
not believe in the existence of any Christian God or Devil, the demon is
very real for them as an idea – the different varieties of demonic discourse
are used to explain their condition.

> Do devils love each other? Do they walk arm in arm in hell saying, "Ah,
> you are my friend, how I love you," things like that to each other? It was a
> rather detached intellectual question I was asking, as I did not believe in
> hell. But it was a matter of a concept of evil, wasn't it? All creatures in hell
> are supposed to hate one another, as all the saved hate the damned, with-
> out reservation.[11]

These are thoughts of a vampire, who is presented as a being that is try-
ing to make sense of its existence in terms of demonic discourse. The para-
doxical quality of Anne Rice's vampires is intertwined with their self-
conscious and moral character; they cannot exist long without killing hu-
mans and using them as nourishment – yet, they are presented as moral crea-
tures fully aware of their actions. The self-accusations and guilt are particu-
larly strong in the case of Louis, the protagonist and first-person narrator of
his story in *Interview with the Vampire*. If, then, Rice's vampires call them-
selves devils and demons, what sort of demons are they? How is the de-
monic discourse applied in the *Vampire Chronicles*?

The first aspect is bound up with the moral ambivalence of demon; dis-
cussions about good and evil saturate the action-packed narrative of the
vampire heroes. Louis at first tries to resist his "nature" as a vampire: he re-
fuses to kill humans and takes his nourishment from animals instead. How-
ever, this is depicted as a profoundly unsatisfactory alternative for a vampire.
Louis's guilt and refusal to accept his lot is even represented as a kind of evil
in itself – it makes Claudia, his vampire child and companion suffer. "Your
evil is that you cannot be evil, and I must suffer for it," are Claudia's desper-
ate words to Louis.[12] Because of their need for blood, vampires are defined
as predatory beings. Their virtues are strength and the emotional detach-
ment they need to kill and survive. Louis admits this: he equals his
"strength" with "that curious thing I've called my detachment."[13] If this

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(Gremlin Games, 1994). It is also interesting to note how even the Disney company ven-
tures into the underworld with its recent production, *Hercules* (and, in a more sombre
tone, already in the classic *Fantasia*, 1940 [the segment "Night on Bald Mountain"]). The
ambivalence (the simultaneous presence of unsettling and sympathetic aspects) is much
more boldly displayed in some comic book explorations of the demonic – *Nemesis the
Warlock* (by Pat Mills and Kevin O'Neill) and *Spawn* (by Todd McFarlane) as popular
examples. Both feature demons as their darkly sympathetic main characters.
    [11] VL, 102.
    [12] IV, 283.
    [13] IV, 276.

moral reversal was complete, these vampires would be completely satanic creatures; that what human's call evil would be highest good for them. On the contrary, Rice's vampires dismiss and ridicule the traditional, one-dimensional and morally fixed concept of the demon. They refuse to settle for a place in the Christian mythology, and reject a simple role as "servants of Satan."[14] Yet, the elevation of a vampire into the status of a hero and protagonist (the central focus offered for the reader's identification) could certainly have incited someone like Marx to make biting comments on the sad and corrupted state of our ("late capitalistic") society.

"[Y]ou die when you kill, as if you feel that you deserve to die," speculates the Parisian vampire, Armand, of his intuitions concerning Louis.[15] This empathy makes Louis faulty in vampires' standards: it makes him weak. Paradoxically, however, this "weakness" is the most treasured feature of Louis at the end of the narrative. The ambivalence that these vampires display towards their own natures, their (demonic) selves is profound. Armand continues his explanation: "[Y]ou are the spirit [...]. This is the spirit of your age. Don't you see that? Everyone feels as you feel. Your fall from grace and faith has been the fall of a century."[16] Vampires have to keep their contact with humanity and their times; otherwise, their immortal life will become meaningless for them, everything else changes but they remain the same. This will eventually lead into withdrawal, madness and suicide. "[W]e are *conscious* death," claims a vampire to his victim;[17] this consciousness and self-awareness makes the best of vampires also the most human. This contradictory mixture of human and other (supernatural monster) is, in turn, what makes Rice's vampires demonic beings. The recognition of a fundamental moral ambivalence acts as an interpretative guide; both Rice's vampires and the reader are directed to suspect some sort of heterogeneity, or polyphony, in the ontological make-up of vampires – and to embark on a long narrative quest to explore this possibility.

DESIRE TO KNOW THE LIMITS OF HETEROGENEOUS SELF

They had been entered through their wounds by the demon at the point when mortal life itself was about to escape. But it was the blood that the demon permeated in that twilight moment when the heart almost stopped. Perhaps it was the substance that he had always sought in his ragings, the substance that he had tried to bring forth from his victims with his antics, but he had never been able to inflict enough wounds before his victim died. But now he had the blood, and the blood was not merely the demon, or the blood of the King and Queen [Enkil and Akasha], but a combina-

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[14] This is especially deliciously acted out in the scene where Lestat (the modern, individual vampire) meets the old-fashioned group of vampires in Paris: "'Our Leader is Satan [...]. And we serve Satan as we are meant to do.' 'Why?' [Lestat] asked politely." (VL, 213.)

[15] IV, 254.

[16] IV, 310.

[17] IV, 241.

tion of the human and the demon which was an altogether different thing.[18]

The "all too human" vampires, the protagonists Louis and Lestat, desire two things from the very beginnings: blood and knowledge. Both of these are essential for their survival; blood for their continued existence as supernaturally infected creatures, and knowledge for their psychological survival. The quotation above is the high moment of the latter desire. The origin of vampires is finally revealed in it. This pursuit for blood and knowledge could be described in terms of Peter Brooks's "narrative desire": "A rock-bottom paradigm of the dynamic of desire can be found in one of the very earliest novels in the Western tradition [...] where all of the hero's tricks and dodges are directed initially at staying alive," Brooks writes. He continues that the hero "stands as a figure of the reader's efforts to construct meanings in ever-larger wholes, to totalize his experience of human existence in time, to grasp past, present and future in a significant shape."[19] Following Roland Barthes's notion that we read because of our "passion for (of) meaning," Brooks defines the driving force behind narratives as a psychological and semantic demand:

> Desire is inherently unsatisfied and unsatisfiable since it is linked to memory traces and seeks its realization in the hallucinatory reproduction of indestructible signs of infantile satisfaction. [...]
> Discourse hence becomes the interconnection of signifiers one with another in a "signifying chain" where meaning (in the sense of access to the meaning of unconscious desire) does not consist in any single link of the chain, yet through which meaning nonetheless *insists*.[20]

The desire for blood becomes desire for knowledge as the narrative desire fuelling the *Vampire Chronicles* begins to unroll. Since the death of his brother, Louis's life had been meaningless – his existential abyss and craving for answers finds its fantastic, dislocated form in the appearance of the vampire Lestat. The vampire is one of the "undead": a being that both symbolises death and acts as its walking personification. Death is central for Rice's vampire novels; it provides an attractor for the course of narrative, an existential challenge and much of the dark aesthetics which has made the series popular.[21] The dynamic of narrative desire circulates around death in the story: vampires desire the blood and life of humans (these two are figuratively identified with each other), and usually this desire ends at the moment of consummation (the victim either dies, or becomes another vampire – in

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[18] VL, 440.

[19] Brooks 1984, 38-39. His exemplary novel is from the sixteenth century: *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554).

[20] Ibid., 55-56.

[21] *Interview with the Vampire* was written under the shadow of her five-year-old daughter's death of leukaemia. Anne Rice had also lost her mother early, at the age of fourteen. (See Riley 1996, xv-xvi.)

either case, he or she is no longer an object of desire).[22] Also, the "consummation of plot" would signify a sort of death; a complete answer to the protagonist's search for meaning would be the end. The continuation of desire and story-telling is imperative for the existence of Rice's fictional vampires. Therefore the "explanation" for the existence of vampires quoted above can only be a temporary answer.

Brooks writes about "the hallucinatory reproduction of indestructible signs of infantile satisfaction." The immortality of vampires can be interpreted in many ways, but two points should be accounted for: 1) vampires are immortal, and 2) their greatest pleasure is not (genital) sex but oral enjoyment (sucking of blood). In Rice's case one should connect these to the openly demonic aspects of her vampires; they are metaphorically called "demons," and their blood entwines them with the demonic also literally. Vampires are supposedly a race apart from humans; but a race that looks deceptively like us, just having different abilities and weaknesses. It is troublesome for the vampires to figure out their true identity, what makes them truly vampires. The monsters hover between two dangers: one of total rejection and otherness, and the danger of becoming the same, of being totally incorporated and subsumed to the self. Rosemary Jackson's apt characterisation is well worth quoting in this context, as well: "the history of the survival of Gothic horror is one of progressive internalization and recognition of fears as generated by the self."[23] On the thematic level, Rice's vampires continue the existential story-lines of many central nineteenth and twentieth century novels; the vampires are presented as individuals who step over the moral boundaries as imposed by human society.[24] Murder makes them emphatically individuals, separate from society – and as creatures of fantasy they are also immortal killers, without the human weaknesses of Dostoyevsky's Raskolnikov. They flourish in the absurdity of existence that made Camus rebel and Beckett study the impossibility of communication – and transform it into bestselling entertainment. The *Vampire Chronicles* achieves this through a primordial fantasy of immortality and omnipotence. The "infantile satisfaction" of an oral pleasure connected with a (practically) indestructible body that can bend iron with bare hands, read thoughts and

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[22] An example is Lestat's reaction as he finally took his human friend Nicolas, and made him a vampire: after the Dark Gift (or Dark Trick, as the making of a vampire is also called) Lestat feels "[e]mptiness here […]. Quiet, and the realization gnawing at my insides like a starved animal – *that I couldn't stand the sight of him now*." (VL, 240.) A counterexample would be David Talbot, who stays quite important for Lestat even after he has become vampire (at the end of *The Tale of the Body Thief*). He is, however, no longer of importance to the plot; others become the objects for narrative desire and David steps aside.

[23] Jackson 1981, 24.

[24] William Butler Yeats's poem "Sailing to Byzantium" prefaces *The Tale of the Body Thief*; it is one intertextual example of Rice developing the theme of being "outside natural law" (Ramsland 1995, 531).

even fly, is undeniable.[25] However, this satisfaction is also painfully bound up with loss and death. The immutable body of a vampire retains its form because it is *dead*; this object-like quality is increased as time goes, to the point of reaching almost complete immobility in the manner of a marble statue.[26] The drive that carries Rice's long narratives is powered by this tension: the perfect satisfaction of infantile fantasies is both celebrated and rejected. Subsequently, the narrative projects an image of divided self. Demon and the ontological heterogeneity are invoked to give this situation a figurative shape.

The second important aspect of demonic discourses in the *Vampire Chronicles* is thus connected with the liminal quality of demons, their ability to transgress the border of flesh and soul.

SUCKING THE SIGNIFICANCE

Blood is a vampire's life, and vampire's blood in Rice's novels is explained to be "a combination of the human and the demon." "Demon" is an answer for the vampire's thirst for knowledge: it is the name for the quality that sets him apart from humans. The quest for knowledge is begun in the first part, *Interview with the Vampire*, and the feature of this particular novel that separates it from the rest of the series is its uncompromising refusal to give answers. A crucial scene points out the dramatic and essential role this refusal plays for the desperation that gives this novel much of its captivating power:

> "'Then God does not exist … you have no knowledge of His existence?' [Louis asked.]
> "'None,' [Armand] said.
> "No knowledge!' I said it again, unafraid of my simplicity, my miserable human pain.

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[25] The powers and feats of Rice's vampires become more and more spectacular with every new book; see e.g. VL, 7.

[26] This culminates in Those Who Must Be Kept – the ancient King and Queen of Kemet (Egypt) – who have sank into passive existence as "flexible stone" statues during their six thousand years of existence. (See VL, 387-89.) Cf. the equally old vampire, Maharet, who is described as possessing "the eerie glamour of women who have made themselves into sculpture" (QD, 151). It is also possible to interpret this statuesque immobility as artistic self-awareness, as a Romantic metaphor for art's self-contained detachment (see e.g. Frank Kermode's study *Romantic Image* [1957/1961, 49-91]). Queen Akasha may also claim literary ancestry among the Victorian "demonic women": the ancient Egyptian Queen Tera (by Bram Stoker) and specially the mighty "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed," whose real name was "Ayesha" (by H. Rider Haggard) can be seen as models for Akasha (see Auerbach 1982, 25, 36). H. Rider Haggard's terrible *She* lives in ancient tombs, surrounded by the dead and the ruins of a forgotten civilisation; her radiant face and transformed body are covered with "long, corpse-like wrappings" (Haggard 1886/1926, 158). She is thousands of years old, and with her wisdom and fascinating moral ambivalence is a clear ancestor for Rice's Akasha. She is "undying and half-divine" (ibid., 159), ambiguously "evil," yet "the very *diablerie* of the woman, whilst it horrified and repelled, attracted in an even greater degree" (ibid., 162): in her altered (demonic) condition she claims to be "above the law" (ibid., 256).

"'None.'

"'And no vampire here has discourse with God or with the devil!'

"'No vampire that I've ever known,' he said, musing, the fire dancing in his eyes. 'And as far as I know today, after four hundred years, I am the oldest living vampire in the world.'

"I stared at him, astonished.

"Then it began to sink in. It was as I'd always feared, and it was as lonely, it was as totally without hope. […] My search was over.[27]

The demonic quality of the vampires remains inexplicable in the first part of the *Vampire Chronicles*. Apparently they are the *only* supernatural element in their world – an aberration without any God- (or Devil-) given significance whatsoever. Louis's search for meaning ends in a void. He is dead, in the corporeal sense, after all, so he cannot find any meaning in the material world any more. The opposite sphere of signification, the spiritual, would be of utmost importance for him, but this alternative is denied, as well. In the world of *Interview with the Vampire* there hardly exist any other levels of significance except those connected with individuals, their self-realisation and need for each other. "The only power that exists is inside ourselves," verifies Armand.[28] Louis cannot accept this; he loses first his mortal brother, and then his immortal child-lover Claudia. In the end he denies all value in such a life – a life that cannot grant "indestructible" meanings and secure love-objects. This is embodied in a gesture at the end of the novel: Louis finds weak and withered Lestat, but rejects him and takes away the little baby that was meant to give Lestat sustenance.[29] The vampire becomes positioned as a *demonic self*, one that exists in the absence of meaning, and is haunted by this purposelessness from inside, and therefore is forced to suck the life of others to fill this incurable lack. This is an interesting reformulation of the demon and the demonic, but it is also faithful to the "high" tradition in the demonic discourses: excessive individuality and pride in one's special value has been interpreted as demonic.[30]

The petrified and passive quality of the oldest vampires becomes more comprehensible in this light: they fix into an immobile image the purposelessness of their demonic existence. However, *The Vampire Lestat* and later books (particularly its direct sequel, *The Queen of the Damned*) are more open to new departures on the "Devil's Road" towards final emptiness. Narrative desire can be seen to offer temporary answers for this paradoxical quest of nothingness. This is also connected to the way these novels are more self-reflexive. *The Vampire Lestat* purports to be written by Lestat himself. It describes how he finds out that Louis has told his story to a reporter, and that it has been published as *Interview with the Vampire* (supposedly under the "pseudonym" of Anne Rice). The curious structure of

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[27] IV, 257.

[28] IV, 258.

[29] IV, 357.

[30] See above, page 38-39.

Louis (Brad Pitt) destroying the Theatre of the Vampires in Interview with the Vampire *(dir. Neil Jordan). © Warner Bros., 1994.*

The Vampire Lestat has to do with the change of attitude – from the mainly existential anguish of Louis in the first novel we step into the world of Lestat, who calls himself "the James Bond of vampires."[31] The main part of *The Vampire Lestat* is made up of "The Early Education and Adventures of the Vampire Lestat" – an embedded narrative of autobiography with a jokingly eighteenth century title. This is a contemporary narrative: it is written for Louis, not to be "an answer to his malice in *Interview with the Vampire*," as Lestat rationalises, "but the tale of all the things I'd seen and learned before I came to him, the story I could not tell him before."[32] This novel within a

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[31] BT, 5.
[32] VL, 16.

novel (*mise en abyme*) finishes with Lestat's signature bearing the date 1984; this is where the fictional novel *The Vampire Lestat* ends. However, *The Vampire Lestat* continues after the publication of its fictional incarnation. The short part at the end of the novel ("Dionysus in San Francisco, 1985") as well as the prologue ("Downtown Saturday Night in the Twentieth Century, 1984") properly belong to the chain of events that are recorded in *The Queen of the Damned*. There is, thus, a part of *The Vampire Lestat* that does not coincide with its embedded self-reflection.[33]

This incapability to fully comprehend the material that makes up one's identity is, in a way, appropriate for a novel that aspires to explain the origin and nature of its demonic characters. The very structure of *Lestat* is marked by otherness, an uncontrollable flow of semi- or subconscious materials. In the first part of the *Vampire Chronicles* Rice's vampires were figuratively called fiends or demons; as the thirst for meaning pushes Lestat deeper towards the origin of vampires, they become literally demonised. Vampires are said to be created by a demon, Amel, who blended his own substance with that of humans.[34] The narrative layers become more and more complicated; Lestat embeds into the novel his own autobiographical narrative, which includes the story of Marius, an ancient Roman vampire – and this in turn contains the myth of Enkil and Akasha, as told to Marius by the Elder (an even more ancient vampire). Until this explanation, there has been no indication that any sort of spirit would inhabit the world of the *Vampire Chronicles*. The openly atheistic world is suddenly transformed with the introduction of "a common demon, the kind one hears of in all lands at all times."[35] The demon acts as a turning point: if demons are accepted into the "secondary universe" of the *Vampire Chronicles*, then there would be no end of spiritual, religious and theological speculation.[36] Furthermore, it would just move the origin of evil away from the vampire and open the question of the origin of demon. The closed universe of *Interview with the Vampire* would break open, and its uncompromising lack of meaning would give way to competing systems of thought. A tragedy would give way to an existential travelogue.

This is exactly what happens. After the story of the demon has been told, ghosts and spirits became an essential part of the *Vampire Chronicles*. In *Interview with the Vampire* there are several scenes in which Lestat ridicules death: he makes a *danse macabre* with a corpse of a dead woman, and then makes a vampire of a small child, her daughter. After one of Lestat's

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[33] Rice: "There's a more deliberate use of the vernacular and a deliberate use of humor, things I would never have risked in *Interview*. But when *Lestat* was finished, I was blackly depressed. I thought it was a real failure of a book, and in some ways I still think it's a failure. It just ends. Never was I so clearly aware that a book had a bad form." (Riley 1996, 39.)

[34] According to Anne Rice, 'Amel' was an ancient Middle Eastern word for evil. See Ramsland 1995, 14.

[35] VL, 437.

[36] See above, pages 129-30.

outrageous antics, Louis asks him "why have you propped her [his victim] here in some grotesque manner, as if tempting the gods to strike you for your blasphemy?"[37] These kinds of comments are clues to the reader, making it painfully poignant what it means to have no such "gods," to have no meaning that would transcend the world of mere chance and matter. After the story of the demon is told, the world starts to react to Lestat in different supernatural ways: in *The Queen of the Damned* he shares the vision of a dying person's soul being greeted by loved ones and vanishing into the afterlife;[38] a human character, Jesse, who is a sort of "psychic detective," also reveals that something of his victims may have been left behind after their deaths.[39] The ghost of the dead vampire child, Claudia, is haunting the central parts of *The Tale of the Body Thief*. The last of Lestat's adventures is depicted in *Memnoch the Devil*, which tells about Lestat's confrontation with the Devil and God, and about his fantastic travel through Christian mythology (including the history of Creation, and visits to Heaven, and to Hell). The introduction of the demon has finally transformed the substance of the *Vampire Chronicles* into spiritualist adventure novels, leaving the limits of *Interview with the Vampire* far behind. The demon thus also functions as the element that breaks up the initial "purity" of the *Vampire Chronicles* universe, and changes its textual composition into a field of conflicting (and eventually blasphemous) intertextuality. "Intertext," however, should in this case be applied more generally as a concept for transposition of whole systems of meaning, not so much as the influence or interplay of specific individual texts.[40]

MYTHICAL ORIGIN IN DISHARMONY

The disclosure of the vampires' demonic origins is a very important turning point for Rice's series. It supposedly ends the quest for knowledge after several layers of embedded narratives, and opens up a possibility for complete self-understanding: a recognition of the vampires' true identity (*Anagnorisis*). However, to the vampires (and to the reader) an *original disharmony* is revealed, and a conflict between two incompatible substances (demon and human), instead of a single, clear-cut identity. I will now take a closer look at how this conflicted identity is articulated in the text; particularly, how it is characterised by its vampire narrators.

The educated Roman vampire, Marius, impulsively rejects the demonic version of his vampire nature. He is an intensely individual vampire, very much like Lestat, who always begins his narratives in the characteristic man-

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[37] IV, 90.
[38] QD, 57-58.
[39] QD, 187.
[40] See above, p. 101 (and Kristeva 1974/1984, 60).

ner: "I'm the Vampire Lestat. Remember me?"[41] Marius cannot feel comfortable with a story that would violate his individuality and unity:

> I revolted against all of it because if I was anything, I was an individual, a particular being, with a strong sense of my own rights and prerogatives. I could not realize that I was host to an alien entity. I was still Marius, no matter what had been done to me.[42]

This deep anxiety and rejection of heterogeneity is presented also as the motive for the demon, Amel, to go after humans in the first place. *The Queen of the Damned* goes in greater detail into the origin of vampires. Instead of a legend rounded by time into a fairy-tale about a "good King and Queen," who were accidentally transformed into vampires because they went to face the demon alone, this book presents an eyewitness report from those times, around 4000 B.C.E.[43] The evil spirit, Amel, is presented to be motivated by an anxiety towards heterogeneity: he feels an enthralling mixture of hatred and jealousy towards the curious nature of humans. He was "feeling that we are abominations, we humans, because we have both body and soul, which should not exist on this earth. [...] He told us that to have spirit within mortal bodies was a curse."[44] This rejection is reported by Maharet, a female vampire even more ancient than all the previous ones (and therefore one who is able to report even more ancient, and supposedly more authentic, knowledge).

As narrative desire propels Anne Rice's vampires deeper and deeper towards the elusive origin of their evil disposition (Nina Auerbach notes that Rice's vampires are "compulsive storytellers"[45]), this origin seems to twist into a circle. Humans were made vampires by a demon; but the demon was incited into action by the monstrous character of humans – a unified spirit looks with horror and anger towards this "Chimera," a creature of mixed up nature. Monstrous liminality is dramatised by the demon in the creation of vampire, but the original heterogeneity is to be found in humans themselves. This is underlined by Maharet's narrative; she describes how the twisted psychology and personality of Queen Akasha made it impossible for her to live in peace and harmony – and because Akasha behaved the way she did, finally she is really to blame for the acts of the evil spirit.

This is, of course, a modern solution to the complex problem of evil. The *Vampire Chronicles* is an openly post-Nietzschean work; it underlines,

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[41] QD, 1. Cf. similar announcements of emphatically underlined self-awareness: VL, 3; BT, 1; MD, 3.

[42] VL, 446.

[43] The virtually immortal characters in the universe of these novels act in many important roles; from a narrative point of view, one of the most central ones is to operate as narrative devices, and to open up new possibilities for story-telling. These ancient characters frequently engage in long narrative sessions which make up substantial parts of Rice's novels.

[44] QD, 341.

[45] Auerbach 1995, 154.

for example, that good and evil are human creations; that "Satanic" is just a name humans have given to such behaviour that disrupts their conception of orderly existence.[46] Nature itself is described as amoral, more prone to be esteemed by aesthetic criteria than by ethical ones. The demonic elements in the series are connected to an ideological structure, which emphasises the existence of destructive and chaotic potentials as parts of nature. The central metaphor is that of a "Savage Garden."

> If "our conversation" [between Lestat and his mortal friend, Nicolas] could only continue.
>
> Beauty wasn't the treachery he imagined it to be, rather it was an uncharted land where one could make a thousand fatal errors, a wild and indifferent paradise without signposts of evil or good.
>
> In spite of all the refinements of civilization that conspired to make art – the dizzying perfection of the string quartet or the sprawling grandeur of Fragonard's canvases – beauty was savage. It was as dangerous and lawless as the earth had been eons before man had one single coherent thought in his head or wrote codes of conduct on tablets of clay. Beauty was a Savage Garden. [...]
>
> Good and evil, those are concepts man has made. And man is better, really, than the Savage Garden.[47]

It is "only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*," is the way that Nietzsche formulated this principle.[48] Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* is packed with demonic metaphors and images, and he is very useful in pointing out the paradoxes and tensions that typically motivate the use of them. "Whatever exists is both just and unjust, and equally justified in both," was his formulation of the tragic conflict.[49] I have above (in chapter two) read the ambiguity of the Nietzschean position, the simultaneous acceptance and recognition of contradictory opposites. In morality, this amounts to the necessary recognition that value-systems are based on human "myths," and (simultaneously) that such myths are essential for our existence.

The central problem in the *Vampire Chronicles* is analogous to the one presented by Nietzsche. Rice's modern vampires like Lestat believe in the Savage Garden – a reality without any inherent "meaning" – but they simultaneously are driven by their "desire for knowledge" to find some significant myth. The endless dialectic of new questions and answers creates a particular version of Carroll's "erotetic narration." Even if morality is just a human in-

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[46] VL, 334. – The view of morality as a construction is linked with Nietzsche's name; the view itself, however, has been common enough. In H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1886/1926, 153) Ayesha ponders: "My life has perchance been evil – I knew not, for who can say what is evil and what good?" Earlier on, the narrator had confirmed that the morality was "an affair of latitude and religion, and what is right in one place, wrong and improper in another" (ibid., 87).

[47] VL, 131.

[48] Nietzsche 1872/1967, 52 [§ V].

[49] Nietzsche 1872/1990, 65 [§ IX].

vention, the vampires take a passionate interest in it, and in their own discussions it appears to be extremely important whether they perceive themselves as "good" or as "evil." To have this sort of definite designation would help them (and the reader) to make sense of their existence. As they are alternately described with both the attributes of demons and angels, they end up in ambivalence: they are "both just and unjust, and equally justified in both."

FROM A NEGATIVE ROLE INTO A POSITIVE IDENTITY

The intertwining of ontological and moral ambivalence structures the use of demonic elements in the *Vampire Chronicles*. At the beginning, Louis starts to tell his own story about being a vampire, in order to shatter the old myths and misconceptions. His narrative reveals an insoluble dilemma at the level of character: Louis aspires to live a good life, but in the end he has to face the exact opposite – his existence has taken on the traditional role of evil, and it is questionable whether this existence can be called "life" at all. This moral dilemma takes an alternate shape in the series as the production of a different, new, myth takes precedence. Insoluble at the level of characters, the moral dilemma goes to the roots of Rice's fictional universe. As a creation of a post-Nietzschean artist, this universe is based on a tension which is productive in aesthetic terms, but dysfunctional in ethical ones. The ontological heterogeneity of the vampires is the form this ambivalence takes as the vampire narrators offer explanations for their existence. The fictive universe proves to be flexible: it accommodates dual principles of flesh and soul, and postulates a primordial conflict between them to match the ethical problems at the cosmic scale.

However, the separation between moral and ontological, ethical and epistemological, individual and universal is somewhat artificial and superficial in Rice's case. The descriptions and pieces of information the reader receives from the *Vampire Chronicles'* cosmos are not neutral; they are offered through the vampire characters and reflect their desires and questions. The existence of the narrating self demands such a universe that has made this sort of self possible – the existence of a vampire self demands a universe with natural laws that allow the vampires to exist. In a sense this is a truism, but significant discordances complicate this picture and imply a narrative universe which is self-centred, and which serves the narcissistic need of a "grandiose self."[50] This drama of self deserves fuller treatment.

Louis's or Lestat's desire to know their origins can be interpreted as a moral imperative, as well as a creative urge. Knowledge of their origins does not necessarily alter their "nature" (as the archetype of a blood-sucking

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[50] A theory of narcissism is presented in Kohut 1971/1977 & 1977. For a metaphorical application of narcissism in the study of metafiction, see Hutcheon 1980; Bouson 1989 offers an adaptation of Kohut's "psychology of self" and empathic listening techniques to a study of the narcissistic character and the reader/text transaction.

monster is their generic precondition), but it makes possible deliberate responses to this condition. Rice's vampires confront the "old vampire" (the archetypal monster) early on in the series, perceive it as a "mindless, animated corpse", and kill it.[51] After this "Oedipal" act they narrate to each other new myths, and new definitions for what it means to be a vampire. Desire to know is also fundamentally a desire to exist (after all, these "obsessive storytellers" live under the same condition as Scheherazade: capture the interest of the audience, or perish).

Their characterisation as modern, conscious individuals (with an insatiable bloodlust) makes Rice's novels both explorations into unrestricted individuality, and dramatisations of conflicts inherent in this individuality. The great demarcation line that runs through these novels is death, as it separates the "common herd" of humans from the superior (if cursed) creatures that feed on them. Nina Auerbach has recently researched vampires as "luminaries of the twilight zone," or of those limits and social norms which restrict individual self-realisation. She focuses especially on the forbidden relationship between members of the same sex, and points out the existence of a tradition of sensitive and sympathetic vampires. This interpretation shows how these monsters are actually an "alien gender," and (in their subversive behaviour) offer encouraging objects of identification for sexual minorities and other socially suppressed groups of people. "More than our heroes or pundits, our Draculas tell us who we were."[52]

The homosexuality, or homoeroticism (as vampires do not actually get involved in genital sex) of Rice's vampires is a noteworthy feature, and connected to their general impetus to be transgressive characters – to step beyond all the limits that confine mortal existence in reality. In an earlier work, *Woman and the Demon* (1982), Auerbach has made a forcible claim that the demonic features connected with the female energy and mutability hides in its essence "a dream of transfiguration whose power over lives as well as literature has lasted well into our own century."[53] Even the (post)modern loss of self is, according to her, actualised in celebration of characters' "perpetual metamorphosis," especially by such authors as Virginia Woolf and Hélène Cixous.[54]

Auerbach emphasises an important positive dimension, central for any attempt to understand the enthusiastic response and "cult" following that Rice's vampire novels have inspired. The positive aspect is notable in the gradual process of revelation that creates a whole alternative universe on the basis of one conscious (vampire) self. On the other hand, it would be unwise to forget the deeply troubled nature of this individual. Not only feelings of empowerment, but feelings of self-hatred, rejection and impotence are thematised in these texts. Furthermore, the negative aspect is more char-

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[51] IV, 207.
[52] Auerbach 1995, 42, 112.
[53] Auerbach 1982, 34.
[54] Ibid., 228.

acteristic of the series – especially if it is read in the generic context of Gothic horror. Eugenia C. DeLamotte's views are helpful in highlighting these features of Gothic, connecting them with the limits of the self explored in this fiction.

DeLamotte notes how much the liminal state laden with "anxieties of the threshold" means for Gothic horror – ghosts and other typical supernatural beings defy both physical boundaries and those cultural categories which are important for distinguishing one thing from another.[55] The vampire Lestat, whose narcissism and magnificent self dominates a large part of the *Vampire Chronicles*, demonstrates this "anxiety of the threshold" especially during his search for the meaning of his existence. As the cosmic order and the conscious self are intimately linked in this universe, the world itself changes as Lestat adopts and then transgresses against several "Great Narratives" for his existence. These transgressions of boundaries contribute significantly to the series as a demonic text; the demonic contradictions and blasphemous polyphony create textual ambiguity.

SELF-CONTRADICTORY IDENTITIES

The early universe of the *Vampire Chronicles* is devoid of other supernatural elements, except vampires, who exist in solitude as cosmic aberrations. The main intertext (or subtext) behind discussions between Louis and Armand (such as quoted above) was atheistic: no God, or Devil. This is an implicit and explicit precondition for the desperation that is an essential part of the vampiric existence in the early *Chronicles*. Marius's tale transgresses these self-prescribed limits: relating the story of a "Good King and Queen," it adopts the tone of fairy-tale to rationalise the vampires' origin. The introduction of a demon evokes a new intertext which is at odds with the atheistic, rationalistic and openly "anti-religious" spirit dominant earlier in the series.

The intertextual heterogeneity is heightened further as Maharet tells her story (in *The Queen of the Damned*). This story rejects the fairy-tale and opts for a different perspective: the universe is in fact saturated with different (supernatural) beings, or spirits, and an ancient religion with female sorceresses knew how to use their powers. Maharet is actually evoking a new and totally different intertextual frame: that of the twentieth century "scientific" neo-paganism, particularly the writings of Margaret Murray, an English anthropologist. Murray published her book, *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*, in 1921, and claimed that the medieval witch-hunts had attacked an existing Pagan religion. The later Wicca movement (which also esteems the writings of Robert Graves and Gerard Gardner) reanimated her theories into modern-day mysticism, complete with worship of the Great Mother and her horned companion, a dark male god. With the introduction of the Wiccan

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[55] DeLamotte 1990, 20-21.

intertext, the early paradox (a vampire novel with an openly anti-religious emphasis) is transformed into a new paradox: a tale of predatory monsters who are also Wiccan witches. The climax at the end of *The Queen of the Damned*, during which Maharet and her sister defeat the ancient Queen, Akasha, can be seen as an allegory for the battle of the different, conflicting intertexts.

The fourth book, *The Tale of the Body Thief*, brings little new to the series, but it develops further its religious aspects. The existence of separate souls inside vampire or human bodies is confirmed in this novel, and the vampire Lestat is presented as strongly rejecting human corporeal existence with its disease, filth and messy sexuality. (Lestat is swaps bodies with a psychic con-man, Raglan James, and finds out that he hates the experience.) This rejection well suits the *Vampire Chronicles*' obsession with the production of recurring paradoxes, its irresistible compulsion to contradict itself. The spiritualist element in the series is locked in battle with an equally strong emphasis on materialism, and with claims of faith in body and sensual wisdom:

> *Let the flesh instruct the mind.*[56]

> "In the flesh all wisdom begins. Beware the thing that has no flesh. Beware the gods, beware the *idea*, beware the devil."[57]

> [W]e are both believers in the wisdom of the flesh [58]

The paradoxical quality of the last quotation is especially blasphemous and curious: it is voiced by a being that claims to be the Devil himself, a fallen angel, to another being of equally problematic claims to (human) flesh: the vampire Lestat. In a context of a horror fantasy novel which deals extensively with various spiritual and demonic beings, these claims are openly paradoxical, twisted, and in a painful tension – in other words, typical elements of demonic text.

Memnoch the Devil is the best example in Rice's series about this blasphemous dimension of the demonic. In it Lestat confronts both the Christian God and the Devil; the Christian theological intertext openly contradicts both the initial atheistic, and Maharet's Wiccan framework. This can be illustrated by the case of (non-human) spirits. In Maharet's tale these beings have since ancient times "bragged that they had watched human beings change from animals into what they were" – in other words, they had wit-

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[56] IV, 134.

[57] QD, 241. – These views, and this claim by the witch Maharet in particular, are attributed by Anne Rice to her husband, the poet Stan Rice (Riley 1996, 19). The biographical information suggests its own roots for the tensions and conflicts in the *Chronicles*: Anne was raised as a devout Catholic (ibid.)

[58] MD, 302.

nessed the evolution of human species, being themselves exterior to it.[59] Because Christian theology is not compatible with the Wiccan theories of natural spirits, all the spirits in *Memnoch the Devil* are suddenly relegated to the status of dead human souls. Even the most powerful among them (such as Amel) are explained as souls of dead people, who have just "forgotten" their origins.[60] Their previous knowledge of natural evolution is not accounted for, and remains insoluble.

