

# **SCHIZO-GOTHIC SUBJECTIVITY:**

**H.P. LOVECRAFT AND WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS**

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**Schizo-Gothic Subjectivity: H.P. Lovecraft and William S. Burroughs**

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## **Abstract**

**My thesis applies the concept of schizoanalysis developed in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project to the reading of subjectivity in Gothic fiction, via case studies of texts by H.P. Lovecraft and William S. Burroughs. I argue that Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis provides new perspectives on the ongoing influence and effects of that theory within the field of Gothic criticism. Interrogating this influence, I develop the concept of a 'Schizo-Gothic' modality which provides the means to detect previously occluded dynamics of schizoid becoming and subjective multiplicity within Gothic fiction. I argue that this approach opens up new conceptual and methodological possibilities for Gothic criticism, which I then apply to my analysis of exemplary texts by my selected authors. While my readings are designed to contribute to the growing body of scholarship surrounding Lovecraft and Burroughs, they also work to highlight the more widespread presence of schizoid subjective operations within the Gothic mode. Considering this force of schizoid subjectivity in the light of Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of subjectivation in the modern capitalist *socius*, my thesis thus offers a theoretical intervention into the field of Gothic Studies, providing new ways to understand the mode's engagement with the politics of subjectivity.**

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## Introduction: Gothic Fiction and Schizoanalysis

At the point where schizoanalysis meets pulp horror [...] there is a process of retrocontamination in which the deep past finds itself already infected with the far future. The crucial question is one of becoming: what are you changing into, what is growing out of you? ('A Short Prehistory of the Ccru')

Every writer *creates* his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future. In this correlation the identity or plurality of the men involved is unimportant (Borges 1999: 75).

My thesis will reveal previously undisclosed forces of schizoid subjectivity within the Gothic mode. My literary focus is William S. Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy (1981-87) and selected tales by H.P. Lovecraft. Mobilising the philosophical concepts of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, I will present these literary works as a zone of proximity between schizoanalysis and Gothic fantasy and horror: a 'becoming-schizoid' of Gothic fiction. As I will contend, unexplored affinities between the subjective micropolitics of schizoid or 'minor' literature and the Gothic mode bear important implications for our understanding of Gothic subjectivity. Exploring these affinities, I will show how Lovecraft and Burroughs employ Gothic effects in order to challenge the normative, spatio-temporal coordinates of egoic continuity. Liberating desire from the neurotic psychic formations of the capitalist *socius* in this way, they forge alternative modes of subjectivity which actualise virtual schizoid tendencies within the horrific temporal fantasies of the Gothic. Demonstrating how Lovecraft and Burroughs potentiate a revolutionary micropolitical force within Gothic fiction, this thesis will thus formulate new grounds for a productive dialogue between schizoanalysis and the Gothic.

### 1. The schizoid destiny of the Gothic subject

#### 1.1. Gothic subjectivity: an overview

My thesis begins with the premise that there is an integral relationship between literature and subjectivity. In Michel Foucault's formulation, the term 'subject' implies being both 'subject to someone else by control and dependence' and 'tied to one's own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge' (Bennett and Royle 2009: 130). Its



usefulness, Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle argue, lies in its facilitation of 'a more critical attention to the ways in which [...] an 'I' or 'me' is always *subject* to forces and effects both outside [...] and "within" itself' (2009: 130). Literature allows us space to discover and interrogate these forces of subjectification, and the sense of self which they produce. More than this, it can allow us to reconfigure that sense, and to construct entirely new modes of experience and consciousness otherwise precluded by our culturally-imposed attachment to identity. As I will demonstrate, Deleuzio-Guattarian schizoanalysis offers distinctive ways to both conceptualise and facilitate this potential reconfiguration of subjectivity within the literary medium. More specifically, I will show that this approach can shed new light on the troubled, ambiguous and contested subject of Gothic fiction.

From its eighteenth-century origins to its current dissemination across a proliferating range of media, the Gothic has become a site of active and theoretically engaged academic debate. Any preliminary definition of Gothic fiction almost inevitably implies adopting a position vis-à-vis this critical history. My own thesis develops from an assumption that Gothic fiction is intrinsically related to the historical emergence of fragmentations or disjunctures in cohesive human subjectivity. The novels of the 'original' Gothic revival, from Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) to James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), appeared amidst social and economic change, as feudal structures slipped into the mutable, counterfeit social realities of a burgeoning capitalist state. Against the internally coherent self posited by the dominant eighteenth-century discourse of Enlightenment rationality, these Gothic tales depicted a sense of human consciousness in flux, under threat from both illegitimate desires and unnameable fears. As Gothic fiction developed a recognisable continuum of literary sensibility and effect, it has come to exert a persistent and important cultural influence, revealing and contesting the psycho-social formation (and deformation) of subjectivity.

Resurfacing periodically in response to differing socio-historical pressures, and merging with other genres, the Gothic is now more aptly thought of as a 'mode' rather than 'genre' of fiction (Cameron 2003: 35). Although it may be difficult to define, the stylistic and thematic features of this mode are readily recognisable. They include an aesthetic of excess and linguistic intensity, an emphasis on both

ontological and visceral threat, and disjunctive, fantastical narratives which frequently convey intimations of the supernatural. Connected with the latter is also the mode's concern with spatio-temporal otherness, juxtaposing forces from past times and foreign locales against contemporary and domestic values. Here, Gothic fiction's historical and geographical foundations are often egregious and mutable, deliriously imbricating in psychic constructions of spatio-temporality to the point where the two become indistinguishable. Even when incorporated into other genres of writing, these features mark an ongoing negotiation over the division and restoration to which human identity is subject.

There is an inherent difficulty, though, in reconciling a Deleuzio-Guattarian approach to literature with analysis of the Gothic on a generic or modal level. As I will discuss in Chapter One, although Deleuze and Guattari align experimental schizoid writing with literary modernity (2004: 405) they also suggest that, as soon as such writing is produced, it 'belongs to no school, no period' (2004: 404). Nevertheless, there is a definite implication in their work that the development of schizoid literary forces reflects the emergence of modern capitalism, and this bears direct relevance to schizoanalytic readings of the Gothic as a socio-historical phenomenon. I will thus contend that schizoanalysis can be applied to the Gothic mode as a whole, but in a very particular way. Genre can be understood as depending, 'not on the substance or form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish' (Miller 1994: 24). This understanding can, in turn, be related to the Deleuzio-Guattarian assertion that 'instead of asking what a work of literature *means*,' we should ask '*what can it do?*' (Baugh 2000: 35). Extending this, not merely to genre, but also to the Gothic as mode, a generic relationship can be established based upon what a group of texts do, and how they do it, rather than upon a common set of conventions or discourses. Following the prioritisation of difference over identity developed in *Difference and Repetition* (1968/2004), I take this relationship to reflect repetitions of the differential genetic conditions underlying each text, rather than repetitions of identical qualities. Questions about 'Gothic' subjectivity can thus be viably applied to texts which explore and produce subjectivity through dialogic extensions of this Gothic negotiation. As I will discuss shortly, both Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy and Lovecraft's short fiction warrant inclusion in this category.

## 1.2 Gothic subjectivity: psychoanalytic and schizoanalytic perspectives

I will contend that, through its anti-oedipal conception of psycho-social desire, schizoanalysis can offer important new perspectives on the (de)formation of subjectivity in Gothic fiction. Like the Gothic itself, Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project, comprising *Anti-Oedipus* (1972/2004) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980/1988), is concerned with the historical emergence of disjunctures in 'sovereign' subjectivity, and with a politicised analysis of those forces which serve to arrest this process. The notion of 'minor' literature which arises in this analysis foregrounds 'the ill-formed or the incomplete' (Deleuze 1997: 1), offering an image of the literary as a 'psychotic and revolutionary means of escape' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 145). Yet, despite these striking resonances, schizoanalysis has until now enjoyed only limited purchase within the field of Gothic Studies. In determining why this has been the case and suggesting how schizoanalysis can take its place as an alternative or complementary pragmatic for the reading of Gothic fiction, my thesis will thus act as a theoretical intervention in the field. I will be using key works by Lovecraft and Burroughs to exemplify the primary tenets of this intervention. As groundwork for this, my first chapter will establish a theoretical methodology.

As Jerrold E. Hogle (2006) has indicated, the twentieth-century renaissance of academic interest in the Gothic was inspired by psychoanalysis. In more recent times, the role of psychoanalysis as a distinct, self-contained methodological framework has diminished, through both internal revisionism and integration with alternative theoretical discourses such as culturalism. Yet, as I will argue, from a schizoanalytic perspective this apparent decline belies a continuing paradigmatic influence which has shaped the conditions of Gothic criticism in fundamental ways. Since schizoanalysis arises from a critical reevaluation of psychoanalysis, it is necessary to establish the nature of this continued role, and to navigate the innate incongruence of these two rival theoretical bodies. To do this, my first chapter begins by contrasting the literary ramifications of schizoanalysis with those of psychoanalysis. I then offer a more specific examination of how the latter has shaped critical constructions of the Gothic subject, and how the former may be used to challenge or supplement existing approaches.

At the most basic level, Deleuze and Guattari diverge from psychoanalysis in their construction of the relationship between desire and subjectivity. Psychoanalysis construes the subject as a sovereign entity anterior to desire, which is understood as a libidinal force constituted around a principle of 'lack' and capable only of representation (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 26). In general terms, this produces a sense of literature as representing psychic and material realities which themselves precede and exceed the text. This play of imagery can be used to express conscious concerns regarding the real, or to mediate movements of the unconscious at an imaginary level (dramatising unrealisable desires, resolving anxious conflicts) but it always functions essentially as *theatre*. What is real, and what is represented in the work, retain their essential distinction. This, in turn, authorises a scholarly approach which emphasises the search for textual meaning and signification, the interpretation of what lies *behind* the text. For Deleuze and Guattari, whether or not such interpretation draws explicitly upon the details of Freud's model of psychic function, it constitutes an 'oedipalization' of literature, propagating an implicit affiliation with the oedipal image of desire (2004: 144).

Deleuze and Guattari reject the universality of this psychic model, contextualising it as a socio-politically instrumental response to a 'schiz' or fragmentation of psychic structure particular to the capitalist state (2004: 43). Against it, they offer a sense of desire as a positive, prepersonal force which precedes and produces emergent subjectivities, so that subjectivity arises as a 'residuum' or 'appendix' of desire (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 21). Accordingly, the vocation of literature is to facilitate and accelerate the fragmentation of the psyche into flows of prepersonal desire, thus emancipating desire from the oedipal template of organised selfhood. The literary text is understood as a 'desiring-machine' which allows desire to form new connections with the world, actively producing new realities, and new possibilities for life (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 403). These new senses of life cannot be interpreted against categories which exist outside the text, but must be comprehended in their own right, as immanent to the medium.

Taken in turn, these two approaches carry profoundly different implications for how Gothic writing can be understood and evaluated. At stake here are fundamental assumptions regarding the nature of the subjective fragmentation underpinning the

mode and the form of response to this fragmentation which the literature represents. As Robert Miles asserts, 'there is broad agreement that the Gothic represents the subject in a state of deracination, [...] rupture, disjunction, fragmentation' (2002: 3). Yet what a mistake, Deleuze might suggest, to have ever said *the* subject (2004: 1). Taking the sovereign, cohesive human subject as a point of default orientation, it is inevitable that the Gothic concern with psychic fragmentation should be interpreted in negative terms. By extension, assuming a sense of desire as representing that which is subjectively lacking, Gothic literature has been viewed as a signifying surface upon which such concerns are manifested, thus making it 'a means to understand Western thinking and culture more deeply' (Hogle 2006: 31). In schizoanalytic terms, whether pulling towards psychological 'interiority' (Mighall 1999: xi) or emphasising socio-political expression, such approaches necessarily impose an 'oedipal form' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 145) upon Gothic writing to the extent that they read it as simply representing realities which precede the text.

Schizoanalysis, by contrast, enables the Gothic to be understood not merely as expressing and representing psychic and social anxieties, or in terms of a neurotic drive to restore or remould subjective cohesion. Instead, a different potential destiny emerges for *the* Gothic subject as it is riven apart by political, social and psychic conflicts. We can begin to question whether the underlying drive of the Gothic is *exclusively* oedipal (in the Deleuzian sense of the term) or whether it forges new, schizoid pathways which escape the terms of the neurotic human subject. To do this, it is necessary to ask how the particular qualities of Gothic writing subtend new subjective forces and machines of desire. Schizoanalysis, and the notion of minor literature, provides tools to identify these desiring-machines and understand how they function. As I will show, they lurk within the spaces produced by the formal disruptions and linguistic subversions of the mode. Running, not *beneath* but *across* the ambiguous, often reactionary significations of Gothic fiction, they take flight through its supernatural temporal mutations, and draw their power from its subjectively-overwhelming horror. When revealed, they enable a new picture of the Gothic subject, enmeshed within an oedipal template but caught also in the act of dissolution, emitting particles of desire which escape that template, becoming something other.

Yet I stress here the *destiny* of the Gothic subject because it is not my intention to argue that the Gothic mode appears as a mature, ready-made schizoid literature. My concern, rather, is to show that latent, still-tentative overtures towards a schizoid literary sensibility can be detected amidst its experimental operations: preliminary moves which open doorways in the subject that are more fully-realised in subsequent and alternative fictional modes. Crucially, I contend that these alternative achievements are not different *in kind* from the achievements of Gothic writers, but that they refine and actualise implicit Gothic potentialities. Furthermore, I use the term 'destiny' neither to imply a deterministic relation between linear past and present, nor a fate which was always already there to be fulfilled. Instead, following the distinctive conceptualisation of time advanced by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* (1968/2004) I understand it in terms of 'non-localisable connections, [...] resonance and echoes, objective chances [...] which transcend spatial locations and temporal successions' (2004: 104). As I will argue, the schizoid force of Gothic fiction is a potentiality (one amongst many) which is only brought to life by being connected outwards to other images, other moments. In particular, as I will explain further in Chapter One, this can occur only when we learn to read the Gothic *schizoanalytically*.

I argue, moreover, that it is precisely in those writers who enjoy an interstitial relationship with the Gothic, whose work is in the act of both repeating and transforming Gothic potentialities, that the latent schizoid trajectory of the Gothic subject is most clearly revealed. It is in this respect that the work of Lovecraft and Burroughs bears such importance. Drawing upon their work to highlight the schizoid orientation implicit in key features of Gothic fiction, I will demonstrate that they can help us to read the wider Gothic mode with greater attentiveness to this orientation. By allowing us to witness a 'becoming-schizoid' of Gothic fiction, I will show (following Borges' dictum) that these writers create their own precursors within the Gothic, retroactively modifying our conception both of their work, and of the wider mode.

## 2. Schizo-Gothic writing: H.P. Lovecraft and William S. Burroughs

H.P. Lovecraft and William S. Burroughs share the position of having exerted a significant influence over cultural production in the twentieth century and beyond, whilst enjoying only limited academic attention. This has resulted, in part, from their ongoing attachment to themes and imagery associated with the pulp market, the challenging and often controversial nature of their literary output, and their incommensurability with many of the established categories and standards of academic criticism. Both authors have become the object of increasing academic interest since the end of the twentieth century, as their work has come to resonate with newly emergent literary/critical theories such as post-structuralism. As such theories have, in turn, come to play an ever greater role within Gothic Studies, the possibility now arises of reading Lovecraft and Burroughs as exponents of a modern Gothic revival. Over the course of this thesis, I will argue that critical concepts associated with Gothic fiction offer one important means of apprehending the ongoing cultural impact of these authors. Moreover, while the resonances between their respective bodies of work have until now received little scholarly consideration, I will argue that it is when they are read together that the Gothic effect of Lovecraft and Burroughs is most clearly revealed.

Both authors are usually considered as liminal to the Gothic, occupying a shared borderline with other genres, particularly those of pulp-horror and science/speculative fiction. As I have argued, this liminality should not be taken as grounds for excluding the work of these authors from consideration under the aegis of Gothic criticism. Rather, I will show that they participate in a significant dialogue with the Gothic mode, and thus in a shared negotiation regarding the subjective threats and possibilities delineated therein. At the same time, what makes both writers so important in the current context is that they also feature in Deleuze's discussions of literature and schizoanalysis, though in different capacities, and in ways which leave unresolved their precise status as representatives of schizoid or minor writing. I will work to resolve this ambiguity, arguing that the texts under consideration here reflect a clear schizoid agenda. More crucially, I will also show how the new modes of schizoid subjectivity they facilitate emerge directly from the concerns and techniques of Gothic fiction. When Burroughs' late trilogy is read

against Lovecraft's short fiction, I will demonstrate that an ever more articulated trajectory of schizo-Gothic effect becomes visible.

### 2.1 H.P. Lovecraft: Beyond the world, beyond life

H.P. Lovecraft is commonly known as an author of short stories and novellas in the pulp-horror tradition, although he also produced poetry, correspondence and both journalistic and scholarly non-fiction writing. Originally, his short stories were published exclusively in pulp magazines such as *Weird Tales*, but after his death his reputation began to grow. Lovecraft is associated with the creation of a persistent pseudo-mythology popularly known as the 'Cthulhu Mythos'. The Mythos is most clearly developed in a series of tales produced between 1926 and 1937, including 'The Call of Cthulhu' (1926), 'The Dunwich Horror' (1928) and 'The Shadow over Innsmouth' (1931). Widely regarded as Lovecraft's most important work, these tales detail various incursions of a pantheon of timeless, alien entities into a semi-fictionalised version of Lovecraft's native New England. The tales selected for detailed consideration in this thesis, 'Pickman's Model' (1927) and 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' (1934), stem from this period, although only the latter draws directly upon the Mythos.

Lovecraft attracted many followers and imitators during his writing career, including Robert Bloch, Clark Ashton Smith and August Derleth. Subsequently, Joyce Carol Oates has compared Lovecraft's 'incalculable influence on succeeding generations of writers of horror fiction' to that of Edgar Allan Poe, suggesting that 'Lovecraft is arguably the more beloved by contemporary Gothic aficionados' (1996). Stephen King, Clive Barker, Brian Lumley and Neil Gaiman include themselves in this list. Lovecraft's influence has also extended to cinema (John Carpenter, Stuart Gordon and Guillermo Del Toro are amongst the many directors whose work he has shaped) and to the world of board, computer and role-playing games, extending his popularity to an audience beyond the literary world. Much of this influence relates to Lovecraft's depictions of monstrous, other-worldly bodies and impossible visions intruding into otherwise realistically-rendered American settings. His most recognisable trademark,



though, is an insidious diminution of the importance of human consciousness in relation to the cosmos.

Emphasising this aspect of Lovecraft's work, *The Starry Wisdom* (1994), a collection of tales gathered in tribute to the author, offers an alternative view of his literary interconnectedness. The pieces selected for this volume are not slavish emulations of the 'Lovecraftian' style. What the contributors have in common, editor D.M. Mitchell notes, is a shared vision of 'anthropocentricity torn to shreds [...] of cosmic alienation, metamorphic desire, mutating sexuality' (1994: 8). Rejecting the perceived centrality of the Mythos, Mitchell identifies such visions as the defining characteristics of Lovecraft's work. In this light, while acknowledging Lovecraft's relationship to authors such as Machen, Poe and Blackwood, he points out Lovecraft's affinity to a quite different set of contemporaries, who were 'simultaneously, yet unknown to him, working with aspects of the same primal material in many diverse ways' (Mitchell 1994: 8). Here, he points to the 'delirious visions' of Lautréamont's *Le Chants de Maldoror* (1869), the magical polytheism of Aleister Crowley and Helen Blavatsky, and Antonin Artaud's apocalyptic play *There Is No More Firmament* (1933) (Mitchell 1994: 8).

'Supernatural Horror in Literature' (1927, revised 1935), Lovecraft's own scholarly survey, offers the key to understanding why his pulp-horror fiction should connect outwards to such diverse relations. Here, Lovecraft offers technical appraisals of the early Gothic novels, and discusses those writers from whom he took most direct influence, including Poe, Lord Dunsany and Arthur Machen. Yet, while he saw himself as working in the tradition of such authors, he makes clear that his own interest lies specifically with what he calls the 'weird tale' (Lovecraft 2004: 84). He defines such tales according to their ability to evoke 'a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space' (Lovecraft 2004: 84). Lovecraft later came to understand his literary goals in terms of 'non-supernatural cosmic art' (Joshi 1999: 49). Yet, whether through supernatural fantasy or scientific speculation, he remained consistently concerned with the 'weird' disruptions to subjective unity produced by an unravelling of natural spatio-temporal laws. Lovecraft himself always saw this effect as a refinement and continuation of

possibilities initially offered by the Gothic mode. Nonetheless, it led him to emphasise altered states of consciousness and perception in his work, resonating strongly with the magical and surreal visions of writers outside the Gothic horror arena, and with the schizoid experiences central to Deleuzian thought.

Despite his extensive cultural impact, Lovecraft initially failed to achieve academic recognition, particularly in the Anglo-American context. As Sean Elliot Martin (2008) notes, there has always been greater sympathy for his work in Europe, and Maurice Lévy's *Lovecraft: A Study in the Fantastic* (1972/1985) was the first professional book-length study of his fiction. Deleuze's interest in Lovecraft, which will be discussed shortly, may be seen as partly reflective of this trend. Since the turn of the millennium, though, there has been an upsurge in reappraisals of Lovecraft's work. This must be attributed in part to the efforts of the Lovecraft scholar S.T. Joshi, who edited the first American collection of academic scholarship, *H.P. Lovecraft: 4 Decades of Criticism* (1980). This volume paved the way for recognition of Lovecraft's importance as a more than merely generic author. Relevant, too, was the philosophical importance ascribed to Lovecraft by the Warwick-based Cybernetic Cultural Research Unit (Ccpu) in the 1990s.

Joshi himself subsequently produced a number of works which will feature in subsequent discussions of Lovecraft in this thesis, including *A Subtler Magick: the Writings and Philosophy of H.P. Lovecraft* (1982/1996) and *H.P. Lovecraft: A Life* (1999). Following Joshi, Michel Houellebecq's *H.P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life* (1991/2005) offered a provocative valorisation of the nihilism informing Lovecraft's writing. More recent works have included Sean Elliot Martin's *H.P. Lovecraft and the Modernist Grotesque* (2008) and Graham Harman's *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy* (2012), which builds upon the work of the Ccpu to explore Lovecraft's expression of 'Speculative Realist' philosophy. Most important, for the purposes of the current thesis, are two recent papers by Patricia MacCormack offering Deleuzo-Guattarian readings: 'Baroque Intensity: Lovecraft, Le Fanu and the Fold' (2007) and 'Lovecraft through Deleuzio-Guattarian Gates' (2010). These papers will play a central role in my discussion of Lovecraft in Chapter Two.

What is so valuable about Lovecraft, in this context, is that he is the only author clearly working in the Gothic/horror tradition whose work is referenced in detail by Deleuze and Guattari. These references appear most frequently in the tenth chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, where Deleuze and Guattari develop their notion of becoming. Given that the chapter opens with a discussion of the horror film *Willard* (1972), and is peppered with references to sorcery, demonology, vampires and werewolves, Lovecraft scarcely seems out of place on these pages. Here, Deleuze and Guattari use the thresholds and gateways of becoming permeating Lovecraft's fiction to reveal glimpses of the anomalous encounters and subjective transformations which await us on the borders of selfhood. Elsewhere, introducing his *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1993/1997), Deleuze again uses these Lovecraftian thresholds to characterise the centrality of becoming to minor writing (1997: 1). In this respect Lovecraft, who trained the Gothic roots of his work towards 'weird' transformations of the human subject in the face of virtual cosmic possibility, forms an obvious point of focus for exploring the potential overlap between Gothic and schizoid or minor modes of writing.

Nevertheless, there are two caveats to this view, which will be considered as this thesis progresses. Firstly, MacCormack argues that Lovecraft's Deleuzio-Guattarian resonance emerges only at that point where Lovecraft ceases to write in a recognisably Gothic form (2007, 2010). In Chapter Two I will pay careful attention to this issue, tracing specific linkages between Gothic tendencies and Lovecraft's schizoid subjectivity. Secondly, as MacCormack observes, Lovecraft appears to have little in common with those authors (such as Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence and Herman Melville) usually drawn upon by Deleuze to illustrate minor writing (2010). In this respect, Deleuze's regard for Lovecraft as a specifically minor writer remains ambiguous. This partly stems from the complex interface between aesthetic composition and philosophical conceptualisation in Deleuze's thought. Yet it also seems indicative of certain limitations to the schizoid distance achieved within Lovecraft's work. In exploring these, I will argue that Lovecraft's value lies in directly highlighting the process whereby schizoid subjectivities can be derived from Gothic origins, but that this potential is curtailed by a recurrent attachment to oedipal fantasy.

The first of the tales I will consider, 'Pickman's Model' (1927), is important because it throws into relief the precise ways in which Lovecraft enacted his conception of weird fiction. In doing so, it offers a working picture of how original Gothic influences segue into the weird, and thence into the territory of schizoid writing. The second, 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' (1934), features heavily in Deleuze's discussions of Lovecraftian becoming. Its schizoid directionality is vividly foregrounded through its contrast with an earlier companion piece, 'The Silver Key' (1926). As I will show, it represents the most fully-developed subversion of egoic subjectivity achieved at any point within Lovecraft's body of work. This subversion is achieved through an overturning of the normative spatio-temporal coordinates which underpin subjective cohesion, employing a mode of supernatural fantasy to effect new states of experience and perception. The process is further reinforced through the tale's emphasis on horror as an accelerant of subjective change. Together with the repetitive, exhaustive assaults on representation and linguistic order developed within the tale, it emerges as Lovecraft's strongest attempt to break through the wall of oedipal fantasy into new realms of schizoid writing.

Despite the progression evidenced in this tale, its experimental ambitions ultimately seem curtailed by Lovecraft's authorial deficiencies. While it reveals connections between Gothic and schizoid modes of writing, its achievements in terms of the latter remain, in Deleuze and Guattari's words, 'grandiose and simplified' (1988: 251). As I will show, Lovecraft's achievements lie in his actualisation of the potential of horrific and fantastic material to shatter oedipal constructions of subjectivity, and in his experimental attempts to develop new modes of language and expression suited to this process. Yet always, Lovecraft falls back from a full realisation of his literary aims, unable to break through the barrier of neurotic perception which he so provocatively tests within his writing. As such, the schizoid orientation of his work is obscured, and remains open to recapitulative readings. It is in going beyond this barrier that William S. Burroughs' exemplary value emerges.

## 2.2 William S. Burroughs: Nothing is true, everything is permitted

William S. Burroughs was the author of eighteen novels and novellas and several collections of short stories and essays, and was additionally known for his painting, spoken-word performances and experimental films. He was associated with the Beat Generation, and appears, together with other major Beats, in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), where Kerouac observes of the thinly-disguised Bull Lee that 'we'd all learned from him' (1991: 246). Rick Moody has argued that 'without his work the novel of the late twentieth century would be unrecognizable' (1999: xi). His most famous novel, *Naked Lunch* (1959), was described by J.G. Ballard as 'the most important and original work of fiction by an American writer since the Second World War' (1993). It prompted Norman Mailer to describe Burroughs as 'the only American novelist living today who may conceivably be possessed by genius' (Miles 1992: 15). Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy, which will receive primary focus in this thesis, was his last major fictional work.