On some occasions, the characters themselves comment on the most obvious contradictions. Lestat especially is good at this: he at first puts the blame for the inconsistencies on the unreliable narrator; Louis had been ignorant in the first novel, or telling plain lies. As the contradictions pile up even in his "own" novels, the same explanation will not do. Change in the narrative universe is reduced into evolution in character: "My views are changing," Lestat warns. "The atheism and nihilism of my earlier years now seems shallow, and even a bit cocky."[61] When the narrating self is adopted as the sole criterion for purpose and direction, the whole series starts to sound hollow and emptily self-referential. The Devil (in *Memnoch the Devil*) all but admits that he must offer Lestat his last adventure, because all the other possibilities for the narcissistic super-hero have already been used:

> You challenged every form of authority, you sought every experience. You buried yourself alive twice, and once tried to rise into the very sun to make yourself a cinder. What was left for you – but to call on me? It is as if you yourself said it: 'Memnoch, what more can I do now?'[62]

The exploration and transgression of limits has become the sole imperative in Rice's vampire series. The demonic elements perhaps figure so prominently in these novels because they articulate the implicit conflicts that narcissistic fantasy (an immortal, superhuman and radically autonomous self) runs into. The simultaneous rejection and celebration of flesh is a typical example of this logic; the wisdom of the flesh is invoked to attack various (religious) ideas or authorities – and the religious intertext is used to save the narcissistic self from the taint (and corruption) of corporeal existence. Lestat wants everything, and the fictional universe mutates very fast in order to satisfy the demand – so fast, that eventually it is in danger of losing all identity, and becoming everything and nothing. It could even be claimed that the compulsive story-telling in the *Vampire Chronicles* exists *not* to *reveal* something, but in order to hide and cover this final emptiness; it is narrating at length about the search for "truth" in order not to face the truth.

This double bind actively functions in the demonic features of the series' intertextuality. The quest for the meaning of life and especially for new

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[59] QD, 307.
[60] MD, 216.
[61] MD, 106.
[62] MD, 134-35.

religious answers is the compulsive subject-matter of the *Vampire Chronicles*. The atheistic and Wiccan systems are incorporated into the texture of horror fiction, and in their turn rejected, as the Christian intertext is adopted in *Memnoch the Devil* – supposedly to end Lestat's story in a suitably spectacular and philosophical manner. As it stands, however, this novel is such a tormented and curious mixture of ingredients that even those readers who had enjoyed other parts of the *Vampire Chronicles* reported mixed feelings and disappointment.[63] What is it that makes *Memnoch the Devil* so controversial, then?

AMBIVALENT CELEBRATION OF IMPURITY

The heterogeneous quality of different traditions or conflicting elements forced together is captured figuratively in a statue that acts as an augury for the appearance of Memnoch, the novel's Devil.

> Feathered wings. I [the hiding vampire Lestat] could see that now. Not reptilian, feathered. But the face, classical, robust, large nose, the chin … yet there was a ferocity in the profile. And why was the statue black? Maybe it was only St. Michael pushing devils into hell, angry, righteous. No, the hair was too rank and tangled for that. Armor, breastplate, and then of course I saw the most telling details. That it had the legs and feet of a goat. Devil.[64]

The description does not follow any single alternative of the traditional ways of presenting the devil. Instead, it takes the tradition of fallen angels (upper part) and the folk tradition of hairy, animal-like devils (lower part) and puts them together, into a chimera of our contradictory conceptions of evil. Analogously, Rice's novel takes the seemingly serious theological and philosophical questions about justice, God, and purpose in universe, and combines them with comical or farcical episodes, or scenes from horror fiction. In the end, the text seems to struggle with its own objectives and hovers ambiguously at the limit between religiosity and irreverent blasphemy.

In some instances *Memnoch the Devil* bears a strong resemblance to Clive Barker's play "History of the Devil" (see the next chapter). Particularly the middle part of the novel, which consists of a journey through history in the company of the Devil, is comparable to Barker's work. Both highlight untraditional moments that supposedly are the historical truth behind Christian Scriptures. Both Rice's and Barker's Devils meet Jesus, and come out of the encounter as intellectually (and even morally) superior. Rice's Devil, the archangel Memnoch, is the first and best among the angels; his dispute with God is concentrated on the role and destiny of conscious beings (humans). God (and his alter-ego Jesus, as well) is depicted as a totally detached and even cruel Creator, who is unable to sympathise or iden-

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[63] See e.g. the Internet newsgroup alt.books.anne-rice .
[64] MD, 34.

tify with the lot of suffering humans. Incarnation into human form and Jesus' final self-sacrifice are portrayed as complete mistakes. Memnoch tries in the novel to make God understand the morally destructive nature of human existence (tormented by the lack of any absolute knowledge or meaning, broken by intolerable suffering). Jesus goes through suffering and death, but because of his divine understanding he makes an inhuman (or superhuman) mistake and glorifies the value of suffering into a Christian dogma.

> "'Oh, no, no!' [Memnoch cried out to Jesus]. 'This is disaster.' […]
> "Lord, there are times when the hardest men hold infants in their arms, their own children, and the happiness and satisfaction of those moments is so sublime that there is no horror on earth that can destroy the peace they feel! That is the human capacity for love and understanding! When one can achieve harmony in spite of everything, and men and women do this, Lord. They do. Come, dance with your people. Sing with them. Feast with them. Throw your arms around the women and the men and know them in the flesh!'[65]

The inhumanity and fundamental inability of God to understand the Devil, who is trying to defend the cause of humanity and ethical values is symptomatic of the novel in general. It has taken the whole of (Catholic) Christian theology and put it through a demonic inversion. The traditional names for Good and Evil – God and Devil – are reversed. At the same time, however, the narrative does not carry far enough to subvert the opposition completely. The evil God is still omnipotent, and the rebellious Devil is locked into impotent, if righteous, rage. The Christian subtext becomes coded with ambivalent and blasphemous acts and parallels; as Lestat confronts Jesus for the last time, on the road to Golgotha, he both receives the veil of Veronica (the mythical cloth with Christ's image) and drinks his blood. Jesus himself is depicted as teasing Lestat into this ambiguous act of blasphemy or mystic union: "The Blood of God, Lestat," Jesus whispered. "Think of all the human blood that has flowed into your lips. Is my blood not worthy? Are you afraid?"[66] Later, back from Heaven and Hell, Lestat kneels down on a menstruating woman and licks her menstrual blood – in a double act of blasphemy parallel to his vampiric "Communion" with Christ, and rejection of Christ's sacrificial blood.

> "Forgive me, forgive me," I whispered, and my tongue broke through the thin cotton of her panties, tearing the cloth back from the soft down of pubic hair, pushing aside the bloodstained pad she wore, and I lapped at the blood just inside her young pink vaginal lips, just coming from the mouth of her womb, not pure blood, but blood from her, blood from her strong, young body, blood all over tight hot cells of her vaginal flesh, blood that brought no pain, no sacrifice, only her gentle forbearance with me, with my unspeakable act, my tongue going deep into her, drawing out

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[65] MD, 277.
[66] MD, 283.

the blood that was yet to come, gently, gently, lapping the blood from the soft hair on her pubic lips, sucking each tiny droplet of it.

Unclean, unclean. They cried on the road to Golgotha, when Veronica had said: "Lord, I touched the hem of your garment and my hemorrhage was healed." *Unclean, unclean.*[67]

This (compulsively repetitive) celebration of the "impurity" of the flesh, however, sounds odd as Lestat had spent most of the previous book (*The Tale of the Body Thief*) cursing the filth and agony of human bodies. In the end, any claim or gesture in the *Vampire Chronicles* should not be interpreted as a declaration of some authentic position, but rather as strategic moves which are connected with some opposition in a structure of tension. Lestat finally transgresses all limits and rejects all options: he comes through his Christian adventure claiming: "God and Devil are idiots!"[68] As a creature of borderlines (and as an image of a borderline personality), the vampire Lestat cannot accept any alternative, nor any system of signification, apart from the value of story-telling. The confrontation with Christian mythology proves finally to be profoundly disappointing. Lestat feels seriously betrayed and is imprisoned during a violent attack of madness. As he is free again, he walks into a deserted automobile store, watches his reflection in the glass, and the *Vampire Chronicles* are finished with this image – the vampire self looking at his own reflection. "I am the Vampire Lestat. This is what I saw. This is what I heard. This is what I know! This is *all* I know."[69]

Lestat finds no meaning, nor lesson: after every system of thought has been transgressed, contradicted and blasphemed, the vampire self finds himself devoid of all "depth" or substance. He is only a mirroring surface which may reflect (and distort), but which figures relationships to others (and other texts) as violence, parasitism, and death. The interpersonal and intertextual relationships are both portrayed as necessary, but also fundamentally ambivalent and rooted in difference, debt, and separation. Maybe this is the "demonic voice" these vampire narratives are trying to drown in their voluminous, polyphonic fantasies.

Demons have been used in narratives for a wide variety of reasons during their long history. In Anne Rice's vampire novels, the quest for some "Grand Narrative" that would organise life and meaning in our contemporary society is set in an unresolved tension that suits well the traditional thematics of the demonic. The blasphemous obsession with the Christian religion in the *Vampire Chronicles* grows more pronounced as the series enters its fifth part, *Memnoch the Devil*. This can be interpreted in terms of the *Vampire Chronicles*' particular "demonic poetics" (how these novels utilise demonic imagery in their own, particular manner): the series simultaneously strongly rejects all the answers offered by religions as insulting to a modern

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[67] MD, 322.
[68] MD, 339.
[69] MD, 353.

individual – at the same time, however, it just cannot completely give up on religious themes. To exist in a total lack of answers would be unthinkable. The *Vampire Chronicles* is locked into battle with limits and is constantly forced to cross them. The borderline between Good and Evil is entangled with the logic of double-bind; "the saints of evil" is one characteristic expression used.[70] Another, equally typical expression is "good at being [a killer, a vampire]" that characterises Lestat. "I was a good marksman when I was a young man […]. And now I am a good vampire. So much for our understanding of the word 'good.'"[71] Other limits that the series similarly circles and twists are Beast/Human, Human/Demon, and Spirit/Body.

I conclude my analysis of this chapter by emphasising the profound ambivalence that characterises Rice's *Chronicles*. Both her vampire characters and her novels have liminal "impurity" or heterogeneity in their fabric. The demon acts as a sign of the Other: the vampires explain their plural and morally conflicting condition by their fusion with the demon.

In the end, the heterogeneity of the self precedes the demon; the potential for conflict is inherent in human make-up itself and Rice's vampires are just exploring the demonic extremes of the desire. The *Vampire Chronicles* cannot stop at any conclusion; it is sucking different occult and religious materials into its textual self, proving only that desire is always desire for something Other. It is possible to see it as an exhilarating or terrifying prospect (or both, as in Rice's case) that we cannot ever really reach and know this Other.

Anne Rice has been central in establishing "monstrous others" as the main characters of horror; especially such forms of sexuality that have traditionally been labelled as "perverse" have gained new prominence as a part of horror's transgressive character. Another important writer to explore these possibilities is Clive Barker, even if from a somewhat different angle. He returns the Christian Devil to the centre of the stage in the next chapter.

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[70] VL, 312.
[71] VL, 336.

8. The (Un)Traditionalist: Clive Barker's Devil

> POLYXENE: (*To Yapshi*) What have you got there?
> YAPSHI: Lady?
> POLYXENE: In the bundle?
> YAPSHI: A dead god, lady.
> POLYXENE: Surely you mean dog. (*To Lysias*) He means dog. Take it away, Yapshi.
> YAPSHI: (*Bowing*) Lady.[1]

"The History of the Devil; or Scenes from a Pretended Life" is the full title of one of the earliest published plays by Clive Barker (b. 1952). Barker became instantaneously famous with the publication of a three-volume short story collection *Books of Blood* in 1984. Since this he has published eight novels, four more short story collections and several novellas, as well as scripted, directed and produced several movies. The earlier work by him has also gained attention, and *Incarnations: Three Plays* is one of the most recent and most interesting additions to his *oeuvre*, consisting of three plays written and produced in the early 1980s.[2] "The History of the Devil" (1980; "HD") exhibits several of the key features of Barker's fiction – especially his love for the grotesque, the demonic and his dark sense of humour – but is also unique in its reliance on the fantastic theatre tradition and adaptation of the Christian figure of the Devil. I am particularly interested in analysing how different layers of ambivalence are constructed in the script. I want to see how the demonic figures are connected with or set apart from the humans – to examine the specific role that Barker has cast for the Devil and his demons to play.

The opening citation from the play is a good signpost. The joke with the inversion of letters from "god" to "dog" match the general atmosphere of the work.[3] It is irreverent, often grotesquely comic, and directs special offences towards good taste, proper conduct and Christianity. The figure of the devil is in a central role in the play, but it has gone through a radical re-

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[1] Barker, "The History of the Devil" (1995, 283).

[2] For more of Barker's playwriting, see also *Forms of Heaven: Three Plays* (Barker 1996).

[3] *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Obscenity & Taboo* also points out that 'dog' relates to 'a male prostitute': "This euphemism is a reference to anal intercourse carried out 'doggy-fashion'" (McDonald 1988/1996; q.v. 'Dog'). Such connotations were probably not missed by Barker (well familiar with the homosexual and sadomasochistic subcultures).

writing from its traditional sources. As a study of evil this early work clearly has had an effect on how evil is depicted in Barker's influential horror stories and movies. He also makes use of the devil in a more general context, to characterise the aims of his work.

> I think one of the things that's been missing from monster movies of recent years is that, for the most part, the monsters themselves have been dumb. [...]
> Evil is never abstract. It is always concrete, always particular and always vested in individuals. To deny the creatures as individuals the right to speak, to actually state their cause, is perverse – because I *want* to hear the Devil speak. I think that's a British attitude. I like the idea that a point of view can be made by the dark side.[4]

Clive Barker is not simply advocating here an interpretation of the Devil as a real individual; the play partly contradicts and complicates such ideas. In many points in the play it is emphasised that the Devil is not a human being and to conceive of him as such would be a mistake.[5] The structure of the play is fragmentary, it consists of four acts that divide into over twenty scenes. These take place over the span of three thousand years and cover various geographically unconnected sites such as ancient Russia, a Greek settlement in North India, and sixteenth century Lucerne. Barker's Devil is interesting precisely because it is not a fixed individual with clear-cut boundaries, but rather takes different guises and is constantly changing.[6] In this respect it is a liminal creature and closely connected with the questions discussed in the first chapter.

At the same time this specific incarnation of the Devil (one should remember also the title of the book, *Incarnations*) develops some personality during the play. This demonic character is unique in its position both as a subject with human attributes and an individual history, and as a superhuman principle, or force. In this latter, impersonal role the Devil is shown to be a mere narrative device, "a point of view" to borrow Barker's own phrase. He is an actor constantly taking up different roles on life's stage, taking part in human suffering, but definitely not the origin of all evil acts, as in reli-

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[4] Clive Barker, interview with Phil Edwards ("Hair-Raiser," *Crimson Celluloid* No. 1/1988; Barker - Jones 1991, 11).

[5] These include: "THE DEVIL: I have no self to be certain of. Understand that, and you understand me." "SAM KYLE: A wife cannot testify against her husband. That's the law. POPPER: That's true. CATHERINE LAMB: M'lord, this is no natural husband and wife. [...] THE DEVIL: She's too cruel. Too petty. SAM KYLE: (*Quietly*) Good. She'll humanize you. Make you look a little more human." (HD, 293, 350-51.)

[6] Barker's Devil could easily have used as his motto the same quotation as Salman Rushdie from the study by Daniel Defoe (and not just his title, *The History of the Devil*): "Satan, being thus confined to a vagabond, wandering, unsettled condition, is without any certain abode; for though he has, in consequence of his angelic nature, a kind of empire in the liquid waste of air, yet this is certainly part of his punishment, that he is ... without any fixed place, or space, allowed him to rest the sole of his foot upon." (Quoted as the epigraph of *The Satanic Verses*.)

gious fundamentalism. The Devil is there to guide the reader's attention towards all the cruelty that human beings have been able to inflict on each other throughout history. Through his point of view we get a dark version of history – which overlaps with the "history of the Devil" in this play. A mythical, immortal creature is evoked to give the audience a means of access into History on a superhuman scale. It is one of the paradoxes of "The History of the Devil" that the superhuman perspective reveals an uninterrupted tradition of inhumanity in humanity itself.

"The History of the Devil" is not realistic theatre; the fast changes in scenery and fantastic events are implied by stylised action, changes of lightning and sound effects. In his production notes the author stresses that the play should not sink into caricature. "This is not a dream-play; not a medieval mystery play, parading semi-symbolic figures for a moral purpose. It's a history."[7] In its combination of archetypal figures, such as the Devil, a

"The History of the Devil" (the poster by Clive Barker; Barker - Jones 1991, 4).

witch, a soldier lost in a forest, with a story-line of historical pretensions, it is of course – both. Its central subject-matter is fantastical and symbolic: the trial of the Devil after all his years of banishment. This very special session of law takes place in suggestive surroundings. The court is assembled on the shores of Lake Turkana, in Africa. We are told that the exact spot is "sixty miles east of where Eden stood."[8] At the same time the mythical and biblical context is contrasted with the opposing register of concrete realism. The place stinks ("So did Eden" comments an assisting demon) and crocodiles and a local pagan tribe contribute to an impression of desolate "godlessness."[9] Mythical and realistic, Christian and non-Christian, high and low registers are mixed in the play from the beginning. This contributes to the various aspects of ambivalence dominating the play. The settings have an important role in determining the initial tone; actions take place in the context of the great narrative of the Garden of Eden (connoting original sin and its punishment), but this place is empty – filled only with the random cruelty of crocodiles and the Turkana people who live in iron shacks and make necklaces out of tin cans.[10]

The main character is the Devil, whose entrance is described in the stage directions:

> *ENTER THE DEVIL, SMILING. HE IS A STAR IN HIS OWN ROTTEN FIRMA-MENT. AS GLAMOROUS – AND AS ARTIFICIAL – AS ANY HOLLYWOOD ICON. A COAT OVER HIS SHOULDER, PERHAPS. SUNGLASSES, PERHAPS. PERHAPS NOTHING.*[11]

The description is again in humorous contrast to the mythical context in which it is situated. The devil's entrance is anticipated by darkness at noon, a boiling lake and a cloud of thousands of birds. A human observer whispers in terror: "Pazuzu." The reference is to *The Exorcist*, which gave the demonic entity this name (of an Assyrian god).[12] Because of the best-selling qualities of the Devil in the 1970s, it is only proper that the Devil should be called a "Hollywood icon." The popularity of personified evil among the mass audience points also towards the carnivalesque, or low, discourse of the demonic. "The History of the Devil" particularly relishes this part of the demonic tradition. As a play it is characterised by fast and witty dialogue, rapid changes of setting, fights and cruel laughter over painful and serious subjects. Parts of a character eaten by crocodiles are handled on the

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[7] HD, 246.

[8] Ibid., 256.

[9] This indeed seems to have been Barker's intention; in his notes he explains that he used *Eyelids of Morning: the Mingled Destinies of Crocodiles and Men* by Alistair Graham and Peter Beard while writing the play (it has pictures of Lake Turkana and its inhabitants). Barker also emphasises that Satan comments in the play on the "Godless" quality of this scene. (Ibid., 245.)

[10] Ibid., 321.

[11] Ibid., 263.

[12] See above, page 149n19.

stage ("Is that his head?" – "Some of it."), and a boxing match complete with a sports commentary is left to be improvised by the actors.[13] In his introduction Clive Barker remarks approvingly on a review that described "The History of the Devil" as "a mixture of *Decline and Fall*, *Paradise Lost*, *Perry Mason* and *Flash Gordon*."[14] Barker combines themes and material that are classified in our culture as "high" with elements that are decidedly "low" – metaphysical speculations with farts and extravagant violence. In this he is a self-conscious heir to the spirit and methods of *commedia dell'arte*, *Grand Guignol*, and *Punch and Judy* puppet shows. Barker especially comments on the English Christmas pantomime, and its "riotous indifference to any rules of drama but its own; its guileless desire to delight."[15] The demonic elements are, once again, put to the use of entertainment.

The mode of entertainment Barker's play celebrates is openly self-reflexive and ironic; every act opens with an announcement made by an "actor." In these opening lines the main action and subject matter of the play are anticipated and commentated upon. The play should have a good, captivating beginning – thus the actor announces that "History always begins with a cry" (and a panicking woman enters crying "The ground's opening up").[16] Pretension and acting are also the Devil's traditional skills, as fiction can be aligned with a lie and opposed to the absolute truth. Barker notes that the Devil "has the best collection of personae of any character in Western culture."[17] The relationship between actors and the Devil is treated ironically in the play. The Devil constantly demands the services of the actors; he is especially fond of insisting that they give him "the obscene kiss." This becomes one of the comic sidelines in the play's twisted plot. At the same time it also functions as a mark for the connection between the demonic and (forbidden) sexuality.

> *ENTER THE DEVIL, UNSEEN.*
> THE DEVIL: Would you care to kiss my ass?
> 1ST ACTOR: How did you know?
> 2ND ACTOR: Know what?
> 1ST ACTOR: What he said to me. Would you care to kiss my ass?
> 2ND ACTOR: Are you offering?
> 1ST ACTOR: Me?
> 2ND ACTOR: Yes.
> 1ST ACTOR: Why not?
> 2ND ACTOR: Your tent or mine?[18]

The immediate context of this incident reveals the intimate relationship the Devil gradually enters into with the humans in the play. The court of law

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[13] Ibid., 321-22, 340.
[14] Ibid., xii.
[15] Ibid., x.
[16] Ibid., 251.
[17] Ibid., xii.
[18] Ibid., 316.

that should release or condemn the Devil consists of the Devil's attorney (Sam Kyle), the judge (Felix Potter) and two female prosecutors, Catherine Lamb and Jane Beck. If one studies the specific role of the demonic in the play, the nature of the trial alters: the real judgement is made by the reader, or by the audience – only they are able to perceive the invisible role that the Devil is given in scenes like the one quoted above. The play opens up a discursive space that invites the reader to re-evaluate and reflect on the role of evil in our history. In the next scene the Devil meets with the second prosecutor, Jane, and they have a twisted love scene: misunderstandings, crosstalk and misunderstanding each other's words (or understanding them in surprising new ways) – this is the simultaneously tragic and comic horizon of communication where the Devil is most at his own.[19] In his relations with the humans the Devil is consistently articulated as being morally ambivalent. In this example this means simultaneous and contradictory relationships to sexuality: at first the Devil plays the traditional role of Tempter. He seduces the two actors into a (homo)sexual relationship, and thus propagates (in the traditional, moralistic sense) immorality and depravity. Then he reacts to Jane's unwilling attraction to himself with a confused exchange of words. ("JANE BECK: Wait: you *are* telling me you're in love with me? THE DEVIL: No, I thought you – [...] There seems to be a misunderstanding."[20]) The rejection and temptation are connected by the Devil's only soliloquy. This offers the audience an "authentic" glimpse into the Devil's perception and attitude to humans. As the Devil, however, is constantly characterised as a great liar, we can never be certain of these shows of emotion.

> THE DEVIL: I've seen men and women in the throes of bubonic plague, lying beside each other on diseased blankets under a dirty lamp, suddenly overcome with passion for each other's bodies, sores notwithstanding. I've seen them grind their last moments away, grunting out their lives, then collapsing on to each other, dead. When that's the way most of you touch Heaven, if at all, how can you believe that I, who didn't make you, am more malicious than the God who did?[21]

The sexual body appears here as the grotesque body of the "low" demonic tradition: a body transformed by disease and overcome by lust. As the Devil (speaking from his immortal position as a fallen angel) degrades humans into mindless animals, he mixes the "high" with the "low" demonic. The description of men and women making love on their deathbed romantically elevates sexual desire into an answer for death's absurdity. The sexual

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[19] Many writers have noted the suggestive parallelism between the demonic tradition and the displacing and "disseminating" effects of language, especially the written language. (See the discussion of the "devil's language" and demonic polyphony in chapter three.) Barker's play toys with this thematics: language can be very slippery and if we are using language to construct our identities or to build human relationships, they can be very slippery, too. (See also Derrida 1972/1981.)

[20] HD, 318.

[21] Ibid., 317.

act is a way to touch Heaven, and perhaps the only way that exists. The sinful, human body that tempts people to forget their spirituality has here gone through a demonic inversion. The specific target is the ascetic tradition of Christianity that can be traced back to Paul and his writings in the New Testament (e.g. "For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live").[22] The fallen angel ostensibly pities the grotesque sight of diseased humans copulating in their throes of death – but the situation hides a double irony. As he uses the "high" discourse and starts talking about Heaven, the Devil is also forced to face his loss. A fallen angel is dismissed from Heaven, and the "way of the flesh" might be the only way for himself, as well. The boundary between demon and human starts to erode.

This indeed seems to be the case. The first flashback scene into the history of the Devil goes back to the day Lucifer was cast down from heaven with the other rebel angels. With ironic realism this event is meticulously pinpointed in place and time: November 1212 B.C.E., in the area that is now known as Russia. Barker's rewriting of the myth is emphatically corporeal; the Devil is naked and his wounds are bleeding – his wings have been torn off. He is treated by Ulla Shim (a tough, practical woman who intended to feed her pigs with Lucifer's body if he were dead) and her retarded daughter, Pia. Pia teaches the Devil knots, and the Devil teaches her words. Knots and words become intermingled as Pia wants to make love: the Devil has forgotten the meaning of words like "Heaven" but as their bodies are tightly tied together, he remembers. The ambiguous thematic bond between sex, death and Heaven is repeated here as well; the Devil accidentally strangles Pia with the rope she carried on her neck as they are making love.[23]

The intimate connection between the Devil and the humans is linked with the problem of making moral judgements in a world without pure and absolute ideals, and, on the other hand, with the shared desire to cross boundaries. Sex and death are such liminal moments in the play, and the combination of both marks the Devil's ambivalent role as a desirable and frightening transgressive figure. "He's [a] monster: The Devil himself. Of course I want him," is how Jane Beck explains this paradox.[24] The dual nature of a monster is here very acutely felt. Stallybrass and White comment that the "grotesque physical body is invoked both defensively and offensively because it is not simply a powerful image but fundamentally constitutive of the categorical sets through which we live and make sense of the world."[25] In "The History of the Devil" the role of this specific "monster" is subtle – as he is associated with death, cruelty and suffering, he breaks through the limit between life and death. But as an immortal creature who is fighting for his right to return into Heaven, he also carries opposite mean-

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[22] Rom. 8:13.
[23] HD, 278-79.
[24] Ibid., 351.
[25] Stallybrass - White 1986/1993, 23.

ings. The positive and negative aspects are inseparable from each other, the good and evil blend, and the Devil becomes more human as the play proceeds. This is aptly presented in the actor's announcement opening the second act:

> ACTOR: (*To the audience*) In law, there are no certainties. Suppose we tried our loved ones? Made a list of offences against us. How long before we'd amassed enough resentment to hang them by? Now, we put the Enemy on trial. How long before we find enough reasons to love the Prince of the World?[26]

The sympathy for the devil goes very far in Barker's play, but it does not settle for a blank acceptance of irremovable evil as a part of "human nature." Barker's warning against reading his play in the tradition of moralities is here well worth heeding. As the Devil is granted a separate existence and some individual personality in the play, he also gains an individual destiny: he is not reduced to allegory, even if he carries a heavy burden of symbolism and metaphysical speculation. In the end, the Devil is fated to become a tragic character.

This aspect is made especially clear in the Easter episode. The trial is progressing in time to modern days, and the prosecution accuses the Devil of challenging God himself, of making a parody of humanity.

> THE DEVIL: I made a doll, if that's what you're driving at.
> CATHERINE LAMB: You confess to it then?
> THE DEVIL: Confess? There is no guilt here; I'm an engineer. I'd read Descartes. One of his heretical papers especially, the "Traite L'Homme". In it, he makes the analogy between the physical body and a machine: the nerves are pipes, and so on. I myself had seen beautiful hydraulic automata in the royal gardens in Germany: the work of one Solomon de Caus. To a creature such as myself, rejected by all and sundry, what better solution than to construct a companion of my own, without will except my word? Twenty years, it took me, building from the marrow outwards.
> CATHERINE LAMB: Easter.
> THE DEVIL: Yes, I called him Easter, after the Resurrection.

The "pretended life" of the Devil gains another dimension with the creation of an artificial human being. The concept of a living doll thickens the multiplicity of references in Barker's play. German romanticism, especially E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Fantastic Pieces" are paid homage; "Nutcracker and Mouse King" (1816), "Automata" (1814), "Sandman" (1816-17) all figure animated dolls, automatons and demonic metamorphoses.[27] The mechanical man also invokes the stage tricks and violent puppet plays which Barker is drawing upon in his own work. The most important single tradi-

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[26] HD, 268.
[27] See Lois Rostow Kuznets's study *When Toys Come Alive* (1994).

tion used here is, however, the story of Faust in its different versions. Barker has admitted that he repeatedly varies the Faustian theme in his works: *The Damnation Game, Hellraiser* and *The Last Illusion* are all according to him fundamentally Faust stories.[28] In this particular piece Goethe's *Faust* (1808-32) with its reference to the alchemists' dream of making a *homunculus* (a small artificial human) is important.[29] Goethe was interested in the "daemonic" spirit of Faust expressed in his ceaseless striving for more knowledge, more experiences, in his pursuit beyond all conventional morality or ideas of good or evil. The endless wanderings and experiments of Barker's Devil follow very much the same imperative.[30] Furthermore, the question of tradition and originality, of machine-like determination and free will, are central to both the form and content of the play.

Jeffrey Burton Russell calls the figure of Faust "the single most popular character in the history of Western Christian culture" – overtaken only by Christ, Mary and the Devil.[31] This demands quite a liberal interpretation of a literary "figure" and opens up some problems, especially in a case like Barker's play. "The History of the Devil" attributes to the Devil some of the experimental curiosity that traditionally belongs to the figure of Faust. The Faustian tradition seems to have gone through a reversal. The original sixteenth-century version of the story was already an important modification of a medieval legend about the pact with the Devil. Russell cites the following changes from the earlier tradition:

> [Faust's] story is homocentric. In the medieval tales the tension is between the Devil and the Christ, or the Virgin , or another saint. [...] But in Faust, the tension is between Devil and man [...].
>
> Second, this homocentrism is closely tied to individualism. [...] Faust has no recourse to a community or a communion of saints. [...]
>
> Third, the story is pessimistic [...] like the horror films of our own century [...].
>
> Fourth, the story reveals a Protestant and modern ambivalence toward knowledge [...].
>
> Fifth, the character of Mephistopheles begins a transformation of the Devil's character: he is at least a little sympathetic with his victim, and he shows some small signs of introspection [...]. The internalization and humanization of Satan's character became the main theme in the post-Faustian literature of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[32]

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[28] Ibid., xiii. Cf. Barker - Jones 1991, 113 ("The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus" [1988]).

[29] Goethe, *Faust II* (1832/1959, 99-106).

[30] At one point, for example, the Devil tries to justify his actions during the massacre at Bucephalus (the Greek settlement in India) as an experiment: "If you were given power over a species, wouldn't you want to examine its passions? It was my sentimental education." (HD, 293.)

[31] Russell 1986/1992, 58. To reach his conclusion on the dominance of the Faust as a literary figure Russell is ready to include even the legend of Don Juan "with all its manifestations from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* to Shaw's *Don Juan in Hell*" as Faustian (ibid.).

[32] Ibid., 63-64.

Barker's play is distinctly "post-Faustian" in the sense that it is both well informed by the Faustian tradition, and attempts to go beyond it. It dispenses with the figure of Faust altogether, and gives the Devil himself the centre stage. Barker's Devil could be called an (un)traditionalist; it focuses our attention on the traditional role that the Devil has played in legends and folklore, and invites our imaginative identification with the life of such a character. In this process the Devil is inevitably both a captive inside the tradition and a creative rewriting of it. Barker has himself commented on this dialogue between freedom and necessity that confronts genre writers with certain subjects which have long histories, such as vampires or devils. Every new vampire story will be compared to its countless predecessors, and the awareness of this acts as a spur to invention: "the writer drives his imagination to new extremes of form and content, honing his vision so that whatever else may be said of the resulting work it can at least be called uniquely *his*". However, Barker sees that the tradition has also another creative role:

> But there's a greater pleasure yet. In traveling the road of a particular story – along which every town will have streets and squares in common, yet none looks quite like the other – the writer may see, with a backward glance, the way the essentials of the tale have been reinterpreted over the years, subtly hanging to reflect the interior lives of those who've gone before. The road becomes an index to the blossoming and decay of belief-systems; a book, if you will, of books, in which the subject is both the history of the story and the story of history.[33]

Metafictional concerns may, of course, be interpreted as a hindsight on the part of an author writing within a controversial genre which has often been under attack. Both the intellectual content and the formulaic generic conventions of horror have received a fair share of scorn. In the case of "The History of the Devil" it is, however, quite accurate to characterise it as "the history of the story and the story of history." It devours a rich array of materials from the demonic tradition (the myth of the fallen angels, Jesus Christ, Dante, the witch hunts, Faust, the myth of Lilith, to name but a few) and subjects them to reinterpretation (albeit quite a schematic and fast-forward one). The intensity and graphical violence that characterise Barker's fiction in general derive their power in this particular play largely from the tensions between these diverse materials. The character of the Devil is not only the sophisticated and civilised Mephisto who puts into words the moral desperation of modern man. He is also – and perhaps more importantly – the comic and cruel, inconsistent devil of the "low" demonic tradition. After playing a simple trick on one human character in the play, and sending him to death among the crocodiles, he notes: "I am weary of this: sending innocents to their deaths." This is nevertheless the traditional role of the devil in

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[33] Barker - Jones 1991, 111 ("The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus").

this sort of *diablerie*; one rule of this game is "If we play with the Leviathan, we must expect to be bitten" as the Devil comments a little later.[34]

The episode with the man-machine is still worth a closer look: in it the ambivalent role of the Devil is heightened both in the areas of sexual thematics and in the struggle between freedom and determination. Easter is the Devil's pride and joy, an artificial man which surpasses "real" humans in many areas. The carnivalesque climax of the play is a boxing match that the Devil arranges between the invincible Daniel Mendoza and Easter: a feast for improvised stage action. The apparent goal of the Devil is to break and destroy Daniel in this last battle of his. The motives for the Devil's actions seem at this point to be simple resentment and bitter will to destroy. The real motive is not revealed, but in the light of Easter's words this seems to be envy. Easter spies on the lovemaking of the Mendozas and then voluntarily loses the fight. The Devil destroys his rebellious creation – as a modification of the Frankenstein motive (discussed more closely in the next chapter). The Cartesian man-machine presents the Devil in his last speech with a critique of the division between "insignificant" materiality and meaningful spirituality:

> JACK EASTER: You're frightened because there's something you haven't taken account of; that makes me dream, that makes me bow my head to little Israel [Daniel Mendoza]. You'll never be Prince of the World, you know that: because there's a mystery here you can't fathom. And if I dreamt it, who was never in a womb, who had no childhood, how much more certain is it that flesh has it in its head, this nostalgia? Can you explain, engineer? How is it an engine, mere mechanics, aches to hold in its works a half-remembered beauty?[35]

The naively romantic pathos of Easter matches the grotesque soliloquy by the Devil quoted above. "The mystery of the flesh" is among the central concerns for Barker (as it was for Rice), and these two speeches well illustrate how it is sometimes articulated as a curse, sometimes as a blessing. The Devil and the demonic has clearly an important relationship to the body and material existence. They cannot simply be equated with each other – the Devil seems to be as troubled by human physicality as humans themselves. In fact, Barker has put a new type of paradox into the monster gallery of horror fiction; his Devil is so human that it seems to be troubled by some "inner demons" of its own. In its generic role as an adversary or tempter it cannot be fully human: its otherness is part of its definition as a demonic being, and bound up with its metaphysical and cosmological roles. In Barker's play this role is unclear and labile. In a final show of irony the *prosecutors* demand that the Devil be destined for the rest of the eternity in Heaven (the advocate finally turned against his employer and demanded Hell). What the Devil ends up finding there is emptiness; the absolute ideal of perfection

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[34] HD, 319, 322.
[35] Ibid., 344.

(and God as its embodiment) does not exist any more. However, the death of God is not perhaps metaphysically as interesting as is the figure of the Devil in itself; he seems to be as ignorant of his own best, of his true desires and of his self as any imperfect human being. Barker's Devil is the one truly possessed. In his deeply problematic condition and moral vacillation he becomes, if not admirable, at least a sympathetic and interesting, many-sided figure.

This "human interest" in the persona of Devil is apparent also in the denouement. The Devil betrays his fellow demons in order to have Heaven all to himself; after a while he returns in a terrible rage – having been betrayed. In the end of the play only the binds between people are affirmed as valid. (It is left unclear what power forces the Devil to respect the judgement, if God exists no more.) The play ends on a high note that is typical for an important part of contemporary horror: even the monsters are no longer totally others. The Devil is joined by Jane Beck, who gently leads her lover away. Even the Devil is not absolutely rejected in this context: the many voices on stage react differently to him and the end result is characteristically polyphonic.

Clive Barker is unquestionably one of the most important current authors working within the horror genre. His most recent novels have broadened the scope of horror and simultaneously dissolved the boundaries between horror, fantasy and mainstream writing. He is not alone in this development. He is, however, probably the most systematic in his use of demonic elements, especially as images of fantastic tortures and bodily deformations. As in the popular *Hellraiser* series, his demons are still recognisable as humans – what they were before their extreme desires lead them beyond the limits of humanity.[36] "The History of the Devil" is an interesting rewriting of the Christian diabolical tradition; the Devil is described as an ambivalent figure that in many different ways gives voice to the painful borderlines of humanity. Barker has identified his Devil particularly with the liminal areas of sexuality, death and violence. As the Devil is not completely rejected but given a possibility of defending his own position, the "monstrosities" and "perversions" of the traditional Devil are articulated as parts of ourselves, of humanity.

This project of adapting the rejected or the demonic into cultural production is on Barker's part a conscious decision. He has given in his numerous articles and interviews many justifications for this sort of art; the following comment captures his vision of horror stories, and well expresses the different levels of application and different functions that contemporary horror aims to serve.

> Stories of the body: the doomed machine in which we awaken, prone to the frailties of age and corruptions of disease. Stories of the mind: a system striving for reason and balance while the ape and the lizard we were –

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[36] See below, page 219.

and in our coils, still *are* – slink through its darker places. Stories of God and the Devil: the actors we have cast to play our moralities out. Stories heroic or absurd: epic or elegiac: but all, in their different ways, touching upon the fears that we live with day by day.[37]

I would like to conclude by quickly outlining my main points from this short analysis. In "The History of the Devil" by Clive Barker the demonic elements are paradoxically intertwined with the humanity and the human history. This invites the audience (or the reader) to reflect on the role and nature of evil, and finally to interpret the demonic elements (particularly through the figure of Devil) as connected with the ambivalent borderlines of humanity (especially with sexuality, and death). In a characteristic gesture for a demonic text, the Christian diabolical tradition is both respected and travestied: the ontological and moral categories are presented as existing in continual conflicts.

    The next chapter probes further the relation between the "artificial subjectivity" and the demonic that Barker opened in the case of Easter.

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[37] Barker - Jones 1991, 5-6 ("Introduction: Night Visions 4").

9. Technodemons of the Digital Self

MEPHISTOPHELES.
I'll show you arts and joys, I'll give you more
Than any mortal eye has seen before.
[…]
FAUST. If I be quieted with a bed of ease,
Then let that moment be the end of me!
[…]
If to the fleeting hour I say
'Remain, so fair thou art, remain!'
Then bind me with your fatal chain,
For I will perish that day.
— J.W. von Goethe, *Faust I*[1]

THE MAGIC OF MACHINES

Science fiction (SF) has traditionally been connected with reason, technological innovations and the scientific advancement of human civilisation. In such a role as an optimistic inheritor of the Enlightenment it is not immediately associated with the tradition concerning demons. Yet, any reader who is familiar with the genre will know that the irrational – even demonic – has its important share in the dynamism of this abundantly productive field. This chapter studies the tempting and anxious relationship men (humanity in general, but here also specifically the male characters) have had with machines in science fiction, and the way "technodemons" eventually figure in this relationship.

Academic research of science fiction has often had problems with the "romantic" or irrational aspects of its subject; the genre is defined in such a way that most published science fiction is excluded from the small group of "real" SF works. Darko Suvin's pioneering theory is a typical example: according to him, "*SF is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional 'novum' (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic.*"[2] Furthermore, it is

> a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and
> interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is

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[1] Goethe 1808/1949, 86-87.
[2] Suvin 1979, 63. Italics in the original.

> *an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment* [...].[3]

Suvin aims to take SF seriously, and in doing so, he makes it an emphatically cognitocentric genre, and positions "cognition" as something opposed to myth or metaphysical dimension.[4] The reality does not correspond to the definition, and so Suvin is forced to discard ninety percent of the genre as "sheer confectionery" (as both intellectually and politically trivial).[5] The weight put on the factual and intellectual aspects of science fiction has played an important role in the self-definition of SF; claims of plausibility, scientific "thought-experiment" and extrapolation have figured in the writings of proponents (the declarations by Hugo Gernsback and John W. Campbell, Jr., central "pulp" editors, are characteristic examples).[6] The need for separating science fiction from its "other" – the irrational, dreamy "fantasies" with nothing but entertainment value – is obvious, even if in practice many SF writers and readers deal continuously with fantasy as well as with science fiction. Furthermore, it could be argued that a reading of SF that does not take into account its symbolic and mythical dimensions is fundamentally inadequate.

The Faustian subtext is often very strong in science fiction; in his dealings with forbidden knowledge, the typical SF innovator becomes a deeply ambivalent figure. The demonic connotations of scientific enterprise surface early in the genre, and gain new forms and interpretations in "cyberpunk" and other contemporary SF. The commercial success of modern science fiction was preceded by the popularity of two important predecessors, Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. Verne captured the imagination and fascination of his audience with the prospects of modern technology, whereas Wells developed sweeping visions of an (often threatening) future. Well's *War of the Worlds* (1898) with its blood-sucking Martians provided a formula for numerous popular SF stories. The monstrosity of space aliens became a given, the amount of self-awareness and self-reflection in this connection a variable. Already in 1956 film, *Forbidden Planet* (directed by Fred M. Wilcox) the terrors of outer space are produced by the human mind, as the "monsters from the id," creations of subconscious mind and alien technology, start attacking the expedition. The majority of pulp SF had, nevertheless, more concrete and external sources for evil.

Rosemary Jackson's theory of progressive "internalisation" of fears as generated by self has its validity in science fiction as in fantasy. This process is not, however, a linear development; as seen above, in the context of horror, Blatty's *The Exorcist*, among many others, resists the internalisation of

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[3] Ibid., 7-8. Italics in the original.

[4] Ibid., 4-7. To Suvin, the "real" SF is dismantling myths, and operating as a critical and political analogy of the possibilities and threats inherent in a writer's own time and society (ibid., 75-6).

[5] Ibid., 36.

[6] See, e.g. Broderick 1995, 4-8.

evil. The dualistic opposition (between 'us' and 'them,' or 'good' and 'evil') is linked with the need to raise boundaries for identity; the questioning of this boundary and the problematisation of self/other division is its necessary counterpart. The demonic features in SF are interesting particularly because the rational emphasis associated with the genre leads one to expect a different treatment of otherness and selfhood in this "scientific" context. On a closer look, the univocally secular and materialist label of SF starts to wear out. For example, in the popular novels of Arthur C. Clarke, one of the world's best-known science fiction writers, science and technology pursue answers to all humanity's questions – reaching finally also those that have traditionally belonged to religion. In *Childhood's End* (1953) the first aliens humans confront are demonic in form, but much higher in their development of knowledge, morals and technology. The diabolical appearance of aliens (they are winged and horned like medieval devils) is symbolically connected with their painfully transgressive role in the evolution of our species; they have come to lead humans into space, but only the children are capable of responding to the call of the transcendent – the older generation is bound to earth by their rigid structures of thought.[7] The tension between the young and the old is articulated with the help of demonic imagery: the future is in league with the "scientific demons" (whereas the old are captives of their own superstitious fears). The evolutionary leap is a central motif in Clarke; also *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968; directed by Stanley Kubrick, based on Clarke's earlier short story) carries religious resonance. The black monolith that manipulates the early humans into tool-users is a powerful symbol of the mythical force that technology exercises in SF. This story also depicts how man can leave his earlier limitations by endorsing the dark and frightening powers of scientific evolution, technology, the unknown – moving toward a new, god-like selfhood.

Science fiction is sensitive and responsive to the promises of scientific and technological progress. Study of its mythical subtext reveals that it also expresses the anxieties inherent in this process. In a collection of articles addressing the relationship between religion and SF (*The Transcendent Adventure*, 1985) Robert Reilly offers the explosion of the first atomic bomb in Hiroshima (1945) as the turning point in our relationship to technology. The deal with technology promised free passage into scientific heaven; but after this event, darker tones gained increasing prominence.[8] In *2001* the episode with Hal 9000, the on-board computer, addresses the fears of too much intimacy between man and machine – "artificial intelligence" is, after

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[7] *Childhood's End* has a special note attached to it: "The opinions expressed in this book are not those of the author." In his article "Immortal Man and Mortal Overlord: The Case for Intertextuality" Stephen Goldman argues that the need to make this ambiguous dismissal of the novel (which opinions? opinions of the characters? or the whole book if read as a statement?) must have been due to the heavy influence that the intertext concerning Satan (especially Milton's *Paradise Lost*) has on the reader's reception of it (Yoke - Hassler 1985, 193-208).

[8] Reilly 1985, 4.

all, a hybrid, and thereby inheritor to the ambivalent monstrosity central in the demonic tradition. Hal tries to resolve conflicts between its programmed task and the orders of the crewmembers – by eliminating the crew. The motif of robots rebelling and turning against their masters is as old as "robots" themselves (coined by Karel Čapek in his play *R.U.R.*, 1921).

The production of technologically enhanced "supermen" has proved to be an enduring and unnerving topic. A possible technological redefinition of human being could be desirable as the ultimate self-fulfilment as it creates an expansion and extension of self, but it also simultaneously threatens and violates the limits of the self. This ambivalently desirable threat is manifest in such works as *Man Plus* (1976) by Frederick Pohl. In this novel Roger Torraway is an astronaut who is cybernetically enhanced to survive on Mars. In this case, as well, SF applies demonic imagery to man-machine hybrids:

> He did not look human at all. His eyes were glowing, red-faceted globes. His nostrils flared in flesh folds, like the snout of a star-nosed mole. His skin was artificial; its color was normal heavy sun tan, but its texture was that of a rhinoceros's hide. […] He was a cyborg – a cybernetic organism. He was part man and part machine, the two disparate sections fused together […].[9]

> The solar panels were a problem at first, but we solved that one rather elegantly. […] They did resemble bat wings, especially as they were jet-black.[10]

He is characterised as looking "like hell"; the standard appellation is "monster."[11] The uncomfortable heterogeneity in relation to machine is figuratively expressed by various animal attributes, suggesting nocturnal and demonic associations.

In order to cope with the torrent of non-human information pouring through his artificial sense organs, Torraway's nervous system is combined with a computer that filters it into manageable forms. This mediated information is, however, profoundly unreliable. Roger's epistemological problem is seen as a specifically religious problem in the novel. The circuits are necessary to interpret the "excess of inputs," but: "If Roger could not know what he was seeing, how could he see Truth?"[12] The possibility of evil is inscribed in heterogeny; in a case of emergency, the computer takes over the control of Torraway's body and perverts his perceptions into malevolent fantasy.[13]

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[9] Pohl 1976/1994, 18.
[10] Ibid., 92-93.
[11] Ibid., 8, 94 *et passim*.
[12] Ibid., 96.
[13] Technological selfhood is imagined in paranoid terms where one cannot even control what one's hands are doing: "He knew that the backpack-brother [the computer] was still withholding energy from the transmitter. He knew that his perceptions had been skewed, and that the dragon was no dragon and the gorillas no gorillas. He knew that if he could not override the brother on his back something very bad was likely to happen,

In this cyborg fiction, body as an "other" is figuratively linked with machine as potential threat to the self. The Man Plus project attempts to build a superman who is capable of exceeding the limits of the biological body: it would be stronger, and not covered with vulnerable, soft human tissue. As narrative progresses, the technological supplement of Man Plus threatens to displace the "original" – Torraway is even castrated to attain the standards of machine-like invulnerability.[14] Following the supplementary logic, the "plus" not only adds something to the "man," but replaces it.[15] Klaus Theweleit's psychoanalytic interpretations of the "armoured" body in Freikorps novels offers some suggestions about the motivations for such ambivalent gestures. The denial of sexuality and living, feeling contact (inherent in man-machine fantasies) signals the traumatic need to control instinctual impulses, to armour one's ego by armouring the body.[16]

The fear of robots is such a strong trend in SF that Isaac Asimov has even coined a term for it, the "Frankenstein complex." In his own short stories, Asimov set out to alleviate this anxiety.[17] Many of his popular robot stories revolve around crime and guilt, and only humans are proven to be capable of evil acts. The robots in Asimov stories are incapable of unethical actions – because they are programmed by humans to follow compulsively every command a human gives, even if that would mean a robot's own destruction.[18] Asimov actually retains the distinct identities of man and machine by emphasising the inequality and dissimilar problems of robots and their creators. For example, the classic story "The Bicentennial Man" (1976), that Asimov later expanded into novel (*The Positronic Man*, 1992, with Robert Silverberg), aims to cross the line separating humans and machines (robots), but in so doing only substantiates the significance of this limit for the construction of identity. The individual robot, "Andrew Martin," possesses creativity and struggles for recognition of his humanity in a manner reminiscent of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In a self-defeating act, the robot can reach this recognition only by replacing his body with an organic human body, and by letting his brains deteriorate and die in the

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because he knew that his fingers were slowly and delicately wrapping themselves around a chunk of limonite the size of a baseball." (Ibid., 266.) The fear of evil intentions is projected into the malevolence of treacherous machinery.

[14] Ibid., 117.

[15] See Derrida 1967/1976, 145.

[16] Theweleit 1989, 162-64, 210-25.

[17] "The Myth of the Machine," 1978 (Asimov 1983, 162). See also Brian Stableford, "Man and Machine" (in Wingrove 1984, 26).

[18] Asimov formulated the "three laws of robotics," a set of built-in commands that often preface his robot story collections: 1. A robot may not injure a human being, or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm; 2. A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law; 3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

manner of human brains. The "union" of man and machine is here accomplished by erasing the "machine" from the man-machine hybrid.[19]

The question of artificiality in identity construction is a sensitive one. Nowadays, "artificial" has characteristically negative connotations; it is opposed to something genuine and natural – "artifice" is a human stratagem, deception or trickery (as an imitation of the real thing).[20] The omnipresence of technology in the affluent West is well suited to heighten any semiconscious anxieties one might have about one's own status as a product as much as a producer, as a heterogeneous collage: an object, rather than a unified and monologic subject. Cultural critics have recently renewed their interest in the manner in which industrialisation and development of the modern society "liberated" people into the freedom of modern individuality only by demanding more self-control; the new way of administering time, for example, is machine-like in its mechanical precision. Marshall Berman reminds us of the ways the Faustian tale is connected with modernity; the need to exceed all traditional boundaries is linked in Goethe's classic version with "a new social division of labor, a new vocation, a new relationship between ideas and practical life."[21] Like Faust, the modern man has "two souls" living in his breast; the unremitting drive for development springs from an inner contradiction.[22] The interpretations for this situation differ: Berman thinks that the demonic aspects of modernity are necessary – even if the process of modernisation "exploits and torments us," it also brings us energies and imagination, drives us to confront the ever-changing world and make it our own.[23] Charles Taylor, on the other hand, claims in his *Sources of the Self* that to live without a stable moral basis (Taylor speaks about "moral ontologies" or frameworks that structure identity) is senseless life.[24] According to this view the constant hurry and almost hysterical rush for more "efficient" modern technologies (which, in reality, have become ends in themselves) operate as an obfuscation of inner emptiness. Whatever the interpretation, machines, and in our day especially communication and information technologies, have nevertheless become emblems of this condition, and science fiction records both the exhilaration and anger in our relationship to them.[25]

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[19] Asimov's views on robotics are deeply intertwined with racial (even racist) discourses; the last whisper of the dying (ex-)robot invokes the memory of the beloved owner: "Little Miss." (Asimov 1984, 682; Asimov - Silverberg 1995, 290). Perhaps *Uncle Tom's Cabin* transposed into the positronic brain?

[20] The etymology of 'artificial' is connected with art: it is derived from Latin *artificiâlis*, belonging to art (from *artificium*, craftsmanship). The idea of deception now dominates over the more positive dimensions of 'artifice' as the ingenious use of skill.

[21] Berman 1982/1991, 62.

[22] See *Faust I*; Goethe 1808/1949, 67.

[23] Berman 1982/1991, 348.

[24] Taylor 1989, 17-18.

[25] The discourse of slavery is repeatedly invoked, as people describe their relationship to the technological modernity – in the past, as well as in the present: "Is not slavery to capital less tolerable than slavery to human masters?" (George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All! or Slaves Without Masters* [1857; quoted in Selzer 1992, 47]), "I now have attained free-

When new technology is developed and employed, it gains symbolic and imaginative significance that goes beyond its purely utilitarian value. Lewis Mumford, a social critic of technology, noted in 1930 that the "vast material displacements the machine has made in our physical environment are perhaps in the long run less important than its spiritual contributions to our culture."[26] Arnold Pacey agrees with this in his *The Culture of Technology* (1983): there is no neutral technology. We always attach symbolic meaning to instruments and techniques we use.[27] This basic idea can be taken further by emphasising the complex role of technology in identity production in an increasingly technologically saturated, and – even more importantly – technologically mediated reality. Antiquity, for example, has left us the cautionary tale of Icarus flying too close to the sun, but also the description of the whole world as represented on Achilles' shield.[28] Metallic weapons, architectural monuments, vehicles – these have been prominent as mirroring embodiments of our status, power and achievement (notable in such designations as "the Bronze Age," "the Machine Age," or "the Rocket Age"). The current era, known as "the Age of Information," or "the Computer Age" in popular nomenclature, is no exception in the symbolic and also unconscious meanings that operate in our relationship to technology. Herman Bausinger has studied the role technology has in people's life and imagination in his *Volkskultur in der technischen Welt* (1961), and seen a clear continuum with magical thinking. Engines and railways were at first perceived through the earlier discourse of magical powers. Bausinger claims that the development of modern technology into ever-increasing degrees of complexity makes it harder to grasp and control; the need for magical thinking in relationship to technology is growing, not diminishing.[29]

"MAKING A MAN": FRANKENSTEIN'S DEMONIC MONSTER

> 'Devil,' I exclaimed, 'do you dare to approach me? […] Begone, vile insect!' […]
>   'I expected this reception,' said the dæmon. 'All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things!'[30]

A mystical quality is especially seen in relation to electricity, the power that energises most current technodemons.[31] It can be found already winding

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dom just as fully and really as a runaway slave might have in the pre-Civil War period" (respondent to a New Age questionnaire; Ross 1991, 15).

[26] Mumford, "The Drama of the Machines" (*Scribner's Magazine*, August 1930; quoted in Mumford 1934/1963, xii).

[27] Pacey 1983, 92; also 1990, viii.

[28] See *Iliad*, 18:478-608.

[29] Bausinger 1961/1990, 27.

[30] F, 99.

[31] Different terrifying powers (even more openly connected with the exploration of hybridity and heterogeneity) are granted through genetic engineering, which has evolved to play a prominent role in such SF horrors as the *Alien* film series.

through the novel that gave Asimov's "syndrome" its name: *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818; "F") by young Mary Shelley.[32] The power of lightning introduces the protagonist to "the subject of electricity and galvanism," and to this mysterious, invisible energy that could make the dead convulse, as if re-animated.[33] As man-machine hybridity has gained new prominence in the popular imagination, *Frankenstein* has been raised to the position of the inaugurating work in the SF genre.[34] Since this novel is visibly connected with the problematics of the unconscious, the irrational and the demonic, it puts the validity of cognitocentric approaches to science fiction into question. Not so surprisingly, Suvin disparages *Frankenstein* as SF; he writes about it under the title "Romantic Recoil." He is unable or unwilling to deal with its numerous "irrational" aspects. For instance, he only touches upon the interesting question of why Victor Frankenstein's creation had to be so hideous in its appearance. The creature is not a product of demonological research, but of the natural sciences – so why is it such a "monster," evoking supernatural fear?[35] The answers are connected with the technological redefinition of identity and the particular role demonic conflicts play in this context.

The first modern theories of magic saw it as a "pseudo-science," an imperfect attempt to see direct causal relationships (supernatural forces) where science is able to see more complex systems at work.[36] In the European context, the relationship has also been argued in reverse: the practitioners of magic and alchemy were among those who developed laboratories and experimental methods used later by scientists. In *Frankenstein*, the order of inheritance is clear; young Victor Frankenstein is attracted to occultism and

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[32] The references are to the Oxford University Press edition: Shelley 1818/1992.

[33] F, 41. The discussion of electricity is slightly different in the first and the second edition (the first edition mentions experiments with kites to conduct electricity from thunderclouds to earth; see also Mary Shelley's introduction [1831; F, 9]). Electricity was seen as a divine or mysterious power; Armstrong (1981) describes the magical relationship to it in the nineteenth century, amounting even to attempts to revive the dead. The power plants were for a long time designed like cathedrals (Giles Gilbert Scott, builder of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, has been said to have built two cathedrals, "one for God, one for Electricity"; Pacey 1983, 88).

[34] Especially Brian Aldiss's genre history, *Billion Year Spree* (1973; the revised edition *Trillion Year Spree*, 1986) has been important in establishing *Frankenstein*'s position. (Aldiss has himself written a "sequel" to Shelley's work, *Frankenstein Unbound* [1973].) The exploitation of the monster in theatre and film made Boris Karloff's rugged, awkward figure synonymous with "Frankenstein," and Victor's surname into a common noun in dictionaries ("an agency or a creation that slips from the control of and ultimately destroys its creator" [*American Heritage Dictionary*]). Such compilations as *The Essential Frankenstein* (Jameson 1992), *The Frankenstein Omnibus* (Haining 1994), or *The Ultimate Frankenstein* (Preiss 1991) witness the lively interest in the Frankenstein tradition and its origin; *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (the 1994 film by Kenneth Branagh) claims the same by its title.

[35] Suvin 1980, 133.

[36] This theory is presented in Edward Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871), and developed by James Frazer (*The Golden Bough*, 1890) and Bronislaw Malinowski (*Magic, Science and Religion*, 1925), among others.

natural sciences for the same reasons. He wanted to know the "secrets of heaven and earth," and acquire the power of such knowledge; Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus and Albert Magnus are displaced by the "miracles" and "almost unlimited powers" of the new science.[37] "Natural philosophy" in *Frankenstein* is the replacement of occultism, magic, and finally also religion; there remains, however, several textual traces that suggest repressed religious conflicts in the background of this science.

Victor's aim in his studies is emphatically "creation," the mystery of life that only God himself possesses in the Christian setting. The manner in which this goal is set and characterised by Victor's narrative is illustrative; he speaks about "fate" and "stars" as if he would be a character in classical tragedy, whose destiny is set by *moira*. He attributes the relinquishing of his "tormenting studies" to the influence of a "guardian angel," whereas resuming them he is grappled by an "enemy."[38] Victor Frankenstein seems to be surrounded and constantly manipulated by daimonic forces, impulses that he is only capable of conceptualising in religious or magical terms. The initial "fatal impulse" that sets Victor out on his studies is motivated by his relationship to his father; the father "carelessly" dismisses Victor's interest in Agrippa's occult writings: "My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash."[39] As a typically "modern" individual, Victor reacts by going against such injunctions – rebellion against the father suggests separation and establishment of identity boundaries.[40] It is possible to read the novel in Oedipal terms; as Victor attempts to create life, he is actually usurping the position of the Father. The patriarchal authority, as embodied in God, the Father, is rejected. In the modern, individualistic spirit, Victor does not put his trust in God; his goal is not the immortality of his soul, but how to "banish disease from the human frame," or how to "render man invulnerable to anything but a violent death."[41] The repressed anxiety for replacing the divine authority and spiritual immortality with the pursuit after bodily immortality is given an outlet in the figure of a "demoniacal corpse."[42] The huge size of this creature emphasises even more the "paternal" aspect of this demonic creation (the father as perceived from an infantile perspective).

Victor's creation is nevertheless an important change in the history of the demonic. The Faustian subtext is clear in *Frankenstein*, and the "raising of ghosts or devils" is something Victor eagerly practices in his youth.[43] Vic-

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[37] Shelley 1818/1992, 37, 41, 48.

[38] F, 42, 48.

[39] F, 39.

[40] Victor's lonely research is analogous in the novel to the arctic exploration by Robert Walton (in the frame story); this expedition is also made against paternal authority – the "dying injunction" of Walton's father forbade a seafaring life. (F, 17.)

[41] F, 40.

[42] F, 58.

[43] F, 40. – *Deals with the Devil*, the anthology mentioned earlier (see page 121) is also an indication of the enduring popularity of the Faustian element in the SF.

tor sways between the traditional Faustian figure of magician and the nascent role of modern experimental scientist, but the latter grows dominant.[44] As Jeffrey Burton Russell has noted, "the monster is no medieval demon or specter but a material being of flesh and blood manufactured in a laboratory."[45] The demonic features are, however, not just trivial residues from an earlier period. The creature is a "monster," and that connects it with the tradition and significances of monstrosity, especially in this being's overt heterogeneity. The impurity and grotesque disunion of its constituent parts, assembled from the "dissecting room and the slaughter-house,"[46] suggest conflicts and internal discords of selfhood, evoking parallels to the traditional demons with horns, tails and other beastly features. The demonic characterisations of the monster are a very persistent and striking feature of the novel.[47] This being combines animal and human flesh in its gigantic, scientifically manufactured body; it is a walking embodiment of heterogeny and a powerful illustration of the conflicts in the early industrial self.

Mark Selzer has made many interesting readings or "rewritings" of disciplinary individualism and machine culture in his *Bodies and Machines* (1991). Selzer focuses on the "American body-machine complex" that produces a particular cultural logistics, redrawing of "the uncertain and shifting line between the natural and the technological."[48] *Frankenstein* seems to foreshadow many of the anxieties that figure later in different, sometimes more subtle forms; the isolation of the emerging "free individual" and the uncertainty about agency. The modern, industrial society is continuously being constructed, and Selzer points out, for example, how agency is under construction in literature of adolescence, where the aim is "to make a man."[49] The emphasis on the naturalness ends constantly in paradoxes, as in the idea of a "self-made man."[50] The "natural" and the "cultural" are finally inseparably intertwined, people constantly defined in terms of complex systems they take part in, the agency in modern culture always appearing in the form of a crisis of agency – as "such panic about agency makes for the ritual-

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[44] E.M. Butler's *The Myth of the Magus* (1948/1993) is useful in exploring the origins of the Faust figure in religious and occult mythology, from the Magi of Persia, Moses and Simon Magus, up to modern times (Saint-Germain, Cagliostro, Blavatsky, Rasputin). The historical Faust or interest in devil-worship seems to have contributed less to the longevity of the myth than the enduring fascination with supernatural powers and secret knowledge. – For more on the magus and computers, see Davis 1994.

[45] Russell 1986/1992, 189.

[46] F, 55.

[47] The creature is 'demon' or 'demoniacal' in six cases, the more tragic and classical 'daemon' sixteen times, threatening 'fiend' or 'fiendish' forty-one times and clearly 'devil' or 'devilish' thirteen times in the text. (76 occurrences in all; the search was conducted using the electronic text supplied by the Gutenberg Project, frank13.txt; ftp://uiarchive. uiuc.edu/pub/etext/gutenberg/etext93/ .)

[48] Seltzer 1992, 4.

[49] A phrase of Ernest Thompson Seton; quoted ibid., 149.

[50] Ibid., 171.

ized reaffirmations of individuality and self-possession that motivate and mobilize these contradictions."[51]

The making of the monster is suggestive of various significant types of activity: scientific invention, industrial production, artistic or divine creation, and the maternal act of giving birth. The unconscious character of this activity is prominent:

> Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil, as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave, or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with the remembrance; but then a resistless, and almost frantic, impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. It was indeed but a passing trance, that only made me feel with renewed acuteness so soon as, the unnatural stimulus ceasing to operate, I had returned to my old habits.[52]

The reasons behind this "unnatural stimulus" are nowhere clearly stated, but Victor links it in retrospect with emotions and desires getting out of control.

> A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind, and never to allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquillity. I do not think that the pursuit of knowledge is an exception to this rule.[53]

Victor's momentary lapse as a controlled man of reason, his "trance," brings out the monster; and as the creature awakens, Victor is horrified and escapes into sleep.[54] Victor's waking trance is aimed at realising the dream of a "new species" that would bless him as its "creator and source"; this is replaced by restless dreams of his fiancée, Elizabeth, transformed in his arms into the corpse of his dead mother.[55] The intellectual isolation of the romantic individual is here ambivalently related to love, desire and body – all these symbolised in relation to women. Many scholars have interpreted the relationship between Victor and his monster under the doppelganger motif; there is an uncanny connection between the unnamed creature and its crea-

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[51] Ibid., 145.

[52] F, 54.

[53] F, 55-6.

[54] The whole novel is explicitly linked to a trance-like state between sleep and conscious mind. Mary Shelley relates the starting impulse of *Frankenstein* in her introduction [1831] as follows: "When I placed my head on my pillow, I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie." (F, 9.) – One is also reminded of a famous etching by Goya: "The sleep of Reason produces monsters" (*Los Caprichos*, plate 43, 1799). *The Sleep of Reason* by Derek Jarrett (1988) relates the religious impulses and imagery in the nineteenth century British literature to (Victorian) society and culture.

[55] F, 54, 58.

tor.[56] As an image of Victor's subconscious conflicts, the monster expresses the suppressed hatred that he has released in his trance. William Veeder has made important modifications to the doppelganger interpretation in his *Mary Shelley & Frankenstein: The Fate of Androgyny* (1986). The case in *Frankenstein* is not just one psyche as projected into two characters; rather, it presents a psychological conflict or division of self, first in Victor, and then echoes this division in the monster.[57] The numerous literary references in *Frankenstein* to the demonic quality of agency emphasise the internally warring quality of this self: Coleridge's cursed "Ancient Mariner" is pursued by a "frightful fiend" close behind;[58] in Shelley's "Mutability" the poetic self is tormented by nightmares and thoughts that pollute his night and day;[59] Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) offers the monster a model of "divine being" as well as "disquisitions upon death and suicide," and Plutarch's *The Parallel Lives* taught him about men of action, "concerned in public affairs, governing or massacring their species."[60] The most accurate analogy the monster finds to his own situation is in *Paradise Lost* by John Milton.

> Like Adam, I was apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but his state was far different from mine in every other respect. He had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with, and acquire knowledge from, beings of a superior nature [angels]: but I was wretched, helpless, and alone. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition; for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me.[61]

Satan had the company of fellow devils, but the monster finds himself even more cursed than the archfiend: he is solitary and abhorred.[62] Milton's epic and the figure of Satan is particularly well suited for analyses of demonic rebellion and conflict; Harold Bloom, in his *Anxiety of Influence*

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[56] Victor is almost incapable of admitting the creation of the monster; instead, he proceeds gradually to confess that he himself killed all the people the monster had murdered (see F, 77, 88-9, 176, and 185: "I murdered her. William, Justine, and Henry – they all died by my hands"). Veeder makes perceptive comments on the earlier doppelganger interpretations (1986, 246n8).

[57] Veeder 1986, 79.

[58] F, 59.

[59] F, 98.

[60] F, 128-9. Even before Milton, Goethe and Plutarch, monster's education is begun with *Ruins of Empires* by Volney (1791). Michael Holquist notes the anti-religious intertext: "Volney, a true child of the French Enlightenment […] was inspired by Gibbon's demonstration of Christianity's harmful effects on the Roman state to show the role of religion in the decline of other empires" (1990/1994, 96).

[61] F, 129.

[62] F, 130. The biblical allusions are also notable: "Remember, that I am thy creature," the monster says; "I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Every where I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend." (F, 100.)

(1973), derived from it a theory which centred on agonistic struggle against precursors in poetry, rather than celebrating the beauty and unity of art. All literature is a fight against the inevitable influence of earlier works. According to this view, the "daemonization" of the most important precursors is the subconscious formative power in creative work.[63] Mary Shelley's novel addresses such demonic impulses by incorporating the most important influences into its text – in the process becoming so involved in the problematics of heterogeneity that Mary Shelley herself addressed this novel as her "hideous progeny."[64] This suggests that the novel is monstrous in itself, or, as Michael Holquist writes, Shelley's "novel, like the monster, is made up of *disjecta membra*, story inside framed story […]. Not only is there a mix of narrators, there is a compound of genres – letters, diaries, and a variety of oral tales."[65] The "demoniacal texture" of Shelley's hybrid creates polyphonic effects, a case of textuality that might well be termed demonic. As a work about "making a man," or as a drama of constructing modern (male) identity, *Frankenstein* explores heterogeneity, projects it in a demonising gesture to the figure of monster, and finally portrays the return of this conflict and its tragic undoing in death.

The roots for such narrative self-destruction can be found in earlier tragic conventions (*nemesis* for a *hybris*), in the principles of religious and poetic justice (retribution of the sinners) or in the problems in the structure of this type of self. Veeder points out that the Shelley circle was concerned with the division and dualisms splitting the early modern self. They aimed to transgress such divisions as body/soul, or masculine/feminine, but actually Mary Shelley's experience revealed the Promethean men surrounding her (Percy, Byron, Godwin) as narcissistic, constantly bifurcated into "ego-centric willfulness" or "self-abandoning weakness."[66] Veeder relates the Promethean will-to-power, that Victor exhibits in his trance-like pursuit of making the monster, to Eros, the ego-centric and unbalanced love. It is tempting to interpret monster as a purely intellectual element, a symbol of the unlimited quest for knowledge and technological hubris that has got out of control. As Veeder points out, this is not true; the monster claims it is "the slave, not the master, of an impulse, which I detested, yet could not disobey. […] The completion of my demoniacal design became an insatiable passion."[67] Victor, too, feels himself "slave" in this double bind: "through the whole period during which I was the slave of my creature, I allowed myself to be governed by the impulses of the moment […]."[68] In the context of this study, the daimonic character of this Eros is an important feature; when creating the monster, Victor is possessed and driven, and the monster, in

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[63] Bloom 1973/1975, 20, 99-112.
[64] "Introduction" (1831); F, 10.
[65] Holquist 1990/1994, 97. (See also Cornwell 1990, 72.)
[66] Veeder 1986, 49.
[67] F, 220
[68] F, 153.

turn, is possessed, too. The split between reason and emotion is deep; in the figurative level the monster evokes supernatural fear as there is a striking incongruence in his features – at the level of identity, there is no unity of agent.

It is important to note how the demonism in man-machine is particularly a problem of isolated individuality. The "workshop of filthy creation" is placed in "a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase";[69] when Victor encounters the monster, the setting is in the superhuman heights and coldness of glacier in the Alps.[70] The monster speaks of having "no link" to anyone, and how this makes him malicious; he begs for another creature like himself, so that they could be "cut off from the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to one another. [...] My evil passions will have fled, for I shall meet with sympathy!"[71] Victor is suspicious, and the reader should be, as well. Veeder has interpreted the novel as "negative Oedipal"; the effort to awaken dead flesh might indicate Victor's desire to resuscitate his dead mother. The real thrust of the novel, however, is to kill the loved ones. The nightmare kiss does not revive the mother, but reduces Elizabeth to a dead corpse, as well.[72] The "link" to other people is loaded with ambivalence; the power over life and death that Victor desires is acted out when the monster kills the people surrounding Victor. The connection that Victor really desires is to himself – he attempts to make another human being, but actually makes a monstrous image of an isolated individual, demonic in its subconscious conflicts.

When the monster is interpreted as a sign of a daimonic conflict, the demonic attributes and irrational behaviour becomes easier to understand. Rollo May mentioned that Eros and a craving for power are possible sources of the daimonic, and Stephen A. Diamond emphasised that cathartic expression of this area is not enough, it has to be integrated to the self.[73] *Frankenstein* does not portray the dialogue with the daimonic elements as successful; the conflict remains demonic, irresoluble. Victor and his other – his monster – are too intimately interconnected; the monster reveals too much unacceptable material, and in the end both must perish. The conclusion is similar to that of Father Karras and his demon in *The Exorcist*; they also shared Victor/monster's ambivalence towards the body. The Promethean spirit possessing Victor/monster has, after all, a dual character. Prometheus is the semi-divine trickster, the titan who stole fire from the gods and taught humankind arts and sciences – *Prometheus pyrphoros*. Another, later version of the myth attributes to Prometheus the creation of mankind from figures of

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[69] F, 55.
[70] F, 98.
[71] F, 145-7.
[72] Veeder 1986, 143.
[73] See above, chapter two.

clay – as *Prometheus plasticator*.[74] Frankenstein, the modern Prometheus, is both of these, he is a creator and a thief, he is a benefactor and the victim of his own machinations, subject and object, man and artefact. The paradoxical quality of the modern self as both construction and the constructor of itself has the capacity to evoke deep anxieties, and Mary Shelley's reinterpretation of the myth was able to capture the popular imagination in a manner which still has resonance today.