In addition to those already mentioned, Burroughs has been cited as a key influence by authors including Angela Carter, Jean Genet, Ken Kesey, Alan Moore, William Gibson and China Miéville. Barry Miles has observed that 'the development of the new genre of science fiction known as cyberpunk would simply not have been possible without him' (1992: 17). Just as with Lovecraft, Burroughs' influence stems as much from the conceptual, imagistic and sensational resonance of his work as from his specific achievements in prose. It is in this respect that he has also exerted an important influence in cinema and music. Miles points to the debt owed by such films as *Star Wars* (1977) and *Mad Max* (1979) to Burroughs' distinctive imagery (1992: 13), and to his reputation as a counter-cultural champion amongst 'New Wave' punk musicians of the late seventies (1992: 7).

Burroughs' literary output can be differentiated according to his use of what he described as the 'cut-up' method. This took many forms, but essentially involved the cutting and recombination of sections of his work, or other texts, to form semi-random textual assemblages. This technique was used extensively during certain points in Burroughs' career, most obviously in his *Nova Trilogy* (1961 -64). As I will discuss shortly, Deleuze and Guattari offer a negative appraisal of this technique in

*A Thousand Plateaus*, suggesting that it masks an underlying order incompatible with their notion of rhizomatic relations (1988: 6). The cut-up, though, was not a consistent feature of Burroughs' writing, although his novels typically avoid conventional narrative ordering, forming instead a series of semi-autonomous 'routines' folded together in complex, non-linear fashion. The *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy adheres more closely than any of his previous writing to a sustained narrative form, but still displays a diluted version of the disordering sensibility which informed his cut-up period.

Burroughs' cut-ups were designed to subvert the forces which shaped the production of the texts from which they were derived. Ultimately Burroughs believed that they could be used to effect 'magical' changes in the real universe, by allowing conventionally 'pre-recorded' realities to be edited and reformed. As Genesis P. Orridge explains, 'if reality consists of a series of [...] recordings [...], then reality only remains stable and predictable until it is challenged and/or the recordings are altered, or their order changed. These concepts led us to the realization of cut-ups as a magical process' (2006: 281). In Chapter Three, I will relate this approach to Gothic temporality and Deleuze's analysis of 'punctual' models of history. For now, it is sufficient to note that the cut-up reflected Burroughs' general belief that 'the origin of all the arts—music, painting and writing—is magical' and thus 'always used to obtain some definite result' (Burroughs 1975). This, in turn, stemmed from his long-standing interest in mystical or pseudo-scientific means for the development of altered consciousness and psychic powers, and in the use of demonology, sex, death and chaos magic. These interests play a shaping role in the subject-matter of the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy.

As Jennie Skerl notes, the controversial nature of novels such as *Naked Lunch* caused much early criticism to focus on the moral status of Burroughs' work; he was thus received as 'either an example of a sick society or its most incisive critic' (2004: xi). In the 1980s, though, Burroughs' engagement with questions of language, identity and control came to receive increasing attention in terms of postmodernism and post-structuralism, as exemplified by Skerl's *Word Cultures: Radical Theory and Practice in William S. Burroughs' Fiction* (1987). Biographies also began to emerge,

including Ted Morgan's *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs* (1988) and Barry Miles' *William Burroughs: El Hombre Invisible* (1992). More recently, a number of important book-length studies of his work have been released. Of particular note here is Timothy S. Murphy's *Wising Up the Marks: The Amodern William Burroughs* (1997), which has to date offered the most comprehensive account of the affinities between Burroughs' late trilogy and Deleuzian thought. Also important here are Jamie Russell's *Queer Burroughs* (2001), and Oliver Harris' *William Burroughs and the Secret of Fascination* (2003). A valuable collection of articles considering Burroughs' challenge to globalisation, *William S. Burroughs in the Age of Globalization* (2004) builds upon this prior scholarship and includes the aforementioned Ccru analysis of the hyperstitional nature of Burroughs' fiction.

While my analysis of *Cities of the Red Night* will draw upon Murphy's assessment, I diverge from it in my specific appraisal of the trilogy as schizoid writing. Murphy relates the models of revolutionary subjectivity and society represented in the trilogy to Deleuze's politico-philosophical arguments. The generation of conceptual insights, though, does not equate to what Deleuze and Guattari term the schizoid 'grandeur' or 'genius' proper to art itself (2004: 403). Revolutionary subjectivity in schizoid writing cannot be located within the framework of a 'model', which necessarily retains the dynamic of representing a reality outside the text. As a mode of experience, it must be immanent to the text's own structure, language and syntax. As I will show, it is for precisely this reason that the revolutionary conflict depicted in the trilogy ultimately dissolves into a series of formal and linguistic disruptions which themselves embody revolutionary consciousness. Consequently, my analysis of the trilogy in Chapter Three focuses on its affinities with the Gothic mode as schizoid or minor writing, rather than at a purely philosophical level.

In examining Burroughs' trilogy in this light, it is useful to consider those qualities of his work towards which Deleuze has exhibited particular interest. These include his identification of the concept of 'control' as the modern successor to Foucauldian 'discipline' (Deleuze 1995: 178), and the assertion that (along with Miller, Kerouac and Artaud) he knows 'more about schizophrenia than psychiatrists and psychoanalysts' (Deleuze 1995: 23). In Chapter Three, I will give more detailed attention to these factors, but it is important to note that none of Deleuze's expressed

views relate to the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy specifically. Discovering new grounds for reading the trilogy as an instance of schizoid writing, I will draw particularly upon Deleuze's concepts of the crystalline image-regime and the falsifying narrative in *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (1985/2005). I will argue that these concepts provide a valuable means for understanding the literary effect of Burroughs' chronology-defying narrative operations in terms of schizoid subjectivity.

I will show that, when read in this light, the trilogy sensitises us to an incipient field of schizoid-Gothic effect. Gothic concerns with supernatural temporality, the subjective effects of horror and the violent ambiguities of revolutionary struggle are reproduced in the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy, in a recognisable but altered form. Here, they form the framework of a minoritarian, subjective micropolitics directed against the forms of being suited to the control networks of the capitalist state. Underpinned by a subversion of representation, and both narrative and syntactical order, the trilogy's mobilisation of Gothic techniques thus offers a picture of Gothic writing in schizoid flux. This process is more clearly visible when read against Lovecraft's own Gothic variations, but here it is extended in ways which more fully demonstrate the schizoid potentialities of the Gothic.

### 3. Extracting the schizoid powers of Gothic fiction: structure and methodology

Eugene Holland observes that *Anti-Oedipus* does not merely take its orientation from psychosis rather than neurosis, but is itself written 'in accordance with the dynamics of unconscious thought' and so 'adopts a schizophrenic style, appearing almost as if a schizophrenic had written it' (Holland 1999: 2). This observation can be applied to *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* as a whole, and implies that Deleuze and Guattari's work demands a particular method of critical application which itself draws upon schizophrenia. Although there can certainly be mistaken applications of schizoanalysis, there is no single or 'authorised' version, only an experimental process of 'inventive connection [...] the pragmatic proliferation of concepts' (Massumi 1992: 8). In this sense, we should ask of any deployment of schizoanalysis 'not Is it true? But, Does it work? What new thoughts does it make possible to think?' (Massumi 1992: 8). Accordingly, the connections which I establish



between schizoanalysis and Gothic fiction in this thesis are designed to be productive rather than definitive or comprehensive. My aim is an experimental mapping of zones of schizoid effect which run through and beyond Gothic fiction. To paraphrase Bruce Baugh, I aim to show 'how Deleuze can help us make [Gothic] literature work' (Baugh 2000:34).

This use of Gothic fiction depends upon the discovery of effects which are 'entirely objective' (Baugh 2000: 34) in that they either work to give us new powers (of thought, action or sensation) or they don't. Yet the process also depends upon *how* we read Gothic texts: what forces we bring to them, whether we are able to read them schizoanalytically. This does not involve attending to textual meaning or signification, but identifying and responding to 'configurations of images or words [...] which produce determinate effects' (Baugh 2000: 43). Since the field of Gothic fiction is notoriously diverse and difficult to define, any assertion of commensurability between this field and the conditions of schizoid or minor writing must necessarily focus upon a partial selection of Gothic elements. Furthermore, my aim is not to offer a comprehensive picture of relations between the two, but rather to explore areas in which key features of Gothic writing align meaningfully with central aspects of schizoid subjectivity.

Accordingly, my analysis of the schizoid potentialities within Gothic fiction will focus on the supernatural fantasies of the mode, its deployment of horror as a vehicle of affective transformation, and its characteristic distortion of time and history. These aspects of Gothic fiction have frequently been considered in terms of psychoanalytic paradigms, emphasising their nature as attempts to master sources of anxiety through rehearsal (Freud), or as cathartic encounters with the abject (Kristeva). Challenging these psychoanalytic emphases, through my readings of Lovecraft and Burroughs I will show the different ways in which those authors enact the schizoid possibilities of these Gothic qualities, liberating pre-subjective forces of desire, and thus producing new powers of resistant subjectivity.

In the first chapter of my thesis I will present an overview of the theoretical background to my arguments. My aim here will be to develop a framework for understanding how schizoanalysis can be employed in the formation of alternative

methodologies for the reading of Gothic fiction, and alternative conceptualisations of Gothic subjectivity. I will begin by situating the Gothic mode itself within a debate about the nature and possibilities of subjectivity as constituted within the capitalist *socius*. As I will argue, this debate carries a directly political significance, in that it involves conflicting perspectives on the means by which capitalism functions to both facilitate and curtail human freedoms. In explicating the nature of this debate, I will contrast the different implications for subjectivity implied by psychoanalysis and schizoanalysis, and the way in which these differing models can serve to shape critical perceptions of the revolutionary or complicit orientation of Gothic subjectivity.

I will first consider the formulation of subjectivity which arises from Freud's metapsychology, and how this formulation relates, *via* psychoanalytic literary theory, to an understanding of the subject in Gothic fiction. I will then examine the primary ways in which schizoanalysis diverges from this approach, again relating the schizoanalytic formulation of subjectivity to the model of literary production and reception with which it is associated. Finally, I will consider the alternative concepts and perspectives which schizoanalysis offers specifically to Gothic criticism, considering how it can shed new light on the mode's socio-historical context, and reveal new dynamics of subjectivity within its literary operations. This will provide an orienting schema for the textual analyses which will form the second and third chapters of the thesis, demonstrating how my chosen authors enact a dialogue with the Gothic which may be illuminated with reference to the conditions of schizoid literature.

Chapter Two will focus on the work of H.P. Lovecraft. Here, I will consider at some length Lovecraft's own understanding of his literary aims, drawing upon his extensive body of correspondence and scholarly studies of the field, together with elements of existing Lovecraft scholarship. After forming a general picture of how Lovecraft's aims resonate with the Deleuzio-Guattarian literary model, I will explore the ways in which this resonance is realised in his short fiction. 'Pickman's Model' will serve, in this context, as a suggestive indicator of how Lovecraft's fiction merges Gothic memes with schizoid writing under the aegis of the 'weird' tale. In my subsequent reading of 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' I will develop a more detailed

understanding of how supernatural spatio-temporal mutations, and the horrific, constitute an imbrication of Gothic and schizoid subjectivity in his work.

In Chapter Three, I will demonstrate how William S. Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy reflects and expands upon Lovecraft's schizoid deployment of supernatural fantasy and horror. I will begin by examining Burroughs' literary and political approach in the light of the analyses of his work offered by Deleuze and Guattari. I will go on to examine how the approach to narrative within Burroughs' late trilogy serves to disrupt the linear, chronological time and punctual history within which the capitalist subject of control is constituted. I will then explore how this relates to the historicity of Gothic fiction, revealing an implicitly revolutionary force in the Gothic's temporal distortions. Finally, I will analyse the particular way in which Burroughs enacts a schizoid deployment of horror and the abject, and compare this to the use of horror in Lovecraft's work. I will argue that Lovecraft allows us to trace linkages between Gothic and schizoid writing, and through him, we can more easily detect this Schizo-Gothic at work in Burroughs' writing. Burroughs, in turn, shows us the schizophrenia at work in Lovecraft's fiction, and extends the nascent political charge of this schizoid dimension into a more fully-fledged assault on the 'unfreedom' of the oedipal capitalist subject.

As I will argue throughout, the Gothic emphasis on fantasy and the supernatural takes on a particular function in the work of Lovecraft and Burroughs, when viewed in terms of the Deleuzian distinction between actual and virtual reality. In this respect, I will lay stress upon David Punter's assertion that the most definitive characteristic of Gothic writing is its 'opposition to realist aesthetics' (1996: 182), and particularly the realist tendency to 'smooth out the moments of terror and vision which comprise experience and render them into a unitary whole' (1996: 186). For Punter, this process is inherently ideological. While ideology works to 'make its consumers think that the cardinal features of the world they inhabit are natural, eternal, unchangeable' (Punter 1996: 200), the Gothic explores 'unnatural' perceptions of the world 'in the guise of the "supernatural"' (Punter 1996: 202). Both the writers under consideration are engaged in attempts to overcome normative, naturalised perceptions of spatio-temporal reality by evoking fantastical or supernatural situations and events. Lovecraft explains that 'time, space and natural

law hold for me suggestions of intolerable bondage, and I can form no picture of emotional satisfaction which does not involve their defeat - especially the defeat of time, so that one may merge oneself with the whole historic stream' (Lovecraft 1971: 220). His words are echoed in Burroughs' depiction of Joe the Dead, a character in the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy. Joe, as Burroughs states, 'belongs to a select breed of outlaws known as the NOs, natural outlaws dedicated to breaking the so-called natural laws of the universe [...] To the NO, breaking a natural law is an end in itself: the end of that law' (1988: 30).

These challenges to 'natural law' do not depend merely upon a blurring of the boundaries between 'ordinary' and 'psychic' reality, or reality and imagination. Rather, as I will argue, they participate in that release of virtual possibility from the dominance of actualised human perception associated by Deleuze with a 'crystalline' regime of image and narrative (2005: 122). As such, this challenge to normative modes of spatio-temporal experience enacts an implicit subversion of cohesive selfhood. As Tamsin Lorraine argues, 'the normative subject of contemporary culture orients herself with respect to conventional notions of space and time' (2005: 159). Thus, subjective transformation requires 'not only relinquishing normative conceptions of self' but also 'rethinking the space-time coordinates of the conventional reality through which normative subjects orient themselves' (Lorraine 2005: 159). As I will show, by asserting modes of experience which appear fantastical or supernatural in relation to ideologically-received models of reality, these authors demonstrate a link between the ideologically interrogative counter-realist aesthetic of the Gothic and schizoid subjectivity. In this sense, both align with that process of ideological questioning which Punter identifies as an important marker of continuity in the Gothic mode (1996: 200).

A further area of focus concerns the question of horror as an integral element of the Gothic. Clive Bloom asserts that 'horror is the usual but not necessarily the main ingredient of Gothic fiction and most popular Gothic fiction is determined in its plotting by the need for horror and sensation' (2007: 2-3). This important feature of the Gothic bears a close relationship to the irruption of fantastical or supernatural material, as discussed above, because it is typically in response to the explicit emergence of such phenomena that Gothic horror unfolds.

Fear as a core affective component of much Gothic writing is generally considered under the separate categories of terror and horror. Following conventions initially suggested in Ann Radcliffe's 'On the Supernatural in Poetry' (1826), terror is typically associated with undisclosed intimations of the fearful which contribute to a sublime expansion of the soul. As such, it follows a dynamic which threatens but ultimately affirms the category of the human, producing 'an elevated sense of self' (Botting 1998: 124). Horror, by contrast, is linked to the existentially overwhelming encounter with 'a positive object of fear' (Cameron 2003: 21). It constitutes, as Fred Botting argues, 'the limit of reason, sense, consciousness and speech, the very emotion in which the human reaches its limit' (1998: 131). As such, it connotes ambivalence with regard to the category of the human, the feeling that preserves a sense of humanity at the very point where it is 'most indefinite, most unbearable and most in danger of disintegration' (Botting 1998: 131). It is with these connotations in mind that I propose horror, rather than terror, to be the area of Gothic affect which is of primary interest in terms of schizoid or minoritarian readings of the Gothic. Nonetheless, in order to demonstrate this point it will be necessary to introduce modifications to Botting's formula.

As I have already suggested, the horrific tenor of the Gothic response to crises of subjective ontology appears to bear a *prima facie* incompatibility with the characteristically affirmative drive of schizoid writing. Both modes of writing may share a common territory in that both work on what Punter calls 'the fringe of the acceptable' (1996: 189). However, if the fear which the Gothic derives from this borderland is understood as a negative or expulsive response to the perceived threat of subjective transformation, this implies a quintessentially paranoid rather than schizoid impulse. How, then, can the Gothic predilection for terror and horror be reconciled with the assertion of a schizoid or minoritarian orientation within Gothic writing?

To begin answering this question, it must be stressed that there are already a variety of theories concerning the origins of Gothic horror and its functional relation to subjective ontology. As Bloom notes, this relationship has been viewed in contradictory ways, as either 'conservative, restoring things to the status quo and dedicated to the ultimate return to normalcy' or as prompting change, 'not

recuperative and conservative but radical and subversive, dedicated to excess and marginality' (2007: 14). This latter view also extends to viewing horror on a social level, as 'questioning technological, scientific and social norms as well as class relations in a way unavailable to realist fiction' (Bloom 2007: 15). In practice, Bloom cautions, such 'universal explanations' rarely fit neatly with any given text (2007: 15), and are more frequently amalgamated in complex and often ambiguous ways. Bloom also highlights a divide between psychoanalytic theories of horror, which are 'essentially narcissistic' (2007: 16) in that they concern encounters with projections of the self, and the view of horror as deriving from confrontation with '*that which cannot be* (against nature) and *not* something familiar but repressed [...] something *without* human values' (2007: 17). While the former can be more readily aligned with a conservative reading of Gothic horror, the latter view presents the possibility of locating the force of Gothic ideological interrogation in encounters with that which lies beyond normative human selfhood. Bloom associates this latter view of horror, in particular, with H.P. Lovecraft's meditations in 'Supernatural Horror in Literature' (1927/1935) (Bloom 2007: 17).

In this context, the possibility of reading Gothic horror as a force of schizoid transformation aligns with general perspectives on horror's ontologically subversive orientation. In order to discover a positive molecularising force within this dynamic of subversion, it is necessary to carefully consider any assumptions which proceed from a psychoanalytically-driven prioritisation of egoic preservation. This is not to deny the partial relevance of such perspectives, but rather to disclose the presence of an alternative impetus within the dynamic of horror. Horror may proceed, as Botting argues, from the preservation of a sense of humanity at the very brink of subjective disintegration. Yet this should not be taken as implying that such preservation constitutes horror's total significance, or its total affective force. Rather, as I will demonstrate through reference to the work of Lovecraft and Burroughs, the horrific encounter with subjective dissolution can itself exert an active schizoid functionality.

In distinctive but related ways, both authors embrace the traumatic and threatening adumbrations which attend molar disintegration, and which fuel the supernatural horror of the Gothic mode. In doing so, they illustrate an alternative dynamic to the

psychoanalytic reading of this affective territory in terms of an anxious abjection of otherness and egoic threat. For Lovecraft, I will argue, the achievement of horrific affect is not an end in itself. Rather, horror serves as a pathway or tool for escaping the confines of molar perception, since he considers it impossible to achieve his aim of creating 'a convincing picture of shattered natural law or cosmic alienage or "outsiderness" without laying stress on the emotion of fear' (Lovecraft 2004: 176). In her detailed analysis of Lovecraft's Deleuzo-Guattarian effect, MacCormack suggests that this effect is achieved only when Lovecraft abandons his adherence to Gothic horror. By contrast, it will be my intention to demonstrate that Lovecraft's schizoid 're-purposing' of horror can be understood as an extension of tendencies always already present within the Gothic mode.

Burroughs, too, employs horrific affect throughout his work. On one level, this is done to expose the operational logic of control, which employs fear in order to restrict our perceptions of subjective possibility. His aims go beyond mere social commentary, though: the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy seeks to discover a pathway through fear, since 'to reach the Western Lands' and thus to escape subjectification 'is to achieve freedom from fear' (Burroughs 1988: 162). More than this, Burroughs espouses a becoming-with those very forces which traditionally mark, and threaten to overwhelm, the boundaries of the cohesive subject of control. As Punter states, one purpose of Burroughs' work is to ask how fear can be 'revisited onto the custodians of a suspect, state-sanctioned sanity' (2009: 77). Perhaps, he suggests, it is those custodians themselves who are frightened of anything which 'radically undermines the [...] progress- and development-oriented myths by which we are taught to live our lives' (2009: 77). As I will argue, therefore, although Burroughs' work is peopled with powerfully affective images of Gothic horror, that horror leads us towards, rather than away from, the deformation of the subject.

In comparing the schizoid effect of the two authors' work, I will argue that although both seek to liberate flows of desire from the restrictions of normative subjectivity they do so with differing degrees of political and communal engagement. Lovecraft conceives his work in personal terms, seeking escape primarily for his own emotional satisfaction and giving little consideration to the political implications of his writing. Burroughs, by contrast, directs his writing towards collective, revolutionary

aims: the identification and disruption of control. However different the overtly macro-political frameworks within which they situate their work, both are involved in a process of ideological interrogation which resonates with the Gothic mode. Burroughs, though, is more successful in avoiding the dangers of paranoid recuperation which attend the literary abandonment of socially-constructed normativity. The detachment and disorientation involved in 'attuning ourselves to life-as-becoming,' Lorraine notes, can lead to destructive effects unless the new spatio-temporal blocks of becoming we produce are 'created from the ametrical space-times of an open-ended humanity that we can unfold together' (2005: 174). As I will show, while Lovecraft ultimately 'falls back' from the schizoid implications of his work, unable to connect his desires to a wider minoritarian context, it is in Burroughs' work that the schizoid potentiality of Gothic writing is most fully articulated.

Through these experimental forays into the Schizo-Gothic dimensions of the work of Lovecraft and Burroughs, my aim is to facilitate a wider awareness of the possible connections between schizoanalysis and the Gothic. I contend that, by considering the schizoid deployment of Gothic tropes exemplified by these authors, we can become sensitised to the presence of these possibilities and powers in other, less familiar places. Following Borges' reading of Kafka, I thus take Lovecraft and Burroughs as atemporal or synchronic precursors of a schizoid sensibility in the Gothic, capable of modifying our conception of the mode both past and future (1999: 75).



## **Chapter One: Gothic Fiction and Schizoid Subjectivity**

### **1. Introduction: theorising the Schizo-Gothic**

This chapter will establish a theoretical foundation for the case studies undertaken in the second and third chapters. My analyses will draw upon a model of reading derived from the schizoanalytic approach to literature developed by Deleuze and Guattari. Accordingly, the primary aims of this chapter are to identify the models of subjectivity and literary subject-formation arising from this approach, and to reveal how these can shed new light on the nature of subjectivity within Gothic fiction. I will begin by considering the Gothic mode in terms of its representation and production of subjectivity, offering preliminary indications of the political tensions revealed through a schizoanalytic perspective. This will be followed with a brief overview of the oedipal model of subjectivity advanced by psychoanalysis, and its extension into literary theory and, specifically, Gothic criticism. I will then explore literary subject-formation within the schizoanalytic schema, and suggest how schizoanalysis can be used to develop alternative readings of Gothic subjectivity. In this way, the chapter will contextualise the particular methodological emphases of my subsequent readings of work by Lovecraft and Burroughs.

In developing an approach to the Gothic based upon a schizoanalytic literary model, there are two important reasons to consider Freud and psychoanalysis in some detail. The first is that schizoanalysis is framed partly through its rejection of Freudian thought, and certainly assumes familiarity with it. *Anti-Oedipus* provides a politicised interrogation of psychoanalysis, presenting it as complicit in ‘the reactionary investment of the capitalist field’ through its emphasis on familial rather than social constructions of subjectivity (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 292). In response, schizoanalysis is offered as an antidote to the ‘yoke of daddy-mommy’ upheld by psychoanalysis, which serves only to maintain social repression and defer ‘genuine liberation’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 54). This is not to suggest that *Anti-Oedipus* is primarily *defined* by its oppositional reaction to Freud. Its companion work, *A Thousand Plateaus*, characterised by Brian Massumi as ‘less a critique than a positive exercise in the affirmative “nomad” thought called for in *Anti-Oedipus*’ is directed towards unfolding the new dimensions of thought suggested there (2003:

*xi*). Nevertheless, an understanding of basic psychoanalytic principles is a useful precondition for grasping the positive operations embodied in schizoanalysis.

Secondly, psychoanalysis has exerted significant influence over critical readings of Gothic fiction. As I noted earlier, Hogle ascribes great importance to its role in rescuing the Gothic from academic obscurity. In particular, he links this effect to two moments in Freud's thought which bear special relevance for the Gothic. In 'Creative Writers and Daydreaming' (1908) Freud presented 'the sublimation and symbolizing of unconscious drives as more readily apparent in popular fiction than in most published writing' (Hogle 2006: 31). Subsequently, through his paper on 'The Uncanny' (1919) he developed a concept of unconsciously-derived fear allowing Gothic fiction to be seen as 'especially indicative of the relationship between conscious life and the infantile/archaic unconscious' (Hogle 2006: 32). Taken together with Freud's general model of psychic functioning, these papers presented new possibilities for discovering in Gothic fiction the dreams, hopes and repressed anxieties of its originary social context. They allowed its fantastical elements to be interpreted as representations of unconscious desires and repressed anxieties, while offering a way to understand Gothic terror and horror as means for processing threats to egoic cohesion.

Of course, the renewed status of Gothic Studies within academia cannot be attributed to psychoanalysis alone. In subsequent years, the field has been strongly influenced by other disciplines, including feminism and gender studies, new forms of Marxism, deconstruction, and cultural studies including postcolonial and queer theory (Hogle 2006: 31). These alternative approaches have often challenged the discursive dominance of psychoanalytic literary criticism, which has also undergone internal refinement through the work of post-Freudian psychoanalysts such as Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva. Nonetheless, certain elements of psychoanalysis have proved persistent in conditioning approaches to the field. At root, these elements turn upon a widespread, implicit attribution of sovereignty to Freud's oedipal, neurotic model of the human psyche. Despite challenges to the patriarchalism inherent in Freud's original theories, and an increased emphasis on the mode's specific cultural significations, I will argue that this model continues to serve as a point of orientation within Gothic criticism. Through it, the Gothic subject

continues to be understood in terms of the neurotic drive to dramatise the desires which shape it, and to master perceived threats to its own cohesion.

Psychoanalysis has undoubtedly opened up new possibilities for investigating the Gothic, and it is not my intention to dispute its relevance to some aspects of the mode. Rather, it has caused alternative ways of understanding the literary fragmentation of Gothic subjectivity to be overlooked. Refuting the universality of the oedipal psyche, schizoanalysis offers a radically different construction of desire, as a positive force productive of new realities, and of subjective states which escape the normative coordinates of identity. It encourages us to view literature, not as a form of signification, but as a machinic medium through which desire forms new connections with the world, unconstrained by the organised structures of the neurotic unconscious. In this chapter, I will suggest how the particular forms of analysis offered by this approach can be applied to a mode more frequently associated with the repressions and anxieties of the neurotic subject. Indeed, those very aspects of the mode so inviting to psychoanalysis - its fantastical and fearful adumbrations, its fragmented, dreamlike style, and the eternal return of a dark past which resonates in ambiguous ways with the present – can be understood as machines for the production of schizoid subjectivity. In forming a general picture of how Gothic fiction may disrupt neurotic patterns of consciousness, giving rise to flows of schizophrenic desire, I will thereby offer a methodological framework for my subsequent textual analyses.