"THE DEVIL WITH A METAL FACE": PHILIP DICK'S ANDROIDS

> Within the universe there exists fierce cold things, which I have given the name "machines" to. […] We mean, basically, someone who does not care about the fate that his fellow living creatures fall victim to; he stands detached, a spectator, acting out by his indifference John Donne's theorem that "No man is an island," but giving the theorem a twist: That which is a mental and moral island *is not a man*.
>
> – Philip K. Dick, "Man, Android, and Machine"[75]

The Faustian inventor and his demonic invention form a motif overlapping both the areas of horror and science fiction. Technology carries a demonic edge that surfaces in such stories as "The Hellbound Heart" (1986) by Clive Barker. This novelette (made famous by the series of *Hellraiser* films) uses the intricate device named "Lemarchand's Configuration" as a symbol for the fatal human curiosity that opens the door for demons to come. Cenobites, the most cinematic demons of new horror, are marked by technology; as a Cenobite speaks, "the hooks that transfixed the flaps of its eyes and were wed, by an intricate system of chains passed through the lower lip, were teased by the motion, exposing the glistening meat beneath."[76] Their hybrid deformity is void of emotion, even humanity – they are only expressive of desperation and "appetite."[77] The implied association is between demons and body-as-machine, the cold inhumanity and lack of feeling in tech-

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[74] The third important aspect of the complex tradition that the romantic literature emphasised was *Prometheus patiens*, suffering Prometheus. (See Trousson 1976, 31, 47, 364. Also: Kerényi 1959/1997.) Werblowsky 1952 relates Milton's Satan to the myth of Prometheus; Wutrich 1995 is a comparative study of Prometheus and Faust (it includes a concise account of the emergence of this combined tradition in the myth and drama). David S. Landes's *The Unbound Prometheus* (1969/1988) and Timothy V. Kaufman-Osborn's *Creatures of Prometheus* (1997) employ the figure of Prometheus for the needs of history and cultural criticism of technology. The literature on Prometheus is a fascinating, constantly expanding field.

[75] Dick 1995, 211-12 (1976).

[76] Barker 1986/1988, 189.

[77] Ibid.

nology, the metal having only the capacity to move or inflict pain in flesh. The name for the leader of the demons is descriptive: "a light flickered and grew brighter, and brighter yet, and with the light, a voice. "*I am the Engineer*," it sighed. No more than that."[78]

In the field of science fiction, Philip K. Dick has said that for years, the theme of his writing has been, "The devil has a metal face."[79] This does not amount to any monologic demonisation of technology; that would be rather uninteresting and a curious position from a science fiction author. Instead, Dick enunciated something that most of the earlier SF had implied: a critical ambivalence towards technologically redefined and altered subjectivity. This means also growing suspicions about the observing self itself; the demon of Descartes (a hypothetical spirit which might be manipulating our world through our senses) is a real problem for Dick in this era of consciousness-altering drugs and exponentially evolving simulations. This is one aspect of what is commonly discussed as Philip K. Dick's postmodern "paranoia"; in *Ubik* (1968) the reality is surrealistically altered and degenerated – the reason might be that the characters are actually dead, sustained in an artificial illusion of half-life. The evil character, Jory, who manipulates this reality is doing it for classic demonic reasons; he is a soul-eater who nourishes himself on the life-force of others.[80] In *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965), as well, the technological capacity for altering reality is associated with a demonic figure – Palmer Eldritch is marked by "the hollow eyeslot, the mechanical metal arm and hand, the stainless-steel teeth, which are the dread stigmata of evil."[81]

As Lawrence Sutin writes, Dick has become "the focus of one of the most remarkable literary reappraisals of modern times."[82] The interest has been centred on the ontological, rather than the theological aspect – yet the two dimensions are intimately related in Dick's fiction. Dick is valued for his inventive use of multiple points of view and for his capacity to shatter SF conventions by exploring the mutability and multiplicity of realities. The narrative uncertainties and perplexities in his work correlate with the moral and ontological puzzles pressing on his characters. Brian McHale, in his *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987) writes about transition from cognitive to "postcognitive" questions in literature; instead of looking for possible inter-

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[78] Ibid., 277. Cf. the Devil's comment in "The History of the Devil"; quoted above, page 199.

[79] Dick, "Man, Android, and Machine" (1976; Dick 1995, 213).

[80] Jory is "misshapen" in accordance with the Frankenstein tradition: "No two features mached: His ears had too many convolutions in them to fit with his chitineous eyes. His straight hair contradicted the interwoven, curly bristles of his brows." The demonic polyphony is also given its grotesque expressions: "If you come close to me and listen – I'll hold my mouth open – you can hear their voices. Not all of them, but anyhow the last ones I ate. The ones you know." (Dick 1969/1991, 195-96.)

[81] Dick, "Man, Android, and Machine" (1976; Dick 1995, 213). See Dick 1964/1991, 161-62.

[82] Sutin, "Introduction"; Dick 1995, x.

pretations for this world, postcognitive questions begin with questioning this world, its unity, and the unity of the experiencing self.[83] Dick relates the postmodern theme of the individual's construction of reality (visible in the numerous metafictional features of postmodern literature) with moral and theological concerns.[84] This can be approached by analysing the demonic features in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968; "DA"), the novel that became later an important influence on cyberpunk in its movie version, *Blade Runner* (1982; directed by Ridley Scott).

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep approaches the problematic aspects of postmodern agency by building an opposition between "authentic" humans and androids, the artificial man-machines. Natural humans are born, androids are built. Because the person may or may not know that he or she is an android, the question becomes more complicated at the level of character psychology. The protagonist, Rick Deckard, is a police detective and bounty hunter: his task is to locate and "retire" (kill) any escaped androids. "You and I, all the bounty hunters – we stand between the Nexus-6 [the most evolved type of android] and mankind, a barrier which keeps the two distinct," asserts another bounty hunter to Deckard.[85] To be able to make the distinction, there has to be a viable criteria for differentiation. The owners of the robotic slaves desire their servants to be as identical to humans as possible; the company building androids complies with the demand.[86] The "Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test" is designed to identify the essential streak of otherness – the androids are intelligent (more intelligent, even, than most humans), but they lack capacity to feel empathy. They are perfect postmodern narcissists, self-sufficient and unable to violate the boundaries of their self through emotional identification.

The romantic, isolated individual that confronted his demonic conflicts in *Frankenstein* reaches a new stage in Dick's novel. It is no more the suppression of conflicting emotions that is the problem. Rather, the "androidization" that Dick examines with his demonic man-machines articulates the "lack of proper feeling," the "schizoid" and cold personality type that Dick saw as becoming increasingly common. He was not really worried that machines were becoming more animate, more human; what concerned him was that humans were becoming more "inanimate," reasonable, obedient and predictable elements in manipulative systems. This blurring of boundaries clearly both fascinated and terrified Dick; he returned to it repeatedly in his writings.

> And – here is a thought not too pleasing – as the external world becomes more animate, we may find that we – the so-called humans – are becom-

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[83] McHale 1987, 1 (McHale quotes Dick Higgins's *A Dialectic of Centuries*).

[84] The awareness of "real" becoming "unreal" (in the context of fantasy, science fiction and postmodern metafiction) is discussed in Brooke-Rose 1981/1986.

[85] DA, 124.

[86] DA, 47.

ing, and may to a great extent always have been, inanimate in the sense that *we* are led, directed by built-in tropisms, rather than leading. So we and our elaborately evolving computers may meet each other halfway. Someday a human being, named perhaps Fred White, may shoot a robot named Pete Something-or-Other, which has come out of a General Electric factory, and to his surprise see it weep and bleed. And the dying robot may shoot back and, to its surprise, see a wisp of gray smoke arise from the electric pump that it supposed was Mr. White's beating heart. It would be rather a great moment of truth for both of them.[87]

The image of the cyborg carries such demonic traits that it mostly invites rejection and repression. Yet, our daily immersion in technology is a fact, and new inventions tend to incorporate technologies as an even more intimate dimension of our make-up. Donna Haraway, a social feminist writer, has even written a "Cyborg Manifesto" that reclaims the cyborg as a positive and inspiring model (or myth) for our heterogeneous subjectivity.[88] Pure and clean, clear-cut identities are no longer conceivable; our cultures, languages, physical surroundings and daily activities are changing too rapidly for any stable identities to be viable. Nevertheless, there is a definite threat in the acceptance of "inhumanity" as a part and parcel of human identity. Science fiction takes part in the negotiation of this identity-in-progress; Dick, for example, questions the logic behind such works as Pohl's *Man Plus*. "Our flight must be not only to the stars but into the nature of our own beings," he writes in the context of space travels. "Because it is not merely *where* we go, to Alpha Centauri or Betelgeuse, but what we are as we make our pilgrimages there. […] *Ad astra* – but *per hominum*." [To the stars – but as men.][89] Machine and mechanic qualities stand as signs of the other, and as Carlo Testa writes in *Desire and the Devil*, the "plurality of relationships which the Other entertains with the self is paralleled only by (because identical with) the infinite plurality of the relations that tie the human self to the ceaseless variability of its own desire."[90] Traditional imagery of the devil, or the cyborg, for that matter, with "its deformed traits" portray "the human in whom interdiction and desire are at war with each other," they are displaced traces of "an internal battle."[91] Immersed and incorporated in the "infernal machine" the postmodern self has the premodern means at its disposal: the demonic attack applies negation to self, forces it to face the terrors threatening it, and possibly achieves something of transformation in its reconstructive moment.[92]

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[87] Dick, "The Android and the Human" (1972; Dick 1995, 187).
[88] "By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics." (Haraway 1991, 150.)
[89] Dick, "The Android and the Human" (1972; Dick 1995, 189).
[90] Testa 1991, 7. Cf. above, page 120-21.
[91] Ibid., 5.
[92] This view of demonic attack is elaborated in Kapferer 1979.

In Dick's novel, the demonic is assigned to the android's inability to feel empathy. The pseudo-scientific explanation for this is that empathy requires "an unimpaired group instinct," and such solitary predators as spiders would have no use for it.[93] The implied association between androids and spiders suggests something insect-like or inanimate in the former.[94] The opposite mythical figure to the android in the novel is Wilbur Mercer, a suffering human with Christ-like characteristics. Wilbur is a "special" (a mutant, caused by radioactive pollution) who is able to bring dead animals back to life. According to the legend, Wilbur was captured and "treated" by local authorities; his aberrant brains were bombarded with radiation to destroy the unnatural capacity. As a consequence, he sunk down into a symbolic, alternative reality – the tomb world. The desolate landscape of this world carries the marks of human cruelty; on the barren earth lie the bones of animals, killed by the radioactive fallout of World War Terminus. Wilbur Mercer can not get out "until the bones strewn around him grew back into living creatures; he had become joined to the metabolism of other lives and until they rose he could not rise either."[95] The instinctive empathic link that blurs the boundaries between self and the other is given a cultural form in the "black empathy box": with its aid the followers of Wilbur (the "Mercerites") experience "mental and spiritual identification" as well as "physical merging" with his struggle and suffering.[96]

This religion of empathy has its demons, the unfeeling forces that can cause suffering to others without experiencing it in their own tissue. The unseen "Killers" haunt the painful ascent of Wilbur from the tomb world, locking his healing attempts into an endless cycle of resurrection and death. Deckard meditates on the role of the Killers as follows:

> In Mercerism, an absolute evil plucked at the threadbare cloak of the tottering, ascending old man, but it was never clear who or what this evil

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[93] DA, 26.

[94] Sherry Turkle has studied how people react to computers as they spend lots of time with them. One of the repeated topics in children's discussions was if the computers were alive or not. She reports in her *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (1984, 28) one child as claiming that spiders are "not alive" (paradoxically) because "you can kill them"; analogously, "killing" a mechanical toy or computer is possible as they are not "really alive" (but tempting precisely because they have some animate features; they are liminal objects). Judith Kerman, in *Retrofitting Blade Runner* (1991,1), relates this exclusion of otherness to the bloody history of this century: it becomes possible to kill the "vermin" (insects, Jews, gypsies, etc.) as they are detestable and "not really alive."

[95] DA, 20.

[96] DA, 18. – In the textile industry, "mercerising" signifies a method of altering threads with the use of sodium hydrate (named after John Mercer [1791-1866], a British calico printer). Mercerism associates also with an early form of hypnosis, mesmerism; Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), an Austrian physician, believed in "animal magnetism" (hypothetical theory concerning an invisible fluid in the body that reacted to electromagnetic stimulation), and cured his patients by channelling this energy through the use of magnets, cables, etc. Both the altering and merging dimension are present in the Mercerism of Dick's novel.

presence was. A Mercerite *sensed* evil without understanding it. Put in another way, a Mercerite was free to locate the nebulous presence of The Killers wherever he saw fit. For Rick Deckard an escaped humanoid robot, which had killed its master, which had been equipped with an intelligence greater than that of many human beings, which had no regard for animals, which possessed no ability to feel emphatic joy for another life form's success or grief at its defeat – that, for him, epitomized The Killers.[97]

The exclusion of machines from "natural" human identity in Dick's novel does not amount to a denial of heterogeny. As the Mercerites identify with the passion of Wilbur, they become aware of their deep unity with the other sentient beings, humans and animals. The merged state is polyphonic: "He [the Mercerite] experienced them, the others, incorporated in the babble of their thoughts, heard in his own brain the noise of their many individual existences."[98] Because the empathy box is also, after all, a piece of technology, the merger through it is also interwoven with ambivalence and heterogeneity. In a gesture opposing the cognitocentric bias, mere intelligence is not enough to classify someone as truly living; connection to other life is needed. Android's relation to language is analogous to the desolate landscape surrounding Wilbur Mercer: only fragments of life remain, dead and decomposed. Rick Deckard notes how the female android had no "emotional awareness, no feeling-sense of the actual *meaning* of what she said. Only the hollow, formal, intellectual definitions of the separate terms."[99] An android is the subject of technological word, or demonic aspects of language – "perverse and artful."[100] When Deckard tries to fix the identity of one android (Luba Luft), she can masterfully exploit the anti-communicative potentials of language.[101] All the signifiers are detached from their intended contexts, and the attempts of Law (Deckard) to capture the real identity and referent are deflected.

According to the traditional logic of opposing dualisms 'male' is associated with 'reason' and 'good,' whereas 'female' groups with 'irrational' and 'evil.'[102] In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* the unconnected rationality is demonised, whereas a certain type of irrationality is treasured. The androids are both male and female, but Deckard is most confused in his relation to the female androids. The story of Deckard bears witness to the enduring capacity of the demonic Other to provoke reconstruction of identity. The opening scene of the novel shows Deckard and his wife in an absurd argument over the use of a "Penfield mood organ" – a device that artificially manipulates the brain state to induce the desired emotion. His wife wants to

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[97] DA, 27.

[98] DA, 18.

[99] DA, 166-67.

[100] See the discussion on Derrida and writing in chapter three.

[101] "'*O nein*,' Luba broke in. 'I wouldn't be there. That's easy to answer.' – 'That's not the question!' – 'Did you get the wrong question? But I understand that; why is a question I understand the wrong one? Aren't I *supposed* to understand?'" (DA, 92.)

[102] See above, chapter four.

use this system (mainly acquired to ward off depression) to make herself depressed. She explains to the amazed Deckard how the "absence of life" is surrounding them from everywhere, and instead of just intellectually acknowledging it, she wants to have the appropriate affect, as well.[103] Deckard overrules his wife's "irrationality" and dials for her the mood 594: "pleased acknowledgement of husband's superior wisdom in all matters."[104]

In the course of his inquiry, Deckard negotiates his own reactions to otherness, to female androids as the demonic "others" of his male self, and in particular to the "absence of life" that relates to Dick's "androidization." The inhumanity of androids, despite their surface resemblance to humans, is confirmed during the narrative. This culminates in a key scene, as the androids are watching television and one of them cuts off a spider's legs. The mutilation of the spider is motivated by intellectual curiosity – the androids want to see if it can walk on four legs, instead of eight. At the same time, it also demonstrates the unfeeling cruelty that the total lack of empathy creates. During the torture, TV show host "Buster Friendly" (actually an android, as well) does his best to reveal Mercerism as a hoax. He claims that the landscape seen through the empathy box is actually a Hollywood sound stage, the moon is a painted prop, the "stones" are made of soft plastic, and the role of Mercer himself was played by the actor Al Jarry, now an aged alcoholic.[105] The opposition between normal and abnormal, real and artificial is upset: the only "real" person in this scene is John Isidore, a pitiable "chickenhead" whose intellect has been damaged by radiation. Yet, despite his intellectual inferiority, he is able to grasp the value and meaning of a spider's life through his empathic suffering in a manner beyond the intellectual androids. The androids aim to prove that the Mercerism is based on artificial illusions, and that the "whole experience of empathy is a swindle."[106]

Similar doubts, anxieties of what is real and unreal, and different subversions characterise the novel at large.[107] Luba Luft is quick to turn the suspicion on the investigator himself: perhaps Deckard himself is an android?[108] Because it is possible to give androids artificial memories (and thereby a false sense of identity), anyone in the novel could be an android without knowing it. Deckard is arrested and brought to a police station – but this is the Other Police Station (Dick's appellation)[109] where no-one knows him.

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[103] DA, 3.

[104] DA, 5.

[105] DA, 181-84.

[106] DA, 185.

[107] Reversals of identity are quite common: "'You're not Polokov, you're Kadalyi,' Rick said. – 'Don't you mean that the other way around? [Polokov/ Kadalyi replied.] You're a bit confused.'" (DA, 81.)

[108] DA, 89. – This possibility is played with in *Blade Runner*, the movie (see Sammon 1996, 391-2). Such complex suspicions structure also the work that K.W. Jeter has done in replicating "other Blade Runners" (see *Blade Runner²: the Edge of Human*, 1995, and *Blade Runner: Replicant Night*, 1996).

[109] Dick, "Notes on *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*" (1968; Dick 1995, 157).

He tries to call his wife, but an unknown woman answers.[110] This fantastic sequence has a surreal, threatening logic of its own; it has a strong resemblance to the narrative situation in *The Third Policeman* (1940/1967) by Flann O'Brian. The hallucinatory visit to a police station in that novel turns out to be a delusion created by the dying mind – or hell itself, depending on the reading. Paranoia is often associated with the postmodern; Fredric Jameson has said that "conspiracy […] is the poor person's cognitive mapping in the postmodern age."[111] The explosive increase of information makes it harder to form unified and clear-cut narratives and models for the situation of subject. The doppelganger police station goes beyond any reasonable strategy a bunch of escaped robots might develop: it is, primarily, a manifestation of Deckard's fears. Teeming with artificial policemen, this place is an inverse echo with mythical qualities – it is the land of the dead, a parody of officials walking the hallways of the real institution.

After Phil Resch, another bounty hunter, has arranged Deckard's escape from the Other Police Station they have to deal with the androids and with the question of their real identity. Resch is able to kill prospective androids without hesitation; after Resch kills Luba Luft because she had accused him of being an android, Deckard insists that Resch himself has to be tested. The question is, as Resch says, about Deckard's faith in the human race. Empathy is the defining factor of humanity in novel's world, and now Resch, the bounty hunter, seems to be lacking it. The general thrust of the novel is to belie the reader's expectations (sometimes even by stretching the limits of plausibility); this principle operates in this case, too. Deckard is shocked to find that Resch is a human, after all. He is just incapable of feeling anything towards androids. And this is exactly what is expected from a bounty hunter. It is Deckard himself who is beginning to trespass the limits; he is asking "irrational questions" ("Do you think androids have souls?"), and "acting irrationally" (he buys a book containing reproductions of Edward Munch's paintings for Luba Luft, and then burns it after Resch had killed her).[112] "So I was wrong," Deckard ponders. "There is nothing unnatural or unhuman about Phil Resch's reactions; *it's me*."[113]

The exposure of Mercerism by androids does not change anything from the human point of view. Similarly, Deckard's revelation about his own "unnaturalness" actually helps him to reconstruct a new conception of human nature, a new identity. As Isidore and Deckard, the human protagonists, need Mercer more, the fusion starts spontaneously – technology becomes transparent as the boundaries separating the natural and the unnatural begin

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[110] DA, 98-111.

[111] Jameson 1988, 356.

[112] Munch's *The Scream* (1893) is adopted as an expression of the android condition (DA, 114); Fredric Jameson comments that this painting is "a canonical expression of the great modernist thematics of alienation, anomie, solitude, social fragmentation, and isolation, a virtually programmatic emblem of what used to be called the age of anxiety" (Jameson 1991, 11).

[113] DA, 124.

to blend. The basic message of Mercer is ambivalent, one of suffering and comforting connection: "*There is no salvation*. [...] [Y]ou aren't alone. [...] It is the basic condition of life, to be required to violate your own identity."[114] For Deckard, the fundamental dilemma is that he simultaneously has to feel empathy – even love – towards androids, and yet kill them, in order to be a "human" individual. This individuality is based on a paradox: "individual" is, by definition, something indivisible and whole.[115] Deckard has a love affair with Rachael Rosen, a female Nexus-6 who has artificial memories and who initially believes that she is a human being. Deckard thinks that Rachael helps him to capture other androids, whereas her real goal is to make him fall in love with an android, and incapacitate him as a bounty hunter.[116] Love and the pain of betrayal works in Deckard's case to demonstrate to him both the necessity of borders towards the android otherness, and how necessary it is to violate these borders to really understand the relationship between humans and androids. Deckard's true identity, in the end, is not completely "individual," not clearly separate from the others. Even the androids with their demonic traits cannot be completely set apart from Deckard's true self. Deckard goes through the traumatic episode of "killing the things he loves":[117]

> "I'm sorry, Mrs. Baty," Rick said, and shot her.
>   Roy Baty, in the other room, let out a cry of anguish.
>   "Okay, you loved her," Rick said. "And I loved Rachael." He shot Roy Baty; the big man's corpse lashed about, toppled like an overstacked collection of separate, brittle entities [...].[118]

Afterwards, Deckard experiences a spontaneous fusion with Mercer; he feels that he *becomes* Mercer, without the consoling awareness of other Mer-

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[114] DA, 156.

[115] The etymology of "individual" is based on the Middle English meaning 'single,' 'indivisible', derived from Old French, and ultimately from Medieval Latin *indîviduâlis* (Latin *indîviduus* : *in-*, not + *dîviduus*, divisible). (*American Heritage Dictionary*.) – The inhumanity of androids can be linked with their lack of childhood: they may have childhood memories, but their bodies do not carry any biological bond to another organism (mother). In psychological terms, this image can be interpreted according to the lines of attachment theory; Victoria Hamilton has used "attachment" rather than "bond" (which has negative and restricting connotations) to describe the basis for our communication and coexistence. "Inherent in attachment theory is the notion that the first infant-mother relationship creates that structure which governs later attachments. Since an attachment is like an inner construct, it is stable and exists across space and time." (Hamilton 1982, 7.) Contemporary psychological theories, such as this, suggest that unbroken psyche is a paradox: psychic "wholeness" carries always something of the other in it.

[116] DA, 175.

[117] "Yet each man kills the thing he loves, / By each let this be heard, / Some do it with the bitter look, / Some with the flattering word, / The coward does it with a kiss, / The brave man with a sword! [...] For each man kills the thing he loves, / Yet each man does not die. // For he who lives more lives than one / More deaths than one must die." ("The Ballad of Reading Gaol" [1898] by Oscar Wilde.)

[118] DA, 197.

cerites. In yet another swell of expectations that the narrative creates and then disappoints (thus "linking" with an empathic reader), Deckard-Mercer finds a toad in the desert (toad and ass are extinct animals, and symbols for Mercer's love for the humble forms of life) – and then, as he brings it home to his concerned wife, it turns out to be an artificial toad. But Deckard's attitude towards the traumatic division line between "real" and "artificial," truth and deception, has gone through a subtle but profound change: "The spider Mercer gave the chickenhead, Isidore; it probably was artificial, too. But it doesn't matter. The electric things have their lives, too. Paltry as those lives are."[119]

Dick's androids are inheritors to the demonic otherness of Frankenstein's monster: to be "united by no link to any other being." Yet, the quality and necessity of this linking, and the critique of the subject inherent in it is directed towards different concerns, as compared to those of Mary Shelley. Anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to machines and other inanimate objects has often been regarded as a feature of "primitive" or magical thinking in our scientific century; Dick was aware of this, but he made the counterargument that a certain amount of "magical" quality in our relation to our surroundings, to other people, and to ourselves, is necessary.

> A native of Africa is said to view his surroundings as pulsing with a purpose, a life, that is actually within himself; once these childish projections are withdrawn, he sees that the world is dead and that life resides solely within himself. When he reaches this sophisticated point he is said to be either mature or sane. Or scientific. But one wonders: Has he not, in this process, reified – that is, made into a thing – other people? Stones and rocks and trees may now be inanimate for him, but what about his friends? Has he now made them into stones, too?[120]

Scott Bukatman writes in his *Terminal Identity* (1993) that in the "postmodern, post-alienated future posed by Philip Dick, the movement into a state of alienation is simultaneously both regression and progression; a crucial ambivalence which avoids any reification of the 'natural,' but which also rejects the unequivocal embracing of the instrumental reason of a new technocratic order."[121] Dick eyes technology with suspicion, but because he is able to perceive the reciprocal intertwining of "artificial" and

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[119] DA, 214. – In "The Android and the Human" Dick develops this idea: "the difference between what I call the 'android' mentality and the human is that the latter passed through something [suffering, empathy] the former did not, or at least passed through it and responded differently – *changed*, altered, what it did and hence what it was; it *became*." (1995, 203.)

[120] Dick, "The Android and the Human" (1972; Dick 1995, 183.) – A modern anthropologist, Madronna Holden, makes an analogous but more moderate argument: "Whereas civilized society commoditizes its persons, primitive society personalizes its commodities" (Holden 1995, 3).

[121] Bukatman 1994, 52.

"human" in our technologic culture and reality, he is not able to cast it off as outrightly Satanic. Rather, the androids are demons for Dick – this figure of a reified, cold and alienated man-machine both obsesses and inspires him. In his writings during the 1970s, he revises his earlier vision of machine as the modern face of the devil.[122] Now he thought that he should have been talking about masks, rather than faces; the situation is more complex, and a troubling ambivalence is more accurate than direct adversity. The relationship is reversible: the machine can be a mask for the human as well as the human can mask something mechanical. Age-old mythology can also be applied to these contemporary forms of hybrid selves; Dick calls for recycling, where a *Pietà* motif, for example, could be applied to machines.[123]

CINEMATIC TECHNODEMONS: BLADE RUNNER

> Here's to the crazy ones.
>   The misfits.
>   The rebels.
>   The troublemakers.
>   The round pegs in the square holes.
> […]
> We make tools for these kinds of people.
>   While some see them as the crazy ones,
>   we see a genius. […]
>
> Think different.
> – Apple Computer, Inc., advertisement 1997

Recycling the mythical motifs is, in a way, exactly what the director Ridley Scott and his team did as they adapted Dick's novel into a science fiction film. *Blade Runner* is loaded with traces from various mythological – often also demonological – intertexts. The emotional coldness of the androids is back-pedalled, leaving more room for the existential anguish (and love interests) of these "replicants."[124] Some of these changes are motivated by commercial Hollywood interests, some are outcomes of several people putting in months of labour to produce a working script from Dick's novel – which had left quite a few open questions in its plot structure. The rationale of the androids escaping and getting back to earth, for example, was not

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[122] See Dick, "Man, Android, and Machine" (1976; Dick 1995, 213).
[123] Dick, "The Android and the Human" (1972; Dick 1995, 206-7).
[124] Ridley Scott: "The term *android* is a dangerous one, undermined by certain generic assumptions. […] I didn't want *Blade Runner* to be premonitory of *android* at all. Because then people would think that his film was about robots, when in fact it isn't." Screenwriter David Peoples got the term "replicant" from microbiology and the practice of cell cloning. (Sammon 1996, 61.) Replicant also carries the various connotations of the verb "to replace," the threatening possibility of a supplement usurping the place of the original.

Dying Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) from Blade Runner *(dir. Ridley Scott).*
© Warner Bros., 1982.

clear; this future earth is, after all, a dreary, radioactive place everyone else is trying to get away from.[125] Screenwriter Hampton Fancher and Ridley Scott highlighted accelerated decrepitude as an answer; with their beauty, superhuman abilities and their intense mortality the replicants of *Blade Runner* became embodiments of their maker's motto – *More Human Than Human*.[126] The climactic sequence between Roy Batty, an escaped replicant,

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[125] Dick suggested that androids were just escaping from servitude (DA, 161). The title question of the novel – *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* – proposes that maybe artificial humans might have their "artificial dreams" (a real sheep is a status symbol in Dick's novel). Deckard's question "Do you think androids have souls?" and his final acceptance that even "artificial" lives have their meaning and value suggests an uncertain move away from essentialism and towards constructivism in relation to human identity.

[126] The four year life span is mentioned in Dick's novel, but it is never a central problem for Dick's androids (DA, 173). The motto for Tyrell Corporation (corresponding to the Rosen Association in Dick's novel) echoes *More Than Human* (1953), an important science fiction novel by Theodore Sturgeon. Sturgeon addresses the question of "super-

and Dr. Eldon Tyrell, the head of Tyrell Corporation (the company manufacturing replicants) crystallises the ambivalent and violent manner in which demonic conflicts operate in this work.

> [ROY BATTY:] It is not an easy thing to meet your Maker. […]
> [DR. TYRELL:] What seems to be the problem?
> [ROY BATTY:] Death. […] I want more life… fucker!
> [DR. TYRELL:] The coding sequence cannot be revised once it's been established. […] You were made as well as we could make you. […] The light that burns twice as bright, burns half as long. And you have burnt so very, very brightly, Roy! Look at you! You're the Prodigal Son. You're quite a prize!
> [ROY BATTY:] I've done questionable things.
> [DR. TYRELL:] Also extraordinary things! Revel in your time!
> [ROY BATTY:] Nothing the God of Biomechanics wouldn't let you in Heaven for… [*Takes Dr. Tyrell's head between his hands, kisses him to mouth, and kills Tyrell by pushing fingers into his eyes and crushing his head.*][127]

The movie deals with the replicants in very different ways as compared to Dick's treatment of androids. A religious subtext – the Bible – was applied in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* to make Deckard a strange Christ-figure, forced to kill (artificial) women and men he both sympathised with, and regarded as demonic embodiments of evil. In *Blade Runner* a replicant, Roy Batty, is the Christ-figure; during the last chase scene between him and Deckard an "accelerated decrepitude" starts to overcome him, and Batty fights back by driving a rusty nail through his hand.[128] His final act is one of mercy: with his pierced hand this biomechanical Christ saves the life of Deckard, the petty bounty hunter. A white dove, the symbol of Holy Spirit, is released from Batty's grasp as his life is finally consumed.[129] However, this "Prodigal Son" is not only a Christ, but also a fallen angel, rebellious and vengeful for his expulsion from Heaven. His blond, angelic beauty (portrayed by the Dutch actor Rutger Hauer) is ambivalently contrasted with his intelligence and innocence, a tender kiss that suddenly turns into murderous violence. Dr. Tyrell, Roy's "God of Biomechanics," is positioned at the top of a huge pyramid, the only place illuminated by the sun in the film; he is also associated with the owl, the symbol of the god of wisdom and the arts (Athena, or Minerva).[130] After Roy has

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man" from a different angle than the cyborg tradition; his "Homo Gestalt" being is a group of individuals, each somehow handicapped on their own, working as one. As an imaginative solution, this is a radically different alternative to the alienated and demonised "Man Plus."

[127] *Blade Runner* 1:23-25. (The reference is to The Criterion Collection CAV laserdisc; see William M. Kolb, "*Blade Runner*: Film Notes" [Kerman 1991, 154-77].)

[128] *Blade Runner* 1:39.

[129] *Blade Runner* 1:47.

[130] *Blade Runner* 0:19. – As Paul M. Sammon notes, "since Tyrell owns an artificial owl, this could imply that Tyrell has "false wisdom" (Sammon 1996, 171). William M.

killed Tyrell, he descends in an elevator into darkness, and this, in turn, is the only scene where we can see stars, the heaven drawing away from Roy's (now Luciferian) figure.[131] Scott Bukatman summarises the ambiguous effect of *Blade Runner* succinctly: "This science fiction adventure of urban perception produces an enhanced self-mastery, but also, at the same time, a dispossession, almost an erasure, of self."[132]

The first working title for *Blade Runner* was "The Android," and this accurately captures the altered position of man-machine: instead of posing as an image of the "unfeeling" or mechanical qualities in the modern self, replicants figure in *Blade Runner* to invoke our empathy in all of their fragile artificiality and lack of solid "human nature."[133] The "demoniacal corpse" of 1818 had become the metal-faced devil of 1968, only to be reborn again as the troublesomely angelic-devilish replicants of 1982. The replicants carry subtle signs of their demonic ancestry (their eyes, for example, have a faint glow in many shots); more important it is, however, that the audience cannot identify with them directly, nor are they able to do so with Deckard.[134] The hysterical fear that Victor displayed towards his creation has subsided – or, for that matter, so has the blind infatuation Nathaniel expresses towards the Olympia, the female automaton in E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Sandman." Dr. Tyrell does not have the demonic powers of Coppelius/Coppola (in Hoffmann's tale), but the demonic has its uses even in the fantasies of the twenty-first century. "Artificiality" is still a sign of otherness, but it has come closer to the sympathetic, conscious dimensions of the self. In Clive Barker's play the mechanical man Easter, manufactured by the devil, voluntarily sacrificed himself for "real" humans; the replicants find themselves as cast into the role of the "demonic other," and they explore whatever potentials such a situation might offer.[135]

Kolb remarks in his notes on the ecclesiastical trappings that surround Tyrell: he wears the papal gown, his bed is designed after that of Pope John Paul II – a ring on the little finger of his right hand and the "devotional candles" illuminating his chambers should also be noted (Kerman 1991, 166).

[131] *Blade Runner* 1:26.

[132] Bukatman 1997, 8.

[133] See Kolb, "Script to Screen: *Blade Runner* in Perspective" (Kerman 1991, 133).

[134] Deckard is shown as shooting an escaping female replicant, Zhora, in the back; the killing of Pris is also shown as a painfully cruel and undignified act. His "love scene" with the beautiful young replicant, Rachael, is actually sort of "reprogramming" this woman-thing – Deckard pushes Rachael around, and demands that she repeats after him: "Kiss me... I want you." (1:10.) The Blade Runner crew called it, actually, "The Hate Scene." – "Instead of a relationship, that scene became this sort of sadomasochistic encounter between the two of them. But that might have had something to do with eighties sensibilities as opposed to nineties sensibilities, too. The sexual and political environment today is much different than it was then." (Model Supervisor Mark Stetson; Sammon 1996, 165.)

[135] This principle of appropriating the demonic figure and tradition into identity construction is discussed in the next chapter, in the context of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*.

As Roy Batty arrives in the film to torture the Chinese biomechanic who designed the replicants' eyes, he utters some lines of poetry: "Fiery the Angels fell / Deep thunder rolled around their shores / Burning with the fires of Orc."[136] The reference is to William Blake's "America: A Prophecy" (1793), an apocalyptic poem allegorising the battle for American independence. Batty's quotation, however, is significantly altered; the original Blake reads "the Angels rose" – not "fell."[137] Batty is actually quoting Milton through Blake.[138] There is no immediate plot rationale why Batty should not have stayed with Blake (a rebel who regarded the authority of State and King with the same dislike he later devoted to Church and God). The change of wording is important as it is yet another example of how demonic ambivalence is produced in *Blade Runner*; Batty is not necessarily a righteous rebel, he has also destructive and demonic potential – and the ambiguous combination of both makes his character the more interesting.

Rosemary Jackson has written about the relativity of evil, how shifts in cultural fears and values also modify the use of the demonic.[139] The late twentieth century has witnessed renewed attention to animation narratives; as Lois Rostow Kuznets writes in her *When Toys Come Alive* (1994), numerous stories about living toys, automatons, and cyborgs are capable of embodying "human anxiety about what it means to be 'real' – an independent subject or self rather than an object or other submitting to the gaze of more powerfully real and potentially rejecting live beings."[140] Demonic imagery is not immune to cultural change: omnipresent technology may be assuming the role which terrifying animals or demonic monsters used to occupy.[141] The relatively permissive character of contemporary society may

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[136] *Blade Runner* 0:26.

[137] "Fiery the Angels rose, & as they rose deep thunder roll'd / Around their shores, indignant burning with the fires of Orc; / And Boston's Angel cried aloud as they flew thro' the dark night" (Blake 1982, 116). – The impulse towards Blake came from director Ridley, but David Peoples chose the lines and rewrote them to suit Batty's character (Sammon 1996, 134). See also Wood (1986, 185) for a political interpretation of this detail.

[138] Some relevant sections from the first book of *Paradise Lost* (1:34, 36-8): "Th' infernal Serpent [...] his Pride / Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his Host / Of Rebel Angels" – and from the second book (2:266-67): "And with the majesty of darkness round / Covers his Throne; from whence deep thunders roar." And (2:771-3): "down they fell, / Driven headlong from the Pitch of Heaven, down / Into this Deep [...]". (An interesting analysis of the intertextual relationships is the article by David Desser, "The New Eve: The Influence of *Paradise Lost* and *Frankenstein* on *Blade Runner*" [Kerman 1991, 53-65].)

[139] Jackson 1981, 52, 54.

[140] Kuznets 1994, 2.

[141] Michael Jackson writes in his article "The Man Who Could Turn Into an Elephant: Shape-shifting among the Kuranko of Sierra Leone": "Just as images of were-animals are conditioned by the ubiquitous dialectic of village and bush in preindustrial societies, so images of bionic people, androids and robots reflect the human-machine dialectic that shapes both mental and bodily consciousness in industrial societies." He also refers to the famous case of "Joey: a 'Mechanical Boy'" (reported by Bruno Bettelheim in *Scientific*

also account for the change in the dynamics of the demonic conflict – it is not so much characterised by the struggle of repressed instinctual material for recognition, as it is a means to process uncertainties about the self, its "reality." The digital selves of "cyberpunk" science fiction invoke their demons precisely from those abysses.

Rachael (Sean Young) from Blade Runner *(dir. Ridley Scott).*
© Warner Bros., 1982.

American [1959; 300:3]), who felt completely alienated from his humanity and identified himself with a machine. (In Jackson - Karp 1990, 59-77.)

DIGITAL DEMONS FROM THE CYBERSPACE: *NEUROMANCER*

'What's the matter?'
'Never mind.'
'What is mind?'
'No matter.'
    – Old joke[142]

Paul M. Sammon, in his *Future Noir* (1996), a thorough exploration of *Blade Runner*, positions this movie as the seminal influence for dozens of television series, music videos, and motion pictures – and for cyberpunk.[143] The central themes of memory and perception (repeated in the numerous scenes dealing with eyes and photographs) were to become some of cyberpunk's main concerns. An even more important influence was the style; Bruce Sterling writes, in his introduction to *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology* (1986), how cyberpunk is "known for its telling use of detail, its carefully constructed intricacy, its willingness to carry extrapolation into the fabric of daily life. It favors 'crammed' prose: rapid, dizzying bursts of novel information, sensory overload that submerges the reader in the literary equivalent of the hard-rock 'wall of sound.'"[144] *Blade Runner* brought the future to the street level: with the 1980s' cynicism it supposed that the problems of current urban blight are not going away with the advancement of science and technology – they are going to get worse with accelerating pollution, population growth and transfer of power from the government to private corporations. The counterforce to despair in this "*Blade Runner* aesthetics" was "retro" romanticism; *Blade Runner*'s mixture of dilapidated hi-tech and Marlowesque voice-overs, 1940s' film noir hairstyles and wardrobes did find their counterparts in the cyberpunk that was also taking shape during the early 1980s. This interest in the appearance, the look, the style – the "surface" level of media and commercial production – has made critics question the logic and morality of this subgenre.[145] Bruce Sterling writes in his criticised "manifesto" of the cyberpunk movement:

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[142] See *Newsweek*, February 7, 1983; quoted in Turkle 1984, 321.

[143] Sammon 1996, 324-25. Scott Bukatman writes in his study on *Blade Runner* that "the aesthetic of cyberpunk was almost defined by *Blade Runner*" (Bukatman 1997, 41). – William Gibson points to another near-future dystopian SF movie as a direct influence on his novel, *Neuromancer* (1984); "*Escape from New York* [1981] never made it big, but it's been redone a billion times as a rock video" (McCaffery 1991, 266).

[144] Sterling 1986/1988, xiv-xv.

[145] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. has made some of the most scathing comments on the self-deception and falsehood of cyberpunk: "To put it mildly, it's hard to see the 'integrated' political-aesthetic motives of alienated subcultures that adopt the high-tech tools of the establishment they are supposedly alienated from. It seems far more reasonable to assume that the 'integrating,' such as it is, is being done by the dominant telechtronic cultural powers, who – as cyberpunk writers know very well – are insatiable in their appetite for new commodities and commodity fashions. (Csicsery-Ronay 1991, 183.)

> Mirrored sunglasses have been a Movement totem since the early days of
> '82. The reasons for this are not hard to grasp. By hiding the eyes, mirror-
> shades prevent the forces of normalcy from realizing that one is crazed
> and possibly dangerous. They are the symbol of the sun-staring visionary,
> the biker, the rocker, the policeman, and similar outlaws. Mirrorshades –
> preferably in chrome and matte black, the Movement's totem colors – ap-
> peared in story after story, as a kind of literary badge.[146]

The logical contradiction does not prevent Sterling from listing the po-
liceman among other "similar outlaws"; Samuel Delany has pointed out that
mirrorshades "both mask the gaze and distort the gaze," and Darko Suvin
writes that they "conjoin a minor degree of effective withdrawal with a large
degree of psychological illusion of withdrawal in the wearer."[147] Such illu-
sions, paradoxes and apparent lapses of rational reasoning are interesting
from the specific viewpoint of this study; cyberpunk is situated in the tradi-
tion of "hard" (technologically plausible) SF, but its characters seem to have
a relationship with technology that reaches beyond rational extrapolation
and invention. They are also inheritors of Victor Frankenstein, Roger Tor-
raway, and Rick Deckard, and of the demonic conflicts negotiated at the
limits of the self and the other.

Brian McHale has dubbed as "interface fictions" those contemporary
narratives which register the "first, often traumatic encounters between 'lit-
erary' culture (high culture generally) and the transformative possibilities of
computer technology."[148] The term could be developed to cover the "inter-
faces" of other cultures, not only the high one, with the cybernetic condi-
tion. These fictions often address the anxiety of dealing with non-human
systems in demonic terms. Félix Guattari, for example, comes up with the
same idea while trying to rethink the relation of subjectivity and machine:

> The fact that machines are capable of articulating statements and register-
> ing states of fact in as little as a nanosecond, and soon in a picosecond,
> does not in itself make them diabolical powers that threaten to dominate
> human beings. People have little reason to turn away from machines;
> which are nothing other than hyperdeveloped and hyperconcentrated
> forms of certain aspects of human subjectivity, and emphatically not those
> aspects that polarize people in relations of domination and power. It will
> be possible to build a two-way bridge between human beings and ma-
> chines and, once we have established that, to herald new and confident al-
> liances between them.[149]

When Guattari proceeds from theoretical speculation into prophecy, he
is actually producing "interface fiction" in the sense above. The reference to
machines (here specifically computers) as threatening "diabolical powers"

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[146] Sterling 1986/1988, xi.
[147] Suvin 1989/1991, 358.
[148] McHale 1992, 236.
[149] Guattari, "Regimes, Pathways, Subjects" (Crary - Kwinter 1992, 16-18).

reassures the reader only by implicitly confirming the diabolical dimension that technology has adopted in our cultural imagination. The antihumanism of much interface fiction is apparent; writers do not only question and shake the illusory unity of the traditionally unified humanist self – they "play with the devil" by allying their texts with the disturbing and frightening potentials of technology. The poetic outcome is a darkly suggestive and decadently rebellious form of aesthetics; Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. compares cyberpunk authors (and could well have included some theoreticians) to the French fin-de-siècle "accursed poets": "Cyberpunk artists acquire much of their power like the *poetes maudits* before them by dealing with the Devil. […] They know the sleaze, because they have set up shop in the belly of the beast."[150] There is a moment where such analysis turns into accusation. The experience of having an ambivalent relationship to technology is a likely possibility in the post-industrial West (it can simultaneously offer both ways to construct identity, and be an "outer," determining power in the construction process). The fictional means of exploring this ambivalence thereby carries both interest and significance. Such politically committed critics as Darko Suvin, however, seem to hold it against cyberpunk that it is related to the experience of a certain group (which is not normally counted among the oppressed).[151] Is cyberpunk the "*diagnostician of or the parasite on a disease*?" Suvin asks.[152] If there is a pattern of demonic conflict, disintegration and subsequent reconstruction of the self operating in cyberpunk, the likely answer is *both*.

> Cyberspace, as the deck presented it, had no particular relationship with the deck's physical whereabouts. When Case jacked in, he opened his eyes to the familiar configuration of the Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority's Aztec pyramid of data.
>   'How you doing, Dixie?'
>   'I'm dead, Case. Got enough time on this Hosaka to figure that one.'
>   'How does it feel?'
>   'It doesn't.'
>   'Bother you?'
>   'What bothers me is, nothin' does.'
>   'How's that?'
>   'Had me this buddy in the Russian camp, Siberia, his thumb was frostbit. Medics came by and they cut it off. Month later he's tossin' all night. Elroy, I said, what's eatin' you? Goddam thumb's itchin', he says. So I told

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[150] Csicsery-Ronay 1991, 193.

[151] "I would speculate that cyberpunk SF is representative for the structure of feeling of an important but certainly not all-inclusive international social group. As I hinted at the beginning [of the quoted article], this is some fractions of the youth culture in the affluent North of our globe. More particularly, cyberpunk is correlative to the technicians and artists associated with the new communication media, and to the young who aspire to such a status. […] However, it is certainly a small, single-digit percentage even of the fifteen-to-thirty-years' age group, even in the affluent North (never mind the whole world)." (Suvin 1989/1991, 363.)

[152] Ibid., 364. Italics in the original.

him, scratch it. McCoy, he says, its the *other* goddam thumb.' When the construct laughed, it came through as something else, not laughter, but a stab of cold down Case's spine. 'Do me a favor, boy.'

    'What's that, Dix?'

    'This scam of yours, when it's over, you erase this goddam thing.'[153]

When the android Leon is fighting with Deckard in *Blade Runner* he says: "Nothing is worse than having an itch you can never scratch"[154] The above quotation from the "quintessential cyberpunk novel" *Neuromancer* (1984; "N") by William Gibson, brings the themes of isolated and artificial self to the Baudrillardian territory. As Jon Thompson summarises: "the real is a palimpsest continually rewritten by the simulacra. As such, it becomes indistinguishable from its infinite simulations. [In the circuit of the hyper-real] the boundaries between the true and the false, the real and the imaginary, and the present and the past combine and recombine in a dance of signs, reducing all oppositions to an algebra of equivalence."[155] The confrontation between the real and the artificial agency, which still had the capacity to shock in *Frankenstein* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, retains only vestiges of its unnerving qualities in the world of *Neuromancer*. Since the people in this world encounter each other mostly through various communication technologies, there are no reliable ways to identify the interlocutor; some of them, as "Dix" (McCoy Pauley) here, are just simulation. In the cyberpunk dialectic of flesh and prosthesis, he is a terminal point: an agent which is nothing but prosthesis.

Still, traces of difference remain, and they are emphasised by narrative means; the "stab of cold" that goes down Case's spine is one such token. Dix is dead, and replaced by a ROM personality construct – a digital ghost of a person that was once alive. The synesthetic replacement of laughter with the Gothic shivers that Case feels in his spine does not signal any completely neutral or interchangeable relationship between the "real life" and simulation. The implied anxieties are present in numerous ways. The opening of *Neuromancer* establishes the intermingling of natural and artificial both in the levels of figurative language and characterisation; the opening sentence states that the "sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel." Ritz, the bartender, anticipates in his figure the conspicuous place heterogeny holds in *Neuromancer* – "his teeth a webwork of East European steel and brown decay," and his arm "a Russian military prosthesis, a seven-function force-feedback manipulator, cased in grubby pink plastic."[156]

If *Neuromancer* were a Philip K. Dick novel from the 1960s, the prosthetic arm would send signals as a stigma of evil (as in the case of Palmer El-

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[153] N, 130.

[154] *Blade Runner* 1:01.

[155] Thompson 1993, 151. – See Baudrillard 1983.

[156] N, 9. – "Russian" and "eastern" have in *Neuromancer* their pre-perestroika associations with communism and the "Empire of Evil."

dritch). There are some subtle features that connect *Neuromancer* with the demonic and the underworld, but the moral division into good and evil is not apparent; *Neuromancer* is governed by collage, multiplicity and heterogeneity. Case, the protagonist of *Neuromancer*, is a "cyberspace cowboy" – a "retro" appellation coined by Gibson that half-ironically appropriates the earlier SF "space opera" tradition with its solitary cowboy figures. The naming and imaginative application of "cyberspace" is William Gibson's most important contribution to SF, and this idea continues to evolve into real-world applications as computer programmers and interface designers are pursuing it as their goal.[157] Simultaneously, this interest in the actual implementation of cyberspace threatens to obscure the actual complexities of Gibson's work. There are important anxieties and an irreducible ambivalence figuring in the descriptions of this extraordinary "space."[158]

Even if Ritz is not a literal demon, he works in a world that can trace its genealogy to Dante's *Inferno*; it is a "borderland of older streets, an area with no official name. Night City, with Ninsei its heart."[159] Earlier in his career, Case had lived for "the bodiless exultation of cyberspace," now he has experienced "the Fall" – sleeping in "coffins," he inhabits a shadow world with chthonic and infernal connotations. It is a domain of night, its daytime resembling suspended animation, "under the poisoned silver sky."[160] Against this contrast, cyberspace is charged with eschatological and celestial associations; it is a release from "the prison of flesh," making its appearance as "lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind."[161] The actual workings of this system are left sketchy. The interface demands that the "disembodied consciousness" of the operator is "projected into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix [i.e. cyberspace]."[162] The commentators have been quick to pick up on the roots of such an idea in intellectual history: the independent reality of Platonic Ideas, the noösphere of Teilhard de Chardin, "World 3" of Karl Popper, the memes of Richard Dawkins – cyberspace was seen as the fulfilment of an age-old dream of embodying, entering and directly interacting with the clarity and purity of the conceptual realm. Cyberspace seemed to connect with the ancient images of the Heavenly City: "weightlessness, radiance, numerological complexity, palaces upon palaces, peace and harmony through rule by the good and the wise, utter cleanliness,

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[157] See such studies as *Cyberspace: First Steps* (Benedict 1991), *Virtual Reality* (Rheingold 1991) *Cultures of the Internet: Virtual Spaces, Real Histories, Living Bodies* (Shields 1996).

[158] The author himself did not particularly feel at home with computers; *Neuromancer*, the paramount interface fiction, was written with a manual typewriter (see "Gibson's Typewriter" by Scott Bukatman in Dery 1994, 71-89, and "Author's Afterword" by William Gibson in the electronic edition of his cyberspace novels by the Voyager Company [New York, 1992]).

[159] N, 13.

[160] N, 12-13.

[161] N, 12, 67.

[162] N, 12.

transcendence of nature and of crude beginnings, the availability of all things pleasurable and cultured."[163]

"We will all become angels, and for eternity!" one enthusiastic writer claimed. "Highly unstable, hermaphrodite angels, unforgettable in terms of computer memory."[164] The Platonic dream, however, is based on dualism, and it is interesting to analyse how *Neuromancer* addresses and employs the contradictions and conflicts inherent in such a vision. The use of mythical narratives and symbolism is an outstanding feature of *Neuromancer*, but it does not endorse the man-machine interface uncritically: the euphoria of increased possibilities is interwoven with the fears of merging with the other, of losing one's identity – the essential threats towards one's self. The cyberspace cowboy, Case, may agree with the Church Fathers that the flesh is the prison of soul, but the narrative does not stop here: this is the starting point.[165] The impurity and defectiveness of the body haunts this "disembodied" story from the beginning. Case has stolen from his (criminal) employers, and they paid him back by maiming his nervous system with a "wartime Russian mycotoxin."[166] Afterwards, Case is unable to see or travel into cyberspace any more, the implication being that the "talent" of Case had somehow been a part of his nervous system. The "cyberspace deck" that he uses is not enough in itself: the real roots of cyberspace are in the experiential and visionary capacities of the human body and mind.

In a seminal article tracing the demonic and occult roots of cyberspace, "Techgnosis, Magic, Memory, and The Angels of Information" (1994), Erik Davis finds parallels and contacts between the postmodern "cult of information" and hermetic tradition – the mnemonic techniques (visualising a space for things to be remembered), demonic cryptography, and Gnostic cosmology.[167] The magi of the past spent their time attempting to have communications with "daemons" (any spirits from the lower ones to the archangels and planetary rulers), trying to find out their "true names" and to reach gnosis. This divine information "in-forms" by transforming the subject of knowledge; in immediate transcendence, the subject "knows God" and realises the (previously hidden) unity with divinity.[168] According to Davies, the 1960s Bay Area culture that laid the groundwork for much of current "cyberculture" saw computers as "the latest and the greatest tools available for the

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[163] Michael Benedikt, "Introduction"; see also Michael Heim, "The Erotic Ontology of Cyberspace"; Marcos Novak, "Liquid Architectures in Cyberspace" (Benedikt 1991, 1-25, 59-80, 225-54; quotation from page 15).

[164] Nicole Stenger, "Mind Is a Leaking Rainbow" (ibid., 52).

[165] The metaphor of body as prison is common in Patristic writings; St. Paul likened body to an "earthen vessel" (2 Cor. 4:7) and asked "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:24). See also Jerome 1963, 136 ("As long as we are imprisoned within this frail little body"…) and the discussion on transmigration of souls by Tertullian ("On the Soul"; Tertullianus 1985, 262).

[166] N, 12.

[167] Davis 1994, 31.

[168] See also Pagels 1981, 143-69.

achievement of the Aquarian goal: the expansion of consciousness by what-ever means necessary."[169] The New Age took shape as the "religion of the Information Age," creating a new interpretation of gnosticism in the proc-ess. Davis quotes a popular New Age text, *The Starseed Transmissions* (1982), claiming to be a series of transmissions from an alien angel to a car-penter named Ken Carey: "This new information is not additional data that you will act upon. It is, rather, the very reality of your new nature. You are not to act upon my information in the future, you are to be my information yourselves."[170]

The New Age subtext is intermingled in *Neuromancer's* texture in vari-ous ways. The disembodiment of mind (soul), and trips into "inner spaces" are its essential features. When Case confronts alien life forms – the Artifi-cial Intelligences, AIs – inhabiting this new realm created in the computer memory, he is not an agent manipulating a technical tool; his disembodied consciousness is "out there" in cyberspace. When the AI intercepts his communications, Case's connection with the computer is not disconnected: the brain activity in his body stops – he "flatlines."[171] But the experiential re-ality continues, as Case *is* information. *Neuromancer* explores the idea that personality is information, and that thinking, feeling and other (mental) ac-tivities are information processes that can be simulated and transferred to computers, when needed.[172] The eschatology inscribed in this line of thought leads the human race into technological transcendence, rebirth as "angels of information," and finally into a rendezvous with some Supermind. *Neuromancer* partly complies with such expectations, as the AI encounters other superhuman intelligences in outer space.[173] The final resolution, how-ever, is not complete but the discordant quality remains.

The confrontation with the AIs highlights the demonic aspects of Gib-son's narrative; they are alien entities, initially disturbing and frightening, later with tempting potentials that are in the "case of Case" linked with the attempts to heal a split in self, or to achieve transformation of identity. The text addresses directly the "diabolical" position of such dealings with the other.

> 'You [Case] are worse than a fool,' Michèle said, getting to her feet, the pistol in her hand. 'You have no care for your species. For thousands of years men dreamed of pacts with demons. Only now are such things pos-

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[169] Ibid., 55.
[170] Ibid., 58.
[171] The three flatlining sequences: N, 140-47, 202-8, 276-90.
[172] In his *Mind Children* (1988, 108-11) the robot scientist Hans Moravec describes how the hypothetical "transmigration" of human mind into a machine could be achieved. The future computers are decisively *mind* children; the abjection of the body is con-spicuous.
[173] N, 316.

sible. And what would you be paid with? What would your price be, for aiding this thing to free itself and grow?'[174]

Case, it turns out, is "paid" with himself, his transformed and reborn self. Initially, in the Night City, Case is wounded and quickly turning suicidal. For Case, the narrative amounts to a complicated healing process whereby he is able to recover something of a unity and wholeness. Another mythical subtext, that of a shamanic initiation, is relevant here. Based on research by Russian, Finnish and Hungarian anthropologists, Arnold van Gennep outlines this process in *The Rites of Passage* as follows:

1) the future shaman shows neurological symptoms;
2) he experiences several spirit possessions (hallucinations, phobias, epilepsy, catalepsy etc.) that develops into the idea of "temporary death";
3) he retreats into solitude in the woods or in the tundra and undergoes various privations with psychological and neuropathological consequences;
4) different spirits in animal or human form start appearing to him and teach him the essence of his vocation;
5) or: the shaman dies and his soul travels to the land of the spirits, the gods or the dead, and he acquires the knowledge of this region and learns how to "subdue the evil spirits and obtain the assistance of the good ones;"
6) after this, the shaman is reborn and ready to use his abilities.[175]

Case goes through all of these main phases, effectively transforming the ancient formula into the needs of his "techno-shamanism." His maimed nervous system sets him apart at the beginning of narrative; he also experiences temporary death ("flatline") when he is contacted in cyberspace by the AIs. This alternative reality is the reverse side of "celestial" cyberspace; during the first of these episodes, Case is faced with the simulation of his dead girlfriend, Linda Lee. Encounter with the dead is important for the whole operation: Case is assisted and advised by McCoy Pauley's construct. Pauley himself had flatlined several times while he was still alive, evoking almost superstitious fear among other cowboys – this "Lazarus of cyberspace" is placed in the role of an advisory spirit of an earlier shaman.[176] The final initiation for Case is the period he spends in the land of the dead, abducted by another AI than the one ("Wintermute") that had employed him. Earlier in the text lovemaking is presented as a way of entering some space, or information, analogous to Matrix.[177] Case confronts Linda again on a simulated

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[174] N, 193. – "Michèle" in this scene is "Turing cops," from the agency trying to prevent the Artificial Intelligence from reaching superhuman scale. The reference is to British mathematician Alan Turing who proposed (in 1950) the classic test to see whether a machine is capable of truly humanlike thought.

[175] van Gennep 1909/1977, 108.

[176] N, 98.

[177] N, 45.

beach, deserted except for the two of them. The opposition between "real life" and "simulation," or body and mind, is effectively deconstructed; they make love in the simulation, and Case accepts this reality as the one that "only the body […] could read." The rift between soul and body, "the meat, the flesh the cowboys mocked," loses its significance.[178] In the world of *Neuromancer*, both can be translated into information systems, and if the simulation of a system is good enough (perfect), it effectively *is* this system.[179] The "good" AI that stands as the mythical opponent of the "evil" one is powerful enough to unleash the imaginative possibilities of the divinity.

> [Case:] 'You're the other AI. You're Rio. You're the one who wants to stop Wintermute. What's your name? Your Turing code. What is it?'
>
> The boy did a handstand in the surf, laughing. He walked on his hands, then flipped out of the water. His eyes were Riviera's, but there was no malice in there. 'To call up a demon you must learn its name. Men dreamed that, once, but now it is real in another way. You know that, Case. Your business is to learn the names of the programs, the long formal names, names the owners seek to conceal. True names . . .'
>
> 'A Turing code's not your name.'
>
> 'Neuromancer,' the boy said, slitting long gray eyes against the rising sun. 'The lane to the land of the dead. Where you are, my friend. Marie-France, my lady, she prepared this road, but her lord choked her off before I could read the book of her days. Neuro from the nerves, the silver paths. Romancer. Necromancer. I call up the dead. But no, my friend,' and the boy did a little dance, brown feet printing the sand. 'I *am* the dead, and their land.'[180]

The role of Wilbur Mercer from Dick's android novel has passed to a machine intelligence: now the immense information processing capacities of future computers hold the Apocalyptic promise – resurrection of the dead. The moral dimension of the mythical structure is not in the centre of the narrative. Both AIs have their divine and diabolical moments from the human perspective; the division between "good" and "evil" remains, but mainly as a traditional marker; "Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy."[181] William Blake's words capture much of the Faustian "daemonic" influencing *Neuromancer*.[182] Case finally joins forces with the Wintermute AI out of curiosity; he wants to see what happens, to

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[178] N, 285.

[179] As Neuromancer says: "To live here [in the "artificial" reality] is to live. There is no difference." (N, 305.) The conclusion bears resemblance to Deckard's acceptance that the "electric things have their lives, too" in the end of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*. The endorsement of the artificial life may not be complete, but its "difference" and traumatic potentials have become a source for inspiration, rather than terror, as the tradition of man-machine fictions has evolved.

[180] N, 288-89.

[181] William Blake, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" (1793; Blake 1982, 92).

[182] Even more to the point, of course, is Goethe's definition of the "Demonic": this restless power "which manifests itself only in contradictions" (Goethe 1849, 157).

explore the possibilities of technology, and to make a change: "I got no idea at all what'll happen if Wintermute wins, but it'll *change* something!"[183] Case is also aware how deceptive the demonic imagery and discourse can be; Wintermute, for example, manipulates Case to feel aversion and hate towards the Tessier-Ashpool clan (the owners of the AIs) by editing his dream to include an association between them and the "alien horrors" of a wasp hive.[184] Marie-France Tessier planned for the eventual metamorphosis of the human species into a new, collective identity with AIs' aid, but this is not an evil goal, just an alien one.[185]

The only clearly evil character in the novel is Riviera, the "demon lover."[186] He revels in his sadistic imagination with no real need for anyone else, except as victims or as an audience. He remains totally Other by choice – he does not connect, he feeds on the others, taking pride in the "perversity" of committing gratuitous acts. He smashes a heavy crystal glass in Molly's face just to see if his lens implant would break, in the manner the android in Dick's novel cut the spider's legs to see if it could still walk.[187] The empathic link to the desires and sufferings of others does not exist for him. Still, the titular "divinity" of *Neuromancer* adopts Riviera's eyes; even extreme evil has its place in the aesthetic synthesis. The alliances with alien, ultimately mechanical systems and the heterogeny in general retain, despite the narrative thrust towards synthesis, certain uneasy characteristics in the novel. Case reflects on the "lack of feeling" evident in powerful people: he imagines it being caused by "a gradual and willing accommodation of the machine, the system, the parent organism."[188] The interface and integration with non-human system tampers with the fundamentals of human identity, and it has its irreducible uncertainties. It can lead into something *less* as well as more than human.

After the successful operation the two opposing AIs are unified, and they form a new entity encompassing cyberspace itself.[189] In the intertext of shamanistic initiation, Case returns to life, transformed. He has dealt with

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[183] N, 307. See also N, 199-200.

[184] N, 151-53. Wintermute also edits Case's perceptions of this goal; see N, 222. – The virus program, "Kung Grade Mark Eleven," is spouting out conventional symbols of evil and bad luck ("swastikas, skulls and crossbones, dice flashing snake eyes"; N, 216), but this is part of the aesthetics. An efficient weapon carries in this novel similar amoral and sublime power that "Tyger" embodies in Blake's famous poem (Blake 1982, 49-50). The virus programmers favour names with demonic connotations, as Armageddon, Beast (666), Dark Lord, Demon, Devils Dance, Evil Empire, Nuke, Possessed, Rage, Rape, Shadow, etc. (Examples from the virus list of the Microsoft Anti-Virus program.) They mark these programmers' symbolic transition into the alternative "shadow world," secluded into the company of others practising this dark art.

[185] N, 258.

[186] N, 252. – For an analysis of the "demon lover" tradition, see e.g. Grudin 1987 and Reed 1988.

[187] N, 261, 264.

[188] N, 243.

[189] N, 316.

the dead and the demonic powers. Following the typification presented in Mircea Eliade's famous study on shamanism, Case is closest to the "infernal shaman"; according to Eliade, this shaman experiences finally a bodily alteration to match the spiritual transition – the "demonic beings" cut the body of the shaman into pieces, cook it and replace it with better organs.[190] Case spends most of the money the demonic AIs paid him on a new pancreas and liver. The integration and healing is not represented as complete, however. Case refuses Neuromancer's offer to stay in cyberspace with the dead lover (Linda) and the powers of AI. But the last page of the novel revises the disposition once more:

> And one October night, punching himself past the scarlet tiers of the Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority, he saw three figures, tiny, impossible, who stood at the very edge of one of the vast steps of data. Small as they were, he could make out the boy's grin, his pink gums, the glitter of the long gray eyes that had been Riviera's. Linda still wore his jacket; she waved, as he passed. But the third figure, close behind her, arm across her shoulders, was himself.
> Somewhere, very close, the laugh that wasn't laughter.[191]

It turns out that the narrative resolution has doubled, as the protagonist has. The demonic conflict between the isolated individual and his desire for transcending the boundaries of the self does not find any complete remedy; rather, the revelation that Case has been copied, and that his double is living with "the spirits" in cyberspace, underlies the plurality and heterogeneity of *Neuromancer*. The mythical structure is able to cover only some aspects of it.[192] It is also true, for example, that cyberspace has its literary origins: it gives a science fiction translation for the way in which a narrator creates "reality" in the act of narration, and its immediate transitions between different perceptions or locations realise in a similar manner a change in point of view. Literary devices are, in other words, converted into electronic devices.[193] On the other hand, literary devices have their thematic rationale.

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[190] Eliade 1951/1989, 43. – van Gennep (1909/1977, 108) also notes how "the Australian magician" changes personality when initiated, and sometimes "simulates dying and subsequent resurrection (removal of organs, dream voyage to other world, etc.)."

[191] N, 317.

[192] In addition, it is possible to read several mythical structures operating here, not just one. Jeffrey Fisher, in his article "The Postmodern Paradiso: Dante, Cyberpunk, and the Technosophy of Cyberspace" notes how the disembodiment of cyberspace is structured in accordance with medieval mystical models. The "forgetting and transfiguring hypermemory parallels the beatific vision, in which history is left behind in the eternal now." The pursuit of a "postmodern version of a medieval paradise" is also related to the tempting and problematic disjunction from the body, the "transcendence in which evil and responsibility are left behind in a blissful conjunction with the really real." (Fisher 1997, 116, 125.)

[193] See McHale 1992, 234. Gibson is well aware of this dimension of cyberspace, as well as of its dangers: "By the time I was writing *Neuromancer*, I recognized that cyberspace allowed for a lot of *moves*, because characters can be sucked into apparent realities […].

A typical *Neuromancer* sentence: "Cold steel odor."[194] No verb, just adjectives and nouns crammed into one tight, condensed packet of information. The synesthetic logic is efficient: 'steel,' the middle term qualifies both 'cold' and 'odor' – both of them connect with steel, and as the context is Case going through an operation, the sentence functions also metaphorically. Steel bites between the sensations of skin and smell, linking to the surgery and the theme of man-machine heterogeneity. Similar metaphoric heterogeneity operates in many figures of speech in *Neuromancer*: getting nervous is 'coming apart at the seams,' healing someone is 'fixing' him, and personal traits are 'the way you're wired.'[195] The ambivalently demonic positioning of technology corresponds to textual polyphony and its network of elements, figuratively, linguistically and narratively amalgamated with each other.

The traumatic limit that *Neuromancer* explores is mainly situated between the spiritual and the corporeal. The narrative effects a deconstruction of this limit; it textualises the spiritual efforts in sensuous imagery, and material (body/machine) in spiritual terms. The juxtaposed opposites begin leaking into each other, the mere density of overlapping connections creating "new" reality where the difference between real and appearance "does not matter." But it remains a topic for discussion.

> 'What happened to you, back there, man? You flatlined.'
>   He shook his head. 'I dunno, yet. Wait.'
>   'Okay. We get a cab or something.' She took his hand and led him across Jules Verne, past a window displaying the season's Paris furs.
>   'Unreal,' he said, looking up again.
>   'Nah,' she responded, assuming he meant the furs, 'grow it on a collagen base, but it's mink DNA. What's it matter?'[196]

In narrative terms, both the spiritual and the material can only appear as representation. Cyberspace is a narrative space, and William Gibson has said that computers in his books are "simply a metaphor for human memory. I'm interested in the hows and whys of memory, the ways it defines who and what we are, in how easily memory is subject to revision."[197] *Neuromancer* involves its reader in a discussion of how to approach and understand agency; if identities are based on memory and memory is only representation, there is no reason why history could not be rewritten. If there is no "other" outside the information system, there could be no stable position to stand against forgery or misappropriation of power. *Neuromancer* seemingly endorses the "information religion" backed by the claims of the Artificial

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That kind of freedom can be dangerous because you don't have to justify what's happening in terms of the logic of character or plot." (McCaffery 1991, 272-73.)

[194] N, 42.

[195] E.g., N, 40-41. For more examples, see Csicsery-Ronay 1991, 190.

[196] N, 149.

[197] McCaffery 1991, 270.

Intelligence scientists: a perfect simulation of intelligence *is* intelligence. But is a human being only intelligence? In its demonic complexity, *Neuromancer* unveils some contradictions and hidden anxieties motivating the contemporary "techno-Platonist" dreams of overstepping the human body into the superhuman realms of a postbiological era.[198] Digital eschatology has inner tensions, it is a dream that can easily be read as a nightmare – underlined in Gibson's oeuvre by the way the godlike AI degenerates into a legion of scheming Voodoo spirits.[199]

Erik Davis positions in his article the "digital demons" as ancestors of the old ambivalence concerning ideas of non-human powers; "Like their spiritual counterparts, software demons can both serve and subjugate."[200] The demonic figures are, according to my analysis, always articulating some conflict and division in the self; Case is also the "case" of *Neuromancer* – an occurrence of disease or disorder. He is deeply entangled in heterogeneity with the other (in his case digital technology), and also morally ambivalent character. The narrative gives this condition an uncanny form in Case's double in the end. The digital demons, it seems, have their basis in the splitting, conflicting, and plural character of their digital selves.

As a summary of my main observations in this chapter, I emphasise how technology has entered into our cultural perception of terrifying "otherness." Not only do the technodemons replace the horns and wings of beastly devils with their uncanny prostheses, but the ambivalent fascination with the promise of "forbidden" knowledge is now associated with their digital domains, as well.

The science fiction texts analysed here deal with the potential redefinition of the self by means of technology, and employ ancient demonic imagery and mythical structures to articulate the ensuing liminal anxiety. Doing this, they renew the demonic tradition and illustrate those many difficulties and tensions that haunt the construction of selfhood in the (post)modern world.

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[198] "Postbiological world" is one of the catchwords in Moravec's *Mind Children* (1988, 125 *et passim*.); it also pertains to the hubristic dreams of several fin-de-siècle thinkers (see Regis 1991, 144-76). – Sherry Turkle, who knows the MIT Artificial Intelligence community intimately, writes: "Several present-day AI researchers at MIT grew up with a family tradition that they are the descendants of Rabbi Loew, the creator of the Golem, a humanlike figure made of clay into whom God's name breathed life. These scientists include Gerald Sussman, Marvin Minsky, and Joel Moses. Joel Moses reports that a number of other American scientists have considered themselves to be descendants of Rabbi Loew, including John von Neumann and Norbert Wiener." (Turkle 1984, 270.)

[199] See *Neuromancer*'s sequels, *Count Zero* (1986) and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988). The character of Angie is the next logical step in cyberspace's evolution: she is cybernetically altered to make it possible for the AIs to possess her, and thereby transgress the boundary the other way, from cyberspace into the physical universe. (See, e.g. Gibson 1987, 254-55.)

[200] Davis 1994, 46.

In the next chapter, the analysis of *The Satanic Verses* reveals even more radical possibilities in such a polyphonic condition.