## 2. Towards a subjective politics of Gothic fiction

To approach Gothic fiction through the revaluative lens of schizoanalysis is automatically to read the mode as a field of political contest over the nature and possibilities of subjectivity in the capitalist *socius*. In the course of this chapter, I will detail the psychoanalytic paradigms which have influenced critical perceptions of the Gothic, and I will contrast these with the new perspectives enabled by a schizoanalytic approach. Thus, I will show that, even where the principles of psychoanalytic literary theory have been overtly dismissed, an implicit allegiance to the oedipal configuration of desire and subjectivity which underlies that theory

persists. Reading this model of subjectivity against the social analysis of *Anti-Oedipus*, I will argue that it embodies mechanisms of repression and social control which are perpetuated through any critical approach which continues to employ it as a point of orientation. As Greg Lambert has observed, the schizoanalytic model of literary production is directly inimical to 'the uses of literature' as they have been determined by 'institutional criticism in the modern period' (2000: 136). This model, Lambert argues, 'will radically alter the conditions of literary criticism' (2000: 8), and by extension, its application to the Gothic field bears radical implications. My approach will consequently necessitate a re-reading of Gothic subjectivity which demands attention to the politics of Gothic subjectivity.

In order to ground these theoretical perspectives, I will begin by sketching an initial overview of the Gothic mode itself. From the outset though, it must be recognised that 'Gothic fiction' is itself a critical construct, born of a set of literary-theoretical judgments from which the mode itself cannot simply be isolated. The scope of this thesis does not permit a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of the Gothic, or of all the critical interventions which produced it as a discrete entity. Instead, my analysis will focus on dimensions most relevant to the subjective politics at work within Gothic fiction, foregrounding those which underscore the contest between neurotic and schizoid readings. Two main assumptions underpin my subsequent discussion: that the Gothic is primarily a response to a fragmentation or disjuncture within human subjectivity, and that this condition is directly connected to the emergence of capitalism from the feudal despotism which preceded it. I will then consider three salient literary features through which this concern is expressed –fantastical and supernatural narratives, horror and terror, and adventitious distortions of linear history and temporality. Although closely imbricated, these three dimensions offer insights into how the contest between neurotic and schizoid subjectivity is a central dynamic of Gothic fiction.

## 2.1. Subjectivity in Gothic fiction

The term 'Gothic fiction', as noted earlier, has acquired so many different layers of meaning and interpretation that no clear consensus can be assumed regarding its

implied remit. Punter suggests that 'our present apprehension of the term is usually an uneasy concatenation' of various meanings, involving 'a complicated interplay of direct historical connexions and ever-variable metaphor' (1996: 4). Any attempt to refine this complexity into a concise definition, based on historical delineation, literary genealogy, or conventions of plot and setting is unlikely to be useful, and imposes reductive theoretical assumptions. As Anne Williams argues, 'a thoughtful analysis of 'Gothic' should challenge the kind of literary history that organizes, delineates, and defines: a literary history that also confines us within [...] inherited literary concepts' (1995: 13). Rejecting this approach, Williams seeks instead to identify an "'internal" [...] principle that may not always be explicitly related to the "content" of the genre' (1995: 15).

In her account, this principle can be reduced to conflict between the patriarchal family organisation and the incommensurable 'other' and this view is echoed by others. Cameron, for instance, views the Gothic as an anxious, guilty response to a 'growing disbelief in, and lack of guarantee at the heart of, the father function' (2003: 15). As he notes, 'Freud's myth of the killing of the primal father is a not too thinly disguised allegory for the rise of democracy itself' (Cameron 2003: 1). Nonetheless, Williams' emphasis on an internal psychological principle which supersedes considerations of content, and Cameron's linking of this principle to social transformation, both uphold an oedipal prioritisation of the familial over the social. For a schizoanalytic approach, it is necessary to establish a central dynamic of subjectivity free of these assumptions, and which proceeds from a more direct imbrication of subjective and social. To do this, it is useful to begin from a more general, and theoretically neutral, statement of the subjective concerns underlying Gothic fiction.

In defining his own approach, Robert Miles cites Punter's assertion that the Gothic 'attests to an historical emergence of a gap in the subject' and that this emergence is associated particularly with the 'late eighteenth century - as a period witnessing significant developments in the formation of the modern self' (2002: 2). Retaining Punter's emphasis on subjectivity, Miles notes that there is 'broad agreement that the Gothic represents the subject in a state of deracination, of the self finding itself dispossessed in its own house' (2002: 3). However, rejecting Punter's emphasis on a

single, universal dialectic of subjectivity, he asserts that Gothic writing is a site of multiple, contesting, historically-inflected discourses, employing ‘a series of contemporaneously understood forms, devices, codes, figurations, for the expression of the “fragmented subject”’ (2002: 3). The effect of these multiplicitous discourses is ambiguous and irreducible to a single, simple expression of subjectivity. As Miles notes, Gothic texts ‘revise one another, here opening up ideologically charged issues, there enforcing a closure’ (2002: 3). Yet taken together, they provide a counter-narrative to the previously dominant Enlightenment model of the self as rational, cohesive and autonomous.

Following Miles, I take the Gothic to be united by a shared concern with the ‘rupture, disjunction [or] fragmentation’ of the human subject (2002: 3). This raises the question of which theory best illuminates this concern. Here, Miles is careful to distance himself from psychoanalytic paradigms. Nonetheless, his account retains a fundamentally oedipal emphasis on *the* human subject, implying that the organised, cohesive self remains a natural point of teleological orientation. A schizoanalytic reading of Gothic fiction, however, must attend to the ways in which it enables dispersed, pre-personal flows of desire to escape subjective organisation.

Furthermore, in arguing that the Gothic ‘does represent a disjunctive subject’ Miles retains an emphasis on the discursive *meanings* represented in Gothic texts (2002: 3). By contrast, as noted earlier, a Deleuzio-Guattarian approach requires that, ‘instead of asking what a work of literature *means*,’ we should ask ‘*what can it do?*’ (Baugh 2000: 35). Accordingly, a schizoanalytic approach to the Gothic mode must be concerned not with how texts represent subjective disjunction, but rather how this disjunction can produce new, depersonalised subjective conditions.

## 2.2. Subjectivity and capitalism

I concur with Miles that to be ‘grasped in its proper dispersion’ the Gothic must be understood as an ongoing intertextual dialogue between multiple, culturally-specific responses (2002: 45). Crucial here are the psycho-social transitions of the late eighteenth century as the capitalist *socius* emerged from the ruins of despotic feudalism. The first Gothic fiction must be understood in relation to the new cultural

conditions which accompanied these transitions. These new possibilities can be linked to rapidly changing patterns of literary production and consumption. Growing urbanisation and industrialisation, together with an expanding commercial market for literature, resulted in a reading public whose composition reflected 'a change in the distribution of power and wealth from an aristocratic and landed minority to those whose interests lay in a mercantile economy' (Botting 1996: 46). The accompanying social unrest also affected society's 'ways of representing and regulating itself according to rational and moral principles' in a process intensified by the American War of Independence (1776) and the French Revolution (1789) (Botting 1996: 47). As Hogle suggests, with reference to Horace Walpole, the Gothic developed in concert with a 'divorce between sign and substance' in English culture closely linked to the genesis of early capitalism (1994: 24).

Whilst acknowledging the value of such approaches, my approach will lay emphasis on a particular construction of the changing social and intertextual nuances informing the mode derived from the distinctive form of 'universal history' underlying Deleuzio-Guattarian social analysis. This model of history reflects the emphasis placed by Punter, Miles and others on Foucault's association of the period with 'a series of archival ruptures constitut[ing] the modern' (Miles 2002: 2). More specifically though, for Deleuze and Guattari, this period, marked by the 'irruption of production into [...] the classical world of representation,' is associated both with the liberation of schizoid desire and its consequent entrapment through an oedipal configuration of subjectivity (2004: 329). Given its contemporaneous emergence, we might expect that the tension between these rival polarities of subjectivity should be visible in the 'original' Gothic canon, as well as in later manifestations. Consequently, one of the primary tasks of a schizoanalytic reading of the Gothic must be to identify and explore the effect of these tensions on the literature, and to highlight evidence of its schizoid tendencies.

Paradoxically, therefore, reading the Gothic schizoanalytically involves affirming its reflection of oedipal subjectivity – an emphasis which has otherwise been displaced within the increasingly historicised field of Gothic criticism. Yet the Deleuzio-Guattarian analysis of these oedipal forces is both historically specific and inherently political. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, 'Oedipus is a requirement or consequence

of social production' within the capitalist state, serving to universalise and theoretically justify the subjectification of desire (2004: 15). In this sense, it is integral to 'the work of bourgeois repression at its most far-reaching level' (2004: 54). Asserting that 'Oedipus is in fact literary before psychoanalytic' they affirm both the oedipal character of much 'established literature' and the applicability of psychoanalysis for 'measuring' it (2004: 145). Nonetheless, to the extent that literature engineers and maintains oedipal subjectivity, it is complicit in a process of political control and simply 'secretes ideology according to the dominant codes' (2004: 145). In addition, to the extent that criticism reads literature 'oedipally' as a structure of signification and representation, it, too, is complicit. By implication, whether or not overtly psychoanalytic concepts and methodology are employed, to read the Gothic in ways which uphold a psychoanalytic emphasis on neurotic or oedipal subjectivity is to implicitly repeat this process of repression.

Approaching the question of Gothic subjectivity from a schizoanalytic perspective involves attending to the 'revolutionary force' produced by Gothic texts, which allows new forms of consciousness to arise, rupturing the neurotic 'subject' of capitalist control (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 116). In seeking to explore the production of schizoid subjectivity, a schizoanalytic dynamic thus offers the possibility of discovering forces of political liberation occluded in earlier approaches. Viewed in this way, the field of Gothic subjectivity emerges as a territory riven by the political contest between psychoanalytic and schizoanalytic modes of consciousness.

### 2.3. Central features of the Gothic mode:

The literary features I will now consider are those most relevant to revealing the interplay of neurotic and schizoid subjectivity in Gothic fiction. Each of these features has been instrumental in promoting a critical tendency to read the Gothic through a hermeneutic filter of oedipal subjectivity. Inasmuch as these aspects do reflect a dynamic of neurotic dramatisation, such readings are not entirely without validity. However, I contend that they can be as politically repressive as psychoanalysis itself when they exclusively reflect this dynamic, leaving unquestioned the contextual parameters which determine oedipal subjectivity. In Section Four I will show that



these key features also reflect the stirrings of a schizoid sensibility which is radical in terms of a politics of subjectivity, and which has itself been repressed in psychoanalytically-informed readings.

### 2.3.1. Fantasy and the supernatural:

Punter argues that all other defining factors of the Gothic are subsidiary to its 'general opposition to realist aesthetics' (1996: 182). The association of Gothic fiction with fantastical, supernatural and oneiric narratives and imagery can be traced back to Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), although this 'anti-realist' aesthetic is not manifested consistently across the range of Gothic writing. Even in Gothic of the 'original' period, the explicitly supernatural tenor of *Otranto*, or of Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796), may be contrasted with the 'explained' supernatural associated with works such as Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). In some Gothic texts, fantastical elements are employed in a way which consciously implies narrative madness, as in Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), in which 'the line between psychological obsession and supernatural visitation is a very fine one, and frequently crossed' (Punter and Byron 2004: 128). I nonetheless take the fantastical or hallucinatory narratives, style and imagery of Gothic writing to be an important factor in the mode's engagement with the conditions of subjectivity.

This relates closely to the mode's frequent depictions of the supernatural. At an obvious level, as S.T. Joshi observes, the concept of the literary supernatural emerged in the eighteenth century because scientific advances had reached a stage where certain phenomena appeared as 'manifestly beyond the bounds of the natural' (2007: ix). Yet as E.J. Clery notes, even when this possibility arose, there was an initial resistance to the aesthetic deployment of the supernatural, which became commonplace only with the rise of literary commercialism in the late eighteenth century (1995: 5). Accordingly, while some contemporaries denounced 'indulgence in a fantasy of fear [...] as the symptom of a regression to Gothic barbarism by way of consumer capitalism,' for others it came to be associated with freedom from the social determinations upheld within realist fiction (Clery: 1995: 9). From the

beginning, therefore, the Gothic supernatural was caught up in a contest over the conditions of subjectivity established in accordance with Enlightenment rationality. As Punter argues, 'it is the function of ideology [...] to make its consumers think that the cardinal features of the world they inhabit are natural, eternal, unchangeable' (1996: 200). Thus, the 'supernatural' represents 'the major way that which is for social reasons designated as "unnatural" can make its presence felt'(1996: 202). I will be particularly concerned with the implications of supernatural fantasy for understanding how the Gothic engages with the model of neurotic subjectivity increasingly 'naturalised' in the capitalist *socius*.

When I examine psychoanalytic approaches to Gothic literature, it will become apparent that the emphasis on fantasy and the supernatural lends itself readily to interpretation in terms of the symbolic representation of repressed desires. As such, this aspect has served to promote critical perceptions of the Gothic as shaped by a neurotic drive towards the wish-fulfilling dramatisation of the ego. Accordingly, it has been valued by critics because it can give 'access to the denied hopes and aspirations of a culture' (Punter 1996: 188). The Gothic may indeed, as Punter suggests, make it 'perfectly obvious that unity is not a given property of the psyche,' thus raising important questions about the ideological assumptions which promote such unity (1996: 190). However, from a psychoanalytic perspective, this disunity must inevitably be viewed in negative terms. Consequently, while attention has increasingly moved from the question of the individual experience of subjectivity towards the socio-historically specific significance this experience conveys, such readings nevertheless maintain the assumption of a model of desire and subjectivity which accords fundamentally with an oedipal configuration.

It might also appear to be an immediate reason for seeing the mode as incompatible with schizoanalysis. As I will show, Deleuze and Guattari expressly reject the psychoanalytic formulation that desire is capable only of producing fantasies of that which it lacks. In this sense, they view literary fantasy itself, inasmuch as it serves as 'a mask for a personal or a possessive,' as necessarily reflective of oedipal subject-formation (Deleuze 1997: 3). Nevertheless, I will argue that the ideological interrogation implicit in much Gothic fantasy constitutes a first step towards a form of literature which escapes a logic of representation. This is because it provides a

medium for blurring the division between psychic and ordinary reality, allowing potentialities to be released which can instead be understood in terms of Deleuze's 'actual/virtual' distinction. By this means, it allows the production of schizoid subjective conditions which would be considered 'unnatural' according to the dictates of the normative capitalist model of the subject.

### 2.3.2. Horror

The second Gothic characteristic of relevance here is horror. In asserting that horror is a common ingredient within Gothic fiction, Bloom uses the term loosely, to denote the full continuum of negative emotion produced within Gothic writing, including dread, anxiety and terror (2007: 2-3). In 'On the Supernatural in Poetry' (1826), Radcliffe argued for a qualitative distinction between terror and horror in works now associated with the Gothic mode, claiming that 'the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates them' (1826). According to this definition, Radcliffe's own works, most notably *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), are often taken to exemplify the use of terror, while Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) is considered representative of horror. In practice, though, I would argue that the two effects are inseparably comingled in many Gothic works, so that, as Botting notes, 'horror is often used interchangeably with terror to describe the intense emotions produced by objects of fear' (1998: 123).

As Hogle observes, the Gothic reveals 'how the most difficult issues we face about ourselves and our social contexts,' can be 'addressed, approached, and advanced (or avoided) by the use and manipulation of Gothic "horror and terror"' (1999: 8). Given that my concern is to explore how this aspect of Gothic fiction serves to advance states of schizoid subjectivity, my emphasis will rest upon horror rather than terror. This is because, of the two, horror is particularly associated, as Botting argues, with the human subject reaching the point of disintegration (1998: 131), going to (and beyond) the point of becoming other. While terror may hint at this outcome, it continues to allow for a dynamic most clearly expressed according to Edmund Burke's (1757/2008) notion of the sublime, by which the soul is elevated or expanded in response to that which *nearly* overwhelms it.

As I will shortly discuss, this approach requires a careful interrogation of those 'explanations' of fearful Gothic content offered by classical psychoanalysis, which lay emphasis upon neurotic psychopathology, and the 'uncanny' return of repressed material. Ed Cameron, for instance, presents horror and terror as sub-categories of the Gothic supernatural, to which he adds a third: the polymorphous. He associates this latter category with Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764), and argues that all three narratives are structured around 'particular psychopathologies: perversion, hysteria, and obsessional neurosis' (Cameron 2003: 15). By contrast, there appears to be an implicit incompatibility between literature which focuses on such negative affect and the schizoanalytic emphasis on embracing subjective fragmentation. Later in this chapter, however, I approach the ways in which Gothic horror can be understood as both participating in, and serving to facilitate, the disruption of egoic cohesion.

### 2.3.3. Gothic and the distortion of history

Early Gothic fiction partly reflected a contemporaneous revival of interest in medieval buildings and architectural styles, but Punter suggests that the relationship of the Gothic novel to this general movement was 'in fact rather tangential,' depending on conventions of content and setting and an emphasis on the barbaric and sensational (1996: 7). It should also be added that earlier Gothic novels tended to be characterised by an ornate, pseudo-archaic use of language, combined with simplified treatments of character and situations which in their improbability and melodrama evoked medieval and historical romances. More important than these specific aesthetic continuities, though, is that Gothic imagery of all kinds served to underpin debates regarding how the past could be used to reinforce or reconfigure the sense of the present.

This focus on the past can be seen as a response to the anxieties produced by social change, and uncertainties about the future. In this respect, though, the Gothic does not represent a consistent attitude, but rather plays out a complex and ambiguous 'contest between different versions of history' (Ellis 2000: 14). The term itself was derived from the Northern European barbarian tribes associated with the

fall of the Roman Empire, but during the course of the eighteenth century came to be associated more broadly with the Dark Ages and the medieval period as a whole. Thus, as Robert Mighall notes, 'the "Gothic" by definition is about history and geography' (1999: *xiv*). More specifically, though, it is about how adventitious constructions of earlier epochs and foreign locales could be used to inform current, local, political concerns. As Botting states, therefore, 'the history in which Gothic circulates is a fabrication of the eighteenth century' (2001: 3), and Gothic writers used this fabricated (and usually dark) past 'as a figure for the unseen, the underside, of their own age' (Cameron 2003: 14).

Thus, through its connection with barbarism and the medieval world, the Gothic could serve to emblemise opposition to classical values (Punter 1996: 5). Equally, it could be employed pejoratively to associate particular 'cultures, attitudes, practices and institutions' with 'the perceived characteristics of the Middle Ages, or in fact any "unenlightened" epoch' (Mighall 1999: *xv-xvi*). In this sense, 'the word "Gothic" was [...] implicated in an ongoing political struggle' over 'the [...] meanings of the Enlightenment, culture, nation and government as well as [...] the family, nature, individuality and representation' (Botting 1996: 42-43).

The ambiguous status of 'Gothic' imagery as a general figuration of the past is reflected in the wide range of attitudes towards history expressed in Gothic fiction. Yet running beneath these attitudes is a consistent emphasis on the anachronistic return or irruption of the forces of the past, in ways which trouble the present. As Punter argues, this historical dynamic cannot be viewed, as 'a simple one in which past is encoded in present or vice-versa,' but must rather be seen as 'dialectical, past and present intertwined and distorting [...] each other with the sheer effort of coming to grips' (Punter 1996: 198). In this sense, the Gothic can be understood as subverting conventional notions of linear time and history from its very inception.

The precise nature of this subversion, and its implications for Gothic subjectivity, remain open to theoretical debate. As will shortly be discussed, the historical repetitions of Gothic fiction bear clear resonances with Freud's claim, in 'The Uncanny' (1919), that anything which reminds us of 'the old *animistic* view of the universe' (2003: 147) serves to threaten our egoic cohesion by evoking stages of

human development before the self had fully separated itself from the world. In this way, Gothic interest in the past can be linked to the expression of subjective rifts incompatible with the rational, ordered selfhood assumed within the Enlightenment. Yet, as I will argue, schizoanalysis presents an alternative way of understanding the Gothic elision of past and present, in terms of a relationship which does not depend upon the distinct status of either, but rather produces an entirely new state of consciousness born of the interaction itself. This latter approach allows the Gothic engagement with the past to be seen as working in the service of schizoid rather than neurotic states. In Chapter Three, I will explore this concept with particular reference to the revolutionary historicity of Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy.

### 3. Psychoanalysis and Gothic fiction

Freud is one of the most influential thinkers of the modern era. The applications of his therapeutic technique (the term 'psychoanalysis' was first used in 1896) have extended far beyond its clinical roots, to inform thinking about culture and society on a wider level. Nevertheless, the original therapeutic prerogatives of Freudian theorisation shape its broader impact. Although Freud considered a complex range of psychopathological conditions over the course of his career, a particular emphasis on neurosis, and thus on the neurotic and familial constitution of subjectivity, came to dominate his thinking. The extension of his theories into fiction and literary criticism has had particularly important implications for critical perceptions of the subjective states reflected and engendered within Gothic fiction. As I will argue, the Deleuzio-Guattarian critique of Freud's model of subjectivity and psychic function, which centres on his prioritisation of the Oedipus complex as an explanatory mechanism, can allow us to discover quite different subjective processes at work within the mode. To understand this critique, and the critical perspectives it allows, it is first necessary to form a clear picture of how Freud's formulation of metapsychology serves to prioritise neurotic or 'oedipal' subjectivity. It will then be possible to consider the ways in which this model of subjectivity has been employed as a hermeneutic force in the field of Gothic criticism.

### 3.1 Freudian metapsychology: desire and the oedipal subject

The size and scope of this thesis precludes a comprehensive treatment of Freudian thought, psychoanalysis (and its post-Freudian modifications) and psychoanalytic literary theory. Accordingly, my analysis of Freud's metapsychology will be restricted to those aspects most directly relevant to Gothic criticism, and to the Deleuzio-Guattarian critique which I will apply to that field. My primary aim is to explain how Freud's conceptualisation of desire in relation to unconscious metapsychological organisation and the Oedipus complex, together with his emphasis on the explanatory force of neurotic psychopathology, results in an image of hermetically individuated and fundamentally neurotic subjectivity.

The difference between the psychoanalytic and schizoanalytic accounts of subjectivity turns, at the most basic level, upon their conflicting conceptualisations of desire. Deleuze and Guattari credit Freud with having first determined the nature of desire as 'an abstract subjective essence' rather than as something which must be understood in relation to its objects, aims or source (2004: 292). As I will show, their own model of desire closely reflects this conceptualisation, as it appeared before its subsequent triangulation within the Oedipus complex: the point at which psychoanalysis 'started going bad' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 62). To understand the origins of this divergence, it is useful to note that Freud's understanding of desire was pivotally influenced by Ernst Brucke's opposition to the 'vitalist' doctrine, which sought to explain life processes with reference to a vital force which could not be accounted for by purely physical laws. Brucke instilled in Freud a 'total commitment to the principle of universal causality,' so that he sought to explain human psychological processes in terms of their individual somatic origins (Wollheim 1971: 22). By contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's view of desire is strongly shaped by Henri Bergson's notion of *élan vital* (1907). While the relationship between *élan vital* and vitalism is a complex one, both theories affirm the existence of a vital force irreducible to organic origins. This difference profoundly shapes the contrasting formulations of subjectivity within psychoanalysis and schizoanalysis.

This is reflected in Freud's topographic, economic and structural models of the mind, which operate as distinct but complementary abstractions of mental functionality.

Freud asserts a topographical distinction between conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious systems of mentation, based upon his observation that ideas can be maintained in an unconscious state while continuing to exert an effect on personality. He also argues that, in addition to repressed mental content, the unconscious contains innate, endogenous sources of motivation which fundamentally drive human behaviour. Following Brucke, Freud views these 'instinctual drives' as somatically derived, and functioning in a way comparable to physical stimuli, but producing a constant psychic effect. As essentially biological forces, he considers them to take the same basic form in all humans, as two irreducible and opposing polar tendencies. Freud consistently views the first as being sexual (*libido* or *Eros*), and in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), presents the second as relating to aggression or death (*Thanatos*). Like physical needs, he argues that the drives seek satisfaction, through the minimisation or stabilisation of stimulation, and thus form attachments to objects perceived as suitable for providing such satisfaction.

Freud subsequently postulated that the expression of the drives is governed by primary psychic processes which operate according to 'the pleasure/unpleasure principle' (or simply 'the pleasure principle'). In this psychodynamic or 'economic' formulation, the drive stimuli create a 'libidinal' psychic energy which must be discharged through gratification, or invested across internal representations ('ideas') of whatever external objects promise to allow discharge. The pleasure principle dictates that the primary process seeks pleasure by discharging drive tension and avoids unpleasure by repressing anything which increases it. In so doing, it recognises neither logic nor temporal progression, and only psychic, rather than external, reality. Initially, this process is entirely intra-psychic, with no awareness of a distinction between self and world, so that the existence of desire is inseparable from its hallucinated fulfilment. At a later stage of development, though, it comes to be modified by 'the reality principle', which arises when the psyche recognises the outside world as an obstacle to pleasure. This leads to the emergence of consciousness, memory, and the development of language, logic and problem-solving skills: the basis of the human subject.

Finally, in *The Ego and the Id* (1923) Freud modified his metapsychological model to reflect his increasing interest in the mechanisms of repression, as opposed to the



basic distinction between conscious and repressed mental content. Developing a new, structural theory of the psyche, he suggests here the existence of three active agencies, the id, ego and super-ego. The id represents the unconscious psychic demands of the instinctual drives (Freud 2001c: 23). The ego works to balance drive needs against the demands of external reality, and to repress instinctual urges which might cause anxiety through their conflict with the demands of the super-ego (Freud 2001c: 24). The super-ego, finally, represents the largely unconscious presence of ego ideals pertaining to moral values appropriated from parental and societal expectations (Freud 2001c: 28).

To understand the model of subjectivity which arises from these metapsychological mechanisms, it is necessary to read them in conjunction with Freud's account of the role of psychosexual development in personality-formation. Freud observes that infants develop sexual impulses much earlier than is commonly thought, exhibiting an instinctive 'polymorphous perversity' which only later coalesces into sexual object-choice (2001a: 191). He argues that this objective organisation is fundamentally determined by a complex of drives, aims, object-relations, fears and identifications poetically prefigured by Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (Freud 1997: 155). In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), he argues that 'the earliest affection of the girl-child is lavished on the father, while the earliest infantile desires of the boy are directed upon the mother,' with the same-gender parent becoming an 'obnoxious rival' (Freud 1997: 152). With particular reference to the male child, Freud argues that a fear of paternal retaliation, in the form of 'castration anxiety', then develops. This results from the first sight of the mother's genitals, which are interpreted with horror as the result of castration, and develops into a complex in which guilt and the fear of punishment continue to be associated with castration. In this respect, 'parents play a leading part in the infantile psychology of [...] psychoneurotics' (Freud 1997: 155), although as Freud notes, this effect actually applies in a reduced degree even to 'normal' people (Freud 1997: 155).

These desires and anxieties are repressed until puberty, at which point the adolescent must confront the psychic traces of the Oedipus complex and find a way to resolve them. Typically, this resolution takes the form of reconciliation with the father and transference of the libidinal wishes initially directed towards the mother to

a suitable sexual partner. This process is also results in the emergence of the super-ego (Freud 2001c: 34). Different configurations may emerge though, and failure to resolve the complex can result in the emergence of psychopathological states. More generally, the precise form this resolution takes 'bears upon character structure, the nature of object relationships and sexual identity, [and] fantasy formation' (Moore and Fine 1990: 134), persisting as an 'unconscious organiser throughout life' (Moore and Fine 1990: 133). This extends to literature, which is thus understood in terms of its codified representation of repressed desires and fears traceable to the Oedipus complex, and as reflecting a relationship to the world conditioned by the terms of the oedipal resolution.

Crucially, from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari's critique, this process fixes desire in a configuration which revolves around a prohibited and forever unattainable goal, so that all subsequent expressions of desire can only be understood as replaying or reflecting this primal situation. It implies an understanding of desire as essentially 'a lack [...] of the real object' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 26), capable only of producing guilt-charged fantasies in the 'intimate familial theater' of the unconscious (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 335). As I will show, while Deleuze and Guattari do not deny that this process occurs, they question Freud's attribution of universality to this sense of desire. They argue that, in asserting the preeminent importance of the familial, he takes no account of the mutable network of social forces which predicate, interweave and thus 'determine' family life (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 354). On the basis of this critique, they offer an alternative formulation of desire which, in turn, implies a quite different understanding of the nature of subjectivity and of literary production.

The Oedipus complex, moreover, is central to Freud's concept of repression, and to his understanding of the psychopathologies which result when repression fails. In 'Repression' (1915) he postulates that, in infancy, a process of 'primal repression' works to bar over-stimulating impressions and drives from consciousness (Freud 2005: 37). Nevertheless, a continuing fixation on infantile desires and traumas might still develop. In later life, new experiences or associated ideas might threaten to trigger a return of these repressed memories. A process of 'actual repression' would then work to deny these ideas access to the conscious mind, and also to defend

against any instinctual impulses which might evoke signals of anxiety as a result of conflict (Freud 2005: 38). Nevertheless, if a desire is not consciously assimilated it 'develops more rampantly and exuberantly. It proliferates in the dark, so to speak, and finds extreme forms of expression' (Freud 2005: 37-38). In this way, the desire in question can come to feel 'extraordinary and dangerous in its intensity,' exerting a compulsive influence over behaviour which seems 'demonic' because its internal derivation remains unrecognised (Freud 2005: 38).

This 'return of the repressed' is central to Freud's understanding of neurotic psychopathology. He argues that neurotic symptoms arise when the ego imposes a compromise between the unconscious desires of the id and the demands of external reality and the superego, allowing repressed material to resurface in distorted form. This 'compromise formation' may lead to psychosomatic physiological effects, attacks of anxiety or irrational fear, and uncontrollable and repetitive thoughts and actions, but also ameliorates the 'unpleasure' which would accompany conscious recognition (Moore and Fine 1990: 154). As Freud asserts in 'The Psychopathology of Everyday Life' (1901), even such common phenomena as slips of the tongue, forgetfulness and superstitious beliefs show that 'incompletely suppressed psychic material [...] although displaced from the conscious mind, is not [...] deprived of all ability to express itself' (2002: 262). He thus notes that 'the borderline between nervous normality and abnormality is a fluid one, and [...] we are all slightly neurotic' (Freud 2002: 261). For Freud, this model of neurotic symptomatology offers insights into the processes underlying aesthetic production, so that the presence of repressed drive impulses within fictional writing, and their discovery through attention to symbolic formations, centrally informs his approach to literature.

While he derives insights into both human personality and creative production from neurotic symptomatology, Freud displays less interest in psychosis. Whereas neurosis allows repressed desires to resurface in altered forms, in cases of psychosis (such as schizophrenia) the repressed desires of the id overwhelm the ego defences altogether, coming into direct conflict with a reality unsuited to their fulfilment. Abandoning compromise, the psyche instead 'remodels' (Freud 2001c: 185) reality according to its own desires, leading (in the case of schizophrenia) to 'delusions, hallucinations, confusion, autistic and schizophrenic thinking (in which

syntax is disrupted) and disturbances in the sense of identity' (Rycroft 1995: 163). Freud thus observes that, while both may produce fantasies, neurotic fantasy tends 'like the play of children, to attach itself to a piece of reality – a different piece from the one against which it has to defend itself – and to lend that piece a special importance and a secret meaning which we [...] call a *symbolic* one' (2001c: 187). Psychotic fantasy, by contrast, 'attempts to put itself in the place of external reality' (Freud 2001c: 187). Thus, neurotic compromise-formation offers a model by which to understand creative writing as an attempt to maintain subjective cohesion by displacing or processing repressed desires. Psychosis, by contrast, is incompatible with the creative process, since the psychotic is unable to grasp the clear ontological distinction between fantasy and reality assumed by the writing process: 'a little neurosis is good for the work of art, good material, but not psychosis, never psychosis' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 144).

It is apparent, therefore, that neurosis is afforded a crucial heuristic status in Freud's model of human subjectivity, and in his understanding of the literary process. Psychosis, by contrast, is comparatively marginalised. Anthony Storr points out that Freud took little personal involvement in cases involving schizophrenia, and suggests that, if he had, he 'would probably be more concerned with the development of the individual's sense of reality than with the vicissitudes of his infantile sexuality' (2001: 76). As will become clear over the course of this chapter, one of the central aims of Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project is precisely to redress this balance, returning attention to the lessons and possibilities implied by schizophrenia. From this perspective, I will show that the relationship between desire and reality takes on a quite different form from that suggested by Freud, and suggests a quite different understanding of literary production.

Psychoanalysis, then, presents us with an image of the human subject as produced and actively maintained through unending conflict, poised at the point of balance between a demanding, intransigent unconscious and an external reality to which that unconscious can never truly be reconciled. Constantly threatened by the return of the forbidden sexual desires of the oedipal phase, and the guilt and punitive anxiety they engender, it can maintain a stable and cohesive sense of identity only through

ongoing repression. While the subject is anterior in this account, existing within the individual body which is the fundamental ground of all desire, it is also riven, forced to constantly deny aspects of its psychic constitution which are experienced as other to itself. Moreover, the desires it feels can never truly be acknowledged or achieved, so that the repressed unconscious can only fantasise their fulfilment in distorted, symbolic fashion. Due to Freud's asocial and disproportionate deployment of neurosis in formulating this account, he establishes the sense that the subject is naturally oriented around a search for hermetic definition, engaged in a constant dynamic of maintenance, restoration and recuperation of its own boundaries.

This in turn furnishes a sense of literature as engaged in the same quest, seeking always to represent and process that which the self can never have, or must never acknowledge: we write with our neuroses. As I will show, this model of subjectivity has been particularly influential within Gothic criticism. To understand why this should be so, it is now necessary to consider two of Freud's most significant forays into the psychoanalysis of literature.

### 3.2 Writing with neurosis: dreams, nightmares and the uncanny

An implicit resonance with the creative process is readily apparent in Freud's conception of neurotic desire, and in 'Creative Writers and Daydreaming' (1908) he explores this resonance via theories developed in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). There, he presented dreams as significant psychological structures capable of being decoded to reveal unconscious conflicts, arguing that most dreams are the '(disguised) fulfilment of a (suppressed, repressed) wish' (Freud 1997: 68). In 'Creative Writers and Daydreaming' he extends this principle to the interpretation of devices employed by the 'modest' authors of popular fiction (Freud 2003: 30), whose work he views as an extension of childhood play and the adult fantasies (daydreams) superseding it. Just as with dreams, he argues that every such fantasy can be understood as 'a wish-fulfilment, correcting an unsatisfied reality' (Freud 2003: 28), so that in the experiences of fictional characters 'we have no difficulty in recognising His Majesty the Ego, the hero of every daydream and novel' (Freud 2003: 30). For Freud, the only real difference between the two is that, while personal fantasies often

appear repellent to others, in the public fantasies of creative fiction writers modify or disguise those elements pertaining to their individual ego, and incentivise readers to accept their fantasies with the aesthetic pleasure deriving from the form of the work.

'Creative Writers and Daydreaming' is a useful source for revealing the origins of psychoanalytic literary criticism within Freud's model of neurotic subjectivity, and is particularly relevant to Gothic fiction. Not only does Gothic employ many of the popular literary conventions considered in this paper, but the dream-like imagery of the mode appears to exemplify the analogy between fiction and dreams. In this respect, the paper foregrounds a *prima facie* compatibility of Gothic fiction with psychoanalytic literary methodology, and with the neurotic psychic states identified in Freud's metapsychology. However, Freud's later paper 'The Uncanny' (1919) resonates even more closely with Gothic concerns and techniques. 'Creative Writers and Daydreaming' is based upon the supposition that fantasies are exclusively governed by libido and the pleasure-principle. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), though, Freud subsequently explored the darker territory of repetition-compulsion and the death-drive. This exploration revealed new perspectives on the presence of anxious or horrific content in play, dreams and fantasies and in 'The Uncanny' Freud demonstrates the literary applications of this newly emergent perspective. To contextualise my analysis of the paper, I will outline how the innate drive towards repetition and death relates to the literary process.

Freud drew his evidence for repetition-compulsion from neurotic patients who seemed driven to repeat distressing experiences or relationships, and also noted that trauma victims relived their trauma repeatedly in the dream state. This led him to conclude that the original function of dreams, prior to the development of the pleasure principle, was to retroactively master traumatic experiences. A further instance was found in children's games, particularly the 'fort/da' game which he witnessed being played by his grandson. In this game, the child would repeatedly throw a wooden reel on a piece of string into his cot, then draw it back, while making noises which Freud interpreted as fort ('gone') and da ('there') (2001b: 15). Freud saw this game as an attempt by the child to master the anxiety it felt over the absence of its mother, revealing a universal human tendency to repeat negative experiences in order to control the tension they cause. He concluded that, while the

libidinal drive seeks to minimise or stabilise tension, the compulsion to repeat represents a more fundamental compulsion to eradicate drive tension altogether. Since this can only be fully achieved by restoring the inorganic state which precedes life itself, he concluded that 'the aim of all life is death' (Freud 2001b: 38).

As Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan notes, Freud's notion of repetition is complex and paradoxical, since repetition and difference are inherently related, and 'each can only be discussed in terms of the other' (1980: 153). Thus, repetition can serve as both a productive process, emphasising difference, but also as a destructive repetition of sameness (Rimmon-Kenan 1980: 153). Both aspects are implied within Freudian theory, the former being associated with the operation of the pleasure principle, the latter with the death drive, and both can be used to shed light on the literary process. Freud himself disavowed the applicability of the death drive to literature, arguing that, unlike dreams or games, artistic works 'do not spare the spectators (for instance, in tragedy) the most painful experiences and can yet be felt by them as highly enjoyable' (2001b: 17). For him, they thus offered no evidence of anything other than the pleasure principle (2001b: 17).

Nonetheless, this concept has been employed by critics of Gothic fiction. Linda Ruth Williams (1995), for instance, reads J. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) as an expression of the death drive, demonstrating how the notion of death as an erotically charged aspect of life itself can illuminate vampire fictions. Justification for this approach can be drawn from Freud's observation that, in children's play, repetition-compulsion and the pleasure principle are not always neatly separable, and frequently operate in 'intimate partnership' (2001b: 23). Freud's concept of the uncanny can be used to argue that the same comingling of the libidinal and death drives may be discovered in creative writing.

Most obviously, the relevance of 'The Uncanny' for Gothic criticism lies in its theoretical articulation of a psychological phenomenon (designated by the German term *unheimlich*, and for which the nearest English equivalents are 'uncanny' or 'eerie' (Freud 2003: 124)) which appears particularly apt in relation to the mode. Furthermore, Freud's arguments are supported by textual analysis of a Gothic-inflected fictional work, offering a model for interpreting fantastical and frightening

content through a methodology derived from the psychoanalysis of dreams and symptoms. Appearing only a year before *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud's analysis here amalgamates his earlier emphasis on wish-fulfilment in creative writing with repetition- compulsion, so as to explore what Hugh Haughton terms 'wishful fears' (2003: *xliii*). Thus, the paper offers 'a clear theoretical introduction to psychoanalytic readings of fantastic literature' (Jackson 1981: 64). Yet, as I will argue, it also prefigures the reductions and lacunae implicit in such readings, and offers an important indication of how schizoanalysis can expose alternative dynamics within the production of Gothic subjectivity.

Freud defines the uncanny as 'a species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well-known and had long been familiar' (2003: 124). He notes that, while the German *unheimlich* would translate literally as 'unhomely' it is not simply an antonym of 'homely' but rather denotes that which 'was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open' (Freud 2003: 132). By this formulation, the notion corresponds closely to the return of repressed material underlying neurotic conditions, so that 'the frightening element is something that has been repressed and now returns' (Freud 2003: 147). In seeking examples of this effect, he interprets the proliferating images of eyes and ocular distortions in E.T.A. Hoffmann's proto-Gothic tale 'The Sandman' (1816) as unconscious representations of 'the anxiety caused by the infantile castration complex' (Freud 2003: 140). He associates other features of the tale, though, such as its depiction of the animate doll Olympia, and its emphasis on the double, with the return of an early phase of mental development. He describes this as a 'harking back to single phases in the evolution of the sense of self, a regression to times when the ego had not yet clearly set itself off against the world outside and from others' (Freud 2003: 143). As I will argue, this alternative derivation presents intriguing possibilities for schizoanalytic readings of the Gothic.

In most respects, Freud's reading of Hoffmann's tale anticipates some of the characteristic limitations of early psychoanalytic literary criticism. His approach to the text is an imperialistic exercise in decoding and unscrambling, in order to restore its contents to their 'original arrangement' as features of the author's unconscious (Freud 2003: 159). He makes little reference to the text's complex rhetorical structure and thus, as Haughton argues, 'discounts something of the vertiginous complexity of



Hoffmann's narrative machinery, with its capacity to generate material of uncertain epistemological status' (2003: *xlviii*). Even more importantly, he overlooks the sense that the uncanniness of the tale lies less in *what* it represents than in *how* it represents: as Nicholas Royle points out, the uncanny 'is not simply *in* the Hoffmann text' but instead arises from it as a 'reading-effect' (2003: 44). Thus, his only concern is to reveal how the text serves to represent pre-existent psychic formations, so as to rediscover the myths which permeate and underpin psychoanalysis. When Freud peers through Hoffmann's spyglass, the first thing he sees is Oedipus, setting the precedent for many subsequent psychoanalytic readings of the Gothic mode.

Yet when Freud goes on to consider other examples of the uncanny, it is notable that many of these, as with Hoffmann's animate doll, concern the return of experiences and sensations associated with the pre-oedipal phase of infantile mental life. He argues that repetition is intrinsically uncanny because it evokes the repetition-compulsion dominant in the mental life of infants and neurotics (Freud 2003: 145). In a similar way, he claims that the uncanniness of spirits, magical powers and anything suggesting the 'omnipotence of thoughts' derives from the return of pre-oedipal states (Freud 2003: 147). This even extends to witnessing the same process in others, so that in madness 'the layman sees a manifestation of forces that he did not suspect in a fellow human being, but whose stirrings he can dimly perceive in remote corners of his own personality' (Freud 2003: 150). All such cases, Freud claims, derive their uncanny power by evoking 'the primordial narcissism that dominates the mental life of both the child and the primitive man' (2003: 142).

'The Uncanny' offers persuasive grounds for reading Gothic fiction as an expression of repressed neurotic impulses, and for perceiving in Gothic writers an urge to repeat, represent and master these impulses, in an exercise closely resembling the threat-and-resolution dynamic of the neurotic subject. It resonates even more fittingly with the Gothic emphasis on the return or survival of archaic, barbaric psycho-social states, with all their animistic or magical associations. Freud repeatedly emphasises that our infantile state equates almost directly with 'the animistic phase in the development of primitive peoples,' the 'residual traces' of which continue to seek expression in the present (2003: 147). This imbrication of personal development and social history, of the inner life of the neurotic and the external forces of subject-

formation, allows Gothic temporality to be read as an anxious, ambiguous exploration of the 'underside' of social progression. As I will show, more recent applications of psychoanalytic concepts to Gothic criticism have gone some way towards correcting the imperialistic simplicity of Freud's approach in this paper. Nonetheless, I will argue that when viewed from a schizoanalytic perspective a fundamentally neurotic construction of the desires which run through the texts continues to hold sway.

In one important respect, though, 'The Uncanny' can be read in a way which reveals the unstated presence of schizoid desire underlying the experiences Freud describes. As I have already noted, in Freud's account, the Oedipus complex is only one source of the uncanny. What appears to return frighteningly to mind in many other uncanny encounters is that 'pre-oedipal' state before our desire became fixed into the template imposed by the oedipal triangle. In *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930) Freud identifies this condition as the 'limitless narcissism' associated with an 'early phase of ego-feeling' (2001d: 72) in which the infant 'does not yet distinguish his ego from the external world as the source of the sensations flowing in upon him' (2001d: 66-67). He distinguishes between these two sources of uncanny experience by arguing that, strictly speaking, animistic experience constitutes a 'belief' which has been 'surmounted' rather than content which has been repressed, as is the case with childhood complexes. Yet he also asserts that 'primitive convictions are closely linked with childhood complexes' so that there is a 'blurring of the boundaries' between them (Freud 2003: 154). This reflects a more general tendency on Freud's part, identified by Deleuze and Guattari, 'to connect the pre-Oedipal phases with the negative complex when this seems called for' (2004: 58). This strategic conflation, when disentangled, contains two important implications for the possibility of replacing the neurotic reading of Gothic fear implied by the uncanny with a schizoanalytic dynamic.

In the first place, it is significant to note that Freud relates pre-Oedipal experience to the sense of 'oceanic' oneness with the world identified by Romain Rolland (2001d: 64), the sense of 'an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole' (2001d: 65). In Freud's view, the idea that someone can have 'an intimation of a connection to the world around them through an immediate feeling' is incompatible

with 'the fabric of our psychology' (2001d: 65). Yet, while confessing that 'I cannot discover this oceanic feeling in myself' he also acknowledges that he is unable to dismiss the possibility that this feeling has a 'primary' rather than entirely intellectual origin (Freud 2001d: 65). He accounts for this sensation by understanding it as a return to repressed, infantile phases of the ego, and although Freud himself does not make the link, these are exactly the same phases as he discusses in 'The Uncanny'. This suggests that, in some cases, the return of early psychic states can be experienced in terms of a liberating, almost ecstatic dissolution of the boundaries of the self, raising the possibility that we can read the characteristic uncanny fears of the Gothic in terms of an admixture of the fearful and the liberating.

Secondly, as I will shortly detail, these pre-oedipal phases of subjectivity and desire are directly associated by Deleuze and Guattari with the free-flowing, productive condition of 'schizoid' desire as it exists before the introduction of an oedipal template. For them, the true purpose of repression is precisely to prevent this non-organised unconscious desire from forging its productive connections with the world, and thus to preserve the sense of a distinction between internal and external realities. In this way, Freud's analysis of the uncanny already contains a prefiguration of the schizoanalytic reading of the Gothic which will unfold over the course of this chapter. I will argue that, when we derive fearful connotations from instances of magic and animism, from spectral hauntings and disturbing repetitions and visions of madness, what we truly fear is the 'return' of our own incipient schizophrenia. In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari imply just such an impulse within Freud's own progressive structuration of desire, his gradual drawing-back from the 'wild' and 'explosive' implications of anoedipal desire: 'the schizo – there is the enemy!' (2004: 62).

Furthermore, if we are sensitised to the compound of feelings which such encounters produce, the fear we experience in response to the subjective dissolution threatened by schizophrenia contains within it a sense of desire released, a desire we can perceive in remote corners of our own personality. As Freud did not say, we are all slightly schizophrenic. Royle suggests that 'everyone's relation with the uncanny is [...] their own and no one else's' and cites Jacques Derrida's observation that 'it is less a question of [...] trying to master the uncanny so that it becomes simply the

familiar, than it is of the opposite movement' (2003: 26). In developing a particular, schizoanalytic enactment of this 'opposite movement' I will show that, while the uncanny permits a neurotic construction of the terrors and fantastical, revenant histories of Gothic fiction, it is also possible to extract a schizoid potentiality running across and against this oedipal grain.

### 3.3 Gothic fiction: an invitation to psychoanalysis

Based on the preceding overview, it is easy to see why Gothic fiction should appear to extend so open an invitation to psychoanalysis, and this *prima facie* applicability has been asserted by a number of critics. William Patrick Day, for instance, claims that 'no discussion of the Gothic can avoid discussing Freud; one of the most obvious ways of thinking about the genre is to read it in terms of Freud's system' (1985: 176). Rosemary Jackson claims that 'fantasy in literature deals so blatantly and repeatedly with unconscious material that it seems rather absurd to try to understand its significance without some reference to psychoanalysis' (1981: 6). Punter describes Gothic fiction as 'a godsend to psychoanalytically-minded critics' (1989: 5). Even the historicist Maurice Lévy resignedly acknowledges that 'psychoanalysis was bound to have its say' (1994: 11). In this section, I will consider how some of the characteristic features of Gothic fiction lend themselves so readily to psychoanalytic literary criticism, thus contributing to the close association of the mode with processes of neurotic subject-formation. I will also begin to suggest the alternative perspectives offered by schizoanalysis.

As already indicated, my focus will be upon the mode's fantastical imagery, its emphasis on situations of supernatural horror, and its obsession with the return or persistence of forces from the past. These features are so important to my arguments because, while apparently reflecting neurotically-organised desire and thus reinforcing a sense of the Gothic as restricted to oedipal patterns of subject-formation, I will show that they can also be read as enacting an anti-oedipal, schizoid liberation of desire. Other factors, including the Gothic's concern with familial forces and structures, and its frequent references to madness, are also relevant to understanding the origins of psychoanalytic engagement with the Gothic, but will not

receive detailed consideration in my thesis. The family features prominently in much Gothic writing, its appearances often charged with connotations of incest, dispossession and guilt, and with ambivalence towards patriarchy which has triggered gendered readings of the mode conditioned by post-Freudian feminist theory. Writing from such a perspective, Anne Williams has suggested that 'the patriarchal family provides the organizing 'myth' of the literature we now call Gothic' (Williams 1995: 29). Yet, while this familial dimension can be taken as reflecting oedipal paranoia, it falls outside my remit because it is unsuited to the explication of alternative, schizoid effects within the mode.

Similarly, the portrayal of madness within many Gothic works has attracted psychoanalytic interest. As Punter notes, 'one variant or another of described mental abnormality occurs in all the relevant texts,' many of which resemble 'case histories' (1989: 5). Furthermore, as Michelle A. Massé suggests, this process has been intensified in Gothic works produced since, and presumably with some consciousness of, the emergence of psychoanalysis (2001: 230). Again, though, this particular aspect of Gothic fiction will be considered only to the extent that it goes beyond representation or signification and is enacted through the mode's delirious distortions of rationally-conceived reality.

By contrast, the Gothic deployment of a fantastical or anti-realist aesthetic agenda presents important territory for exploring contrasting interpretations of the mode's subjective operations. Freud lays particular stress on popular fiction in his theorisations of literature because its representations of unfulfilled desires are more openly visible than in more sophisticated modes. Even if for no other reason than that it is a distinctively 'popular' form of literature (indeed, one of the first examples of such) Gothic fiction appears to be open to analysis in these terms. Yet this fiction is characterised by more than that simple valorisation of 'His Majesty the Ego' associated with popular works in general. In the first place, as Punter notes, it differs from other popular forms because it does not depict simply the fulfilment of wishes, but also 'the stumblings, the labyrinths, the uncertainties, the doubts, all those monsters which afflict us on the path towards such fulfilment' (1996: 189). In this sense, as I will discuss, it is especially suited to the unique insights provided by the psychoanalytic concepts of the uncanny and the abject.

Furthermore, the Gothic emphasis on fantastical imagery goes beyond representations of 'ordinary' reality, bringing intrusions of the supernatural, the dream-like and the imaginary into conflict with rational conceptions of the world. It thus evokes psychopathological undercurrents running beneath the Enlightenment model of the rational subject, depicting 'the radically inappropriate persistence of visions of the world which [...] which should have faded long ago from the inner eye' (Punter 1989: 8). This appears to render it eminently suited to psychoanalytic interpretation, and has even led some critics to credit the Gothic with the 'invention' of a systematic discourse of the irrational prefiguring that developed by Freud (Massé 2001: 230). Yet, as I will show, when viewed from a schizoanalytic perspective, this anti-realist agenda can also be viewed as inaugurating a literary methodology with the potential to release schizoid, virtual potentialities from the limitations of a perception grounded in actuality.

A similar possibility arises in regard to the frequent deployment of horror in the Gothic mode. Freud's emphasis on the proliferation and expansion of repressed material in the unconscious foregrounds the relationship between horror and the neurotic drive towards the maintenance of egoic integrity. His notion of the uncanny has thus been one of the most influential concepts informing the critical treatment of Gothic horror, allowing critics to understand frightening content within Gothic fiction as representing a return of the repressed. Closely related to this, Freud's theory of repetition-compulsion allows Gothic fiction to be read as 'unconsciously' playing out repressed anxieties in an attempt to master them. Finally, through Freud's idea of the death drive, we can understand horror in relation to the masochistic tendencies or sadistic aggression produced by the innate impulse of the psyche to neutralise drive-tension through non-existence. Thus, as Botting observes, in the 'darker themes' of Gothic fiction 'criticism finds an explicit invitation to indulge in traditional psychoanalysis' (1996: 18-19). In all these respects, psychoanalysis aligns Gothic horror with the maintenance of neurotic subject-states, and thus reinforces an implicit critical emphasis on neurosis as the chief figuration of Gothic subjectivity.

Post-Freudian developments in psychoanalysis have refined and complexified these basic paradigms, offering new concepts for understanding horror in terms of Lacanian psychodynamics. Nonetheless, I contend that these refinements serve only

to further underscore this neurotic dynamic. Of primary interest here is Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, which, as will be seen later, resonates closely with the Deleuzio-Guattarian concept of the 'anomalous' but represents an almost diametrically-opposed interpretation. Kristeva's theory relates the Freudian uncanny more directly to the process of dynamic ego-adaptation. She argues that we do not simply fear that which we experience as 'other' to our conscious self-identity; rather, we actively uphold that identity precisely by defining ourselves in relation to otherness, by casting-off that which is 'opposed to I' (Kristeva 1982: 1). What we abject, she argues, in order to maintain our identity, is that which 'disturbs identity, system, order' and 'does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite' (1982: 4).