10. The Satanic Verses *and the Demonic Text*

> To see the devil as a partisan of Evil and an angel as a warrior on the side of Good is to accept the demagogy of the angels. Things are of course more complicated than that.
> – Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*[1]

BANNED BOOK

In his essay "In Good Faith" (1990), Salman Rushdie discusses the reactions his novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988; "SV") has evoked around the world.[2] According to Rushdie, his novel has been treated as "a work of bad history, as an anti-religious pamphlet, as the product of an international capitalist-Jewish conspiracy, as an act of murder," everything but literature, a work of fiction. Rushdie is especially mystified by the claims that when he was writing *The Satanic Verses* he *knew exactly what he was doing.* "*He did it on purpose* is one of the strangest accusations ever levelled at a writer. Of course I did on purpose. The question is, and it is what I have tried to answer [in this essay]: what is the 'it' that I did?"[3] A critical reader is faced with the same question; furthermore, the novel itself seems to question 'I' as well as 'it': it tests the limits of 'authorship' – the idea of an unified, fully conscious and purposeful author.

Both in the analysis of the novel, and in making any comments on the uproar following its publication, the complex role of de-contextualisation should be given careful attention. Writing is dangerous, as Jacques Derrida has noted.[4] Derrida emphasises the radical *iterability* of any written communication; it must "remain legible despite the absolute disappearance of every determined addressee in general for it to function as writing, that is, for it to be legible." In a sharp contrast to the idea of writing as a means to convey the intended meaning, writing is (sometimes, as in Rushdie's case, very em-

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[1] Kundera 1978/1996, 85-86.

[2] I have used the paperback edition now widely available: Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*. Dover (DE): The Consortium, 1992.

[3] Rushdie 1991, 393, 407, 410.

[4] According to Derrida, writing is dangerous, anguishing: "It does not know where it is going. […] If writing is *inaugural* it is not so because it creates, but because of a certain absolute freedom of speech, because of the freedom to bring forth the already-there as a sign of the freedom to augur." (Derrida 1968/1978, 11, 12.)

phatically) "repetition to alterity."[5] A written sign "carries with it a force of breaking with its context," and is always drifting away from its author's intentions and open to new meanings.[6] It is Rushdie's purpose in his essay to restore the novel with its "relevant context"; he tries to explain what sort of notion about 'literature' governed the production of *The Satanic Verses*, and to "insist on the fictionality of fiction."[7] Because of his personal predicament, this "restoration" is – albeit elucidating and well justified – somewhat overdetermined and one-sided. The demonic aspects of this novel's imagery and textuality make it difficult to construct *The Satanic Verses* as a "benevolent" and "positive" work – or *only* that. Rushdie makes a reasonable and solid plea for positive interpretation. It is, however, possible to appreciate the conflicting and disruptive aspects of the novel (from the safe distance of a critical reader, of course). Those features play an important part in the striking effect that *The Satanic Verses* has on the reader, and may largely explain how this novel has been such fertile ground for different "misreadings." My reading of the demonical aspects of *The Satanic Verses* will at first outline its general strategy of hybridisation. My hypothesis is that the demonic elements are used in the novel to dramatise conflicting and problematical aspects in the production of identity. The identity in question can further be analysed to have several different aspects or dimensions in Rushdie's text, which all contribute to my reading of it as a demonic text, a demonic form of polyphonic textuality.

The most visible and far-reaching reaction to Rushdie's novel was the *fatwa* (religious/legal judgement) dictated by Ayatollah Khomeini:

> In the name of Him, the Highest. There is only one God, to whom we shall all return. I inform all zealous Muslims of the world that the author of the book entitled *The Satanic Verses* – which has been compiled, printed, and published in opposition to Islam, the Prophet, and the Qur'an – and all those involved in its publication who were aware of its content, are sentenced to death.
>
> I call on all zealous Muslims to execute them quickly, wherever they may be found, so that no one else will dare to insult the Muslim sanctities. God willing, whoever is killed on this path is a martyr.
>
> In addition, anyone who has access to the author of this book, but does not possess the power to execute him, should report him to the people so that he may be punished for his actions.
>
> May peace and the mercy of God and His blessings be with you.
> Ruhollah al-Musavi al-Khomeini, 25 Bahman 1367 [February 14, 1989].[8]

The passionate protests against the novel began among the Muslims in India even before the novel was officially published. Twenty-two people lost

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[5] Derrida 1971/1982, 315.
[6] Ibid., 317.
[7] Rushdie 1991, 393, 402.
[8] Pipes 1990, 27 [orig. *Kayhan Havai*, February 22, 1989]. – The fatwa was officially renounced by the Iranian government almost a decade later, in September 24, 1998.

their lives: rioters were shot in Bombay, the novel's translators, or just Muslims considered too moderate in their opinions, were assassinated. The incident had major consequences on the commercial and diplomatic relations between Iran and several Western countries. Perhaps more importantly, the cultural relationship between Islam and the secular West was aggravated. Extreme fundamentalism became more confirmed than ever as the dominant Western perception of Islam.

From the Western perspective, the burning of Rushdie's books and the effort to silence him with violence were offences towards fundamental human rights.[9] From the viewpoint of many Muslims, *The Satanic Verses* was a direct assault on Islam, abuse of the Koran, the Prophet, and everything they considered holy. Rushdie's novel was clearly able to hit a very sensitive spot in cultural relationships. The different ways to articulate 'right' and 'wrong,' or differences in how 'human rights,' or the right way of living should be understood, were sharply thematised. This is hardly a coincidence, as *The Satanic Verses* is openly addressing and discussing these questions in its pages. As Salman Rushdie himself characterises it,

> If *The Satanic Verses* is anything, it is the migrant's-eye view of the world. It is written from the very experience of uprooting, disjuncture and metamorphosis (slow or rapid, painful or pleasurable) that is the migrant condition, and from which, I believe, can be derived a metaphor for all humanity. […]
>
> Those who oppose the novel most vociferously today are of the opinion that intermingling with a different culture will inevitably weaken and ruin their own. I am of the opposite opinion. *The Satanic Verses* celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure.[10]

The most central structuring principle, and an essential aspect of this novel's demonic thematics, is *hybridity*. The mixture of different cultures, the Indian, the British, the Arabic, is manifest in its cast of characters and milieu. The opposition and mingling of the religious with the secular is another important area where hybridisation takes place. This opposition and the systematic breaking of the limit between the sacred and the secular is also the most notable transgressive feature of the text, and the borderline where the Western and Muslim sensibilities concerning the status of writing collided. The title of the novel also points towards the ambiguous role that religiosity plays in Rushdie's text.

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[9] The article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; see e.g. *The Rushdie Letters: Freedom to Speak, Freedom to Write*. Ed. Steve MacDonald & Article 19. (MacDonald 1993.)

[10] Rushdie, "In Good Faith"; Rushdie 1991, 394.

"The Satanic Verses" refers to an episode in the history of Koran, which, before Rushdie's novel, was almost forgotten.[11] A wide range of old Muslim sources recount that early in his career (about 614 C.E., a year or so after he began his public preaching), Mohammed confronted resistance towards his monotheistic message especially among the Meccan aristocracy. The Ka'ba was a polytheistic religious centre and the town's prosperity relied heavily on pilgrims. According to At-Tabari (d. 923), an early historian and commentator on the Koran, Mohammed was asked to acknowledge the three most important goddesses of Mecca; in return, the nobles would endorse Mohammed's teaching.[12] In the Koran, this question is addressed in Surat an-Najm, verses 19-21:

> Have you thought upon Lat and Uzza,
> And Manat, the third, the other?

In At-Tabari's account, Mohammed "hoped in his soul for something from God to bring him and his tribe together." Accordingly, he recited the following words of approval:

> These are the exalted birds,
> And their intercession is desired indeed.

But afterwards the angel Gabriel came to Mohammed and revealed that these words were not from God, but from the devil. (At-Tabari tells that "Satan threw on his tongue" those verses, *alqa ash-shaytan 'ala lisanihi*.) Promptly, "God cancelled what Satan had thrown." The words of approval were deleted, and the canonical Koran text carries a completely opposite message:

> Have you thought upon Lat and Uzza,
> And Manat, the third, the other?
> Shall He have daughters and you sons?
> That would be a fine division!
> These are but [three] names you have dreamed of, you and your fathers.
> Allah vests no authority in them.
> They only follow conjecture and wish-fulfillment,
> Even though guidance had come to them already from their Lord.[13]

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[11] In the Islamic tradition this is known as the *Gharaniq* incident (from the key expression, *birds*, in the controversial verses). Daniel Pipes (1990, 115) notes that the expression "the Satanic Verses" is unknown in Arabic; it is taken from the Western (orientalist) sources, not from the Islamic tradition, and therefore lays Rushdie open for charges of orientalism.

[12] Other sources than Tabari include the biographer Ibn Sa'd (d. 845), the collector of hadith (the Muslim tradition) al-Bukhari (d. 870), and the geographer Yaqut (d. 1229). See Pipes 1990, 56-59. The translations from the Koran here follow the versions used in *The Satanic Verses*, and in Pipes's account.

[13] Koran, Surat an-Najm, verses 19-23.

This tale casts serious doubts on the divinity of the Koran; if the holy text was once touched up in the context of political interests, then perhaps other "revelations" had all-too-human motivations, too? It could be claimed that the messages came to Mohammed in suitable times, and that their content conveniently affirmed the Prophet's own standpoint. Some orientalists and sceptics had used the incident to discredit the divine authority of Koran and thereby to shake the very foundations of Islam. The orthodox Muslim response (formulated by such thinkers as Muhammad 'Abduh and Muhammad Husayn Haykal) was to seize the differences in the sources, and to announce the whole episode as apocryphal and a lie.[14] Nevertheless, there is still real ground for discussion; the canonical verses themselves address the question of human innovation and the sacred. 'Lat,' 'Uzza' and 'Manat' are claimed to be "but names you have dreamed of, you and your fathers." In other words, even long-held values and traditional deities can be declared as false. The concept of "blasphemy" points towards the fundamental incompatibility of faiths: it is the duty of those of the "true" faith to assert their truth and to declare void the truths of others. The Koran installs itself as the absolute truth by the power of its own word (the word of 'Allah'); the status of writing is therefore of great theological importance.

Daniel Pipes, the director of Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia and an author of many studies of Islam, claims that even the title of Rushdie's novel was read as blasphemous by the Muslims.

> Rushdie's title in Arabic is known as *Al-Ayat ash-Shaytaniya*; in Persian, as *Ayat-e Shetani*; in Turkish, *Şeytan Ayatleri*. *Shaytan* is a cognate for "satan" and poses no problems. But, unlike "verses," which refers generically to any poetry of scripture, *ayat* refers specifically to "verses of the Qur'an." Back-translated literally into English, these titles mean "The Qur'an's Satanic Verses." With just a touch of extrapolation, this can be understood to mean that "The Qur'anic Verses Were Written By Satan." Simplifying, this in turn becomes "The Qur'an Was Written By Satan," or just "The Satanic Qur'an."[15]

The Qur'an/Koran cannot be translated; the Word of Allah was recited in Arabic.[16] Perhaps the same is true for Rushdie's novel, as well; here, the simple act of translation and transfer of the title into another language and culture metamorphosed an ironic and dense metafictional text, or a novel of "magical realism," into something that might be translated as "the Black Bible," in the Western idiom. The shift from the context of many voices and value systems to one where one text dominates and guides reading very powerfully, effects a radical transformation of Rushdie's text. "Babel is also

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[14] Pipes 1990, 61-62.

[15] Ibid., 116-17.

[16] The Arabic name of Koran – *Qur'an* – means recitation, or text to be read aloud. It is derived from the verb *qara'a* ('to read,' 'to recite') but it probably also has a connection with the Syrian word *qeryana* ('reading,' especially of religious lessons). (Räisänen 1986, 13, 19.)

this *possible impossible step* [*ce pas impossible*], beyond hope of transaction, tied to the multiplicity of languages within the uniqueness of the poetic inscription" has Derrida been (impossibly) translated.[17] The sacred texts are not alone in the dilemma of having something irreducibly untranslatable in them; the presence of the original context can never be transferred with the text, thereby the Babel of interpretations is a fact.[18] A religious community is united by shared values and beliefs. The coexistence of competing and conflicting views and voices has traditionally illustrated hell – as opposed to the one voice and harmony of heaven.[19] *The Satanic Verses* uses demonic imagery in ambiguously self-ironic ways to dramatise how profoundly Western individualism becomes positioned as "satanic" when it is opposed to fundamentalist religious ideals.

AGAINST THE ORTHODOXY

The criticism of *The Satanic Verses* has often centred on the discussion whether the novel is blasphemous, or not. One could make a case that it both *is* blasphemous, and *not*, at the same time. A written text – in this case, a novel – is not just the material object, but (in a much more profound sense) all the immaterial conditions that shape its reception. In a classic blasphemy trial at Morristown in 1887, Robert G. Ingersoll presented the issue as follows: "[W]hat is blasphemy? Of course nobody knows what it is, unless he takes into consideration where he is. What is blasphemy in one country would be a religious exhortation in another. It is owing to where you are and who is in authority." David Lawton, who has adopted this statement as an epigram in his study *Blasphemy* (1993) analyses blasphemy as a particular linguistic act, one which makes visible the implicit limits in the social systems of meaning. Blasphemy is, according to Lawton, "a place where one sees whole societies theorising language."[20] It is, for example, hard to deny the (society's) unconscious revolt against Christianity in the intense fascination with the fantasy of the "Witches' Sabbath" in the late Medieval period. There is an unacknowledged reciprocity between the faithful and the blasphemer according to Lawton; it seems to be true that the fantasies of communion with the Devil, as described by Norman Cohn in his *Europe's Inner Demons*, could only be conceived from within an intimate knowledge of Christianity. "In every respect they [the witches and their blasphemous activities] represent a collective inversion of Christianity – and

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[17] Derrida 1992, 408 (orig. *Schibboleth: Pour Paul Celan*, 1986).

[18] See Derrida 1985 ("Des Tours de Babel"); see also Gen. 11:1-9.

[19] The traditional symbolism saw the division between peace and prosperity (heaven) and turmoil, despair and alienation from the social unity (hell); in a pluralistic and culturally complex modernity the status of heterogeneity has gone through re-evaluation. See: Bernstein 1993 (on the development of ideas concerning hell); Bakhtin 1929/1973 (on the concept of polyphony, especially pp. 21-26 on Dante).

[20] Lawton 1993, 17.

an inversion of a kind that could only be achieved by former Christians."[21] In its self-consciousness, *The Satanic Verses* can be also seen as a sustained meditation on the conditions of blasphemy, how sanctity is constructed and what is the role of mockery as its counter-discourse.

The thematic foregrounding of borderlines is pervasive in Rushdie's novel, making it an emphatic dramatisation of possibilities for discursive conflicts. It should be pointed out that *The Satanic Verses* is not "Satanic" in the traditional, one-dimensional sense of advocating some "anti-truth," or developing a simple reversal of religious (Islamic) identity. Instead, it explores the difficulties of constructing any stable identities in a context that could be best described as post-modern. This can be illustrated by analysing the diverse ways in which the demonic elements are applied at the novel's texture. The most important single feature in this area, and one that affects everything else, is the systematic juxtaposition and blending of the religious and the profane, and the self-conscious commentary about this process.

> Question: What is the opposite of faith?
> Not disbelief. Too final, certain, closed. Itself a kind of belief.
> Doubt.
> [...] [A]ngels, they don't have much in the way of a will. To will is to disagree; not to submit; to dissent.
> I know; devil talk. Shaitan interrupting Gibreel.
> Me?[22]

This quotation comes from an important intersection in the novel; the chapter titled "Mahound" introduces the controversial sections, and this meditation on the devil and the will is prominently situated in the beginning of it. Rushdie's text in this point does not address the total opposite of religious faith, it is not indifferent or unsympathetic towards the religious tradition. Instead, it articulates a middle ground between secularism and religiosity by exploring the religious elements with an involved but critical attitude. Thereby, the question of the narrator ("Shaitan [...] Me?") becomes a real point of inquiry. Not the angelic, nor the satanic, but the demonic tradition with its emphasis on the plurality and polyphony of subjectivity is able to illustrate the complexities of this position. The fundamentalist construction of religious identity, which cannot tolerate any doubt, critique or even individual will, renders the essential heterogeneity of the human condition as "devil talk." *The Satanic Verses* asks whether, under this sort of discursive condition, the self (as the speaking subject) should be identified with "Shaitan."[23]

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[21] Cohn 1975/1993, 147.

[22] SV, 92-93.

[23] "*Shaytan* is a pagan Arabic term possibly derived from the roots 'to be far from' or 'to born with anger.' Under Jewish and Christian influence, Muhammad defined the term in relation to its Hebrew cognate *satan*, 'opponent' or 'obstacle.' The Qur'an also describes him as accursed, rejected, and punished by stoning. He is a rebel against God. The

The prominence of the demonic elements in the novel may appear perverse from an orthodox religious perspective. The novel, however, presents its own motivations. Religion is a communal matter in *The Satanic Verses*, it is assigned the intermediary role between specific personal concerns and the public and shared material of a culture. Therefore it is submitted to an ideological inquiry; this is what the use of 'dissent' signals above. It is a concept with a dual history in the political parlance as well as in the field of religion. Whereas political 'dissidence' is an important concern of liberal Western activism, the religious dissenter refuses to conform to the doctrines of orthodoxy or the established Church.[24] Traditionally, the dissidents have been perceived as serious threats by both the political and religious orthodoxy, and the measures towards heretics and political trouble-makers have been forceful. Some prominent elements in *The Satanic Verses* ally themselves with such rebels and subjugated groups, and present the choice of demonic elements as a political act. For example, the Prophet makes an appearance in Rushdie's novel as "Mahound;" this is the Medieval Christian contortion of "Mohammed." It signifies otherness to the point of having been used as a synonym for the devil.[25]

> His name: a dream-name, changed by the vision. Pronounced correctly, it means he-for-whom-thanks-should-be-given, but he won't answer to that here; not, though he's well aware of what they call him, to his nickname in Jahilia down below – *he-who-goes-up-and-down-old-Coney*. Here he is neither Mahomet not MoeHammered; has adopted, instead, the demon-tag the farengis hung around his neck. To turn insults into strengths, whigs, tories, Blacks all chose to wear with pride the names they were given in scorn; likewise, our mountain-climbing, prophet-motivated solitary is to be the medieval baby-frightener, the Devil's synonym: Mahound.[26]

The change of name signals the change of discursive rules: it is the narrator's way of saying 'This should be read differently, not according to the practise shaped by the holy text. This is a dream, fiction.' Those elements that mark the difference – Mohammed transformed into 'Mahound,' Islam translated into 'Submission' (with this word's negative connotations in the

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name Shaytan appears much more frequently in the Qur'an than does Iblis [the other name for the devil], usually in connection with the tempting and seduction of humans; the term *shayatin* in the plural also appears as the equivalent of Christian demons, evil spirits who are followers of the evil leader." (Russell 1984, 54.)

[24] 'Dissent' comes from the Latin *dissentire*, to differ. Cf. *dissidere*, to sit apart, to disagree. (*New Webster's Dictionary*.)

[25] *The Oxford English Dictionary* gives five, now antiquated uses for 'Mahound' (most examples date from the fifteenth century): 1) The 'false prophet' Muhammed; in the Middle Ages often vaguely imagined to be worshipped as a god; 2) A false god; an idol; 3) A monster; a hideous creature; 4) Used as a name for the devil; 5) Muslim, heathen. (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1989, q.v. 'Mahound.')

[26] SV, 93. – "Coney" is associated for an Indian reader with "cunt," bringing an additional blasphemous potential in play. (I am grateful to Professor Alphonso Karkala for this remark.)

"free West"), Mecca reincarnated as 'Jahilia' (ignorance), etc. – are not neutral modifications. They all have distinctly pejorative traits. David Lawton follows Jonathan Dollimore as he writes that "organised religion encounters in a blaspheming rival 'a proximity rooted in their differences'."[27] Rushdie's text displays openly its proximity to Islam, using it to stir discussion about the different interpretations of "community." The justification for stigmatised terms is overtly political; furthermore, "whigs, tories, Blacks" are part of the Western (British and American) political past and the polycultural present. They suggest a history of political debate and dialogue, as well as of one governed by colonialism; the narrator also alludes to the struggle of minorities in the postcolonial situation. Name-calling has a different status in this context; the horizon of immutable truths and sanctity is interlaced in this brief section with the perspective of conflicting human interests, which makes all claims for one, holy and privileged view appear as dubious. There is subtle irony in the words the young immigrant girl, Mishal, speaks to Saladin Chamcha, who has metamorphosed into the shape of Satan: "I mean, people can really identify with you. It's an image white society has rejected for so long that we can really take it, you know, occupy it, inhabit it, reclaim it and make it our own."[28]

The opposition and mixing of the religious and the political points towards two ways of perceiving language and writing: static and dynamic. Whereas Koran denies all authority from "names you have dreamed of, you and your fathers," the situation and characters as presented in *The Satanic Verses* cannot adopt any truths as preordained, or God-given. Other people's beliefs, the sphere of human invention, and therefore, of change – all these are combined with the question of language. As we read from the stream-of-consciousness of Jumpy Joshi, a character with poetic aspirations: "*The real language problem: how to bend it shape it, how to let it be our freedom, how to repossess its poisoned wells, how to master the river of words of time of blood* [...]."[29] The main characters of *The Satanic Verses* are living among many religions, between conflicting cultures and values. This heterogeneity is heightened by the fact that most of them are immigrants, people of Indian origin in Britain. Any meanings cannot be taken as given, because the shared language, English, is not "their" language, originally. Every word of it is alien because of its Western heritage; it is steeped in the history of colonialism. Hami K. Bhabha has written aptly: "Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* attempts to redefine the boundaries of the western nation, so that 'foreignness of languages' becomes the inescapable cultural condition for the enunciation of the mother-tongue."[30] This can be compared with Rushdie's own formulation (as quoted above) that it is "the migrant condition" from which "could be derived a metaphor for all humanity." Basically, *The Satanic Verses*

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[27] Lawton 1993, 144-45; Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence* (1991, 18).
[28] SV, 287.
[29] SV, 281. Italics in the original.
[30] Bhabha 1994, 166 (also 1990, 317; and quoted in Lawton 1993, 186).

defines (post)modern subjectivity as something that arises from heightened awareness of language, and from recognition of "self" as being something defined and redefined by language.

We can conclude from this emphasis on the British context and the immigrant experience, that the Koran itself is not among the real "targets" of Rushdie's subversive text, but rather the fundamentalist interpretation of it, as perceived from the "migrant condition." The change of Islamic names, characters and narratives are nowhere as radical as are the transformations situated in the Great Britain.

> The manticore ground its three rows of teeth in evident frustration. 'There's a woman over that way,' it said, 'who is now mostly water-buffalo. There are businessmen from Nigeria who have grown sturdy tails. There is a group of holidaymakers from Senegal who were doing no more than changing planes when they were turned into slippery snakes. I myself am in the rag trade; for some years now I have been a highly paid male model, based in Bombay, wearing a wide range of suitings and shirtings also. But who will employ me now?' he burst into sudden and unexpected tears. [...]
>
> 'But how they do it?' Chamcha wanted to know.
>
> 'They describe us,' the other whispered solemnly. 'That's all. They have the power of description, and we do succumb to the pictures they construct.'[31]

Saladin Chamcha was born Salahuddin Chamchawala, and after changing his name to adopt a career in the West, he has undergone a complete physical transformation, as well. It should be pointed out, that despite the cruel and distressing situation, this section carries its own, absurd humour. Chamcha is described as having hairy goat-legs, a tail and an over-sized phallus as the Pagan fertility god, Pan, and he is called "Beelzebub" or "devil" even by his friends. The main emphasis, however, is not laid on the religious tradition in this section, or on how religious ideas can alter one's identity. Western philosophical ideas, and the contemporary discussion on how the conceptual representations of reality take part in creating the reality they try to convey, are the main source of humour here. Especially a reference to the role of Nietzsche and his theory of truth is pertinent here, as the lives of Rushdie's left-wing intellectuals are immersed in radical discourses, many of which owe something to Nietzsche. Compare Rushdie to the following quotations:

> What, indeed, does man know of himself! Can he even once perceive himself completely, laid out as if in an illuminated glass case? Does not nature keep the most from him, even his body, to spellbind and confine him in a proud, defective consciousness [...].

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[31] SV, 168.

> What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and an-
> thropomorphisms – in short, a sum of human relations […]. [T]ruths are
> illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; meta-
> phors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have
> lost their pictures […].[32]

The pathos and drama of such radicalism are both illustrated to the reader and distanced from him by the simultaneous effects of irony and fantastic-grotesque spectacle. *The Satanic Verses* discusses also contemporary literary theory in such sections as in the above metamorphic scene from the "medical facility at the Detention Centre." Rushdie's novel is overtly self-aware of itself as a literary creation, as an illusory representation or fabrication of reality in a linguistic medium. Edward Said's influential study, *Orientalism*, was published in 1978, and Rushdie's novel can be interpreted as making its own contributions to the discussion of how Western (dominant) culture constructs alien images of "others" in its discourses. The traditional distinction between fiction as an "object" for the theorising "subject" is hereby subverted; *The Satanic Verses* takes theory as its subject matter, and gives it a fantastic representation. This has double consequences: firstly, cultural theories are given great importance and weight as they become capable of building reality as experienced by the novel's characters; and, secondly, these same theories receive ironic shades of doubt, as they become mixed with fantasy, and thereby fictionalised. As we can see, the principles of heterogeneity and crossing of discursive borderlines has "blasphemous" (or just problematic) results in other fields besides those of religion.

ALIEN SELVES

Demonic elements are containers and vehicles for some very troublesome phenomena: the disintegration of identity, or psychic unity, the disintegration of social groups, or breakdown of such divisions as truth/lie, good/evil, or man/animal. All these are rejected into the field of the demonic for obvious reasons. Life would become very complex if such basic categories were questioned. However, this exclusion is not self-evident; nor has it ever been absolute. In all times people have had different ways to cope with this area. Telling stories about transgressive phenomena is one important way. Religious narratives have dealt with this phenomena by assigning demonic figures the role of obstacles and adversaries to be conquered. My previous analyses have pointed out how Western horror culture has modified its perception of demonic elements and how their role has been re-evaluated and acknowledged as potential, or even essential aspects of subjectivity. Rushdie's text is aware of this development, and makes this manifest by numer-

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[32] Nietzsche 1980, 42-47. – This quotation is given prominent place in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978/1987, 203), in the context of how "truths" about others are produced under the conditions of one's time and culture, some "system of truths," or representations.

ous references in the same direction. For example, the theme of identifying with monster figures is prominent in Chamcha's hit success, *The Aliens Show*. This popular TV show is characterised as an entertaining crossbreeding between "The Munsters," "Star Wars" and "Sesame Street." With its "Ridley" character, a terrifying alien "who had an obsession with the actress Sigorney Weaver," and the mentioning of such names as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rutger Hauer and the film *Blade Runner*, the darkness and complexities of the contemporary science fiction are highlighted in the novel's encyclopaedic field of references. 'Alienation' is one of the concepts that *The Satanic Verses* thematises; "The Aliens Show" even has "the Alien Nation," "a team of Venusian hip-hoppers and subway spray painters and soul-brothers."[33]

The Satanic Verses is clearly not interested in any stable and harmonious identity that could act as a buttress for a fixed ideology, or, for example, centralised government. The typical character in this novel is an alien, in several senses of the word: he is a foreigner, a person displaced into another culture; he is a stranger for himself as for the significant others; in short, *alien* is a concept that emphasises how people inhabit different worlds, even simultaneously. As the dream sequences (those which relate to the Islamic tradition) have been separated from the rest of the novel, the context built by the text itself has been lost. *The Satanic Verses* consists of nine chapters, five of which are located in contemporary London; the main plot forms the bulk of the novel, and the two by-plots (the stories of Mahound and Ayesha, the butterfly girl) are framed by it. In other words, the perspective into these religious episodes in non-Western cultures is built from a position of marginality in the West. The concept of alienation can consequently be applied to *The Satanic Verses* in many ways. Everyone in the novel is "other": the characters are seeking or questioning their identities themselves, or are otherwise estranged by narration. This could be dubbed "double marginality"; the novel simultaneously separates itself from the Western context by adopting the marginal perspective of the immigrant groups, and distances itself from other traditions by mixing religious elements with modern scepticism. The frame of reference, nevertheless, is dominantly a contemporary Western – urban and secular – reality.

The textual, social and cultural aspects of the hybridity in *The Satanic Verses* intersect in the construction of identity: the novel explicitly discusses the idea of a single, unified identity, and also challenges it in its own textual practice. This opposition of unity versus plurality is linked with the angelic/demonic division, and thereby to the novel's key thematics. The epigram from *The History of the Devil* by Daniel Defoe, read in the context that the title of the whole work is concerned with the "Satanic" pole, accentuates some of the ideological context for the novel's demonic elements.

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[33] SV, 62 (quotation), 268.

> Satan, being thus confined to a vagabond, wandering, unsettled condition, is without any certain abode; for though he has, in consequence of his angelic nature, a kind of empire in the liquid waste or air, yet this is certainly part of his punishment, that he is … without any fixed place, or space, allowed him to rest the sole of his foot upon.[34]

The perspective and emphasis – one could say, the novel's politics – are on the side of the displaced, those without the privilege of a "proper" place. Being exceedingly aware of how "others" are subject to demonising by the dominant culture, *The Satanic Verses* incorporates a partial reversal of the role of demonic elements into its structure. The novel itself blazons its "Satanism" in its title; the connection between fiction and the demonic is also explored in its pages. Saladin Chamcha's transformation into a devil character brings the complexities and ambiguities of the demonic into focus by producing their effects in the life of a main character – with whom the reader is most probably going to identify. This reversal of the traditionally rejected "demonism" is not, however, unconditional celebration. The ambivalent role of the demonic elements in *The Satanic Verses* needs a more careful analysis, and it can best be achieved by reading this ambivalence on three different levels: firstly, that of characters, secondly, in the role of the narrator, and, thirdly, in the ambivalent role of "fiction" in the novel.

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[34] Defoe, quoted as an epigram in *The Satanic Verses*.

ANTITHETICAL CHARACTERS

This fragmented and complex novel is given unity by the repeated names which appear and reappear in different contexts in the separate story lines. The material heterogeneity of *The Satanic Verses* is obvious; Hans Seminck has argued that the repetition of names functions to underline the thematic connections between different narratives.[35] It is, however, equally possible to read the novel's three narratives as thematically divergent, or even in opposition to each other. For example, the story of the village's pilgrimage in India can easily be read as the thematic opposite of the Jahilia sequences: the patriarchal despotism of Mahound is opposed to the feminine mystical experience shared by the villagers as they walk into the sea. The reiteration of names has a perhaps quite uncomplicated basis; Rushdie was originally working on different projects, and as the contemporary Western novel became entangled in the narratives about East and religion, he made several names echo each other in these differing constituent parts. This invites the reader to search for – and to produce – thematic analogies between the different narratives during the reading process.[36]

"Rustam killing the White Demon"
(the emblem from The Satanic Verses*).*

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[35] Seminck 1993, 39-40.

The central narrative in the novel can be summarised by the processes and events that become personified in the lives of the main characters. This is the authorial synopsis:

> *The Satanic Verses* is the story of two painfully divided selves. In the case of one, Saladin Chamcha, the division is secular and societal: he is torn, to put it plainly, between Bombay and London, between East and West. For the other, Gibreel Farishta, the division is spiritual, a rift in the soul. He has lost his faith and is strung out between his immense need to believe and his new inability to do so. The novel is 'about' their quest for whole-ness.[37]

Two main characters, Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, become involved in a highly stylised adventure, which mixes the farcical with the tragic and is continuously swaying at the borderline between the allegorical and the fortuitous. The novel opens with a bang: these men are falling from the skies, the only two surviving victims of the explosion of Flight AI-420, the jumbo jet "Bostan." The first impressions are important; Gibreel is described as singing popular Indian songs, swimming and embracing the air in his purple bush-shirt. As an opposite and counterpart figure in terms of colonialist discourse, Saladin is "prim, rigid," and portrayed in "a grey suit with all the jacket buttons done up, arms by his sides, taking for granted the improbability of the bowler hat on his head [...]."[38] Not only are their movements and ways of behaving different from each other, they are described as falling in opposite positions, Chamcha upside-down, and as forming together a figure of a wheel – "performing their geminate cartwheels all the way down and along the hole that went to Wonderland [...]."[39]

The two men are adopted as yin and yang symbols, as competing and complementing elements in a narrative experiment; most intentions of traditional realism are abandoned, and the reader is directed towards adopting allegorical or metaphorical reading strategies. The dramatic opening especially leads us towards different mythological frames of reference. Gibreel's opening lines are: "To be born again [...] first you have to die." The narrator notices how Chamcha was falling "head first, in the recommended position for babies entering the birth canal": birth, death and rebirth are among the first mythical motifs employed in the text.[40] Important are also the different connotations of "the fall." The myth of the falling angels is a significant reference, as are the Christian religious ideas concerning original sin. "Bostan" is one of two Islamic paradises, and the motif of fall thereby is given the connotation of a fall from a state of perfection into something less perfect. As we learn more about these two men it becomes clear that they have both

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[36] See Pipes 1990, 54-55.
[37] "In Good Faith"; Rushdie 1992, 397.
[38] SV, 3-6.
[39] SV, 6.
[40] SV, 3, 4.

lost their faith; the literal fall from the aeroplane echoes the "fall" in a religious sense.

The fall is also connected with the identities of these two characters: all its oddities and fantastic qualities are situated in the context of their arrival in England, a dramatic transition from one culture into another. The changeover initiates a mutation; Chamcha and Gibreel begin their symbolic evolution into different alternatives as "migrants." Both of them are Indian-born, but the "angelicdevilish" fall brings out their differences – they are cast into dual roles, as traditional symbols in a religious-political drama as well as realistically drawn personalities. Gibreel Farishta is singing of "inviolably subcontinental [Indian] hearts," whereas Saladin Chamcha is answering him with a jingoistic British hymn.[41] The opening transition into the British context serves in *The Satanic Verses* as a fracture which brings out the hidden insecurities in emigration in particular, and in the current fast transmutation of culture in general. Can one trust one's old self any more, believe in the traditional signs of good and evil, when contacts with other traditions and other ways of thinking proliferate?

Saladin and Gibreel offer different answers to this question, and this difference grows into an important aspect of the polyphonic strategy of *The Satanic Verses*: the heterogeneous and conflicting elements are set against each other, in a dialogue.[42] The "Satanic" movement, or change, as opposed to "divine" stasis and harmony are illustrated in the life of the main characters by their differing ways of constructing identity. Saladin has endorsed change, tried to reject his Indian past and adopt a new, Western identity. He starts to metamorphose into the figure of the devil. Gibreel, on the contrary, has stayed his whole life in India; he has also made a successful career as an actor playing the roles of India's many gods in popular theological movies. Gibreel receives the halo of an angel in this process of transmutation. Both men are actors, both have changed their names and their lives consist of different roles; in a sense, they are metaphors for (post)modern subjectivity, lives marked by constant choices and self-conscious decisions between numerous courses. As is often the case, these choices may be problematic and painful because there is no longer any certain, fixed horizon of values to lean on. Early on, the novel hints that good and evil are (in a Nietzschean idiom) just "metaphors which are worn out;" Gibreel has a "face inextricably mixed up with holiness, perfection, grace: God stuff."[43] He is made a symbol of goodness because of his appearance. Analogously, Chamcha cannot be accepted for leading roles in England because of his foreign looks – he is demonised because his skin is dark.

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[41] SV, 6.
[42] See Bakhtin 1929/1973, 34: "*The polyphonic novel as a whole is thoroughly dialogical*. Dialogical relationships obtain between all the elements of its structure, i.e. the elements are contrapuntally counterposed." Emphasis in the original.
[43] SV, 17.

The narrator informs the reader that the transmutation which puts the novel in motion is an act of "Creation," and that the reasons for it will be a "revelation."[44] This play with religious language is ironic; the traditional ideas of angels and devils, of such 'good' and 'evil' that would have absolute and immutable criteria, are questioned from the start. The "angel" (Gibreel, the angel Gabriel) and the "devil" (Chamcha, the "shaytan") are cast in their roles just because they happen to be positioned on opposite sides of a culturally sensitive division. Traditional religious society is inclined to reject such apostates as Mr. Saladin Chamcha, the British citizen; the comments of Changez Chamchawala, Saladin's father, are illustrative: "A man untrue to himself becomes a two-legged lie, and such beasts are Shaitan's best work."[45] As the narrator piously follows the same lines, the tone is one of playful irony and didactic (mock)seriousness:

> A man who sets out to make himself up is taking on the Creator's role, according to one way of seeing things; he's unnatural, a blasphemer, an abomination of abominations. From another angle, you could see pathos in him, heroism in his struggle, in his willingness to risk: not all mutants survive. Or, consider him sociopolitically: most migrants learn, and can become disguises. Our false descriptions to counter the falsehoods invented about us, concealing for reasons of security our secret selves.[46]

The narrator is using religious language to address the problematic fictionality inherent in modern identity. It could be argued (as nowadays is almost self-evident) that all identities are constructed and produced in particular situations, under certain conditions; immigration from one culture into another, however, makes this process visible and heightens self-awareness in its conflicts. Saladin is a modern man, he makes his own choices and decisions. In his father's views this is no real life: Saladin has lost his soul, been demonised. The comments of the narrator and such details as Saladin acting as the voices of inanimate objects (such as the ketchup bottles in TV commercials), or the monsters in *The Aliens Show*, support this view.

Chamcha is described as the "Man of a Thousand Voices and a Voice": his construction of identity is extravagant, he is a walking personification of fiction.[47] The opposition between 'fictional' and 'factual' is one of the most important lines of battle in this polyphonic work. Sacred, religious texts make claims for absolute truth, and supposedly a life lived according to their instructions would be considered as more 'truthful,' from the point of view of the believers. As Rushdie's narrator assigns a modern migrant the role of

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[44] SV, 5.

[45] SV, 48.

[46] SV, 49.

[47] SV, 60. The reference is to the "Arabian Nights" collection of tales, *The Thousand and One Nights*, the paradigm of obsessive storytelling (Scheherazade's life literally hangs on her narratives: she has to conceive new tales to keep her husband, Schariar, from killing her).

Creator, he also develops the opposition between secular fiction and sacred scripture which is accentuated in the Jahilia episodes. These sections are framed by Gibreel Farishta's struggle with his faltering religious identity.

Gibreel has in his numerous roles established himself as the personification of the divine. His supernatural experiences, however, begin only after he has lost his former faith due to a mysterious disease: Gibreel feels wrongly punished, and his protests allude to the sorrows of Job and the classic problem of God's cruelty. As an "anti-Job," Gibreel is released from his sufferings only after he has renounced God. As his first act after leaving the hospital, he goes into a hotel and eats pig meat, as the palpable evidence of transgressing the limits of his former identity.[48] There is a way of reading the novel that follows the comparison of religion with illness: when Gibreel is cured, he also recovers from the disease of Faith. As the tormenting religious visions start, they are an indication of Gibreel's failing mental health; as Gibreel accepts the reality of the supernatural, he is also described as losing his touch with a shared reality, and falling into a psychosis. Gibreel Farishta is thereby not just a "good" character as opposed to the "evil" Saladin Chamcha – despite their haloes and horns, respectively. As they are described in the beginning as falling intertwined together from the skies, so they should be read as interrelated and complementary figures in their hybrid identities. Chamcha with his bowler hat and British accent represents a denial and break with his original identity and Indian culture; Farishta differs from him by his tighter bonds with his religious identity. These two characters are offered as starting points for the narrative which studies the effects of transition and hybridity. The events during their migration explore and comment on the break with the "original" (their cultural context, and their original selves as produced by this context). In an important section towards the latter part of the novel the narrator makes a metafictional commentary on this division:

> Well, then. – Are we coming closer to it? Should we even say that these are two fundamentally different *types* of self? Might we not agree that Gibreel, for all his stage-name and performances; and in spite of born-again slogans, new beginnings, metamorphoses; – has wished to remain, to a large degree, *continuous* – that is, joined to and arising from his past; – that he chose neither near-fatal illness nor transmuting fall; that, in point of fact, he fears above all things the altered states in which his dreams leak into, and overwhelm, his waking self, making him that angelic Gibreel he has no desire to be; – so that his is still a self which, for our present purposes, we may describe as 'true' … whereas Saladin Chamcha is a creature of *selected*

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[48] SV, 28-30. Gibreel's disease probably has its model in the illness of the famous Bombay movie star, Amitabh Bachan; there are several common features between Rushdie's fiction and this case (for details, see Timothy Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World*, 1989; cf. Seminck 1993, 24). The episode with pig's meat has an (auto)biographical basis; Rushdie has described how he proved his new-found atheism at the age of fifteen by buying himself a "rather tasteless ham sandwich" ("In God We Trust," 1985, 1990; 1992, 377). Rushdie's biography is discussed in Weatherby 1990.

discontinuities, a *willing* re-invention; his *preferred* revolt against history being what makes him, in our chosen idiom, 'false'? And might we then not go on to say that it is this falsity of self that makes possible in Chamcha a worse and deeper falsity – call this 'evil' – and that this is the truth, the door, that was opened in him by his fall? – While Gibreel, to follow the logic of our established terminology, is to be considered 'good' by virtue of *wishing to remain*, for all his vicissitudes, at bottom an untranslated man.[49]

It is consonant with the thorough irony of *The Satanic Verses* that Gibreel's "goodness" is driving him crazy: his incapacity to change makes him an alien in the postmodern world, whereas Chamcha survives by endorsing his 'alienness' and is also able to enter into a dialogue with his past. "Goodness" is defined as passivity; Gibreel is shown as incapable of differentiating himself from all the historical "voices" that speak through him.[50] The "evil" of *The Satanic Verses* should properly be understood as the demonic in the Goethean sense: it is the amoral dynamism in the universe, something that oversteps all the divisions that our culture establishes in its attempts to separate the selected "good" meanings from the flux of phenomena.[51] "How does newness come into the world?" asks the narrator as Chamcha forces Gibreel to sing and fly during their fall. "Chamcha willed it [the miracle] and Farishta did what was willed."[52] The division between good and evil, the angelic and the demonic, is translated into a division between passive power and active will. The overall narrative attitude towards this "theory" embedded in the novel is, nevertheless, one of ironic play and reversals; for example, the narrator continues his above analysis as follows:

> – But, and again but: this sounds, does it not, dangerously like an intentionalist fallacy? – Such distinctions, resting as they must on an idea of the self as being (ideally) homogeneous, non-hybrid, 'pure', – an utterly fantastic notion! – cannot, must not, suffice. No! Let's rather say an even harder thing: that evil may not be as far beneath our surfaces as we like to say it is. – That, in fact, we fall towards it *naturally*, that is, *not against our natures*.[53]

The narrator here construes self as something always and inherently hybrid: the immutable and pure ideal of 'goodness' thereby becomes something "unnatural" – thus Saladin's father's warnings about renouncing one's natural identity, and of the conscious creation of self as "unnatural" have become reversed. The immediate context of these two accounts of "unnatural" are different; such dislocations and changes of context are characteristic of

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[49] SV, 427.

[50] Cf. William Blake's views on the "passivity" of good and the "active" character of evil; above, page 243. (See also below, page 275.)

[51] *The Satanic Verses* refers to the intertwined nature of 'good' and 'evil' by quoting Goethe's *Faust*; SV, 417.

[52] SV, 8, 10.

[53] SV, 427. Italics in the original.

The Satanic Verses, contributing to the ways in which the text creates a kaleidoscopic impression of good and evil changing places and dancing around each other – as Saladin and Gibreel twirl around each other during their fall.

Homi K. Bhabha points out that Chamcha is situated in a similar division himself:

> Translated, by Sufyan [Chamcha's landlord], for the existential guidance of postcolonial migrants, the problem consists in whether the crossing of cultural frontiers permits freedom from the essence of the self (Lucretius), or whether, like wax, migration only changes the surface of the soul, preserving identity under its protean forms (Ovid).[54]

In his theory of cultural enunciation, Bhabha has emphasised the split, or "Third Space" between the I and You designated in the statement: the production of meaning involves this liminal condition of language – and thus infuses all linguistic meanings with "unconscious" aspects and ambivalencies.[55] Bhabha perceives Rushdie's migrants in terms of transitions and translations, of meanings and of identities. Following Walter Benjamin, he pinpoints the element of resistance in the translation; the heterogeneity of the migrant culture exposes the uncertainties inherent in the construction of cultural identity. According to Bhabha, the real source of "blasphemy" in *The Satanic Verses* is this indeterminacy: like Chamcha, the demonic goatman, its main characters are subjects of cultural difference, living in "the interstices of Lucretius and Ovid, caught in-between a 'nativist', even nationalist, atavism and a postcolonial metropolitan assimilation."[56] The hybridity dramatised in the lives of these characters is also the most problematic aspect of the novel; it does not settle in one culture or position, but, instead, explores their limit in repeated transgressions.

THE TRANSGRESSIVE NARRATOR

The idiomatic voice of the narrator has been strongly present in the above discussion of the ambiguous characters in *The Satanic Verses*. In the beginning of the novel, as the nature of the miraculous fall of Gibreel and Saladin is discussed, the narrator intervenes in the characters' discourse by commenting on it:

> 'God, we were lucky,' he [Chamcha] said. 'How lucky can you get?'
> I know the truth, obviously. I watched the whole thing. As to omnipresence and -potence, I'm making no claims at present, but I can manage this much, I hope. Chamcha willed it and Farishta did what was willed.
> Which was the miracle worker?
> Of what type – angelic, satanic – was Farishta's song?

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[54] Bhabha 1994, 224 ("How Newness Enters the World: Postmodern Space, Postcolonial Times and the Trials of Cultural Translation").
[55] Ibid., 36 ("The Commitment to Theory").
[56] Ibid., 224-26.

> Who am I?
> Let's put it this way: who has the best tunes?[57]

The casual invocation of "God" by Chamcha in his (rhetorical) question is immediately followed by the narrator's comments and quizzing about his identity. In this particular context, alongside "revelation" and "creation," these hints construct the position of divinity for this voice. Simultaneously, however, it intimates a possible Satanic identity; for example, in the Jahilia sections the traditional image of God is defined as patriarchal, and the narrator is distinctly separating his/her position from His. "From the beginning men used God to justify the unjustifiable. He moves in mysterious ways: men say. Small wonder, then, that women have turned to me."[58] This alliance with the opponent of patriarchal God (the devil, traditionally portrayed as being worshipped by female witches) is not consistently followed elsewhere in the novel. Rather, the narrator plays with these two opposing positions, with their discordances, and the final outcome is one of demonic ambivalence.

The questions of narrator and narrative cannot be separated (and we have to return to this question again later, in the context of fiction and its identity); the fragmented narratives in *The Satanic Verses* are linked to the splintered selves of its protagonists and to the ambiguous roles of its narrator. The dominant metaphor for this multiplicity is one of possession; early in the novel, Gibreel Farishta is described as consuming all the essential ingredients for the intertextual Babel which is going to fill the subsequent pages:

> To get his mind off the subject of love and desire, he [young Gibreel] studied, becoming an omnivorous autodidact, devouring the metamorphic myths of Greece and Rome, the avatars of Jupiter, the boy who became a flower, the spider-woman, Circe, everything; and the theosophy of Annie Besant, and unified field theory, and the incident of the Satanic verses in the early career of the Prophet, and the politics of Muhammad's harem after his return to Mecca in triumph; and the surrealism of the newspapers, in which butterflies could fly into young girls' mouths, asking to be consumed, and children were born with no faces, and young boys dreamed in impossible detail of earlier incarnations, for instance in a golden fortress filled with precious stones.[59]

Later, as the metamorphoses, the Satanic verses, the harem and the butterfly girl are all surfacing among the novel's convoluted narratives, the reader is free to interpret the fantastic elements as delusions or dreams produced by Gibreel's possessed mind. Any one interpretation, or reduction to a single explanation, is not sufficient to cover all the novel's diversified materials. The openness of structure, or, in other terms, the compulsion to in-

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[57] SV, 10.
[58] SV, 95.
[59] SV, 24.

corporate new components into the text, characterises Salman Rushdie's literary work in general, and easily suggests demonic metaphors in its polyphony. One review of *The Satanic Verses* sets forth how "Rushdie is possessed by a story-telling demon"; his novels are works of such megalomaniac abundance and openness of narration that they appear to be able to swallow up anything. "In *The Satanic Verses* Rushdie has created a fictional universe whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. It is several of the best novels he has ever written."[60] The possession metaphor is treated by Rushdie's text itself; this excerpt is from the beginning of *Midnight's Children* (1981):

> I must work fast, faster than Scheherazade, if I am to end up meaning – yes, meaning – something. I admit it: above all things, I fear absurdity. […] I have been a swallower of lives; and to know me, just the one of me, you'll have to swallow the lot as well. Consumed multitudes are jostling and shoving inside me; and guided only by memory […] I must commence the business of remaking my life […].[61]

Rushdie's narratives and narrators deliberately confuse the limit of identities; the possession metaphor is offered as a way to articulate the complexity of hybrid and plural (instead of unified and monological) subject positions. In *The Satanic Verses* the narrator is frequently inviting attention to his own role, and adding an important element to the overall atmosphere of uncertainty. The narrator is playing with two opposite ideas of "authorial voice" (once again, the strategy of confusing a traditional dualism is applied as the structuring principle). The narrator's indirect suggestion of his omnipotence and omniscience in the fictional universe alludes to the classic idea of the author as a "maker," as the rational creator in full control of his creation. On the other hand, the narrator emphasises the possessive quality of the separate narratives; especially Gibreel is portrayed as the romantic alternative of a story-teller, one possessed by his materials. Older literary criticism distinguished between models of the "maker" and the "possessed" author, and searched for an ideal in "an equilibrium of tensions," when "the struggle with the daemon has ended in triumph."[62]

The position of the narrator in *The Satanic Verses* unsettles this dualism, and accepts the coexistence of incompatible alternatives. The fictional universe is built on the act of narration; therefore, the narrator's question "Who am I?" is integral for the fictive character's inquiries of *why* they are put through their sufferings. "For what was he [Saladin Chamcha] – he couldn't avoid the notion – being punished? And, come to that, *by whom*? (I

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[60] Irwin 1988, 1067.
[61] Rushdie 1982, 9-10.
[62] Wellek - Warren 1942/1966, 85. (The reference here is to L. Rusu, a Rumanian scholar.) This greatest of creative categories (*type demoniaque équilibré*) should, according to Wellek and Warren, include the names of Goethe, Dante, Shakespeare, Dickens, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky.

held my tongue.)"[63] The narrator implies having either full responsibility or knowledge of the narrated events. Elsewhere, however, the narrator denies having full authorial control over the process:

> And there is a Gibreel who walks down the streets of London, trying to understand the will of God. [...]
> (I'm giving him no instructions. I, too, am interested in his choices – in the result of his wrestling match. Character *vs* destiny: a free-style bout. Two falls, two submissions or a knockout will decide.)[64]

Instead of an interventionist God, this narrating personage is claiming to be a detached observer in an experiment involving the momentous philosophical dilemma about free will ('destiny' and 'character' are two ways of referring to the determinism in man's actions).[65] In a manner consistent with the novel's principle of transgression and heterogeneity, this proclamation of separateness between the narrator and the characters does not hold. Gibreel Farishta is described as seeing God; in a hilarious act of blasphemous self-irony, this apparition carries some not-so-flattering likeness to the author, Salman Rushdie.

> He saw, sitting on the bed, a man of about the same age as himself, of medium height, fairly heavily built, with salt-and-pepper beard cropped close to the line of the jaw. What struck him most was that the apparition was balding, seemed to suffer from dandruff and wore glasses. This was not the Almighty he had expected. 'Who are you?' he asked with interest. [...]
> 'Ooparvala,' the apparition answered. 'The Fellow Upstairs.'
> 'How do I know you're not the other One,' Gibreel asked craftily, 'Neechayvala, the Guy from Underneath?'
> [...] 'We are not obliged to explain Our nature to you,' the dressing-down continued. 'Whether We be multiform, plural, representing the union-by-hybridization of such opposites as *Oopar* and *Neechay*, or whether We be pure, stark, extreme, will not be resolved here.'[66]

The irony of the situation has multiple levels. From a perspective internal to the fiction, this God of *The Satanic Verses* acts in discordance with his own words. "The rules of Creation are pretty clear: you set things up, you make them thus and so, and then you let them roll." And a bit later: "I sat on Alleluia Cone's bed and spoke to the superstar, Gibreel. *Ooparvala or Neechayvala*, he wanted to know, and I didn't enlighten him [...]."[67] The narrator appears as too tempted by the role of the Maker, of the author-God, to resist fooling with his fictional characters' lives; he actually throws Gibreel

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[63] SV, 256.
[64] SV, 457.
[65] About the strong deterministic tradition in religion, folklore and literature, see Carl-Martin Edsman, "Divine and Demonic Necessity in the Oresteia" and the other articles collected in Ringgren 1967.
[66] SV, 318-19. The "divine" names are here given in Hindustani.
[67] SV, 408-9.

into the road of madness by his intervention. If considered as a device at the metafictional level, the inscription of an "author" as a figure into his own fiction has also its ironies, or ambiguities. It confuses the distinctiveness of fiction at its traditional limits: the fields of author, narrator and fiction start to overlap. This structural ambivalence corresponds to the confusing vacillation in the narrator's self-definition – or, in his obvious unwillingness or incapacity to produce one. The narrator offers both his characters and the reader contradictory messages in a sort of demonic double-play: the question of the narrator's identity "will not be resolved here," as he states. This works as an indication of the interstitial quality of the novel, in general. Instead of producing identities, it inquires into their possibilities and preconditions. This is at its most manifest in a chain of questions.

> There is a voice whispering in his [Mahound's] ear: *What kind of idea are you? Man-or-mouse?*
> We know that voice. We've heard it once before.[68]

The immediate reference here is to the discussion about doubt being the opposite of faith, and the sceptical doubts thereby being "devil talk" (the narrator placed the question if he could be Shaytan himself: "Shaitan interrupting Gibreel. [/] Me?") The Prophet's nagging self-doubts make this a modern self – and demonic (or the morally more neutral 'daimonic') in several senses of the concept.

> *What kind of idea am I?* I bend. I sway. I calculate the odds, trim my sails, manipulate, survive.[69]

Here, this question is repeated in the mind of Abu Simbel, the leader of Jahilia. It is further established as a signal of self-scrutiny, of meditation on the moral ambivalence inherent in the constitution of a self.

> – Should God be proud or humble, majestic or simple, yielding or un-? *What kind of idea is he? What kind am I?*[70]

Abu Simbel's offer to gain the souls of Jahilia in exchange for the recognition of the three principal goddesses has caused a fracture in the certainty of the Prophet's mind. *The Satanic Verses* continues here to develop the connection between the human self and its ideas. This novel does not search for any "natural" or "authentic" version of subjectivity; human existence is perceived and understood within the horizon of those ideas that people themselves are able to conceive. Man is always an *idea*: a human creation, or fabrication – essentially a fiction.

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[68] SV, 95.
[69] SV, 103.
[70] SV, 111.

> *Any new idea, Mahound, is asked two questions. The first is asked when it's weak: WHAT KIND OF AN IDEA ARE YOU? Are you the kind that compromises, does deals, accommodates itself to society, aims to find a niche, to survive; or are you the cussed, bloody-minded, ramrod-backed type of damnfool notion that would rather break than sway with the breeze? – The kind that will almost certainly, ninety-nine times out of hundred, be smashed to bits; but, the hundredth time, will change the world.*[71]

This time, the question is presented in Gibreel's mind by Baal, the poet. Gibreel is situated in his confused state between two ages and two places, and the question is targeted to himself, now, as much as to the Prophet, long time ago. Should one follow one's own ideas and ideals, and build an identity on radical differences, or should one perceive identity as something that is produced in community? The moment of hesitation in Prophet's career is compared further to the situation of migrant subjects in the (post)modern world; the society is in a flux, there is a "newness entering the world" – how should a new identity be negotiated under these conditions? What is right, what is wrong? What is the correct perspective to decide the basis for ethics: what is good, what is evil? The hallmark of the human condition is the imperfect knowledge and uncertainty about the full consequences of one's actions. The repeated question grows into an emblem of *The Satanic Verses*, one that emphasises the state of existing between alternatives, or of being divided into conflicting components.

The question of religion plays a key role in the novel's examination of identity and its problems. Partly this prominence is a sign of the key position religion has occupied as the most significant frame of reference for the majority of people outside the current Western hegemony of secular economy and science. Partly, it is also used as a symbol for an individual's search for unity and fulfilment. The stories of Mahound and Imam, the patriarchal religious leaders, are most concerned with the former field; "uncompromising; absolute; pure" are keywords for religious fanaticism. Especially Imam, the fictional rendering of Ayatollah Khomeini, is described as pure and uncompromising to the point of inhumanity. In Imam's view, the whole Western conception of history with its ideas of progress, science, and rights, is the creation of Devil, "a deviation from the Path, knowledge is a delusion, because the sum of knowledge was complete on the day Al-Lah finished his revelation to Mahound."[72]

Ayesha is articulated as the most positive alternative to the religious leadership in the novel; she is an authentic female mystic, and with her young beauty and romantic butterflies, an image of love's divinity (she is capable of mobilising the forces of Eros, that "powerful daimon" in Mirza

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[71] SV, 335. Italics in the original.
[72] SV, 210.

Saeed).[73] She is opposed to the two male leaders, Mahound and Imam, also by being a charismatic leader from the uneducated masses; therefore her political status is different. She leads the villagers into a personal, not institutionalised, religious experience; her relationship to power is less domineering.[74] The division, or the demonic conflict, however, is present here, as well. Ayesha's pilgrimage, the *Padyatra*, is followed from the standpoint of Mirza Saeed, who is a secular man, and acts as a "demon of doubt" in the odyssey. He points out the weaknesses in Ayesha's leadership and questions her miracles. He perceives the inhumanity of Ayesha's endeavour for transcendence, how her absolutism drives her followers to their deaths. Ayesha even accepts the stoning of a baby, because it was illegitimate, and therefore a "Devil's child."[75] She represents the pursuit after an ideal that is ready to sacrifice everything else in order to be absolutely unbroken in faith.

> 'Why should we follow you,' the Sarpanch asked, 'after all the dying, the baby, and all?'
>   'Because when the waters part, you will be saved. You will enter into the Glory of the Most High.'
>   'What waters?' Mirza Saeed yelled. 'How will they divide?'
>   'Follow me,' Ayesha concluded, 'and judge me by their parting.'

> His offer had contained an old question: *What kind of idea are you?* And she, in turn, had offered him an old answer, *I was tempted, but am renewed; am uncompromising; absolute; pure.*[76]

Mirza Saeed's revolt has much desperation behind it: he is bound to the pilgrimage because his wife and Ayesha – the two women he loves – are taking it. For a secular man the acceptance of miracles would mean giving up one's identity. As Mirza Saeed says: "It is the choice, then [...] between the devil and the deep blue sea."[77] The climaxing image of the religious following their leader under the surface of the Arabian sea is a particularly striking image of Mirza Saeed's fears before the "leap of faith." He is longing to lose his self in the Other, but traditional religiosity is not an option for him; *The Satanic Verses* portrays collective and dogmatic religions as dangerous and alien practices. The only variety of faith that is given a positive, identifying treatment, is the faith in love. As Mirza Saeed is finally dying, after losing his reasons for living, he has a vision of Ayesha; he is drowning in the sea because

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[73] SV, 219-20. Her name evokes again the demonic beauty from H. Rider Haggard's *She*; see above, page 176n26. (The "powerful daimon," *daimôn megas*, is Plato's expression, from his *Symposium* [202d].)

[74] In his dreams Gibreel is the medium (as the archangel Gabriel) for all three prophets, and confronts their differences: "With Mahound, there is always a struggle; with the Imam, slavery; but with this girl, there is nothing" (SV, 234). The sources for the revelations are in every case in the prophet's own self, but these selves are articulated differently.

[75] SV, 496-97.

[76] SV, 500.

[77] SV, 484.

he cannot open his heart for her – and she is drowning with him. This finally breaks Mirza Saeed's heart: he opens up, "and they walked to Mecca across the bed of the Arabian Sea."[78] If there are moments without pervasive irony and scepticism in *The Satanic Verses*, this affirmation of love, the need for belief in a mutual bond, is one of the strongest candidates.

Another moment of reconciliation is at the end of Chamcha's story: his father's death. "*He is teaching me how to die*, Salahuddin thought. *He does not avert his eyes, but looks death right in the face*. At no point in his dying did Changez Chamchawala speak the name of God."[79] The narrator has changed 'Saladin' back into 'Salahuddin' which conveys the idea of some – perhaps a little bit more "original" – of his many "alternative selves" returning into Chamcha's life after all his experiences. He does not stick to his bowler hat any more, but faces his starting-points, deals with the relationship with his family and two cultures. Changez Chamchawala demonstrates how one can sustain one's dignity and individuality when living in one's own, non-Western tradition. "I have no illusions; I know I am not going anywhere after this," Changez says. What is in common in the atheistic dying of Changez Chamchawala, and in the final surrender of Mirza Saeed, is that they are characterised by the affirmation of an individual choice, and rejection of official religions or answers. *The Satanic Verses* speaks for the value of love, but it is human love, not the ideal love of a transcendent God.

FICTION THAT VIOLATES THE LIMITS

"Why demons, when man himself is a demon?" asks Isaac Bashevis Singer's "last demon" in Chamcha's stream of consciousness. He is tempted to add: "And why angels, when man is angelic, too?" The narrator speaks in this context of Chamcha's "sense of balance, his much-to-be-said-for-and-against reflex." *The Satanic Verses* makes it impossible to separate one opposite from the other – high and low, holy and profane, good and evil are inextricably entangled with each other. Rushdie connects with that thread of the Western intellectual heritage which has renounced distinct categories or clear-cut dualisms, and instead sympathised with "Eastern" pluralism. It is a Christian heresy to consider Evil and Good as complementary and mutually implicated; William Blake is such a heretic in writing that "Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence. [/] From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil."[80] Blake's poem is one of the two

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[78] SV, 507.
[79] SV, 531. Italics in the original.
[80] "Marriage of Heaven and Hell"; Blake 1982, 94.

works Rushdie names as significant influences on *The Satanic Verses*; the other is *The Master and Margarita* (1966-67) by Mikhail Bulgakov.[81]

Singer's short story, "The Last Demon" records the thoughts of the last demon, as the holocaust of the Second World War ended that reality where demons had still been conceivable.[82] *The Satanic Verses* is written in this post-holocaust reality, where we have to face our (human) capacity for in-human deeds. Angels and devils all stand for a potential in man himself – and one has to bear the responsibility. Consequently, even when the role of an angel or a devil is cast on a character, he remains fully human: a mixed bag of strengths and weaknesses. Rushdie has written approvingly about Singer, that he seems "like so many writers, from Milton onwards, to be somewhat 'of the devil's party'."[83] As a Jew living in the twentieth century, Singer could hardly close his eyes on the more problematic aspects of hu-man nature. *The Satanic Verses* shares the same disillusionment in traditional truths. The disreputable figure of the devil with his horns and hoofs can act as a figure for liberation, as the angel can personify anger and destruction. These lines quoted from Goethe's *Faust* could apply to Saladin as devil, but equally they could be inverted and applied to Gibreel as angel:

> – *Who art thou, then?*
> – *Part of that Power, not Understood,*
> *Which always wills the Bad, and always works the Good.*[84]

Both Chamcha and Gibreel finally choose "the left path" (the Satanic alternative); in other words, they are condemned to realise their modern troubled individuality in their differences, not in harmony with some Law or divine standards – because such do not exist in the world of this novel.[85] "Demon" and "angel" are therefore radically decontextualised; without the religious context the traditional meanings attached to these signs appear merely contingent. They are just "names you have dreamed of, you and your fathers," full of "conjecture and wish-fulfillment." Religious imagery is sepa-rated from its authority.[86]

Uncertain pluralities and excessive heterogeneity question the possibil-ity of constructing other identities, as well; the religious categories are not

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[81] "In Good Faith"; Rushdie 1992, 403. – The first draft of Bulgakov's novel was writ-ten already in 1929 and it was completed May 14, 1939, but it was only published post-humously, and even then in a censored form (see Krugovoy 1991, 62, 212).

[82] Singer 1953/1982, 179-87.

[83] "Isaac Bashevis Singer"; Rushdie 1992, 343.

[84] SV, 417. Cf. Goethe 1808/1949, 75.

[85] SV, 352, 419.

[86] Rushdie's justification for his decontextualisation of religious imagery is based on his experience of living at the juncture of cultures: "If migrant groups are called devils by others, that does not really make them demonic. And if devils are not necessarily devil-ish, angels may not necessarily be angelic ... From this premise, the novel's exploration of morality as internal and shifting (rather than external, divinely sanctioned, absolute) may be said to emerge." ("In Good Faith"; Rushdie 1992, 402-3.)

the only ones which are transgressed. The separate identities of fiction, the idea of an autonomous work of art, and authorship, are all called in question. Keith Wilson has evoked the classic quotation from Keats in the context of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*:

> What Keats definitely offered as the nature and responsibility of his type of 'the chameleon Poet' – 'A Poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence; because he has no Identity – he is continually in for[ming] and filling some other Body' – is inverted by Saleem into consideration of the other bodies, including all the pre-conception ones, that inform and fill, at times to overflowing, the writer. The image of the writer as both master and victim of public and private material, which he has been formed by in the past and is himself attempting to form in the present, dominates *Midnight's Children*.[87]

As we saw, the position of narrator in *The Satanic Verses* is also ambiguous and polyphonic. Gibreel, as the image of a story-teller in the novel, cannot control the sources of his dreams: "this isn't my voice it's a Voice" – "God knows whose postman I've been."[88] The narrator is alluding to his role as the Creator, or author, of this fiction – and even making an appearance on its pages in the likeness of a novelist, perhaps as Rushdie himself – but his relationship to his creation is a curious mixture of involvement and detachment. The limits of fiction, and its autonomous identity (as a fantasy separate from empirical reality, and as an independent work of art) becomes blurred in many ways.

One way that the autonomy of *The Satanic Verses* is undetermined derives from its overflow of intertextual material. A comparison to Bulgakov's novel serves as an illustrative example. The scenario and the fundamental themes are remarkably similar in *The Master and Margarita* and *The Satanic Verses*. In Bulgakov's work the impulse that sets the story in motion is the arrival of Satan and his demonic entourage into the modern capital of Soviet Russia. In *The Satanic Verses* the devil-shaped Chamcha (and Gibreel in his role as the angel of destruction) travel through London. Both novels consist of several intertwined stories, and both include an account of the origin of a major world religion as one of these. In Bulgakov, this mythical-religious dimension is the passion of Jesus ("Yeshua Ha-Nostri" in the novel); in Rushdie's text, the revelation received by the Prophet, Muhammad. The contrasting mixture of contemporary reality and mythical past, the secular and religious realities operate as the structuring principle in both works. In addition, the stylistic and thematic similarities are pronounced: some elements in contemporary society are made grotesque by employing demonic phenomena. The bitter satire is counterbalanced by a similar philosophy of relativism: the demonic and the divine, light and darkness are seen as neces-

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[87] Wilson 1984, 24. See Keats 1970, 157. – "Master and victim" is Rushdie's own expression; see *Midnight's Children* (Rushdie 1982, 463).
[88] SV, 112.

sary and mutually complementary – and the emphasis lies on the demonic laughter and slander. A demonic ambivalence characterises both of these novels; George Krugovoy has referred to the frustration that critics have expressed as Bulgakov's novel "cannot be reduced to any one-sided conception, either religious or anti-ecclesiastic."[89] Bulgakov's Devil, Woland, articulates this ambivalence in the novel from his own point of view:

> You [the messenger of Yeshua] pronounced your words as if you refuse to acknowledge the existence of either shadows or evil. But would you kindly ponder this question: What would your good do if evil didn't exist, and what would the earth look like if all the shadows disappeared?[90]

Krugovoy has made a detailed reading of Bulgakov's complex symbolism to save *The Master and Margarita* from accusations of Manichaeism, but the fact remains that in the end it is the Devil who "saves" the novel's lovers and grants them "rest" (but no heaven, or the divine light).

Similar cases could be made of the influence of many other important twentieth-century novels; Rushdie himself has spoken about literary "cross-pollenation" on an international scale.[91] *The Satanic Verses* does not portray devils and angels in the traditional religious sense; it is concerned with the transformation of the self with the mythical figures as its suggestive means. The literary tradition of metamorphosis supplies Rushdie's novel with numerous influential intertexts, ranging from Ovid to Franz Kafka.[92] Chamcha's situation is not only intimately related to Gregor Samsa's plight in Kafka's "Die Verwandlung" (1915; The Metamorphosis), but to the general atmosphere and situations depicted in Kafka's work. Modern anxiety, alienation and the anonymous cruelty of oppressive power structures is Chamcha's reality as much as an elemental part of *Der Prozess* (1925; The Trial) or *Das Schloss* (1926; The Castle).

To take yet another example from modern literature, some of the basic narrative strategies of *The Satanic Verses* can be traced back into Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad* (1967; One Hundred Years of Solitude), the paradigmatic novel of "magical realism." The tale of Macondo, a Colombian village, interweaves history and fantasy; the babies can have pigtails, people may live hundred of years, but it is equally possible for a banana company to murder four thousand workers, while the supreme court rules that such workers had never existed. Absurdism, fantasy and historical and social commentary are placed in fertile tension, amalgamated, creating a compound that paved the way for such works as *The Satanic Verses*.

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[89] Krugovoy (1991, 3) is here quoting A. Zerkalov (*Evangelie Mihhaila Bulgakova*, 1984).

[90] Bulgakov 1966/1997, 305.

[91] Cornwell 1990, 185; the reference is to Timothy Brennan's *Salman Rushdie and The Third World* (1989, p. 60).

[92] A novel analysis of this tradition is offered by Kai Mikkonen's study, *The Writer's Metamorphosis* (1997).

The repeated query of the narrator – *Who am I*? – could thus be given several answers ("Mikhail Bulgakov," "Franz Kafka," "Gabriel García Márquez"), depending on which narrative or thematic element is in question.

It is justifiable to read the novel's polyphony as a deconstruction of the idea of an "author"; after all, the unity of an empirical author has been used to secure some fixed, authorial meanings – those very same pursuits of pure and absolute truths that *The Satanic Verses* most vehemently opposes. Rushdie himself has attempted to clarify the plurality of his "empirical" self by pointing out its numerous (and potentially conflicting) influences: a moderate Muslim home, a Christian nanny, friends among Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, and the hotchpotch of Bombay with its movies, Hindu myths and Spiderman comics; "I was already a mongrel self, history's bastard, before London aggravated the condition."[93] It is hard to find support for the reestablishment of the author's intentions as conclusive criteria for the literary meaning in *The Satanic Verses*, as Anthony Close has attempted. In his article, "The Empirical Author: Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses,*" Close attacks most literary theory since W.K. Wimsatt's and M.C. Beardsley's article "The Intentional Fallacy" (1946) by claiming that Rushdie's predicament reveals its irresponsibility. Theoretical claims of how unimportant empirical authors are in conferring a text's meaning gain a "grim frivolity" as Rushdie is sentenced to death because his intentions are not heard. Close argues that "meaning is centered on an *egocentric* zero-point," and that one should renounce "implied authors" or "actantial roles" as needless hypotheses. Communication is always of an "interpersonal nature," and one should identify the author "as a person with a specific profile and history, and with designs with his fellow men."[94]

Close's argument for the importance of the empirical author has ethical appeal and humane value. However, his conception of literature disregards those distinctive features of textuality that *The Satanic Verses* so well illustrates. As discussed in chapters two and three, neither "work of art" or "self" offer shortcuts to some unproblematic unity. Both are contested ideas and continue to deviate radically from our common-sense notions under more intense scrutiny. The reader of *The Satanic Verses* does not do justice to the intricacies of this novel if he forgets how "ego" or "person" are the exact ideas it delights in unravelling. An interpersonal aspect is strongly present in the novel, and it is a hard task *not* to discern the political and cultural views upheld in the text. However, one should remember that it is in the interests of such "readers" as Ayatollah Khomeini to equate the empirical author with "his" fiction. Rushdie quoted Michel Foucault's essay "What is an Author?" in his Herbert Read Memorial Lecture in 1990, noting that according to Foucault, "*authors were named only when it was necessary to find*

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[93] "In God We Trust" (Rushdie 1992, 377, 404); "Is Nothing Sacred?" (ibid., 425).
[94] Close 1990, 251, 255, 256, 265.

somebody to blame." Literature, the discourse of art (Foucault emphasised), was originally "an act placed in the bipolar field of the sacred and the profane."[95] Even if the personal history of an author is the formative process in an artwork's emergence, one should see how this process is also an outlet for numerous determining influences that cannot be reduced to the author's person. *The Satanic Verses* invites meditations on the unconscious aspects involved in the creation of fiction, and about the possibilities for the subject always being plural, and heterogeneous; knowledge about the author's intellectual setting can surely be suggested as an ethical norm, but – as the "Rushdie affair" so dramatically proves – texts are *actually* always "misread," received as dislocated and somehow alien visitors in a context different from what was originally intended. This uncomfortable horizon of demonic heterogeneity and conflicting realities is, of course, what *The Satanic Verses* is all about.