This concept can readily be applied to the horrific compound beings of Gothic fiction, such as the vampire, which could be taken as an image of 'those fragile states where man strays on the territories of *animal*' (Kristeva 1982: 13) and is thus drawn into the borderlands which define the edges of being. Kristeva presents the corpse as a particularly intense image of this process because 'corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live,' they are 'a border that has encroached upon everything' (1982: 3). By contrast, as I will shortly discuss, images of the 'composite' or the 'in-between' can be mobilised in the context of schizoanalysis as valuable precisely because they free experience from a fixed, oedipal organisation. The key difference underlying Kristevan and Deleuzio-Guattarian evaluations of this phenomenon is that Kristeva bases her arguments on 'the inaugural *loss* at the centre of desire' (1982: 5). For Kristeva, this process places subjectivity into a state of crisis, because it foregrounds 'the *want* on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded' (1982: 5), so that 'I abject *myself* within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish *myself*' (1982: 3). On the other hand, as I will show, because Deleuze and Guattari understand the desires which precede being not in terms of lack but as essentially productive, they also understand this crisis in terms of a dynamic of liberation. When I enter into detailed consideration of Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy, I will explore further the different dynamic which may be applied to abjection in this regard.

Finally, the inter-related logic of repression, uncanny return and abjection has also influenced critical constructions of the personal temporalities and social histories unfolded within Gothic fiction. Images of haunting, together with the return of long-buried patriarchal threats and barbaric, medieval or despotic forces can be understood in terms of the resurgence of repressed oedipal fears. Even where these factors are understood as representing socially-constituted anxieties, they remain amenable to interpretation in terms of 'abjection' of the past in the service of progressive self-definitions of the present. Crucially, though, this form of interpretation draws upon the psychoanalytic conception of desire as always referring back to some unattainable loss rooted in the past. By extension, it reinforces the sense of a personal unconscious governed by eternal repetition upon a linear temporal scale. By contrast, as I will show in my studies of the work of Lovecraft and Burroughs, it is possible to understand this aspect of Gothic writing in terms of the synchronic networks of desire suggested by schizoanalysis, and thus to see it as radically contesting the normative spatio-temporal coordinates which frame the oedipal subject.

### 3.4 Psychoanalysis and the neurotic subject in contemporary Gothic criticism

It is apparent, then, that Gothic fiction is readily suited to explication through the concepts and methods of psychoanalysis. Before considering the schizoanalytic critique of psychoanalytically-informed criticism, though, and the nature of the alternative paradigms it offers, it is necessary to establish how the psychoanalytic model of neurotic subject-formation informs current criticism. As noted, in the contemporary critical milieu, psychoanalysis is rarely employed as an exclusive metanarrative of exposition. Instead, it is more likely to form a supporting element within a repertoire of theoretical approaches, or to be integrated synthetically with alternative critical paradigms. In some ways, the excesses of the earliest psychoanalytically-informed Gothic criticism have been excised, and more recent developments have moved towards reconciling psychoanalytic and schizoanalytic approaches, through their recognition that oedipal subjectivity is formed within specific social conditions. Nonetheless, I contend that the psychoanalytic emphasis



on neurotic subjectivity, with its unquestioning complicity in a politics of subjective conditioning, continues to exert influence.

Early approaches viewed the themes and structures of Gothic writing as representing forces universally present within the individual psyche, paying little attention to socio-historical context. Adhering closely but superficially to Freudian methodology, they treated symbols as having a definitive, fixed meaning, disregarding the more complex understanding of such symbology emphasised by Freud himself. For example, as Ross C. Murfin notes, in her psycho-biographical study *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho-Analytic Interpretation* (1949) Marie Bonaparte 'found Poe to be so fixated on his mother that his repressed longing emerges in his stories in images such as the white spot on a black cat's breast, said to represent mother's milk' (2002: 470-471). Massé observes that these approaches tended to read Gothic characters intra-psychically as metaphors or allegories of the structural dynamics of the unconscious, as typified by Leslie Fiedler's emphasis on the double or divided self in *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1966/1997) (2001:233). This allowed analysts to assume an imperialistic, interpretive authority over texts, ignoring consciously-presented details in favour of repressed truths, 'so that what is sequestered in the dungeon seems to have more significance than what is on display in the drawing room, the present to have less import than the individual, familial and social past' (Massé 2001: 234).

As Massé argues, the application of psychoanalysis to the field of Gothic criticism gradually became more sophisticated and less insular, partly as a result of internal developments within psychoanalysis itself. In the first instance, she points to a progressive erosion of the hermetic imperial authority of the analyst, due to recognition of counter-transference and the analyst's own ego-needs (Massé 2001: 235). One result of these changes was the emergence of the reader-response school, which sought to replace the previous emphasis on symbols as representing fixed meanings with an attention to the meanings which can be projected onto these symbols by the reader (Lévy 1994: 11). More generally, as Sue Vice observes, there was an erosion of the boundary between the analytic and the literary, reflecting Jacques Lacan's reformulation of the relationship between language and the

unconscious, causing criticism to seek 'mutual' rather than 'masterful' literary insights (1996: 6).

Secondly, Massé identifies an emerging emphasis on the dynamic nature of the ego as actively adaptive in response to external forces. Massé links this change to the development of the object-relations school (associated with Melanie Klein and D.W. Winnicott) and the ego-psychology of Erik Erikson, both of which, she notes, 'significantly modify Freud's developmental schema and highlight the temporal dimension of character development' (2001: 236). Here, the ego is no longer defined by some singular element of response to fixed, universal stimuli, but is understood as a complex constellation of adaptive responses to external pressures. Thus, she suggests, emphasis shifts from asking 'what are you trying to hide from, deny or repress with this behaviour?' to 'what are you trying to preserve and achieve?' (Massé, 2001: 35). Since this allows Gothic characters to be read against a model of the ego in which such preservative strategies represent context-specific responses to external stimuli, 'the nature of the stimuli then itself becomes a topic of conversation' (Massé 2001: 236). Additionally, whereas before the focus was on individual characters as the 'repositories' of neurotic forces within the text, attention shifts here to the way in which such forces inform the structure of the text itself. Thus, paranoia (for example) is no longer considered as a force which produces isolated symbols and defines a particular character, but is recognised as a structural feature of the text itself (Massé 2001: 236).

Although, Massé suggests, these new approaches still tended to focus on 'the male character as normative, and, usually, upon the oedipal plot' (2001: 236), they at least did so in ways which recognised the social constitution of neurosis rather than simply attributing it to an inability to reconcile psychic and physical reality. She cites here Mathew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796), in which the tortured character of the transgressive monk Ambrosio can be read as a product of conflict between his inner nature and the oppressive shaping influence of Catholicism. In a related way, just as male characters came to be seen as 'dynamic representations of ego development' the experiences of female characters, too, came to be understood as interrogatory representations of social conditioning (Massé 2001: 237). Massé depicts this as a

nascent questioning of the male/female binary, and the beginnings of a perception of Gothic dread as something more than 'an individual or familial problem' (2001: 237).

As Massé notes, an increasing integration of the 'interpretative frame' of psychoanalysis with other perspectives derived from cultural studies caused new questions to be asked about the psychoanalytically-informed critic's 'self-interest and complicity in [...] the genealogies of power' (2001: 238), and the exclusion of feminist and Marxist perspectives. These questions prompted a renewed interest in the socio-historical activism of Gothic writing. For some critics, these modifications remain insufficient, so long as Gothic fiction continues to be understood in relation to the unconscious. Baldick and Mighall assert that the 'tendency to disregard [...] surface 'details' in the pursuit of psychological 'depth' remains peculiarly persistent in Gothic Criticism' (2001: 217-218). More frequently, though, psychoanalysis is employed to supplement the concerns of cultural studies.

Nevertheless, many functional concepts of psychoanalytic criticism (the familiarly-formed, neurotic or oedipal unconscious, the representation of repressed fears or desires and the dynamics of the uncanny and abjection) remain common features of contemporary critical writing, even where the limitations of a purely psychological interpretative frame are overtly recognised. Thus, Hogle, introducing the inaugural issue of *Gothic Studies* in 1999, presents a summation of current scholarship which references 'family secrets, and psychological studies of the past and present,' attention to 'the ways symbolic formations deal with conflicting beliefs and many other kinds of cultural anxiety' and awareness of 'a complex symbolic realm where conditions and quandaries that we want to "throw off" from ourselves [...] face us in half-repulsive, half-attractive spectres or monstrosities' (1999: 1). The allusions to Freudian (and post-Freudian) psychoanalysis here are as obvious as the caution with which those allusions are hedged in historicism and feminism. They show the way in which psychoanalysis continues to influence the critical imagination.

Thus, many of the most obvious 'problems' associated with literary psychoanalysis have been ameliorated within the contemporary critical field. The imperialistic interpretation of textual meaning, with its emphasis on content, has been replaced with a more sensitive awareness of structure, rhetoric and conscious authorial

engagement. The ego, rather than unconsciously representing repressed desires and anxieties in the text, is now understood as a dynamic, adaptive agency which actively works to process and resolve internal tensions. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, those features of the psyche traditionally represented by psychoanalysis as 'universal' have come to be viewed in relation to the wider external social forces which condition them. In this way, psychoanalysis no longer participates so damagingly in a patriarchal, bourgeois or racist suppression of the socio-political discourses of the Gothic.

Yet none of these developments obviate the schizoanalytic critique of the 'oedipalisation' of literary subjectivity promulgated by psychoanalysis. Nor can they account for the presence of anti-oedipal, schizoid forces of desire within Gothic fiction. The emphasis placed on Gothic texts as structures of signification and expression continues to uphold an image of desire as an unproductive reaction to lack. This, in turn, implies an oedipal model of subjectivity, via an individuated self, fundamentally organised in its desires, and naturally oriented towards attempts (even if unsuccessful) to restore or maintain cohesion. To the extent that Gothic criticism continues to understand the mode as presenting threats to this forlorn subject, it participates, however unintentionally, in the same work of social repression as psychoanalysis itself. This applies most obviously to approaches which view 'the' subject of Gothic fiction in terms of a neurotic drive towards maintaining a default, anterior state of subjectivity. Yet it also applies even to exclusively cultural or socio-historicist readings, inasmuch as these uphold an emphasis on representation and signification. To understand this radical perspective, I will now turn to consider the schizoanalytic model of subjectivity and its implications for the reading of Gothic fiction.

#### 4. Schizoanalysis and the Gothic

##### 4.1. 'A strange subject': The nature of schizoid subjectivity

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari develop a model of the psyche which, unlike psychoanalysis, places emphasis on schizophrenia rather than neurosis as an

orienting figure for understanding the functionality of the unconscious. This altered emphasis stems from differences between the psychoanalytic and schizoanalytic conceptions of desire, and produces a distinctive sense of schizoid subjectivity. Since a primary goal of this thesis is to identify movements towards the release or production of this mode of subjectivity in Gothic fiction, it is necessary to clarify the key features of the schizoanalytic model of psychic functionality, and explore how this model differs from the essentially neurotic model of the psyche advanced within psychoanalysis.

The Deleuzio-Guattarian critique of psychoanalysis is marked by some of the significant modifications to that theory suggested by Lacan, under whom Guattari trained. These modifications, and Lacan's concept of the split subject, often condition their arguments in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, and were suggestive in helping them to develop their alternative model of psychic function. However, Deleuze and Guattari view these modifications as substantively repeating the effect of Freud's prioritisation of oedipal lack. They acknowledge that Lacan may have 'saved psychoanalysis' from its 'frenzied oedipalization' but argue that, in doing so, he simply found new ways to trap the unconscious 'under the weight of the despotic apparatus' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 237). While he freed the oedipal structure from being understood purely in terms of the familial triangle, he gave it a new structure based on 'positions and functions that do not conform to the variable figure of those who come to occupy them in a given social or pathological formulation' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 59). In this way, he simply produced a new 'triangulation' made up of 'desire, its object, and the law' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 59). Thus, they liken the total effect of his work to the image of resistance fighters 'who, wanting to destroy a pylon, balanced the plastic charges so well that the pylon blew up and fell back into its hole' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 290). In important respects, therefore, Lacan remains 'oedipal' in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's anti-oedipal orientation. With this in mind, it falls outside the scope of my thesis to offer a detailed examination of the genealogical relationship between Lacanian psychoanalysis and schizoanalysis. Rather, my primary concern is to highlight the 'final' position in this genealogy represented by the arguments of Deleuze and Guattari themselves.

In classic psychoanalytic theory, desire is understood as an essentially somatic force which, conditioned by the early familial environment, functions only by producing internal, psychic representations of objects which it lacks. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari treat this model as the product of specific socio-political forces rather than as a universal account of desire in its natural state. Instead, they argue that desire 'is at work everywhere,' flowing through life, both organic and inorganic, forming new connections with the world which they characterise as 'machines' of desire (2004: 1). Rejecting the Freudian notion of the unconscious as a 'theatre' in which unfulfilled desires are repeatedly dramatised, they instead consider the unconscious as a 'factory' which builds and subtends new 'desiring-machines' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 2). These desiring-machines are not formed in response to 'objects of desire' which are lacking, but quite to the contrary, it is they which actively produce reality. Eugene Holland likens this process to the 'sense that lawyers 'produce' evidence in a court of law: they cannot 'wish' it into existence; they don't make it up but they do make it count as real' (1999: 23). As Holland explains, this process occurs 'through the investment of energy in psychic as well as physical form,' so that psychic drives shape the phenomenal world just as labour shapes the material world (1999: 23).

Deleuze and Guattari stress that production and consumption, and a record of the networks of connections which facilitate this cycle, form a single process. As they argue, 'production is immediately consumption and a recording process [...] and the recording process and consumption directly determine production' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 4); their model of the psyche as a 'natural' process of unconscious function directly reflects this general dynamic. Thus, at a metapsychological level, the id is displaced by prepersonal flows of desire, and the notion of desiring-machines replaces the Freudian concept of instinctual drives. Desire thus works within the unconscious to produce new connections, but simultaneously, a disjunctive force of anti-production (which takes the place of the Freudian death drive) serves to break these connections so that new ones can be formed. As Deleuze and Guattari note, 'desiring-machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down' because otherwise desire would become fixed in unchanging, organised forms (2004: 9).

Consequently, in place of an unconscious literally 'organised' according to certain fixed 'organs' of perception, sensation and experience Deleuze and Guattari posit the unconscious as a recording surface which they term a 'body-without-organs' (2004: 9), an idea developed from Antonin Artaud's work on a body with 'no need of organs' (2004: 9). The body-without-organs is not itself a productive force, but 'forms networks of relations among connections' (Holland 1999: 28). Although serving as a form of memory, this recorded network does not adhere to a linear temporality or a metonymic hierarchy, pointing back to some lost object of desire, as in the Freudian primary process. Instead, it is a 'flat' network which serves only to facilitate the repetition of differential relations through a synchronic process of 'variation, ramification [and] improvisation' (Holland 1999: 28). As such, Holland observes, it enables us 'to take pleasure not necessarily in experiencing the new in terms of the old (as Freud would have it) but simply in experiencing one thing in relation to something else' (1999: 29). Working in this way, the body-without-organs frees us from structural determination of the instinctual drives, and perpetually produces new formations of desire.

This dynamic of unconscious functionality bears profound implications for the nature and social constitution of subjectivity. In Deleuze and Guattari's account, consumption, the *experience* of gratification, and thus 'something on the order of a *subject*' comes into existence through the production of recording on the surface of the body without organs (2004: 17). This is, however, a 'strange subject [...] with no fixed identity,' traversing the body without organs 'but always remaining peripheral to the desiring-machines, being defined by the share of the product it takes for itself, garnering here, there, and everywhere a reward in the form of a becoming or an avatar' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 17). As we have seen, this contrasts directly with the Freudian model of desire as being an organic, somatically-derived quality or property of 'the' subject. For Deleuze and Guattari, 'desiring is not in the subject, but the machine in desire – with the residual subject off to the side [...] a parasite of machines, an accessory of vertebro-machinate desire' (2004: 314). Thus, as Holland explains, 'the subject emerges *only as an after-effect* of the selections made by desire [...] *not as the agent* of selection' (1999: 33). This notion of subjectivity in continual processes of becoming rather than states of being is central to Deleuze's

analysis of writing, and as I will show at a later stage, it provides an important key to recognising the emergence of a 'schizophrenic' subjectivity in Gothic fiction.

Thus, we can understand this model of subjectivity-as-process as the defining quality of schizophrenic subjectivity, which goes through 'a series of lived subject-states – but without necessarily culminating in a fixed subject possessed of a specific identity' (Holland 1999: 36). In effect, schizophrenia in its pure state resides upon the body-without-organs, and movements towards schizophrenic subjectivity thus consist in stripping away the fixed organs around which the neurotic unconscious is formed, and constructing in their place a body without organs. As Deleuze and Guattari stress, this subjective condition does not equate to 'the artificial schizophrenic found in mental institutions' (2004: 5), the 'schizo-as -entity' (2004: 148) who is 'forced into autistic behaviour' (2004: 5). In their account, this condition is the result of the schizophrenic process being abruptly ended, or indefinitely prolonged, by the imposition of a neurotic dynamic. Instead, schizophrenia is 'the universe of productive and reproductive desiring-machines,' which is 'the essential reality of man and nature' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 5). Recognised in this way, schizophrenia allows us to understand subjectivity as a quality which is pre-personal, a manifestation of desires which are collective and social rather than beginning and ending with the individual.

It is clear, though, that however 'natural' schizoid subjectivity may be, it does not accord with the experience of what Holland terms 'normal' (and presumably neurotic) adults who subscribe to a 'metaphysics of sovereign subjectivity – whereby they choose their pleasures and desires, rather than being "chosen," that is to say constituted, by them' (1999: 34). Thus, as Holland observes, 'even to speak of "the" subject in the singular is in a sense to have already succumbed to the reversal and illusions of sovereign subjectivity' (1999: 35). Similarly, to the extent that we speak of 'the' Gothic subject we automatically imply a certain way of understanding Gothic subjectivity which then conditions all subsequent debate.

In Deleuze and Guattari's account, neurosis only occurs when the disjunctive force of anti-production gains undue power over the natural forces of production in the unconscious, so that 'desiring-production is denied one or more of its own



connections and is constrained to fix instead on a relatively ungratifying substitute connection (the neurotic symptom)' (Holland 1999: 33). If subjectivity emerges as a 'residuum' or 'appendix' to the machines of desire connecting across the body without organs, and if they become fixed in a repetitive state of organisation, this results in subjectivity itself also assuming a fixed identity (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 21). 'To the extent that subjects believe themselves to have a specific and fixed identity,' Holland argues, 'they do' (1999: 35); this literally self-fulfilling cycle, whereby attachment to a sense of identity limits an ability to connect with the world in different ways, is common. As I showed in my account of Freud's metapsychology, this state is especially promoted by the Oedipus complex. At the centre of Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis, though, is their assertion that this state of affairs is neither natural nor universal but reflects a need particular to capitalist society.

In the next section, I will offer a more detailed analysis of the socio-political genealogy within which Deleuze and Guattari locate the emergence of schizophrenic and neurotic modes of subjectivity. First, though, it is useful to consider in more general psycho-social terms the dynamic of oedipal subjectivity traced within *Anti-Oedipus*. For Deleuze and Guattari, although schizophrenic subjectivity stems from a natural imbrication of humanity and nature, its emergence in earlier social formations is precluded by an imposed paranoia stemming from the rigid codifying of desire. It is only within the capitalist *socius* that it emerges as a force of 'unlimited semiosis' in direct corollary with the subversion of fixed meanings and beliefs by the capitalist 'cash nexus' (Holland 1999: 2). At the same time, because this schizophrenic tendency threatens to undermine capitalist control and cohesion, it comes to be restricted through the re-introduction of an artificially resurgent paranoia. Although this paranoia takes various forms, the primary means of restricting the forces of schizophrenia at a psycho-social level resides in the psychoanalytic notion of the Oedipus.

Deleuze and Guattari offer a complex analysis of the oedipal incest-taboo across social history, but this analysis is designed primarily to illuminate its function under capitalism. While acknowledging the widespread existence of the Oedipus complex, and its effect in inducing neurotic subject-states, they dispute Freud's claim that it is

a universal feature of human society, derived from familial influences without reference to wider social context. Instead, they argue that it is an artificial construct of modern capitalist society, serving to trap schizoid desire within a predetermined formation. By orienting desire around that which has been lost, and is eternally forbidden and unattainable, it facilitates a process of repression, forcing desire to follow a logic of representation rather than enacting its natural function of production. As such, it causes schizoid desire, and the processual subjectivity it produces, to become ensnared within a fixed, organised, 'oedipal' selfhood.

They assert that the family is never the true determining factor in the production of repression and oedipal subjectivity; rather, the family itself is turned into a stimulus, aggregate and intermediary of oedipal restriction by the social forces within which it is enmeshed (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 354). The family's 'mission,' they argue, is thus 'to produce neurotics by means of its oedipalization [...] without which social repression would never find docile and resigned subjects' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 396). Psychoanalysis did not simply 'invent' the Oedipus, but it is guilty of misconstruing it as a universal, personal and familial quality of subjectivity (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 291). In doing so, it conceals the true nature of the Oedipus and the mode of subjectivity it engenders, as a socio-politically specific mechanism of repression, 'a requirement or consequence of social reproduction' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 15). Thus, by suborning desire's natural functionality as a productive force into a dynamic of unconscious representation, psychoanalysis is complicit in the production of fixed subjects amenable to capitalist control.

One result of this process, Deleuze and Guattari argue, is that modern capitalist society must be understood as caught between two rival polar tendencies described as paranoid and schizophrenic, or 'paranoiac fascisizing' and 'schizorevolutionary' (2004: 304). The struggle or oscillation between these poles is at work both in the unconscious and in the various ways in which desire invests the social field. Crucially, as my thesis contends, it can also be discovered within the individual texts and general modality of Gothic fiction. The first tendency is oriented towards the fearful shoring-up of egoic boundaries and patriarchal authority, and imposes an understanding of the world in terms of normative, statistically preponderant or 'molar' categories of being (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 308). Elsewhere, Deleuze and

Guattari understand this tendency in terms of the 'majoritarian' mobilisation of the category of 'man' or 'the average-adult-white-heterosexual-European-male' as a 'constant of expression' or 'standard measure' (1988: 105). They contrast this with a 'minoritarian' mode of existence understood as 'a potential, creative and created, becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 106). As I will show, this minor, molecular orientation is central to Deleuze and Guattari's account of literature's schizoid functionality, and offers a way to identify and mobilise the schizoid effects of Gothic fiction.

For Deleuze and Guattari, 'these oscillations of the unconscious, these underground passages from one type of libidinal investment to the other – often the coexistence of the two – form one of the major objects of schizoanalysis' (2004: 306). *Contra* Freud, schizoanalysis is directed towards an intensification of the schizoid tendency, and thus a restoration of the productive psycho-social force of desire. In this respect, the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project enacts two closely-imbricated processes. The first is 'the constant destructive task of disintegrating the normal ego' and its 'presuppositions' by highlighting the priority of collective, social investments over the private and familial (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 396). The second is the task of mobilising flows of schizoid desire, 'establishing always further and more sharply the schizzes and the breaks well below conditions of identity; and assembling the desiring-machines that countersect everyone and group everyone with others' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 396). As I will argue, these tasks define precisely the active effects which must be identified within Gothic fiction if it is to be considered as containing a schizoid force. Equally, they provide a clear manifesto for establishing a schizo-critical approach to the mode.

Deleuze and Guattari attribute a particular potential to literary production for facilitating these tasks. Within the literary as well as the social field, however, there is a tension or contest between the poles of paranoia and schizophrenia. In this respect, they differentiate between the 'oedipal form' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 145) of writing and its alternative 'schizoid vocation' (Smith 1997: *xxi*). Deleuze and Guattari associate the first with the illusory, artificial condition of oedipal subjectivity, which produces a mode of literary production governed by neurotic fantasies, and explicable in terms of an attempt to contain anxieties traceable to past experiences.

At the broadest level, literature is produced (and received) 'oedipally' and thus 'secretes ideology according to the dominant codes' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 145) to the extent that it works as a system of signification, through which desire serves merely to represent a reality which precedes the text.

For Deleuze and Guattari, this represents an abnegation of literature's greatest potential, which is, by contrast, to facilitate the construction of new desiring-machines and actualise new flows of schizoid, prepersonal subjectivity. The tension between these two subjective tendencies within literary production thus forms a central point of orientation in the schizoanalytic 'evaluation' of literature, and this offers important insights into the Gothic construction of subjectivity. To understand the literary manifestations of this tension, though, it is necessary to situate these manifestations amongst the social forces which produce them. I will now turn to an examination of the particular historico-genealogical contextualisation of the Gothic mode made possible by schizoanalysis.

#### 4.2. The nightmare of capitalism: a schizoanalytic history of Gothic subjectivity

In 'English *Roman Noirs* and Surrealism' (1936) André Breton describes Gothic ruins as 'suddenly so full of significance in that they express the collapse of the feudal period' (Breton 1990: 113). As observed earlier, the emergence of Gothic fiction has been linked closely to the decline of feudalism and that series of cultural shifts in the eighteenth century which marked the emergence of the modern capitalist state. This connection has been aligned to the neurotic dynamic of guilt, anxiety and paranoia visible within the mode. The distinctive form of 'universal history' unfolded within Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project, though, offers a particular way to understand the socio-historical context of Gothic fiction. This Deleuzio-Guattarian approach retains an underlying allegiance to the value of Marxist social analysis, expressed through Deleuze's 'insistence that all political thought must take its bearings from the capitalist context we live in' (Roffe 2010: 40). Yet Deleuze and Guattari's social analysis is unique in identifying capitalism as the source of a new dimension of schizophrenic subjectivity, and in its politicised reading

of neurosis as an artificial mechanism engineered precisely to curtail this schizophrenic dynamic.

In this respect, I contend that Deleuzio-Guattarian schizoanalysis offers new ways to politicise the neurotic dynamic within Gothic fiction, and to discover schizoid processes which rupture and escape this dynamic. Before examining in more detail the enactment of these processes within Gothic fiction, it is necessary to consider the new light which Deleuze and Guattari's historicised reading of capitalism sheds upon the originary context of Gothic fiction.

The model of universal history in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* provides a unique mode of historical analysis directly relevant to the dynamics of subjectivity within Gothic fiction. Deleuze and Guattari describe this model as 'retrospective, [...] contingent, singular, ironic, and critical' (2004: 154). They stress that universal history becomes possible only with the emergence of capitalism itself, and was not a predictable concept because the capitalist mode of production does not arise organically from forces internal to earlier social formations. Instead, it constitutes a 'creative break' from all prior history, emerging contingently from a convergence of different forces (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 243). Hence, they argue, 'the only universal history is the history of contingency' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 244). It is only with the birth of capitalism, which lays bare the relationship between desire and the social forces which work to capture and control it, that earlier social formations can be understood in terms of their structuration and management of desire. Simultaneously, with this understanding it becomes possible to apprehend capitalism in its singularity, and to enact a social critique which proceeds from *within* the capitalist *socius* itself (Holland 2010: 42). Through this approach, Gothic fiction can be situated on the cusp of a profound shift in the socio-historical construction of subjectivity.

Deleuze and Guattari's historical analysis proceeds from their assertion that life is comprised of flows of pure, abstract desire, and that any given social formation may be understood as a 'social machine' which works to channel, restrict and structure these flows (2004: 155). All social formations prior to capitalism achieve this by 'coding' the flows, imposing fixed conventions on the ways people think, talk, work,

relate to one another and to the world, and experience their own subjectivity. In the earliest societies, this process takes the form of a 'primitive territorial machine' which inscribes tribal codes or territories onto the earth itself (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 159). This formation is succeeded by a 'barbarian despotic machine' which 'deterritorializes' and 'overcodes' the tribal codes and reconstructs them as functions of an imperial despot, who comes to stand as the central figure of all social production (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 210). Under regimes of this kind, desire becomes a property unique to the despot himself, so that the search for desire on an individual level is associated with betrayal, disobedience and rebellion. As such, the despotic regime functions as a 'system of terror' and subjectivity is governed by a paranoid dynamic (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 230). Desire, therefore, is forced to function as a representational, rather than genuinely productive, force.

When despotism was succeeded by capitalism, this marked a break from all earlier social formations because, rather than operating by coding, capitalism decodes all earlier value-systems and replaces them with an 'axiomatic of abstract quantities' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 36), effectively a 'law of general equivalence in the form of monetary value' (Roffe 2010: 41). This is facilitated by the decoding and spatio-temporal convergence of two particular flows: 'the decoded flows of production in the form of money-capital, and the decoded flows of labour in the form of the "free worker"' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 36). Capitalism works to maximise the surplus value which results from the difference between the values of these two flows, ultimately stripping all values of their 'absolute' foundations and reducing them to quantifiable abstractions. At the same time, it releases new flows of desire by equating desire directly with production rather than restricting it to the logic of consumption. It thus restores the possibility of desire forming productive 'desiring-machines' rather than being forced to function only through representation.

In doing this, Deleuze and Guattari argue, capitalism reveals a 'universal truth' behind all prior social formations, which is that the codes underlying these societies are no more than artificial restrictions designed to channel desire, 'coding the flows, and even overcoding them, rather than letting anything escape coding' (2004: 168). In their Gothically-inflected account, 'capitalism has haunted all forms of society, but it haunts them as their terrifying nightmare, it is the dread they feel of a flow that

would elude their codes' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 154). In this nightmare, the process of generalised deterritorialisation has no limit except the total loss of fixed meaning and social cohesion. Thus, capitalism constantly expands 'toward a threshold of decoding that will destroy the *socius* [...] and unleash the flows of desire [...] as a deterritorialised field' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 36). It is precisely this effect, they argue, that produces the schizophrenic, 'the subject of the decoded flows' who is defined only in terms of abstract quantities (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 36). By facilitating a 'schiz' or fragmentation of psychic structure into flows of prepersonal desire, capitalism allows a mode of subjectivity to develop which forms libidinal investments no longer governed by organised selfhood. In this sense, schizophrenia, 'the malady of our era' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 37), is a uniquely capitalist condition, a parallel at the level of subjectivity to the abstraction and loss of meaning that unfolds at a wider social level.

In order to limit this effect, and maintain both social cohesion and an organised subjectivity amenable to control and determination by the state, capitalism 'institutes or restores all sorts of residual and artificial, imaginary, or symbolic territories' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 37). It artificially restores the paranoia which underpinned social authority in the despotic regime, resuscitating such fragments of the traditional despotic codes as the authority of government and a belief in national values. Furthermore, and even more fundamentally in Deleuze and Guattari's account, the nuclear family takes on a new, universal significance, in which 'the father takes the position (structurally speaking) of the despotic and all-seeing ruler' (Roffe, 2010: 42). Through the figure of Oedipus, psychoanalysis provides a theoretical means to attribute priority to the familial over the social, allowing for an 'oedipalisation' of the subject, 'the personal and private territoriality that corresponds to all of capitalism's efforts at social reterritorialisation' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 289). In this respect, Deleuze and Guattari view psychoanalysis as 'reviving an age-old tendency to humble us, to demean us, and to make us feel guilty' (2004: 53). Modern capitalist society thus exists in a state of oscillation between the poles of neo-despotic paranoia and revolutionary schizophrenia.

This analysis bears important implications for understanding the contesting forces of subjectivity within Gothic fiction. The original Gothic canon, emerging in the later

stages of the eighteenth century, straddles precisely the period of transition between the feudal system and modern capitalism. It must thus be understood as a response to the first true emergence of the 'nightmare' that haunted earlier social structures. Jerrold E. Hogle has already identified one implication of this, which is that the Gothic must be seen as itself having contributed to the rise of psychoanalysis 'by pointedly playing out, at the start, the growing Western understanding of signs and substances as [...] falsifications of the social and personal substances once associated with them in the Middle Ages' (Hogle 1994: 25). His argument does not necessarily obviate the validity of psychoanalytically-inflected readings of some Gothic fiction, since 'this opening of a breach between symbol and basis' may well lead to 'the projection [...] of certain bourgeois anxieties into all kinds of ghosts reminiscent of past orders and forms' (Hogle 1994: 25). Yet these neurotic, oedipal fears are secondary to a more profound nightmare underlying the early Gothic: the fear of the unlimited possibilities which follow from the death of social codes previously construed as absolute. As Hogle argues, it is this breach which provides an 'open place [...] for those terrors about the origins of identity' to first arise (1994: 25), but this terror at essence concerns the loss of codes which previously imposed an artificial coherence of the self: the terror of schizophrenia.

One implication of this schizoanalytic contextualisation of the Gothic, then, is that a different inflection of Gothic fear emerges. If an oedipal response to the fear of subjective fragmentation exists in the Gothic (and an application of Deleuze and Guattari's arguments suggest that it does) then it must be understood as a secondary reaction to a more fundamental ontological uncertainty, which gives rise to a drive to restore paranoid determinations of subjectivity. Yet a Deleuzio-Guattarian reading of this kind presupposes a countervailing impulse towards schizoid subjectivity. In their account, the psychoanalytic recapitulation of subjectivity does not arise simply in response to an anxiety about the death of the codes, but more specifically as an attempt to repress the 'awesome schizophrenic [...] charge' unleashed by the capitalist order of production (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 37). At root, this charge results from the transformation of desire from a force of representation into a force of production.



If Hogle does not attend to this additional process, it is because he depicts the breach at the centre of Gothic writing as the continuation of a line of development dating back to the Renaissance, 'the first irreversible and widespread effulgence of a truly mercantile or pre-capitalist economy' (Hogle, 1994, 30). It is important to note, though, that Deleuze and Guattari are emphatic in insisting that capitalism was *not* prefigured in the Renaissance, or in the development of mercantilism in the seventeenth century. They argue that such factors as 'private property, commodity production, the monetary afflux [and] the extension of the market' in the feudal economy 'do not by any means produce a capitalist economy but rather a reinforcing of feudal offices and relations' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 243). Equally, 'the monopolistic action favouring the guilds and the companies' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 243) simply serves to keep the mercantile classes imbricated within the feudal social formation. In this sense, these forces are 'pre-capitalist' only synchronically, whereas Deleuze and Guattari argue that the emergence of capitalism is 'diachronic [...] the schizoid time of the new creative break' (2004: 243). This creative break lies in the fact that capitalism is the first and only social formation to release desire as a productive force, rather than constructing it entirely in terms of representation.

Hogle's concern is with specific 'chains' of decoding which did precede the development of modern capitalism in British society. However, it is only with the onset of the Industrial Revolution (1760-1840), and the free market, identified in Adam Smith's 'An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations' (1776) that a truly capitalist mode of production came into being. It is readily apparent that this period corresponds closely to the rise of the original Gothic canon. If we accept Deleuze and Guattari's genealogy of capitalism, this implies that Gothic fiction must be as qualitatively distinct from earlier literary forms, in terms of its reflection of social forces, as capitalism is from earlier social formations. As well as identifying the mode with the anxieties which precipitated an artificial restoration of paranoid subjectivity, then, we must also seek the unfolding of a new, productive schizoid desire within it.

For Deleuze and Guattari, modern societies are 'born of decoding and deterritorialization, on the ruins of the despotic machine,' oscillating between the old values they seek to restore and the release of 'unfettered flows' of desire (2004:

282). The original Gothic canon was present at this birth, and indeed was born in the same process. The Deleuzio-Guattarian analysis of the forces at work in modern society at this point resonates closely with many of the characteristic features of the mode. Modern capitalist societies, Deleuze and Guattari argue, are 'torn' in two directions, 'archaism and futurism, neoarchaism and ex-futurism, paranoia and schizophrenia [...] they try to hold on to the one, but they pour or flow out through the other. They are continually behind or ahead of themselves' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 282). Britain in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries was perhaps the first society to be both behind and ahead of itself in this way, and this provides a valuable insight into understanding the distorted, anachronistic histories which underpin Gothic subjectivity.

Early Gothic can, therefore, be viewed as a testing of boundaries, in which paranoid neoarchaisms are weighed against schizoid possibility: the first fiction riven by capitalist oscillation. This oscillation is marked by the mode's characteristic ambiguity. As Deleuze and Guattari observe, 'one no longer quite knows how it goes on one side or the other: the two ambiguous poles of delirium, their transformations, the way in which an archaism or folklore in a given set of circumstances can suddenly become charged with a dangerous progressive value' (2004: 282). In *The Powers of Horror* Julia Kristeva argues that literature 'represents the ultimate coding of our crises, of our most intimate and serious apocalypses' (Kristeva 1982: 208) and this could be valid in terms of oedipal literature. Yet, when literature is viewed in terms of its schizoid potentialities, it produces the reverse, a de-coding of the crisis of subjectivity, an escape from codes. It is upon this contested ground that the processes of Gothic subjectivity operate.

This genealogical contextualisation of the Gothic lends strength to critical perceptions of the mode as being governed by guilt and anxiety at the overthrow of the old patriarchal codes. Yet it also offers a more specific and complex understanding of this fear: under capitalism, this paranoia is not that originally imposed by the living figure of the despot. It is a counterfeit, resurgent, artificial re-imposition of that which is already dead. This resonates strongly with the Gothic emphasis on the return of repressed fears from the past, but from this perspective we understand this return as actualised at a social level. It can thus be seen that

Gothic paranoia is a distinctly *political* entity, in that it represents the institution of a mode of oedipal subjectivity amenable to the control mechanisms of the capitalist *socius*. A critical approach informed by schizoanalysis demands that it be treated as such.

At the same time, schizoanalysis raises the possibility of finding in Gothic fiction a release of schizoid desire which tends towards the disruption of, and escape from, this controlled subjectivity. To detect and understand the new processes of subjectivity to which this effect gives rise it is necessary to read Gothic literary operations in ways irreducible to a principle of representation. I will now outline the conditions of schizoid literature presented both by Deleuze and Guattari in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and in Deleuze's individual discussions of literary production. This grounding helps us to explore how such conditions emerge within the Gothic mode.

#### 4.3. Schizoanalysis and literature

In *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Deleuze and Guattari consider literature in terms of its force for enacting escapes from oedipal subject states into the processes of schizoid subjectivity. In *Anti-Oedipus* these observations are developed in regard to a number of broadly modernist Anglo-American writers, including Thomas Hardy, D.H. Lawrence, William S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac. The particular achievement of such writers, Deleuze and Guattari argue, is that they 'know how to leave, to scramble the codes, to cause flows to circulate, to traverse the desert of the body without organs' and thus 'to shatter [...] the capitalist barrier' (2004: 144). Although Lovecraft is not considered here, he receives greater attention in *A Thousand Plateaus*, where, together with Herman Melville and Virginia Woolf, he is evoked in connection with the concept of 'becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 238). As this chapter progresses, I will underline the centrality of this concept in the Deleuzio-Guattarian account of literature, and show its particular relevance to the schizoid force of Gothic fiction. Before progressing to a specifically Gothic focus, though, it is necessary to consider in broader terms the Deleuzio-Guattarian model of writing as it functions to produce schizoid subjectivities.

*Capitalism and Schizophrenia* serves as a primary source for the schizoanalytic model of literature which I will apply to Gothic fiction. Nevertheless, I will extend this model through reference to concepts taken from the Deleuze's separate work on literature and art. Of particular relevance here are his *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1993/1997) and 'On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature' (1977/2006). At a later stage, I will also refer to the concept of 'crystalline' narratives developed in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. As Ian Buchanan and John Marks note, 'Deleuze's approach to literature cannot be distinguished from his innovative work on cinema' (2000: 3).

Rather than forming a coherent 'literary theory' Deleuze's work enacts a philosophical 'encounter' with literature, aimed at 'creating concepts' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 5) specific to the literary medium. In conjunction with *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* these concepts facilitate 'a productive use of the literary machine [...] that extracts from the text its revolutionary force' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 116). As I will show, they bear two important implications for understanding Gothic fiction. Firstly, they provide the means to detect and evaluate rival poles of neurotic and schizoid effect in the Gothic mode. More importantly, they offer an experimental or revolutionary 'pragmatics of reading' which can allow us to read the Gothic 'schizoanalytically' and thus release its powers of schizoid transformation (Baugh 2000: 34).

The primary point of divergence between schizoanalytic and psychoanalytic readings of literature rests upon Deleuze's assertion that 'we do not write with our neuroses' (1997: 3). To write, he tells us, 'is not to recount one's memories and travels, one's loves and griefs, one's dreams and fantasies' (Deleuze 1997: 2). As discussed earlier, neuroses occur when flows of desire become fixed into an organised pattern, restricting desire to a logic of representation and imposing a sense of cohesive, individuated subjectivity. Deleuze does not, of course, deny the existence of literature which reflects this neurotic impulse. Rather, he contrasts this 'oedipal' form of writing with a 'schizoid' writing capable of breaking the neurotic impasse, releasing desire as a productive force rather than simply representing it. This bifurcation reflects a literary polarity which aligns closely with the paranoid-schizoid 'meta-polarity' identified in the preceding section. 'Writing,' Deleuze asserts, 'is very simple.

Either it is a way of [...] conforming to a code of dominant utterances, to a territory of established states of things [...] or else, on the other hand, it is becoming' (2006: 55). Literature can be understood as reinforcing neurotic subjectivity, or as facilitating flows of schizoid desire, to the extent that it corresponds with each of these models of literary function.

Deleuze and Guattari align the first of these models with the social repression engendered through the oedipal imprisonment of desire. They argue that when writing is produced (or interpreted) according to an 'Oedipal form' it can do nothing but repeat the 'dominant codes' artificially imposed by the capitalist *socius* (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 145). It will be 'paranoiac and reactionary' regardless of what is specifically signified in the text because in its very 'form of expression' it replays the representational dynamic of the oedipal unconscious, dramatising rather than creating desire (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 405). Even if it is not subliminally shaped by oedipal desires, it will have a 'form of content' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 405) which projects an oedipal structure onto the real, or introjects it into the imaginary: 'what we seek at the end of the voyage, or at the heart of a dream, is a father. We write for our father-mother' (Deleuze 1997: 2). Psychoanalysis contributes to this oedipalisation of literature by providing a theoretical justification for it, masking its ideological origins by presenting them as a universal consequence of the family. Yet, on a wider level, even if psychoanalysis itself is not invoked directly as a critical dynamic, the process of oedipalisation is upheld within any approach which continues to understand literature in terms of an oedipal model of desire.

An oedipal or neurotic model of literature, then, extends psychoanalytic principles of unconscious function to the literary medium. In the same way, Deleuze and Guattari's alternative, schizoid model reflects the schizoanalytic conception of subjectivity as an epiphenomenon of desiring-connections formed across the body without organs. This schizoid subjectivity is understood, not in terms of being, but rather as a series of becomings. For Deleuze and Guattari, these represent the 'natural' status of subjectivity, which is altered, through social repression, into an experience of 'the' subject as a cohesive, organised and anterior being. This concept is central to the schizoid power of literature. Deleuze states that writing, too, 'is a question of becoming' (1997: 1). For Deleuze and Guattari, the 'grandeur' or 'genius'

of literature is that it allows 'lines of flight' to be created, escaping and rupturing this repressed mode of experience and mobilising becomings in the words and syntax of the text (2004: 403). Thus, rather than serving as a way to maintain or restore the boundaries of the self, as in the oedipal experience of literature, schizoid literature transforms the neurotic self into 'a threshold, a door, a becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 249). As I will discuss in Chapter Two, Deleuze uses the work of Lovecraft to exemplify the way in which literary texts are traversed by 'thresholds, and zones' (1997: 1) where becomings can occur.

One way to understand this process is as a production of what Deleuze and Guattari call affects and percepts. Percepts 'are not perceptions referring to an object' but blocs of pure sensation which live in the words and syntax of the text itself (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 166). They exist independently both of their object and of those who experience them, taking on a life of their own as '*beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 164). Similarly, affects are feelings or experiences which 'no longer owe anything to those [...] who have experienced them' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 168). Affects are 'nonhuman becomings of man' just as percepts are 'nonhuman landscapes of nature' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 169). Thus, we can understand a 'schizoid' novelist as one 'who invents unknown or unrecognised affects and brings them to light as the becoming of his characters' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 174). The primary power of schizoid literature, then, is to produce becomings, and as Dan Smith explains, 'one can enter a zone of becoming with anything, provided one discovers the literary or artistic means of doing so' (Smith 1997: xxx). In Section 4.4.2, I will consider the becomings of Gothic fiction in relation to horror.

It must be stressed, though, that no single work can be aligned in all respects with the abstract schizoid pole of literary subjectivity identified here. The Anglo-American writers used by Deleuze and Guattari to exemplify anti-oedipal literature are no exception to this: 'they fail to complete the process, they never cease failing to do so, [they] draw near the wall and back away horrified' (2004: 144-147). As I will discuss later, horror often accompanies flight from the securities of established identity, so that in most works there is an oscillation between schizophrenia and paranoia, escape and recuperation. Thus, the two models of literary production can most

usefully be employed as a guide to evaluating the schizoid and paranoid tendencies present in any given work, rather than referring to 'ideal' forms. Furthermore, across their combined body of work, Deleuze and Guattari present many different ways of understanding what is required for this schizoid process to be enacted in the literary medium. In part, this proliferation reflects the fact that the particular ways in which any given text breaks down actualised forms so as to release schizoid desire are specific and immanent to that text. They are produced (and must be received) experimentally, and cannot be predicted in advance.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the schizoid force of a text cannot reside within an oedipal structure organised around the resolution of tensions or the revelation of repressed familial trauma. In place of structure, Deleuze and Guattari approach the text as an assemblage, a functional network of connections and transformations. Equally, schizoid effects cannot be produced using a language which remains tied to a signifying function, which can only represent pre-existent categories of being. Such linguistic principles in themselves work to maintain subjective cohesion. As Deleuze asks, 'what are we but habits of saying 'I'?' (Lambert 2000: 158). Instead, language must be 'toppled or pushed to a limit, to an outside or reverse side' so that it becomes 'foreign' to itself (Deleuze 1997: 5). A writer must create the affects and percepts she seeks 'in the interstices of language, in its intervals' (Deleuze 1997: 5), creating a unique verbal and syntactical style, a particular way of exploiting 'variations' and 'modulation' in language so as to create 'something that is no longer linguistic, but which language alone makes possible' (Smith 1997: *li*). Ultimately, as Deleuze notes, a writer's style 'is always a style of life too, [...] inventing a possibility of life, a way of existing' (1995: 100). When I explore Lovecraft and Burroughs, I will show how each of these writers, in different ways, develop their own style of linguistic and structural subversion in order to achieve unique literary effects.

In practice, Deleuze and Guattari associate these schizoid literary features almost exclusively with writers working in a modernist tradition. They argue that the 'authentic modernity' of art 'consists in liberating what was present in art from its beginnings, but was hidden underneath aims and objects [...] the pure process that fulfils itself, and that never ceases to reach fulfilment as it proceeds – art as "experimentation"' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 405). They cite 'the Burroughs

experiment' as an example of this (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 405). Although the relationship between modernity and the Gothic is complex, this lends support to the schizoid leanings within Gothic fiction. The Gothic originates in the period of history which Deleuze and Guattari associate with the birth of modern capitalism.

Furthermore, as John Paul Riquelme notes, 'the essentially anti-realistic character of Gothic writing from the beginning creates in advance a compatibility with modernist writing (2000: 585). Yet in terms of its narrative concerns, this compatibility takes the form of a shadowing of the progress of modernity, an 'underside' (Botting 1996: 2). Riquelme thus describes it as 'the black sheep of the Anglo-American novel' (2000: 585). Equally, I contend that the Gothic may be viewed as the 'black sheep' of the 'strange Anglo-American' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 144) literary-schizoid effect, emphasising the fantastical and fearful underpinnings of schizophrenic investment.

Yet the Deleuzio-Guattarian emphasis on modernism should not be taken as definitive. Buchanan and Marks affirm that it is possible 'to produce readings of other forms of literature which are inspired by Deleuze' (2000: 4). In one important respect, this turns upon the mechanics of reading which we bring to the Gothic mode. As Baugh argues, whether a work *works*, whether it gives us new powers for connecting with the world and being transformed in the process, 'is not a matter of opinion or interpretation' (2000: 39). Nonetheless, whether a given text works for a particular reader 'depends on the forces and resources the reader brings to the encounter' (2000: 54). Not least, this depends upon whether a reader reads 'oedipally' or schizoanalytically. Any text 'needs a "desire-liberating reader", a "schizoanalyst", to activate its potentially revolutionary discourses' (Selden, Widdowson and Brooker 1985: 170).

One aim of my thesis, therefore, is to facilitate a schizoanalytic reading of Gothic fiction. While particular attention is given to works by Lovecraft and Burroughs, this is not simply to illuminate the schizoid force at work within their fiction, but, by tracing the linkages between that force and Gothic fiction, to sensitise the reader to the schizoid intensities present within the Gothic. In the remainder of this chapter, I will suggest how, despite its neurotic representations, Gothic fiction also subtends schizoid transformations of the self. Rather than imposing an oedipal form of expression on 'lived experience,' Deleuze argues that schizoid literature moves



towards 'the ill-formed or the incomplete' (1997: 1). Gothic fiction, too, offers us images and experiences of the world as ill-formed or deformed, monstrous or incomplete. We can uncover schizoid stirrings in its blurring of the boundaries between reality and imagination, in its images of psychically and physically monstrous forms, and in its distortions of normative spatio-temporal ordering. While these qualities will only be fully exemplified in my case-studies of Lovecraft and Burroughs, I contend that their resonance can be felt across the mode.

#### 4.4. Schizoid subjectivity in Gothic fiction

##### 4.4.1 Gothic fantasy and visions of escape

The Gothic emphasis on fantasy and the supernatural is, then, one of the primary reasons why the mode has appeared especially amenable to psychoanalytically-informed criticism drawing upon the perceived linkage between dreams and fantastical literary narratives. The employment of a shared interpretative methodology thus reads both in terms of their symbolic representation of unconscious material. On the other hand, scholars working from a historicist perspective have questioned the tendency of this critical emphasis to overlook self-conscious textuality and socio-historical context in favour of a universalising psychological meta-narrative. Maurice Lévy, for instance, argues that an emphasis on 'weird, supernatural, uncanny, or even *fantastic*' qualities is not sufficient to precisely differentiate 'Gothic' writing, as a particular and circumscribed historical response, from other categories of fiction (1994: 3). For Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, the true concern is that this fantastical element has been overvalued for 'ideological' purposes, so as to underpin an ahistorical interpretative emphasis on the subversive quality of Gothic interiority. They argue that, 'misconceiving Gothic fictions as examples of anti-realist "fantasy" or dream-writing,' Gothic criticism 'has repeatedly overlooked their manifest temporal, geographical and ideological referents' (Baldick and Mighall 2001: 210).

Schizoanalysis offers a different perspective on this methodological conflict. In essence, it reveals a greater socio-historical specificity in psychoanalytic readings of

Gothic fiction (though one unrecognised by psychoanalysis itself) while simultaneously exposing an unrecognised retention of oedipalising tendencies in historicist readings. As I have argued, although psychoanalysis presents itself as a 'universal' account of human subjectivity, Deleuze and Guattari view it as a historically-circumscribed manifestation of socio-cultural forces pertaining specifically to the Gothic as a product of modern capitalist consciousness. While in one sense this affirms the Freudian account of literary fantasies, it also characterises this process as reflecting the social constitution of the psyche rather than the reverse. Consequently, it cannot be accused of unduly emphasising interiority since, as we have seen, it rejects the validity of distinctions between personal interiority and social exteriority in its account of subjectivity.

Secondly, the schizoanalytic devaluation of fantastical narratives and imagery reads such features as a representative dynamic of desire, serving only to reinforce states of neurotic, oedipal subjectivity. Yet, while a growing attention to socio-historical specificities has diluted the overt influence of psychoanalysis within Gothic criticism, an emphasis upon the mode's representation of desires and anxieties (even if recast at a social and political level) has been retained. However valid these approaches, and however far removed they are from the ahistorical generalisations of earlier psychoanalytic criticism, from the particular perspective of schizoanalysis they retain an 'oedipalising' dynamic of symbolism and representation. As such, they reinforce the perception of Gothic fiction as an expression of paranoid, neurotic subject-states.

It is not my intention to claim that these approaches are necessarily incorrect in terms of their own aims. There are very particular reasons for affirming the presence of this oedipal dynamic within the Gothic mode, and as Deleuze and Guattari note, it is appropriate to measure literature which contains such dynamics 'against an Oedipal psychoanalysis' (2004: 145). Rather, I contend that it is also possible to discover within the mode a countervailing drive towards schizoid subjectivity, however tentative and concealed it may be, and to understand the mode in terms of the nuances of tension which exist between these rival tendencies. The fantastic and supernatural elements of Gothic writing are particularly important in this respect because they manifest these tensions so acutely. As I will argue, while being in one sense the most overtly oedipal of expressions, it is also possible to discover within

them attempts to escape organised subjectivity and construct new desiring-machines.

How, though, can anti-realist Gothic narratives be understood as subtending movements towards schizoid rather than neurotic modes of subjectivity? It is not a case of attempting to interpret what such narratives *mean*: as Deleuze and Guattari point out, schizoanalysis has no 'unconscious material' to 'interpret' since in the schizoanalytic model of the psyche there is nothing but 'resistances, and [...] desiring machines' (2004: 345 - 346). Rather, we must ask *how* these narratives function so as to allow new desiring-connections to be formed which exceed the restricted template of desire established by the Oedipus. The supernatural landscape of Gothic fiction may well be filled with representations grounded in oedipal subjectivity, but the deterritorialising presence of desiring-machines must be sought where they subvert or escape from this backdrop. Deleuze and Guattari argue that desiring-machines must be 'induced from representation,' discovered as they 'form and train their sights along a tangent of deterritorialization that traverses the representative spheres' (2004: 346). Consequently, 'deterritorialization can never be grasped in itself' but instead 'one can only grasp its indices in relation to the territorial representations' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 348).

Deleuze and Guattari consider this problem via the psychoanalytically-charged example of dreams, and here it is possible to detect a methodological credo for the discovery of desiring-machines within Gothic fantasy. Dreams, they agree, are oedipal. They are 'the manifestation of a superego, a superpowerful and superarchaized ego' and as such they should not be taken as 'the royal road of desire and the unconscious' because they only present an already-compromised representation of it (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 348). As with the psychoanalytic view of Gothic writing, they represent the personalised fantasy. Deleuze and Guattari argue that, 'at the heart of dreams themselves – as with fantasy and delirium – machines function as indices of deterritorialization (2004: 348). These machines introduce 'breaks and flows that prevent the dream from being reconfined in its scene and systematized within its representation' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 348). While psychoanalysis focusses on the 'imaginary and structural representatives of reterritorialization' formed, in this case, through the dream-work, it is the task of

schizoanalysis to follow these 'machinic indices of deterritorialization' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 348). If, following Deleuze and Guattari, we accept Freud's extension of dream interpretation to fantastical literature, we could therefore argue that, here too, it is the task of a schizoanalytic reading of Gothic fantasy to follow these machinic indices.