All this said, there nevertheless remain questions to be answered regarding the relationship of fiction with its other in the text. Why is the key character in the "Satanic Verses" episode called "Salman"? "Your blasphemy, Salman, can't be forgiven. Did you think I wouldn't work it out? To set your word against the Word of God," announces the Prophet of fiction, prophetically heralding Rushdie's own death sentence.[96] The poor scribe had begun to doubt the divinity of Mahound's revelation, and started altering the words of the Qur'an he recorded. Salman is then, literally, the author of "the Satanic Verses": he is shaking the faith in the Holy Scripture by proving that writing is made by humans, and that it is subject to revisions and alterations. He doubts that the Scripture is really outside time and history, a revelation of the transcendent Word as the faithful have it – and this doubt, not the total disbelief, is the "opposite of faith" ("Devil talk," as the narrator puts it). The inscription of the name, "Salman," into the fiction in this role and manner, is thereby a powerful gesture of self-demonisation; the empirical author is implicated in a discursive battle about the status of writing. *The Satanic Verses* embodies in itself the conflict between the ideas of "fiction" and "Truth" and articulates it using demonic imagery.

Salman saves his neck by betraying his friend, Baal, the satirist poet. He is nominated as the "true enemy" of the Prophet, and the most violent conflict in the novel is imagined between these two operators of language. As *The Satanic Verses* connects with the tradition of great satirical novels, the conflict between satire and scripture is yet another way in which the novel discusses the status of its own fictionality at the face of an alternative (religious) mode of using language.[97] Baal is the representative of the author in

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[95] "Is Nothing Sacred?" (Rushdie 1992, 424); italics in the original. Foucault 1979, 148.
[96] SV, 374.
[97] Edward and Lillian Bloom have noticed in their study, *The Satire's Persuasive Voice*, how satire's intention to take a stand has always been in danger of becoming destructive, instead of being "righteous." The traditional view of religious satire is based on the conviction apparent in pamphlets of such a writer as John Milton; they might be ferocious in

the text; he is a professional writer who does not accept extraneous criteria for his work, no authority or value higher than the spirit of inquiry and scepticism.[98] "A poet's work," Baal states: "To name the unnameable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world and stop it from going to sleep." The narrator adds: "And if rivers of blood flow from the cuts his verses inflict, then they will nourish him. He is the satirist, Baal."[99]

As the reader is now aware of how many people have actually lost their lives due to the publication of *The Satanic Verses* and the ensuing clashes, there appears to be something devilish and reckless in these lines. "Baal" is an ancient Babylonian appellation of "Lord," implied in the devil's name "Beelzebub," which has probably originally signified "Baal-zebub," or "lord of flies."[100] The name of the poet is again an indication of the manner in which fiction is positioned as demonic in the text itself; the later reactions and demonising attacks on Rushdie and his novel have only been able to confirm the oppositional structure that is built into *The Satanic Verses* itself. As the Jahilia sequences unfold, this opposition becomes increasingly aggravated. Baal is forced to take flight and hide himself in a brothel. He gradually comes to realise that "his story was so mixed up with Mahound's that some great resolution was necessary."[101] The novel dramatises the conflict between secular writing (backed up by the individuality of the poet) and the sacred text (authorised by God himself) as a power struggle; poetry is subjugated and incorporated into the dualism built into religious thought. Baal's way of attacking this power structure is analogous to the choice of the immigrant children who took the demonic figure of Chamcha as their symbol: inversion, reversal.

The logic and structure of needs behind the production of blasphemy have not been studied much; the explanations suggested by *The Satanic Verses* are as tenable as most. Elaine Pagels wrote in connection with Satan and demonising, how "the more intimate the conflict, the more intense and bitter it becomes."[102] The narrator in *The Satanic Verses* asks "What is unforgivable?" and gives the following answer: "What if not the shivering naked-

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their attacks, but the reader could perceive a fixed horizon of values, of good and evil, at the background. Rushdie, however, is clearly more situated in the tradition of ambivalent satire, analysed by the Blooms in the prose and poems of William Blake, which sometimes makes it impossible to define some clear "target" for the satire. (See Bloom - Bloom 1979, 31, 47, 172, 197.)

[98] The connection between authorship and (diabolical) rebellion towards religious authority is traditional; "The German mystic Jacob Bœhme, as far back as the seventeenth century, relates that when Satan was asked to explain the cause of God's enmity to him and his consequent downfall, he replied in justification of his act: 'I wanted to be an author.' Like the son of many a good family, he was driven out, he claims, for having had literary ambitions." (Rudwin 1931/1973, 8.)

[99] SV, 97.

[100] See, e.g. Langton 1949/1982, 166-67.

[101] SV, 379.

[102] See above, pages 40-41.

ness of being *wholly known* to a person one does not trust?"[103] One is reminded of Mahound's words: "Your blasphemy, Salman, can't be forgiven." Only from the position of the intimate knowledge of Islam could Salman Rushdie have written so striking a rendition of a heartfelt discursive collision, a confrontation between the highest value of the secular, Western tradition (individual freedom and the value of free speech), and the Islamic (the life of the Prophet as a 'beautiful exemplar' for the believer aspiring to perfection[104]). Shabbir Akhtar, in his exposition of the Muslim view on *The Satanic Verses*, states that "Rushdie writes with all the knowledge of an insider," and that the events and characters in the novel "bear so striking a resemblance to actual events and characters in Islamic history that one has grounds to doubt its status as merely fictional."[105] In this light, the sequence that describes Baal the poet naming the twelve whores after the Prophet's wives, and living a life of carnivalesque reversal in the brothel, *Jihab* ('veil'; the Islamic symbol for female chastity), acquires its full blasphemous power.

Harold Bloom has argued in his study, *The Anxiety of Influence*, that literature is created in demonic tension, among agonising conflicts; the writing subject is always torn between the desire to express himself freely and those preconditions that the poetic predecessors pose as starting points. Bloom's theory is openly masculinist, a sort of heroic reading of Freud's ideas concerning the relationship between father and son: "The stronger the man, the larger his resentments, and the more brazen his *clinamen* [poetic misreading of his predecessors]."[106] In an analogous tone, Rushdie states that "The greatest human beings must struggle against themselves as well as the world. I never doubted Muhammad's greatness [...]."[107] *The Satanic Verses* is concerned with the problems of the male psyche, and the conflicts in the relationship between the two men, Baal and Mahound, can be seen as a metafictional commentary on the intertextual relationship between Rushdie's text and the Islamic tradition. Rushdie himself has given interesting reasons for the brothel episode:

> [T]hroughout the novel, I sought images that crystallized the opposition between the sacred and the profane worlds. The harem and the brothel

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[103] SV, 426-27.

[104] In Arabic, *uswatan hasanah*; Koran 33:21; see Akhtar 1989, 3. – Joel Kuortti has argued in his study that the 'Rushdie Affair' points out how "sacred" reveals those categories that are essential in constructing identity, in the West as well as in Islamic communities. The value attached to literature in the West has structural similarity to that of the status of Qur'an and the Prophet in the Islam – it is a privileged arena that should be "exempted from any contamination." He concludes, that an analysis of the "*Satanic Verses* affair can help us reveal the place of the sacred in others' and our own lives, the agency through which we shape our identities, the dreams we live by." (Kuortti 1997b, 161. Cf. also the discussion on the complex roles of fictionality in Rushdie's works in Kuortti 1998.)

[105] Akhtar 1989, 4-6.

[106] Bloom 1973/1975, 43.

[107] "In Good Faith"; Rushdie 1992, 409.

provide such an opposition. Both are places where women are sequestered, in the harem to keep them from all men except their husband and close family members, in the brothel for the use of strange males. Harem and brothel are antithetical worlds, and the presence in the harem of the Prophet, the receiver of the sacred text, is likewise contrasted with the presence in the brothel of the clapped-out poet, Baal, the creator of pro-fane texts. The two struggling worlds, pure and impure, chaste and coarse, are juxtaposed by making them echoes of one another; and, finally, the pure eradicates the impure. Whores and writer ('I see no difference here,' remarks Mahound) are executed. Whether one finds this a happy or sad conclusion depends on one's point of view.[108]

The execution of Baal in the end hardly qualifies to make *The Satanic Verses* a pious narrative; if the pure and impure world are juxtaposed, it in-creases the reader's awareness of the power structures that sustain the limit between them – the boundary that confines women in their separate do-main, away from civic activities. Such parallelism also acts as an analogy, and encourages us to read the institution of the harem 'through' the brothel. The intertextual and discursive heterogeneity adds its own aspects to the "blas-phemous poetics" of *The Satanic Verses*; as the material from the Koran is combined with narrative techniques familiar from "magical realism" or "postmodern novels," the Scripture is subjected to the rules of fiction, and inversely, fiction addresses the ideas of the sacred and of the religious ex-perience. Political history is another "text" *The Satanic Verses* weaves into its fabric; Ayatollah Khomeini, the Islamic revolution and multi-racial or multi-cultural relations are consumed among the "multitudes" that inhabit this polyphonic novel. The encounter between different elements, however, is not balanced and harmonious. Religious and political authority is not recog-nised; the sanctity of the Koran is violated with the Satanic Verses episode; the basis of the Islamic way of life (in imitation of the Prophet) is discred-ited by the brothel sequence. The demonic features in the text seize the power structures by disintegrating their symbols. This is not only true in connection with religious power; the power structures of British society are attacked, as well, in the Detention Centre episode. The extreme violence and the Satanic conspiracy that blemish the descriptions of the British police in the novel display the demonising technique operating in a political con-text.[109] The author-narrator's likes and dislikes guide the production of real-ity inside this fiction; at the same time, fantastic and demonic characteristics ask the reader to be aware how subjective such a perception of reality is, how deeply our "truths" are rooted in our subconscious fears and desires. The blasphemous textuality of *The Satanic Verses* records how demonic im-

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[108] Ibid., 401.

[109] The police – the traditional enemy of radicalism – are accused by the narrator of witchcraft, and he even implies that they assassinated Jumpy Joshi and Pamela Chamcha, "both parties [...] well known for their radical views" (SV, 465).

agery can act as an ambivalent recognition of ties with religious and political discourses, and simultaneously as a revolt against these influences.

THE POSTMODERN UNCONSCIOUS

"Books choose their authors; the act of creation is not entirely a rational and conscious one," Rushdie writes.[110] *The Satanic Verses* transgresses or unsettles in numerous ways the limits between fiction and its various others: religious Truth, revelation, and historical or political texts. In this process it becomes a prime example of a demonic text; it systematically violates culturally sensitive limits and categories. It applies the demonic tradition to make the reader aware of the long history of heterogeneity and ambiguity in our cultures – Judaic, Christian, Islamic, and many other cultures have all made use of the demonic in different ways. This novel is filled with conflicts: collisions and contradictions are its lifeblood. In it the personage of the author-narrator elevates himself into godhead; he declares freedom of choice for his characters, and at the same time playfully intervenes with their lives. Its choice of subject matter seeks out the most potent conflicts; it debunks the sanctity of its author's childhood religion by demystifying the Holy Scripture of this religion. The novel also clearly signals its approval of secularism in its juxtaposition and handling of the two alternatives that Gibreel and Chamcha represent; Chamcha is able to adapt himself, but the religious dreams of Gibreel are ultimately madness and lead to failure and suicide. The demonic ambivalence of the novel's "double protagonist" ("Gibreelsaladin Farishtachamcha," as he is called in the beginning) is thus partly resolved; this solution is nevertheless only relative, not a complete resolution. *The Satanic Verses* is a novel of subversion: the "High" position (angels, prophets) is challenged, and the "Low" aspect (devils, blasphemers) is encouraged. As it strives (in Baal's words) "to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments," this novel is so deeply entangled in those symbolic structures of religious-political use of power it examines, that there is also a self-ironic dimension in the narrator's question: "Who am I?" The identity of the novel is loaded by the tension between the noncommittal nature of the fiction and the needs for political commitment.

Such Western critics as Linda Hutcheon and Brian McHale have analysed *The Satanic Verses* as a representative of a heterogeneous text – a type that problematically situates itself at the borderline of metafiction and actual historical processes and controversies. Hutcheon names this type as "historiographic metafiction"; McHale thinks that *The Satanic Verses* highlights the limit between fiction and reality in its play with historical persons and events.[111] Another interpretation would see the novel strongly contesting any such division between "real" and "fiction"; it operates in a postmodern intellectual setting that considers all truths as constructions, and therefore,

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[110] "In Good Faith"; Rushdie 1992, 408.
[111] Hutcheon 1988, 5; McHale 1987, 87-88.

in a sense, fictions. The power of such fictions, however, is recognised: the revelations recorded in the Koran can have genuine effects on people's lives, even if that "truth" would be ambiguously motivated by the Prophet's needs and personality. This can be applied to Rushdie himself: "In writing *The Satanic Verses*, I wrote from the assumption that I was, and am, a free man."[112] In a legal sense, this is a valid assumption. Yet, there are several other senses that disqualify any claims for absolute freedom; *The Satanic Verses* itself is an eloquent exposition of several of them. The characters in this novel are constantly tossed around by powers they do not understand, nor control. Even full self-knowledge is questioned by pointing out the heterogeneity in the constitution of an individual self. As a melting pot of religious, political and fictional elements, *The Satanic Verses* questions all separate, unbroken identities; the frequent inquiries into the fictionality of one's self ("*What kind of idea am I?*") emphasise this theme. Indecision, misunderstanding, discordance: these are some of the demons haunting the construction of (postmodern) identity. The "misreading" of *The Satanic Verses*, and its author's "original intentions" just verifies the validity of Rushdie's own fiction.

   The Satanic Verses and Rushdie's situation after its publication establish a complex lesson on the power of limits, even in our the postmodern and heterogeneous world. Michel Foucault has written: "Power as a pure limit set on freedom is, at least in our society, the general form of its acceptability."[113] Arthur Kroker adds to this in his work *The Possessed Individual* that today, in a postmodern society, "rules exist only as a seductive challenge to transgress them."[114] The power structures and the different limitations they impose on our freedom are irresistible to a postmodern mind precisely because they offer some means to illustrate and realise freedom in a transgressive act. They "save us from limitlessness," Kroker writes; absolute dissolution of all limits would amount to incapacity to make any distinctions, or to experience any real significance. The postmodern self – paradoxically – *needs* power structures, borderlines and prohibiting attempts: such an Other saves the postmodern subjectivity from the complete self-absorption and aesthetic emptiness of "possessed individualism."

> No longer "possessive individualism" under the Lockean sign of private property and use value, but now possessed individualism under the sign of abuse value. The aestheticization of experience to such a point of excess that nature, subjectivity, and desire migrate into seduction: into a game of chance and indifferent relations of pure positionality.
>   "Possessed individualism" is subjectivity to a point of aesthetic excess that the self no longer has any real existence, only a perspectival appearance as a site where all the referents converge and implode.[115]

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[112] Rushdie 1992, 396.
[113] Foucault 1978, 86.
[114] Kroker 1992, 10.
[115] Ibid., 4-5.

The Satanic Verses is a commentary on certain features of this condition; it simultaneously participates in the disintegration of subjectivity, and becomes (through what has become known as "*The Satanic Verses* affair") engulfed in it. The novel and its author have become subjects of "abuse value": parts of the novel and the public image of the author have become dislocated, and pejoratively rearranged by one faction, and yet, sanctified by yet another.[116] There is bleak irony that the author of a major work demolishing traditional ideas of "authority" has to publicly defend his "original intentions," or that – after writing the most vicious things about British police brutality – this author has to resort to those same authorities and police forces he has attacked, in order to save his life. One cannot avoid the feeling that the demonic imagery and unresolved, ambiguous conflicts Rushdie gave voice to have greatly contributed to the "irrational" intensity and scale of response *The Satanic Verses* has encountered. Salman Rushdie wrote about the demonic conflict inherent in the polyphony of our simultaneously postmodern and traditional, secular and religious, Eastern and Western, reality – and the global reaction proves how painfully accurate his aim was.

An analysis of the demonic aspects in *The Satanic Verses* reveals an impressive array of polyphonic techniques. The dislocation of religious or political material combined with radical transformations of important symbolic figures opens Rushdie's text to the ambivalent effects of dissemination – characterised in Derrida's writing by "the possibility of the 'death' of the addressee, inscribed in the structure of the mark [...]."[117] In Rushdie's case, his writing has, in fact, turned into an infernal machine that continues to produce new meanings, even against its author's publicly pronounced intentions. The intertextual structure of the novel has the characteristics of Barthes's "plural or demoniacal texture;"[118] it even applies the blasphemous logic of dramatic reversals and juxtapositions essential in Bakhtin's and Kristeva's formulations of dialogism and intertextuality. The ambivalent characterisations of subjectivity as a heterogeneous and internally conflicting construction also contribute significantly to the organisation of *The Satanic Verses* as a demonic text.

To conclude, I point towards the extensive possibilities of the demonic figures and discourses, many of them realised and reshaped by *The Satanic Verses*. The dualistic mythical opposition between the angels and the devils is in innovative ways transposed into the polyphonic context of a multicul-

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[116] "When I am described as an apostate Muslim, I feel as if I have been concealed behind a *false self*, as if a shadow has become substance while I have been relegated to the shadows. [...] Jorge Luis Borges, Graham Greene and other writers have written about their sense of an Other who goes about the world bearing their name. There are moments when I worry that my Other may succeed in obliterating me." (Rushdie 1992, 406.) Note the Gothic and demonic connotations in Rushdie's description of his own situation.

[117] Derrida 1971/1982, 316.

[118] Barthes 1977, 160; see above, chapter three (page 102).

tural society and metafictional textuality. The radical consequences of this dislocation and recontextualisation reverberate through the many dimensions of this work; for example, the figure of the angel becomes a symbol of a belief in one, immutable truth, whereas the devil is better suited to become a symbol for the fluid and conflicting postmodern condition.

Heterogeneity and ambiguity characterises also the textual identity of *The Satanic Verses*. The ambivalent status of its blasphemous strategies and its emphasis on dissidence and doubt situates Rushdie's work in the rebellious and radical tradition of demonic texts. Often controversial, such works are not designed to offer univocal answers or instruction, as much as to unsettle and disrupt the conventional order of things. *The Satanic Verses* forces us to face and experience the painful problems hidden at the limits of our individual and collective identities, as demonic elements have done in various cultures from time immemorial.

The Epilogue

> If there are answers to these questions, they will not be less dialectical than the questions themselves, or than the Idiot Questioner within us that silently plots all such questions as a pragmatic malevolence.
>
> — Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*[1]

This century has been a time of radical change; literary demons bear witness to this change, in the semi-heroic roles they are given to play, and in the changing attitudes of people towards such monstrous "others." Yet, the very fact that demons have survived in our cultural vocabulary and continue to flourish in the postmodern world is a testimony of some permanency. There is always potential for conflicts and confusion, feelings of resentment among neighbours, or room for self-accusation and inner dissonance. The proliferation of demonic imagery may capture the anxiety of contemporary life, but it demonstrates, too, how we are constantly trying to face these anxieties and express them in constructive ways. We might remember from history that classical Greek culture was not only embodied in an elevated Olympian edifice, but contained also the pain and madness of the daimonic; it was the Third Reich that tried to eliminate both all "decadent" art and all the other "impurities" – that otherness which had intermingled in human stock.

The turmoil surrounding *The Satanic Verses* proves that the demonic has still retained its capacity for shock and outrage, especially if its polyphonic and parodic characteristics are displaced and read from a different cultural and religious context. The Western audience, however, seems to have learned how to tolerate demons. The recent examples of texts employing the supernatural, Satan and demons, are often actually quite humorous. *Practical Demonkeeping* (1992) by Christopher Moore is a warm and witty tale of Travis, a seminar student who accidentally invokes a powerful demon and spends seventy years trying to send it back to hell. This "comedy of horrors" is packed with details that affectionately connect with the experience of a generation that has grown into adulthood with modern horror as one important element in our pluralistic worlds: Catch, the demon, irritates Travis by doing Pazuzu-impersonations ("Your mother sucks cocks in he-el […]. Then he would spin his head around several times for effect").[2] Or,

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[1] Bloom 1973/1975, 112.
[2] Moore 1992, 22.

when Travis comes to a cafe, it is presided over by the sombre, convoluted verbosity of its owner, "Howard Phillips," who tries to keep the Old Ones at bay by treating his customers with such Lovecraftian specialities as "Eggs-Sothoth – a fiendishly toothsome amalgamation of scrumptious ingredients so delicious that the mere description of the palatable gestalt could drive one mad."[3] As might be expected from a comedy, *Practical Demonkeeping* does not take metaphysics very seriously. The King of Djinn might remark that "Jehovah is infinite in his snottiness," and that he created the human race as a parody of angels, just to drive Satan mad.[4] The real impetus of this novel is an unashamed engagement in fantasy as wish-fulfilment; the supernatural is cherished in its imaginative possibilities. A demon or a Djinn enriches everyday, prosaic reality, and reveals the diversity of possibilities for finding something "magical" or original in one's life.

Another example of this current trend, Elisa DeCarlo's *The Devil You Say* (1993) uses as well demonic materials for comedic purposes, but the results are no match for the inventiveness of Moore's novel. The protagonist, Aubrey Arbuthnot, is a "psychic detective" from 1930s' London who with his valet Hornchurch becomes involved in a case relating to a powerful tome of magic and a coven of Satanist witches. Most of the fun is made out the inversion of identities: Mr. Arbuthnot is cast in the role of Hornchurch's servant, and British class society offers a convenient rationale for a plot filled with double play and amusingly tangled love affairs. The appearance of the Devil in the end is a perfectly conventional Medieval Black Sabbath fantasy, gleaned from the literature of this area.[5] The most interesting work in the subgenre of psychic detectives is done in a more dark and violent tone. The investigations portrayed in *Eye of the Daemon* (1996) by Camille Bacon-Smith are one example. It operates with a demonology (or daimonology) derived from the ancient Pythagoreans, creating a complex and ambitious structure that bears only a distant relation to the Christian framework that most readers are familiar with:

> *Of the second sphere, each Prince is not a being, but a mass comprised of a host of lords of daemonkind, of which each host must convoke in quorum, being 833 daemon lords, to call upon the powers of a Prince of daemons.*[6]

The relationship of fantasy literature to demons and the demonic would need a book-length study of its own; I should point out that I have left out many important works belonging to this popular area. J.R.R. Tolkien, to start with, has a fascinating demonology interwoven in the dense mythological structure of his Middle-Earth (Melkor and Sauron as important Satanic figures, such creatures as the Balrogs, the Nazgûl and the Orcs

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[3] Ibid., 53.
[4] Ibid., 43.
[5] DeCarlo 1993, 162-78.
[6] Bacon-Smith 1996, 13. Italics in the original.

as their demonic servants).[7] The early Sword & Sorcery stories (most importantly the Conan tales by Robert E. Howard) also included demonic adversaries in their adventure formula. Modern fantasy literature generally accepts the existence of multiple realities or universes as a given, and it is easy to accommodate demons within such a plural ontology; they are inhabitants of some "abysmal dimension" of this universe. While some readers seem to lose their interest if alternate realities are made elemental parts of narrative, others are drawn to the endless possibilities such a premise opens. One could mention the subculture of role-playing games, which has repeatedly come under attack by religious fundamentalism because of its supposed links with demonic powers and Satanism. Basically this is a similar conflict of attitudes as in the Rushdie affair (even if it has not such a dramatic status): one side claims that there are some things that one should not play with, and the other cherishes the unrestricted freedom of make-believe.[8]

Science fiction continues with its experiments in personification and exploration of demonic potentials of technology after *Neuromancer* and cyberpunk. Some of it, dubbed "post-cyberpunk," retains most of cyberpunk's stylistic density and emphasis on body-alteration and information technologies. Such novels as *Hot Head* (1992) by Simon Ings and Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* (1992) introduce futures saturated by technology, but their real interests are directed towards the ambiguous promise/threat of altering the self through the use of technology. In *Hot Head* the "Von Neumann machines" embody demonic technology: they are systems that feed and procreate autonomously. They are also susceptible to madness, but such madness and uncontrolled propagation is prefigured already in the destructive human culture and twisted personalities surrounding the protagonist, Malise, a young Muslim girl. The alien datafat (brain transplant) is also an ambivalent part of herself; she finally has to learn to understand her own unconsciousness to communicate with the non-human others. *Snow Crash* has its "daemons" as personified subroutines of its Metaverse, a realistically outlined cyberspace. The "death" of a person's representation ("avatar") is relegated to the "Graveyard Daemons":

> The Graveyard Daemons will take the avatar to the Pyre, an eternal, underground bonfire beneath the center of The Black Sun [a Metaverse bar], and burn it. As soon as the flames consume the avatar, it will vanish from the Metaverse, and then its owner will be able to sign on as usual, creating

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[7] See Tolkien 1977/1979; 1954-55/1983. Verlyn Flieger explores some of Tolkien's metaphysical beliefs and constructions in his *Splintered Light: Logos and Language in Tolkien's World* (1983).

[8] The company that made their name with the *Dungeons&Dragons* role-playing game, TSR, Inc., has downplayed the potentially subversive and transgressive features in their products (one of their main attractions for their young customers, but problematic in the eyes of the parents); the clearly demonic elements have been the first to be cleaned out. Gary Gygax, the co-creator of *Dungeons&Dragons* shows his own fascination for the demonic in his numerous adventures and novels (see, e.g. *Dance of Demons*, 1988).

a new avatar to run around in. But, hopefully, he will be more cautious and polite the next time around.[9]

In a wild imaginative leap, *Snow Crash* unites neurolinguistics, cultural and religious history and virus engineering to create the ultimate demonic technology. The myth of Babel was, according to this scenario, actually based on an actual case of neurolinguistic hacking in ancient Sumer; with the help of *nam-shubs* (holy words, or incantations) it could be possible to "program" the deep structures of human brains, and even write viruses that would spread such a program to unsuspecting victims. The demonic alternative is represented in this scenario as the loss of self and individuality: the opponent of the novel's (self-consciously named) hero, "Hiro Protagonist," is spreading an information virus to make humans susceptible to his Pentecostal cult and control.[10] Language is a virus, but it is also a demonic power, taking possession of ourselves, inseparably intertwined in our "software" and "hardware," or the mental and biological dimensions of our selves.

The division lines between mainstream and different genre or subgenre fictions are continually shifting and mutating; influences travel fast in many directions. Most of the grotesque and transgressive aspects of the demonic are still being exploited in the areas relating to horror, science fiction and fantasy. There have been experiments in such "sub-subgenres" as "cybergoth fiction," represented by *Demon Download* (1990) by Jack Yeovil. The trashy, post-apocalyptic setting of this piece of cybergothic is capable of accommodating both demons and hi-tech, the US Cavalry and Sister Chantal Juillerat, papal ninja agent and beautiful "cyber-exorcist" kick-fighting the powers of evil. The fusion of fantasy and hi-tech have been approached also with much more style and artistic ambition, as in *Hermetech* (1991) by Storm Constantine. This novel presents the daimonic as "potentia," orgasmic energy that fills the universe and that can be tapped into with symbols (such as deities), in altered states of consciousness, through dance and song, or – as in this case – with extensive sexual experimentation and body-alteration.[11]

<p align="center">⊰❈⊱</p>

I do not intend to repeat here everything I have already said in my conclusions to the individual chapters. Instead, I want to discuss the outcome of this study in more general terms. What I have to say relates to the self doing research as much as to the textual demons and demonic texts as objects of research.

Contemporary demonic texts strive continuously to transgress limits, break boundaries and reach towards otherness. Their mutual diversity and

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[9] Stephenson 1992, 96.
[10] Ibid., 369-81.
[11] Constantine 1991, 444-51.

internal tendency to mix incompatible materials, even at the risk of becoming incoherent, soon makes coherent summaries or overviews appear to be dubious undertakings. I have adopted the pluralistic strategy: to quickly parallel and contrast different texts in order to convey also the *sense* of such plurality and heterogeneity, not only my own theories of them. To this effect, I have also extensively quoted the original texts whenever I have deemed this as a useful thing to do; in this I agree with Clive Barker's above-quoted point that to "deny the creatures [or: texts] as individuals the right to speak, to actually state their cause, is perverse." A point of view can indeed be made by the "dark side," but that is not a single point of view. In order to establish a dialogue one should have at least two interlocutors: a study of the demonic is necessarily also as an exploration of a particular self, revealing and researching itself while reading a text.

Facing plurality does not mean that one ought to completely discard and deny the pursuit of knowledge, appeal to reason, evidence to support one's judgements or any such thing. On the contrary, I would claim that demonic texts teach us particularly the importance of listening carefully even to visions and voices that are uncomfortable and uncommon. Richard A. Shweder has made a similar argument in support of "postpositivist" science and epistemology in his *Thinking through Cultures* (1991):

> Postpositivists are no less concerned with what is real than are the positivists, and among sensible postpositivists it is understood that science is good and successful. Yet in a postpositivist world it is also understood that it is possible for us to have important knowledge of the world even if the objective world is subject-dependent and multiplex and even if we give up trying to describe the world independently of our involvement with it or reactions to it or conceptions of it. Hence, the continental chorus singing with Kuhnian overtones that it is our prejudices and partialities that make it possible for us to see, if not everything, then at least something.[12]

Writing from my own – necessarily imperfect and partial – point of view, I have chosen to focus on the borderline character of demons, and on demonic discourses as cultural and textual articulations related to such a liminal position. This is not *the* truth about demons, I still want to emphasise, but *a* truth, one dimension or interpretation.

I have supported my view with evidence, and in the process developed the initial view into something more complex and diversified. The ancient daimons, the supernatural beings inhabiting the interspace between men and gods, offered a suggestive model of both the psychological and cultural position of the demonic. They were associated with the powers of Eros, madness and uncontrollable rage – and, on the other hand, with supernatural knowledge, delivering messages from areas beyond human consciousness. The frightening forms they were capable of adopting pointed towards something that was alien, unhuman, but not completely. It was the heterogeneity and

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[12] Shweder 1991, 66.

interstitial mixture of the self and the Other that has made the daimonic, and the demonic as its inheritor, fascinating and enduring.

My reading of the Christian demonological tradition confirmed that it was the negative, "dark" aspect of the daimonic that was located in our Western conception of the demonic. Yet, even as degraded and suppressed, the connotations of energy, sexuality and forbidden, subconscious communication guaranteed a lively interest in the area. Sometimes this took pathological forms, as in the transition period from the Middle Ages to the New Age (or Renaissance) when witch-hunts were raging throughout Christianity. Art and literature nevertheless continued to acknowledge the existence of these problematical areas, and gradually their portrayals changed from mute and totally rejected "evil" towards something more ambivalent and articulate.

In textual terms, the self was no longer perceived as a monologic unity, but rather as an intertextual field, threaded together from various, often mutually warring or conflicting sources. As Victor Frankenstein's creation, modern man became aware of himself as a combination or assemblage; and he was horrified by what he saw. The "irrational others" (children, women, non-Western "brutes") were excluded from the rational and autonomous subjectivity which this man constructed as his support and protection. Gothic literature responded by portraying the return of the repressed: the demonic woman of the Victorian literature or the demonic child of modern horror convey efficiently those fears and anxieties that this (professedly totally rational and male) subject is incapable of facing in his own self. Daimonic impulses are articulated through demonic imagery; the emotions, the urgent need to receive those forms of affective gratification that this culture has stigmatised as "feminine" or "childish" are pictured as demonic powers that are threatening the integrity and existence of this self. A condemnatory reading might find this as yet another reason to dismiss these texts; I am defending dialogue and interpretation. An ethical reading should not perceive demonic violence and blasphemy only as attacks on some real-world "enemy" – the demonic drama is always symbolic. The Other of a demonic text should be interpreted in relation to a particular, demonic self and its own conflicts.

Those theories of the self and the text that I have discussed in these pages have the tendency either to consecrate the demonic conflict and proclaim the necessity of living in contradiction, or to aspire to resolve the conflict and reach a healing, integrating resolution. In my own reading I have emphasised that committing theoretically to either cause is not really what the reading of the demonic calls for. One cannot read *The Exorcist* as one reads *The Satanic Verses* – to pick these two as representatives of my analysed texts – even if both of them deal with religious imagery, conflicts in the self and are using demonic discourses to achieve their goals. The context of a dark Catholic fantasy, written by a Hollywood screenwriter who was educated by the Jesuits in his youth and directed to an American audience of

the early 1970s, is profoundly different from that of Rushdie's case with its dialectic of an Indian and Islamic heritage, European intellectualism and political commitment. My dialogue with both of these works revealed that they constructed a polyphonic and conflicting textual self, an ambiguous illustration of their demonic tensions and obsessions. But this reading also pointed out that they relate very differently to this condition that they articulate as demonic. Blatty's novel ends ambiguously; Father Karras, the spiritual "anti-hero" of this novel is killed as he invites the demon into himself. I interpreted this as a dubious victory in a novel that is filled with fear of material existence, not with signs of spiritual salvation. *The Satanic Verses* concludes in numerous directions: religious salvation does not concern Saladin Chamcha's atheistic character, but the narrative of Mirza Saeed ends in such a spiritual resolution. Rushdie's novel is much more self-conscious in its discussion and illustration of the plural condition, or our "mongrel selves" as Rushdie puts it. The conclusion is that while both texts reach certain resolutions and retain some dimensions of their conflicts as unsettled, the status of this outcome is different in these texts.

Such an attention to the positional character of knowledge and the role of differences (as much as similarities) in guiding interpretative activity might be named and criticised as pragmatism. If one means by pragmatism just that one renounces the possibility of "eternal truths" in one's systems of thought, then I would accept the nomination. If, however, this also contains the dimension of usefulness – "It is true because it is useful" – then I have reservations.[13] It is very difficult to see what is finally useful, useless or harmful knowledge for literary studies or for the human sciences in general. Emphasis on the unambiguous, intelligible and lucid goals for academic research may lead us to ignore such areas that yield to the conceptual and systematic standards only with difficulty, if at all. Art is capable of communicating such complex states and situations through mimetic and symbolic means, and I believe that I am not alone as I say that this is one of the principal reasons I find myself drawn to art. Art studies should never lose sight of the non-theoretical and non-conceptual aspect of their object. This is perhaps the most important lesson I have learned from my demonic subject matter: we are always engaged and intertwined with the Other – and to really learn something from the Other one has to be open to the unexpected, alien and nonconforming, not just to one's own ideas and interests. A respectful and ethical relationship of research and critique to the "object" of study should be an important concern for the academic community.

My final hope is that I have succeeded in letting the voice of my Other – the demonic texts – be heard, even while I have used them and profited from them in making my own argument. Balancing the needs of determined demonstration and respect for difference and diversity, I hope that I have

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[13] This point is discussed in the classic study by William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Old Ways of Thinking* (1907).

avoided both the Scylla of incomprehensibility and the Charybdis of dogmatism.

The etymology of "method" is illuminating: the Greek *methodos* (pursuit) consists of *meta* (with, after) and *hodos* (way, journey). In the end, knowledge can not be found in the explications: it is embodied in the road itself. While on the way, we might also remember that – monstrous or not – the unknown always surrounds the structures of our understanding, things unsaid echo in those we are able to utter.

"*St. Anthony Assaulted by the Devils*"
(after Schoengauer's fifteenth-century copper engraving; Carus 1900/1996, 479).

Bibliography

A note on this bibliography:

In addition to those works that are referred to in body text or notes, this list includes some other sources that I have found helpful. The tripartite division (below) is applied simply for reasons of utility, and somewhat against my views that most texts can be read as having both "fictional" and "factual" aspects, or as embodiments of some "theory."

In some cases, the date of the translation or the edition I have used differs significantly of the original publication date. Those entries have been indicated in the references with double dates (original date / date of this edition; eg. BARTHES 1973/1990).

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C. WORKS OF FICTION

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