Here, it is also useful to refer to the concept of visions, which take the place of Freudian fantasies in Deleuze and Guattari's account of the unconscious. Visions concern the flows and connections of desire formed when it encounters the 'qualities, substances, powers, and events' constituting the actual world or 'milieu' within which it finds itself (Deleuze 1997: 61). In a psychoanalytic formulation, milieus serve as 'nothing more than terrains capable of conserving, identifying, or authenticating' pre-established desires (Deleuze 1997: 63). As such, the fantastical encounter of the psychic or unconscious with the real is always subject to interpretation which traces effects back to an original source, asking what imaginary textual distortions of external realities can tell us about the psychic context of the author. In place of this 'archaeological' model, though, Deleuze offers a 'cartographic' conception in which we can understand the trajectories of desire as forming a successively modified series of maps (1997: 63). The schizoanalytically-conceived unconscious, as we have seen, maps the universe according to a network of relations inscribed upon the surface of the body-without-organs. Yet 'art,' Deleuze notes, is also 'made up of trajectories and becomings, and it too makes maps, both extensive and intensive' (1997: 65-66). Fantastical narratives may thus be understood as visionary when they are shaped by this dynamic, mapping out such relations in terms of those extensive features of the world with which intensive affects or becomings can be created.

When a literary work functions in this way, its visions are not 'subjective' in referring to a discrete self, and nor do they involve the projection of a personal bias or predilection (Bogue 2003: 170). For Deleuze, writing is never about 'imagining or projecting an ego' but always concerns, rather, the connections which desire forms with the world at a level before any cohesive egoic personality is imposed (1997: 3). The schizoid subjectivities which arise from desiring-production are irreducible to an individuated, personal subjectivity as the ground or selection-mechanism of such

connections. Instead, visions always concern pre-personal and singular movements of desire, which must also be understood as collective because they do not belong exclusively to any 'one' person. The possibility of discovering a mapping of desire across the theatrical representations of Gothic fantasy emerges when we no longer assume the necessary anteriority of a cohesive psychic structure, or that the natural goal of the unconscious is to *maintain* such cohesion. In Chapter Three, Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy offers a vivid example of how literature can embody a visionary network of collective transformations and becomings in this way.

What form, though, might the desiring-machines mapped by Gothic fantasy take? To approach this question, it is necessary to consider the Deleuzian distinction between 'actual and 'virtual' forms of reality. The fantastical and supernatural dimensions of Gothic writing take many different forms, but Punter's attribution of ideological significance to these aspects of the mode (1996: 202) turns upon one central dynamic, which is that Gothic anti-realism asserts the experiential verisimilitude of the influence of psychic reality upon our encounters with material or social reality (1996: 186). In doing so, it serves to challenge the dominant status of any one, authorised or 'consensus' perspective on reality, otherwise unquestioned in 'realist' narrative approaches. Though Punter's claims that the Gothic supernatural carries this anti-ideological force are disputed by some commentators, the anti-realist leanings of the mode have important implications for our understanding of its schizoid potentiality. These implications lie with the particular way in which the Gothic moves towards a mergence of psychic and ordinary reality, to extract the virtual properties of objects and states of affairs from their ordinarily actualised form.

Deleuze, while not disputing the distinction between imaginary and real (2005: 67), argues that they are 'two juxtaposable or superimposable parts of a single trajectory' (1997: 62-63). This distinction is less important, though, than that between the actual and virtual properties of any given object or state. As Constantin V. Boundas explains, in Deleuze's ontology 'the virtual and the actual are two mutually exclusive [...] characterisations of the real. The actual/real are states of affairs, bodies, bodily mixtures and individuals. The virtual/real are incorporeal events and singularities on a plane of consistency' (2010: 300). Deleuze's concept of the virtual here draws upon the Leibnizian model of the world as a 'pure emission of singularities' which

may best be understood, linguistically, as 'indeterminate infinitives that are not yet actualised in determinate modes, tenses, persons and voices' (Smith 1997: xxv). As Smith notes, these singularities or 'events' are always inherently anterior to their own actualisation in the form of predicates. Although strictly speaking the virtual precedes the actual in this way, their relationship is best understood as one of reversibility, in which there is a constant movement from 'an actualised state of affairs, through a dynamic field of virtual/real tendencies, to the actualisation of this field in a new state of affairs' (Boundas 2010: 300 – 301). Effectively, this process renders the actual and virtual indiscernible, and one task of literature is to produce images which are indiscernible in this way, freeing us from perceiving the world only in terms of its lived actuality.

If understood as a medium of representation, supernatural and fantastical narratives in Gothic fiction do not produce indiscernibility, but retain the real and imaginary as notionally separable poles. In this respect, the Gothic tendency towards blurring the categories of psychic and ordinary reality can be read simply as a representation of psychopathological confusion. It is important to question, though, precisely *which* type of psychopathology is at stake here. In the psychoanalytic formulation, as we have seen, neurosis causes present phenomena to be emotionally invested with desires and anxieties rooted in the past, which resurface as symbolic formations. This logic allows the psychoanalytically-influenced critic to interpret Gothic fantasy in terms of neurotic representations of desire. Psychoanalysis understands psychoses such as schizophrenia, on the other hand, as causing these past states to supplant or displace external reality altogether. From this perspective, even if Gothic fantasies are viewed in terms of schizophrenic dynamics such as hallucination, the same interpretative logic would apply.

Yet, from a schizoanalytic perspective, if Gothic fantasies are viewed in terms of schizophrenia rather than neurosis, they enact a different dynamic: not merely representing unconscious states but actively engendering a breaking-down of the barriers which render ordinary and psychic reality distinct. Since psychoanalysis views reality as notionally objective and existing prior to or separately from desire, it would not be sensitive to this process. However, when we view schizophrenia not as regression but as the active formation of new investments of desire, we can begin to

view Gothic fantasy as the production of new, intensive, category-troubling affects. Punter suggests that the anti-realistic tone of Gothic fiction can induce in us 'the terror that we may be in danger of losing our minds, that the madness exemplified in the text may end up by removing some of our own usual life coordinates and leaving us adrift' (1989: 7). If the reader's implication in this process is considered psychoanalytically, 'psychotic states are simply perpetuations of landscapes which we have all inhabited at some stage in our early infancy' (1989: 8).

From this psychoanalytic perspective, we are uncannily reminded of those prepersonal or 'archaic' stages of our early own development when the self was not fully individuated in distinction to the world: memories which disturbingly threaten our individual cohesion. This effect takes on a quite different import, though, when viewed in terms of the schizoanalytic reading of these conditions as pre-oedipal, and actually more 'natural' than later formations of subjectivity. From this viewpoint, we can understand the Gothic, as the first truly supernatural fiction, as initiating a first challenge to the predominance of 'actual' reality over virtual predicates of the real, establishing a literary terrain suited to the creation of images which escape actualist determination. It does not simply represent desire, but works to produce machines of desire which enact escapes from the 'actual' conditions imposed upon subjective experience, and which are capable of taking us with them on their flight.

These may take the form of supernatural encounters with demons, or with internalised demonic potentialities, which lead to an unravelling of cohesive selfhood. Thus, we witness the strange breakdown of individuated identity in James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824/2003), in which Hogg's protagonist observes that 'I generally conceived myself to be two people,' but then again, 'the most perverse part of it was that I rarely conceived *myself* to be any of the two persons' (2003: 106). Again, Robert Louis Stevenson, in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886/2006), conceives a breakdown of organised desire which augurs the possibility that 'man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens' (2006: 52). For his protagonist, this produces 'something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new [...] a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill race in my fancy' (2006: 53).

Alternatively, we may be confronted with anomalous hybrid forms which spread a deterritorialising contagion across their social milieu, such as the vampire in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), or the category-defying man-woman-beetle hybrid in Richard Marsh's contemporaneous *The Beetle: A Mystery* (1897). While such entities can undoubtedly be 'interpreted' as expressions of repressed desire, or contextualised as signifiers of particular, contemporary social concerns, they can also be understood as extractions of singularities, forming new connections of desire which traverse their representative spheres. While clearly 'unreal' they allow the possibility of thinking otherwise unthinkable component possibilities of life. I will shortly detail this process in relation to the concept of becoming.

In the next chapter, I will explore how the Gothic supernatural is transformed, in the work of Lovecraft, into a mode of 'cosmic' or 'weird' fiction which more fully develops the schizoid potential of the fantastic. There, I will show that Lovecraft's work constitutes an interstitial ground between the relatively personalised fantasies of the Gothic mode and a more fully-developed form of schizoid narrative. This transition will then allow us to connect the later work of William S. Burroughs to this inchoate quality within Gothic fiction. Yet as I have argued, even before the work of such authors as Lovecraft and Burroughs, the anti-realist experimentation of the earlier Gothic mode constructs a terrain which allows schizoid desire to form connections running counter to the oedipal paranoia of the early capitalist *socius*.

#### 4.4.2. Gothic horror and becoming

The second aspect of Gothic fiction which appears to resonate most strongly with the Freudian model of oedipal subjectivity is its emphasis on horror and anxiety. Yet, as I will now suggest, an alternative view of Gothic horror as a means of facilitating schizoid subjectivity is opened up by the Deleuzio-Guattarian notion of becoming. This concept is central to Deleuze's account of how literature can work to escape that attachment to fixed selfhood which underpins the nature of the capitalist subject, producing new desiring-machines and thus a schizoid experience of subjectivity. In the next two chapters, I will explore the nature and limitations of the becomings



enacted in the writing of Lovecraft and Burroughs, exemplifying how such becomings function within Gothic writing. Before doing so it is essential to define the nature of this concept and its applicability to the literary medium. It will then be possible to see more clearly the specific conditions and prerogatives it establishes for schizoid literature, and to assess Gothic fiction in this light.

In the Deleuzio-Guattarian account of unconscious functionality, then, the process of becoming emerges as a way of understanding the nature of schizoid subjectivity. The concept can be more broadly understood as an extension of the radical ontology of difference developed in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1968/2004). Here, Deleuze argues that, rather than understanding objects or states according to a transcendent categorisation based on relative 'sameness', which ignores 'the uniqueness implicit in the particularity of things and the moments of their conception and perception' (Stagoll 2010: 75), attention should be focussed on pure 'difference-in-itself', on relational states of becoming rather than on being. Deleuze argues that these relations between things, which are always between or external to the terms of things themselves, should be understood as constituting 'reality' in a far more meaningful sense than does the notion of 'being'.

Rather than contesting that notion itself, Deleuze argues that what appears to 'be' is simply the actualisation of a set of convergent possibilities, perceived 'as they are' by human consciousness. Although we may notionally accept that the universe is in a state of flux, we assume that the state of 'being' which things adopt at any given time represents a teleologically meaningful point of arrival. Such actualisation is only meaningful, though, in terms of our perception as human subjects, and rests on the assumption that the human, as perceiving subject, is in some way 'outside of' that which is perceived. Thus, the subject becomes 'the point of view or ground from which all other beings or becomings are [...] determined,' since 'only with some privileged being as the centre for all experience can there be a strict distinction between the "inner" life of mind or consciousness and the outside world viewed or represented by mind' (Colebrook 2002: 139). For Deleuze, this image of the human as 'perceiving being' is an extension of the false prioritisation of being. Once we question the notion of the human subject as a stable, grounding point of perspective, the identity of things with fixed terms becomes a secondary function of difference

itself. This necessitates replacing the image of the human subject as being with a sense of human subjectivity understood as becoming. The cohesive, unified human subject thus fragments into an adventitious assemblage of differences, defined only as a set of relations to other differences, perpetually forming new connections.

Experiencing both world and 'self' as inseparable from this processual flux runs directly against the habits of thought imposed by the Platonic foundations of most Western philosophy. We can escape from it only by 'destabilising our thinking, disrupting our faculties and freeing our senses from established tendencies' (Stagoll 2010: 75). As Deleuze states, 'one must make relations the hallucination point of thought, an experiment which does violence to thought' (2006: 41). It is here that the true 'vocation' of literature in Deleuze's account becomes clear, as a force for subverting the dualism of the perceiving human 'subject' and the non-human 'object' of perception. Literature which continues to represent objects or states external to human consciousness serves only to reinforce this dualism. By contrast, literature which moves beyond the image of the writer as human subject, to create the image as a production of difference rather than a representation of preexistent being, has the unique power to help us escape from this habitual model of thinking. The task of writing is thus to 'make the encounter with relations penetrate and corrupt everything, undermine being, make it topple over' (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 42). The difficulty, intensity and even fear involved in this process offer the key to a schizoanalytic conception of Gothic horror.

The proclivity towards fantastical and dream-like imagery within Gothic fiction provides a medium well-suited to the production of becomings which escape 'realistic' determinations of being. Deleuze and Guattari are careful to stress, though, that becomings are 'neither dreams nor phantasies ... [but]...perfectly real' (1988: 238). They do not consist in a transformation from one form or set of terms into another, nor do they involve resemblance, imitation, identification or mimesis. Rather, their reality is functional, consisting in the establishment of an objective 'zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man's land, a nonlocalizable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 293).

Deleuze and Guattari present their most detailed discussion of becoming and literature in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Here, they present examples of potential zones of becoming, compared in terms of how far they lead from the fixed category of man, towards a more highly-developed fragmentation of subjectivity. 'On the near side' they point to becomings woman, -child and -animal (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 248). They assert that 'all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all other becomings' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988 277). This is because a becoming-woman represents the closest, most immediate 'opening away from the closed image of man' as the absolute determinant of fixed human identity (Colebrook 2002: 140). At the furthest extension, by contrast, they identify 'becomings-imperceptible' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 248). As an example of this last, they cite Randolph Carter, the 'hero' of Lovecraft's 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' (1934), who 'encounters strange animals, but [...] finally reaches the ultimate regions of a Continuum inhabited by unnameable waves and unfindable particles' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 248). Deleuze and Guattari describe becoming-imperceptible as the 'cosmic formula' or 'immanent end' of becoming (1988: 279). It is the process which occurs when individual subjectivity is fully transformed into the experience of desire as it flows and connects, thus allowing a participation in the constant creative difference of the world. Although other becomings may not accede to this radically transformative condition, they all contain it as an inherent direction or potentiality.

Becomings-animal, as exemplified by the 'irresistible becoming-whale' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 243) of Captain Ahab in Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851), bear a particular resonance for subjectivity in Gothic fiction. Such becomings, Deleuze and Guattari argue, do not occur with an 'individual' animal but always with the animal as pack, understood in terms of 'modes of expansion, propagation, occupation, contagion, peopling' (1988: 239). To encounter an animal in this way, they suggest, is to evoke an alliance or pact, as does a sorcerer with a demon. The writer is a sorcerer because 'writing is a becoming, writing is traversed by strange becomings that are not becomings-writer, but becomings-rat, becomings-insect, becomings-wolf, etc.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 240). To occur, it must involve an animal which, though it is 'of' the pack, is nevertheless uniquely capable of interaction on the level of multiplicities, rendering it 'anomalous, [...] a phenomenon of bordering' (Deleuze and

Guattari 1988: 245). Packs, or multiplicities, they argue, do not have a 'centre', a set of characteristics which defines them, but they are comprised rather of 'lines and dimensions' and it is the furthest extent of those dimensions, the borderline where the multiplicity of the pack becomes something else, entering another multiplicity, that the anomalous resides. Lovecraft, Deleuze and Guattari note, evokes 'this thing or entity' and the territorial anxiety it produces, in his image of 'the 'Outsider', ' the Thing, which arrives and passes at the edge, which is linear yet multiple, 'teeming, seething, swelling, foaming, spreading like an infectious disease, this nameless horror" (1988: 245).

Deleuze and Guattari attach horrific connotations to the anomalous plunge into becoming, and as Powell observes, 'the "anomaly" or outsider is a dynamic catalyst for the becomings of horror' (Powell 2005: 10). In this context, Deleuze and Guattari make reference to vampires (1988: 237). As MacCormack argues, 'aesthetic and apocryphal demons such as werewolves and vampires' belong to the order of the anomalous 'because they seem to resonate with the negotiations of what a human-animal could be' (2010). Viewed in terms of their simultaneous familiarity and unfamiliarity, such entities could be said to have an uncanny quality. However, this quality only pertains, MacCormack argues, if they are viewed as 'symbolic forms sewn together into demarcated half-half mythic monsters' (2010). From a schizoanalytic perspective, by contrast, they function as mobile and abstract potentialities, in which the identity of the various elements involved is wholly replaced with an indeterminate flow of desiring-connections.

In the next chapter, I will consider how MacCormack associates Lovecraft's 'a-human becomings' with exactly this process, although for her, this represents the unfolding of a Baroque, rather than Gothic aesthetic (2010). Nonetheless, I contend that such becomings can be viewed as machine indices of desire, as discussed in the previous section, and it is important in the context of my current argument that these entities are associated particularly with the horrific affect central to the Gothic mode.

Becomings thus offer an escape or line of flight from the fixed pattern of repressed desire which governs the individuated oedipal subject towards a free-flowing process

of schizoid subjectivities. Deleuze and Guattari note that the word 'escape' may appear to connote cowardice, but quite to the contrary, such escapes are themselves a form of social engagement, arguing that 'courage consists [...] in agreeing to flee rather than live tranquilly and hypocritically in false refuges' (2004: 374-375). Yet where there is courage, this implies that there must also be fear, which in this case stems from the loss of the fixed identity towards which we are attached, and which capitalist paranoia makes us fear to lose. Later, I will contend that the fear which attends becoming thus offers a different way to understand the characteristically negative affective content of Gothic fiction. Although in one sense this fear stems from a return of the repressed, it can be seen as referring not to the psychic repression of archaic, infantile desires and anxieties, but rather to the social repression of desire as a productive force.

Equally, this allows us to understand the Gothic response to such fear in terms of dynamics other than simply mastery or abjection. In the next two chapters I will explore these alternative dynamics as enacted within the work of Lovecraft and Burroughs. As I will show, lines of flight towards becoming-imperceptible can be found in the work of both Lovecraft and Burroughs, and in both cases, these lines of flight are closely imbricated with horrific affect. In Lovecraft's work, it is possible to see horror as a means for inducing intense, hallucinatory states which destabilise the image of the fixed self, thus bringing thought to a hallucination point and establishing contact with the unthinkable. Burroughs, however, uses repetitive images of horror to exhaust and break through the barriers of repression which serve to contain and define the subject of capitalist control. In different ways, then, I will show that Gothic horror can be understood in their work as an attempt to actively engender schizoid subjectivity. While this potential tendency of horror does not preclude or obviate more conventional readings of Gothic fiction, it nonetheless exists as an additional facet of effect. I contend that exposing and attending to this potentiality is a vital means for constructing a schizoanalytic 'use' of Gothic fiction which can release and activate the revolutionary force it offers.

#### 4.4.3 Gothic history and crystalline time

Finally, as I have shown, the Gothic emphasis on the interplay between past and present is readily conducive to readings which reflect the psychoanalytically-conceived 'return of the repressed' as a determinant of neurotic subjectivity, causing it to be understood in terms of the linearity and repetition of the oedipally-configured unconscious. Yet the schizoanalytic model of the unconscious allows the possibility of understanding time as a synchronic force, within which desire may form connections in ways irreducible to linear temporality. I contend that this different formulation allows the delirious temporalities and histories of the Gothic mode to be understood as attempts to escape the socially-imposed sense of a linear personal time and an immutably 'true' history. To illuminate this different temporal plane, it is necessary to consider the Deleuzian concept of actual-virtual reality, and the notion of the 'falsifying' crystalline narrative which emerges from it.

As I discussed earlier, Deleuze rejects the pertinence of the distinction between the imaginary and the real. He asserts that 'the imaginary isn't the unreal, it's the indiscernibility of real and unreal' (Deleuze 1995: 66), producing 'a virtual image that is interfused with the real object, and vice versa, thereby constituting a crystal of the unconscious' (Deleuze 1997: 63). Deleuze takes this image of crystalline consciousness from Bergson's account of the relationship between time and perception (1896/1994) and develops it further in *Cinema 2: The Time Image*. For Bergson, whose account focuses on the virtuality of time, the past forms 'a single virtual domain, extending from the most distant events into every present moment' so that 'each present moment coexists with a portion of this virtual past, a kind of virtual "double" of the present that is the present moment's "own" virtual moment' (Bogue 2003: 172-173). Deleuze applies this idea to cinematic images in which the present moment and its own virtual past appear simultaneously, still notionally distinct yet forming proliferating reflections of one another. I assert that this concept can also be applied to the fantastical spatio-temporal disturbances and distorted histories of Gothic fiction.

Deleuze develops the implications of this process through a comparative analysis of what he terms two 'regimes of the image,' characterised as organic and crystalline

(2005: 122). He differentiates between them in terms of the ontological assumptions underlying their descriptions of objects, the different ways in which they engage with the real and imaginary, and the form of narrative they imply. Firstly, the organic description 'assumes the independence of its object' so that the setting described 'stands for a supposedly pre-existing reality.' This reality is assumed to be consistent and continuous, so that when 'the unreal, the recollection, the dream and the imaginary' is depicted, it will appear as a contrasting 'second pole of existence' understood purely in terms of psychic reality (Deleuze 2005: 123). By contrast, crystalline description 'stands for its object, replaces it, both creates and erases it [...] and constantly gives way to other descriptions which contradict, displace, or modify the preceding ones.' The effect of this is that 'it is now the description itself which constitutes the sole decomposed and multiplied object' (Deleuze 2005: 122). Within this regime, the virtual is freed from determination in terms of 'actualised' reality, so that 'the real and the imaginary, the actual and the virtual, chase after each other, exchange their roles and become indiscernible' (Deleuze 2005: 123).

Finally, the most profound and complex implications of Deleuze's account arise at the level of narrative. The organic narrative 'is truthful narration in the sense that it claims to be true, even in fiction' (Deleuze 2005: 123). We are presented with a world which functions according to normally-perceived laws, which *could be* true within the logic of the actual world it recreates, and in which characters act according to the dictates of that logic. Time is 'indirectly represented' (Deleuze 2005: 124) in such narratives, as a linear chronological time which follows from action in, and movement through, space. We do not experience time in itself, but simply infer its passage from the progress of the action. Even if a narrative of this kind presents scenes in a non-linear order, the linearity persists in such a way that it could simply be 'reconstructed' by re-ordering scenes.

By contrast, Deleuze argues, crystalline narration disrupts the organic connection between action and space-time. Focus moves from the depiction of action in space to 'pure optical and sound situations to which characters, who have become seers, cannot or will not react, so great is their need to "see" properly what there is in the situation' (Deleuze 2005: 124). Time, too, is freed from an indirect representation implied by spatial movement, and comes to be presented as 'a direct time-image

from which movement derives' (Deleuze 2005: 125). Rather than the chronological time of the organic narrative, we thus come to experience time as '*de-actualized peaks of present*' and '*virtual sheets of past*' (Deleuze 2005: 126). Time is not indirectly inferred from a chain of events, and so apprehended as a series of discrete 'presents' which move from the past towards the future. Instead, the past exists only 'virtually' in the present and the 'actuality' of the present cannot be experienced in separation from that virtuality.

Deleuze argues that the shift from the organic 'movement-image' to the crystalline 'time-image' reveals time as a pure force, and thus puts 'the notion of truth into crisis' (2005: 126). He explains this crisis with reference to the paradox of 'contingent futures':

If it is true that a naval battle may take place tomorrow, how are we to avoid one of the true following consequences: either the impossible proceeds from the possible (since, if the battle takes place, it is no longer possible that it may not take place), or the past is not necessarily true (since the battle could not have taken place) (Deleuze 2005: 126).

Deleuze himself acknowledges an element of sophistry in this formula (2005: 126), but the problem it raises is not merely linguistic. The point of the paradox is that it shows the incommensurability of truth and the form of time, in a way which means that we must separate 'truth from the existent' (Deleuze 2005: 126). Leibniz solves this problem by saying that different outcomes of the same possibility are not impossible, but rather 'impossible' within the same world. Leibniz thus proposes the existence of different worlds, in which each possibility occurs, so as to salvage the idea that 'the past may be true without being necessarily true' (Deleuze 2005: 127). In any given world, either outcome could arise, so that the pure singularity-event of 'a naval battle' remains a true possibility, but its occurrence and non-occurrence within the same world are simply impossible possibilities. Contesting this, Deleuze instead asserts that 'nothing prevents us from affirming that impossibles belong to the same world' if we understand time in terms of virtual-actual duration rather than chronologically. In the terms of the 'contingent futures' paradox, the 'past,' where the naval battle may or may not have occurred, exists for us now only 'virtually' in the present moment. Whether or not the battle *actually*



occurred, the singularity-event of 'a naval battle' retains its own set of virtual possibilities.

In Deleuze's formulation, this means that the crystalline narrative can be understood as affirming the 'power of the false' which 'poses the simultaneity of impossible presents, or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts' (2005: 127). It allows us to see 'inexplicable differences to the present and alternatives which are undecidable between true and false to the past' (Deleuze 2005: 127). As the binary of 'either truth or appearance' which governs the organic conception of the narrative falls away, so too does the binary of 'either invariable form or variable point of view on to a form' (Deleuze 2005: 142). There is neither a consistent actual world which centres action, nor 'a plurality of viewpoints on the same world or object' but instead, as Dan Smith notes, 'each viewpoint now opens onto another world that itself contains yet others' (Smith 1997: xxvii). As Deleuze states, this allows 'a point of view which belongs so much to the thing that the thing is constantly being transformed in a becoming identical to point of view' (2005: 142). Through their crystalline spatio-temporality, therefore, such narratives facilitate the escape into becomings, the production of affects and percepts. Working in this way, the artist is no longer concerned with expressing 'the' truth as actualised in reality, nor with depicting the relativity of perspective as derived from the imaginary, but instead becomes a creator of new truths not derived from reference to actuality.

As I will show over the next two chapters, this Bergsonian conceptualisation of time can shed valuable light on our understanding of the mutually-troubling relationship between past and present, at both personal and historical levels, in Gothic fiction. Lovecraft presents 'the defeat of time, so that one may merge oneself with the whole historic stream' (Lovecraft 1971: 220) as the primary goal of his 'weird' supernatural fiction. When I examine 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' I will show how it works to subvert the fixed spatio-temporal coordinates which support and reinforce oedipal subjectivity. Burroughs, too, is involved in a hostile engagement with linear time as a mechanism for social control. I will argue that the falsifying force of the narrative structures in his *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy 'consigns the entire Time film, a whole prerecorded and prefilmed universe, to the scrap heap' (Burroughs 1987: 195), by replacing the linearity of both personal and historical time with a

crystalline dynamic. Through these two authors, I will assert that we can discover a revolutionary falsification of time in the Gothic's supernatural temporalities and invented histories.

##### 5. Conclusion: reading the Gothic schizophrenically

The relationship between psychoanalysis and the Gothic, then, is complex and multi-layered, involving not just considerations of literary theory but also a debate about the nature and uses of subjectivity within the capitalist *socius* which must be viewed as directly political. Deleuze and Guattari's anti-oedipal critique of Freud shows us that the influence of psychoanalysis within literature must be grasped in terms of the fundamental logic of representation and signification which it imposes on the literary. This may work via the symbolic operation of repressed anxieties and desires, but as Deleuze and Guattari argue, literature can also be oedipalised purely in terms of its form and structure. Psychoanalysis has been instrumental in influencing critical perceptions of Gothic fiction in both these senses, and even where it has been considerably tempered and complexified amidst recent approaches it has continued to promote an implicit oedipalisation of the mode. Specifically, it has stimulated a tendency to value the Gothic as quintessentially representational, working to assimilate otherwise inexpressible psycho-social fears and hopes by displacing them into terrifying, supernatural, quasi-historical forms. The mode thus appears particularly amenable to such readings, causing Gothic subjectivity to be understood in terms of an oedipal paranoia, shaped by the neurotic urge to expel that which threatens subjective dissolution.

Schizoanalysis, though, presents a very different way of understanding some of the desires and subjectivities of Gothic literature, and in particular, its concern with threats to the cohesion of the self. From this radically alternative perspective, subjective dissolution does not appear as a threat but rather as a positive development: the opening of a gateway, the transformation of the self into a gateway. It represents a restoration of the natural processes of desiring-production as they work before the imposition of oedipal paranoia. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, this repression was never, after all, *ours*, but was rather artificially engineered

to maintain us in a state of subjection, as a docile consumer of ideological codes. While Gothic fiction undoubtedly re-enacts this paranoia within its archaic territorialisations, this must be understood as reflecting an effect which is social before it is personal, and which relates specifically to the emergence of capitalism as its determining *socius*. Moreover, as I have argued, the existence of this paranoid polarity also implies the presence of an alternative, schizoid pole at work.

To discover the effects of this schizoid tendency within Gothic fiction, it is vital that criticism enacts a schizophrenising approach to texts, capable of grasping the ways in which they serve to construct new desiring-machines. This does not mean disregarding the mode's neurotic recuperation of the self, or devaluing existing critical approaches which have identified and explored these aspects of Gothic subject-formation. However, it *does* demand that we carefully contextualise these aspects as expressions of an essentially ideological recapitulation, and as the enactment of a specifically capitalist 'politics' of subjectivity. Furthermore, it requires that we attend to the lines of escape which flow across and away from the dark, fantastical archaisms of the mode, exploring not only the neurotic expressions which the Gothic represents but also the schizoid forces which it actively produces.

Yet to read in this way, to read schizophrenically and without our neuroses, is a process as difficult, experimental and unpredictable as it is to *write* with this schizoid force. If we are to extract from Gothic fiction its revolutionary force of transformation and liberation, and allow it to spread its delirium contagiously to our own perception, we must move beyond a critical dynamic of interpretation questioning many of the principles of established academic criticism. We can counterbalance attention to meaning and signification with a reading which highlights and activates the flows of prepersonal and depersonalising desire released by specific textual images and effects. As I have argued, in Gothic fiction, these reside in experiences of the world which release possibilities of virtual sensation from the dominant appearances of actuality, producing horrific inhuman becomings and delirious synchronic connections.

This task is made more difficult still by the fact that, in its earlier manifestations, the Gothic mode represents a very early, uncertain series of moves towards the

schizophrenisation of literature. It constitutes an experimental, exploratory mapping of pathways which (as in all schizoid writing) are only discovered in the process of writing (and reading) – they can never exist as a *goal* of the text. Moreover, over the course of its development and proliferation, different branchings of the mode have enacted this process in widely different ways, and with varying degrees of the ‘backing away’ common to all texts which approach ‘the schizophrenic wall’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 147). Schizoanalysis makes it possible to approach texts through these often coexisting oscillations of libidinal investment. More importantly, it offers a way to discover moments of anti-oedipal, schizoid desire within the mode and make use of them for our own empowerment. It is not merely Gothic subjectivity which is at stake in this debate, but our own.

Yet these potentialities do not simply exist, waiting to be discovered; they must be *activated* by the reader, brought to life and made to work. They exist, in a sense, as virtual predicates within the substrate of Gothic writing. In this chapter, I have offered general formulations of how these schizoid dimensions appear and function in the Gothic mode. A central argument of this thesis, though, is that the discovery and activation of these forces across the mode can be facilitated by exploring those Gothic modalities which most obviously and powerfully enact this schizo-literary dynamic. My exemplification of these operations begins with Lovecraft’s weird tales.

## **Chapter Two: The Schizo-Gothic of H.P. Lovecraft**

### **1. Introduction: Lovecraft on the threshold**

In their references to authors who exemplify schizoid or minor writing, Deleuze and Guattari rarely draw upon those associated with the Gothic tradition. Herman Melville, singled out for attention in connection with *Moby-Dick* and shorter fiction such as *Bartleby* (1853) (Deleuze 1997: 68-90) can be ascribed a certain resonance with the (American) Gothic. Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) receives brief consideration (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 261, Deleuze 1997: 85). Beyond this, it is Lovecraft who carries the weight of their engagement with horror literature. Brief but suggestive references to Lovecraft appear in *A Thousand Plateaus*, centring upon the proclamations of sorcerous becoming contained within his fiction. Elsewhere, Deleuze discusses how Lovecraft's tales cohere around 'doorways, thresholds, and zones' which denote potential literary becomings across a fearful representational milieu (1997: 1). For this reason, Lovecraft's work presents the most obvious point of entry for an exploration of the interface between Gothic fiction and schizoid subjectivity.

One aim of this chapter, then, is to tease out parallels between schizoid or minor literature and Lovecraft's own literary achievements. I will show how Lovecraft's fiction may be uniquely illuminated via Deleuzio-Guattarian concepts in a way which highlights the schizoid affinities of Gothic writing. In the context of a study which aims to produce a new, productive assemblage between Gothic and the Deleuzio-Guattarian literary schema, though, the most immediate problem is that of Lovecraft's own Gothic status. His work is broadly associated with the mode, appearing in some surveys of the field (see Mulvey-Roberts (1998) and Punter (1996)). It is clear, however, that his fiction diverges from some of the most typical characteristics of the Gothic. The question of how truly 'Gothic' Lovecraft's work might be is inseparable from the ongoing debate surrounding the functional and etymological parameters of that appellation. Through the employment of a Deleuzian taxonomy of difference, this chapter will develop my approach to Lovecraft's modal liminality.

MacCormack (2010) has provided an incisive and thoroughgoing analysis of Lovecraft's literary becomings. For her, it is not as a Gothic writer, but in his adherence to the Baroque tradition, that these becomings are most clearly revealed. She engages Deleuze's conception of the (Baroque, Leibnizian) fold and synthetically overlays his distinction, between the Baroque and the Gothic, onto a distinction between Baroque and (neo- or revivalist) Gothic modes of writing. In a qualified rejection of Lovecraft's Gothic status, she draws a distinction between the 'cosmic tales' of Lovecraft's Mythos and those 'intimate stories of dread' which may be reconciled more readily with the traditional eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tale of terror. While acknowledging that the Gothic leanings of the latter are less easily repudiated, she attributes to the former qualities (more modern themes and settings, denial of romance, rejection of narratives of haunting-and-resolution) which place them sharply at odds with central Gothic devices. These points will be examined in more detail, but I wish to begin by situating my arguments within a relational formulation of literary modes or genres.

My concern here is not simply to present Lovecraft as representative of the Gothic mode. To assume the importance of this question would be to proceed from that very principle of identity, in which groups are constituted through their subordinated differences, against which Deleuze's philosophical project is so consistently mobilised. I utilise Deleuze here to contest, not the validity, but the usefulness, of such an approach. Instead, I intend to explore the specific ways in which Lovecraft's fiction repeats *through difference* some of the central concerns of Gothic writing, as being precisely the *locus* of his relevance for critical understanding of the mode. In so doing, I will not challenge MacCormack's depiction of Lovecraft as a Baroque writer. Nonetheless, in upholding a perception of the Gothic as exclusively directed towards maintaining the boundaries of the (neurotic) self, she establishes a hermetic distinction between Gothic and Baroque writing which forecloses the possibility of discovering schizoid forces within in the former. Questioning this view, I will present Lovecraft's work as navigating a threshold of proximity between Gothic and schizoid writing which molecularises prevailing molar discourses: a becoming-schizoid of the Gothic.

The imaginative overturning of the natural order, and the evocation of horrific affect, are central and congruent elements of Lovecraft's work. I will argue that his treatment of these elements situates him on the margins of both Gothic and schizoid literary production. This marginality, though, involves more than merely a coexistence of distinct Gothic and schizoid concerns. Rather, Lovecraft's work should be understood as an anomalous space between the two, a unique 'phenomenon of bordering' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 245) which draws them into a zone of indiscernibility. As such, it is of unique value in revealing the schizoid forces which traverse the oedipal structurations of Gothic subjectivity.

## 2. Lovecraft's oeuvre: Schizoid continuities

In this chapter, I will offer detailed analysis of two of Lovecraft's works of short fiction: 'Pickman's Model' (1927) and 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' (1934). Deleuze's references to Lovecraft's writing focus almost exclusively on the second tale, but as MacCormack (2010) has demonstrated, Deleuzo-Guattarian potentialities exist in much of Lovecraft's later work. What distinguishes the tales under consideration here is that they most acutely reveal the imbrication of Gothic and schizoid dynamics in Lovecraft's writing. In order to understand this interplay, I will briefly situate these tales within the wider aesthetic developments that shaped Lovecraft's literary project.

Deleuze refers to 'Lovecraft's powerful oeuvre' (1997: 1), implying that this body of work unfolds a unified or consistent force. Lovecraft's literary career, though, was marked by shifts of emphasis and technique which have led some commentators to sharply differentiate between earlier and later phases. Here, examining some of the most important influences and aims which informed Lovecraft's writing, I intend to consider the justifications for this approach, and its limitations. In the context of my current argument, the important issue here is the extent to which these differentiations offer support to MacCormack's division between distinctively Gothic and Baroque/minor phases in Lovecraft's writing.

This demarcation in Lovecraft's literary output is reflected in his changing stylistic influences. In this respect, Joshi identifies three main phases in Lovecraft's career. In his early period, he was 'a devoted [...] classicist' (Joshi 1996: 43). In 'The Case for Classicism' (1919) Lovecraft argued that 'the literary genius of Greece and Rome [...] may fairly be said to have completed the art and science of expression' (2004: 37). This changed, around 1919, to an increasing interest in Decadence and Symbolism, as exemplified for Lovecraft by Poe and Dunsany. Lovecraft's emulation of Dunsany is most obvious in tales such as 'The White Ship' (1919) and 'The Quest of Iranon' (1921). Poe's stylistic influence is evident in such examples as 'The Outsider' (1921), 'The Hound' (1922) and 'Hypnos' (1922). These tales are among the most obviously Gothic of Lovecraft's career, self-consciously and parodically so in the case of 'The Hound'.

In 1926, Lovecraft turned away from what he called the 'revolt, florid colour, and emotional extravagance' of this earlier work (Joshi 1999: 44). In a letter of June 1931 to J. Vernon Shea, he commented in reference to 'The Outsider' that 'I can hardly understand how I could have let myself be tangled up in such baroque & [sic] windy rhetoric as recently as ten years ago' (Lovecraft 1971: 379). From this point on, although classicism and Decadence still remained as influences, they were merged into a style characterised by an emphasis on psychological authenticity. For Lovecraft, such authenticity was facilitated by the sense of being grounded in one's ordinary milieu. Joshi quotes Lovecraft's assertion that an author 'does best in founding his elements of incident and colour on a life and background to which he has a real and deep-seated relation' (1999: 45).

Lovecraft's stylistic shifts appear, then, to support the identification of a significant division between his earlier literary output and later work. This approach runs the risk, though, of forcing an over-simplified taxonomy upon Lovecraft's literary career. August Derleth, for instance, points out that 'Lovecraft did not work exclusively in one vein and then grow into another,' noting that his Dunsanian vein 'persisted well after the first stories in the Cthulhu Mythos had been written' (1985: 9). This is borne out by Lovecraft's acknowledgement in his autobiographical 'Some Notes on a Nonentity' (1933) that he 'got the idea of the artificial pantheon and myth-background' of the Cthulhu Mythos from Dunsany (2006: 209).



Furthermore, this position serves to obscure the underlying consistency and ubiquity of some of Lovecraft's most important aesthetic concerns. One of these relates to the definitive influence of Poe on Lovecraft's compositional practice. As he also told Shea, Poe 'probably influenced me more than any other one person' (Lovecraft 1971: 378). In 'The Philosophy of Composition' (1846) In 'Supernatural Horror in Literature' (1927, revised in 1935) Lovecraft attributes Poe's success partly to his 'maintenance of a single mood and achievement of a single impression in a tale, and the rigorous paring down of incidents to such as have a direct bearing on the plot and will figure prominently in the climax' (2004: 101). He also admires Poe's perfect mastery of 'the very mechanics and physiology of fear and strangeness' (Lovecraft 2004: 103). It was this 'faultless unity' of effect which caused Lovecraft to claim that 'Poe's weird tales are *alive* in a way that few others can ever hope to be' (2004: 103). This sense of the tale as a machine calculated to give life to novel and strange sensations centrally informed Lovecraft's own literary strategy throughout his career. The most useful way to view Lovecraft's development after 1926 is that he ceased to mechanistically replicate the approaches of these writers and instead assimilated their influence into a distinctive style.

The other major constant of Lovecraft's work concerns the effects he sought to achieve. Although often thought of as a horror writer, it is important to recognise that he sought to do more than simply induce fear in his reader as an end in itself. Rather, horror occupies a *functional* role within his writing: the facilitation of what he termed 'weird' effect. 'Supernatural Horror in Literature' is putatively a survey of writing in the horror tradition, and begins with an assertion of the emotional prevalence of fear. It quickly becomes apparent, though, that Lovecraft's real focus is upon what he calls 'the true weird tale', defined by:

A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint [...] of that most terrible conception of the human brain – a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space (2004: 84).

Lovecraft signals here an implicit connection between horror and the supernatural subversion of nature, experienced both sensationally and conceptually. As I will

shortly argue, Lovecraft's efforts to produce this experience cannot be understood in terms of the representation of pre-actualised affective states. Nor can they be subsumed within the symbolic field of imaginary or psychic reality. Rather, they involve the production through a textual medium of intensive visions which elude the oedipal structurations of fantasy.

In the context of this survey, Lovecraft depicts this suspension of the laws of nature as 'malign'. However, in his later correspondence and journalistic writing it becomes increasingly apparent that he found the contemplation of such suspensions exhilarating and fearful in equal measure. This compound response should be considered against my earlier analysis of the schizoid forces 'repressed' within Freud's account of the uncanny. There, Freud attributes the origin of the uncanny effect of supernatural phenomena to a recollection of pre-oedipal egoic phases, which, as I argued, can be associated with schizoid desire. If viewed in relation to Romain's notion of the 'oceanic' (Freud 2001d: 64) we can understand such experiences as being liberating as well as terrifying, and significantly, in a letter of October 1930 to Clark Ashton Smith, Lovecraft described his 'most poignant emotional experiences' as being:

those which concern the lure of unplumbed space, the terror of the encroaching outer void, & the struggle of the ego to transcend the known & established order of time, (time, indeed, above all else, & nearly always in a backward direction) space, matter, force, geometry, & natural law in general (Lovecraft 1971: 197).

This position is articulated further in a later essay, 'Notes on Writing Weird Fiction' (1937). Here, Lovecraft writes that we are 'imprisoned,' and our 'curiosity about the infinite cosmic spaces beyond the radius of our sight and analysis' is 'frustrated' by 'the galling limitations of time, space, and natural law' (2004: 176). He argues that horror is the emotion best-suited to 'the creation of nature-defying illusions,' claiming that 'it is hard to create a convincing picture of shattered natural law or cosmic alienage or "outsideness" without laying stress on the emotion of fear' (Lovecraft 2004: 176). The role of fear in this process emerges as instrumental, a technically necessary component of the story, rather than being teleologically self-sufficient. It is apparent here that Lovecraft's evocation of horror does not simply express an

anxious response to egoic threat, but actually serves as a vehicle for the facilitation of schizoid desire. This point will receive more detailed consideration in my analysis of 'Pickman's Model'.

Lovecraft's writing was initially directed, then, towards the creation of a primarily 'weird' effect, with fear being employed in the service of this rather than the reverse. It must also be acknowledged, though, that there was a gradual change in his conception of the 'super' natural which involved a move from the 'weird' to the 'cosmic'. Joshi points to a 'radical shift' in Lovecraft's 'whole conception of the weird' indicated by his comment in 1931 that:

The normal revolt against time, space, and matter must assume a form not overtly incompatible with what is known of reality [...] it must be gratified by images forming *supplements* rather than *contradictions* of the visible and measurable universe. And what, if not a form of *non-supernatural cosmic art*, is to pacify this sense of revolt – as well as gratify the cognate sense of curiosity? (Joshi 1999: 49)

Joshi describes this statement as 'the key to the understanding of his entire later work' (1999: 49). He argues that it was Lovecraft's later embrace of a philosophical, aesthetic and ethical cosmicism that produced tales 'so distinctive, and so important in the history of both weird fiction and science fiction' (Joshi 1999: 50). There can be no doubt that Lovecraft's increasing use of a 'cosmic' rather than simply 'supernatural' framework is important on a technical level. Joshi correctly recognises that this shift allowed Lovecraft to produce effects which distinguished him from both his forebears and contemporaries not already emulating his approach.

Once again, though, the distinction between the 'weird' and 'cosmic' elements of Lovecraft's work should be understood as a refinement rather than a categorical break. With its dynamic of supplementing rather than contradicting reality, Lovecraft's cosmic emphasis more obviously highlights a potential affinity with the minor attempt to liberate virtual possibilities from established actuality. Yet it is also clear that this aim was always an implicit, less clearly defined element of his supernatural writing. I will consider the implications of this relationship for an understanding of the schizoid potentiality of supernatural fantasy via 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key'.

Lovecraft's notion of the literary 'weird', then, emerges as a fantastically-grounded overturning of dominant perceptual modes, facilitated by a horror which instigates subjective transformation. This consistent orientation also provides clues to understanding how Lovecraft's writing relates to Gothic concerns. In tracing the historical development of 'weird' or cosmic' horror, Lovecraft acknowledges early Gothic writing as having established a 'novel kind of scene, puppet-characters, and incidents' which 'handled to better advantage by writers more naturally adapted to weird creation, stimulated the growth of an imitative Gothic school which in turn inspired the real weavers of cosmic terror – the line of actual artists beginning with Poe' (2004: 88). It appears that, for Lovecraft, early Gothic writing opened new literary possibilities. To be fully realised, though, these possibilities required that Gothic convention be assimilated and transcended, rather than slavishly repeated. Listing those 'dramatic paraphernalia' and 'stage properties' so familiar to modern scholars of the mode, he argues that these features are 'by no means extinct even today, though subtler technique now forces it to assume a less naïve and obvious form' (Lovecraft 2004: 88). For Lovecraft, the limitations of Gothic weirdness were those of technique rather than affective substance.

There are two possible approaches, then, to reading Lovecraft's works as a consistent oeuvre. On the one hand, there is some justification for identifying a point in Lovecraft's literary career where the trappings of the Gothic mode are cast aside, to be replaced with a Baroque, cosmic, schizoid sensibility. The flamboyantly supernatural Gothicism of tales such as 'The Hound' develops into an increasingly science-fictional or cosmic quality, as evinced in 'The Colour out of Space' (1927) or 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key'. Yet on the other hand, even in his earlier work, Lovecraft employed supernatural horror chiefly as the vehicle for a particular kind of affective intensity. If he moved away from the purely supernatural to the speculatively 'supplementary' in his distortions of the real, this was to seek better ways to make his texts *work*, informed by a refined understanding of his literary goals. Accordingly, I would argue that Lovecraft's later tales are best differentiated from the earlier only through a progressive technical gradation. At the root of Lovecraft's Gothic horror and supernatural fantasies lies a consistent drive towards escape from molar perception.

I will show that Lovecraft's conception of 'weird' or 'non-supernatural cosmic art' can be closely related to the schizoid vocation of minor literature. It constitutes an experimental attempt, through a literary medium, to release virtual possibilities from the perceptual sovereignty of the actualised human subject. This also aligns Lovecraft, in an obvious sense, with the modernist focus in Deleuzio-Guattarian accounts of literature. I will also demonstrate that this project is based upon potentialities first detected, by Lovecraft himself, within the Gothic mode. As such, he proceeds, not simply by abandoning the supernatural fantasy and horror of that mode, but by activating and furthering these potentialities. The surface changes in his practice indicate the inchoate schizoid propensities always already present in the Gothic, rather than being taken as signalling a substantive shift of mode.

I will begin by reading Lovecraft's fictionalised meditations on weird art in 'Pickman's Model' against his critical conception of his own aesthetic aims. Through this synthetic dialogue I will explore some ways in which the tale reveals a consistent schizoid impulse running through Gothic fiction, weird art and minor writing. In particular, I will draw out the deployment of horror as a force for subjective transformation. In my subsequent reading of 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' I will build upon Deleuze's presentation of the tale as a sorcerous becoming, to present it as the clearest instance of Lovecraft's schizoid writing. In the process, I will also show how its schizoid effects both derive and deviate from supernatural fantasy. Taken together, these tales reveal how Lovecraft's conception of weird fiction bridges Gothic supernatural fantasy and the schizoid line of flight.

### 3. 'Pickman's Model' (1927)

For Deleuze, as I noted earlier, writing should produce something beyond 'lived or livable experience'; beyond any life, that is, apprehended according to the habitual categories of thought proceeding from the assumed dominance of the human subject (1997: 1). In consequence, the process of writing is itself inseparable from an escape from the sovereignty of selfhood, 'by becoming-hybrid with what is not itself' (Colebrook 2002: 129). Whether through becomings-woman, -animal or -vegetable,

it leads away from the shameful category of man as grounding-point of all perception, towards the impersonal and imperceptible.

Although Deleuze cites Lovecraft's work as exemplifying the dynamic of becoming, he does not enlarge on how it enacts this schizoid power of writing. In what sense, then, can Lovecraft's weird fiction be related to the schizophrenic vocation of literature? 'Pickman's Model' is of signal value here because it expresses Lovecraft's own meditation on the relationship between literature and life, and serves to suggest powerful resonances with Deleuzian thought. Though overtly concerned with painting, its pronouncements seem equally valid for all art forms. Deleuze and Guattari affirm that 'the writer's position is no different from that of the painter, musician, or architect' in its imperative to produce blocs of percepts and affects (1994: 167). Accordingly, the discussions and ekphrastic portrayals of visual art in the tale both reproduce and expand upon Lovecraft's views of the literary medium.

It is significant that Lovecraft is able to present the image of a weird artist succeeding in his endeavours only in a fictional context. As Deleuze stresses, minor writing is always experimental, characterised by its deviation from established styles and its search for new modes of experience. As such, it is never completed, or completely successful, but is rather an ongoing process. Similarly, in his own development of 'weird' or 'cosmic' aesthetics, Lovecraft reaches towards new discoveries in writing, seeking modes of perception and sensation never directly articulated by earlier writers in the Gothic tradition. Thus, when considering Lovecraft's work as minor writing, it must be remembered that few, if any, writers fully exemplify this modality. As Lovecraft notes in 'In Defence of Dagon' (1917), 'far it be from me to claim the honour of being a real imaginative artist [...] but what I have said of imaginative literature may help to explain what it is that I am feebly and unsuccessfully *trying to do*' (2006: 48). Lovecraft's importance lies in his attempt to wrest a schizoid force from the tradition in which he works, an attempt which will never fully succeed. Yet, from 'Pickman's Model' we may begin to form a picture of what it would achieve if it did.

Weird fiction exemplifies a literary impulse toward becoming which employs horror as an internal, functional element of subjective transformation. In considering the

tale, I have three aims. Firstly, I will examine the linkages between schizoid writing and Lovecraft's model of weird fiction, emerging from the interface between Pickman's work and his own. I will then show how the tale problematises readings of horror which focus purely upon a dynamic of abjection. Finally, I will consider how the interplay of the tale's two main characters might challenge MacCormack's hermetic distinction between Gothic and Baroque subjectivities in Lovecraft's work.

### 3.1 From life: The schizoid force of weird art

The tale presents the case of fictional painter Richard Upton Pickman, whose work exemplifies the conditions of weird art. Thurber, the story's narrator, is a critic 'making notes for a monograph on weird art' (Lovecraft 1985c: 47). This constitutes the source of his initial interest in Pickman, and the narrative itself forms something of a monograph. Lovecraft wrote prolifically for amateur journals, where he developed, in increasing detail, his view of weird fiction. Mirroring Thurber, his own monograph on the weird, 'Supernatural Horror in Literature', was released in the same year as the tale. Mediated through Thurber's narration, our ekphrastic encounter with Pickman's work is situated within a discussion of weird art which closely rehearses Lovecraft's own views. This discussion unfolds through a running commentary on Pickman's paintings, presented as terrible realisations of the aesthetic potentiality of the weird. Yet the gradual disclosure of the weird premise of the narrative itself causes monograph and tale to become disaligned. The resolution of this apparent incongruity provides the key to understanding the schizophrenic tendencies underlying Lovecraft's writing.

Emulating Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart' (1843), 'Pickman's Model' begins with an assertion of sanity on the part of the narrator. 'You needn't think I'm crazy,' Thurber expostulates, while admitting that he is 'lucky to be sane at all' (Lovecraft 1985c: 44), and is afraid to use the subway or venture into cellars. In an effort to justify his mental state, he recounts his dealings with Pickman, who has mysteriously disappeared. Although Thurber claims not to know what has happened to him, it emerges that he has some 'inside information' on the artist and his activities which he is unwilling to divulge to the police (Lovecraft 1985c: 44). The reason for this is

that his information concerns a secret visit he made to a private studio maintained by Pickman under an alias, and to which he is unwilling to return because 'there was something there' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45).

Before proceeding with his story, Thurber feels it necessary to justify his interest in Pickman, noting that 'when a man has the genius Pickman had I feel it an honour to know him, no matter what direction his work takes' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45). It will come to seem surprising, in the light of later events, that Thurber maintains even this much positivity towards the artist. For Thurber, there remains no doubt that 'Boston never had a greater painter than Richard Upton Pickman' despite the fact that the Boston Art Club will not exhibit his most recent work and the Museum of Fine Arts refuses to accept it even as a gift (Lovecraft 1985c: 45). In explaining his position, Thurber digresses into a discussion of the precise genius of Pickman's work which extends into a more universalised profiling of 'the really weird artist' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46). This initial analysis prepares the ground for the later exposure of Pickman's artistic inspiration, but also constitutes a statement of authorial intent.

Thurber begins by asserting that 'it takes profound art and profound insight into Nature to turn out stuff like Pickman's' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45). Contrasting such art to the commercialised images of horror produced by the 'magazine-cover hack' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45), Thurber asserts that 'only a great painter can make such a thing really scare or ring true' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45). This, he tells us, is because 'only a real artist knows the actual anatomy of the terrible or the physiology of fear' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45). In the context of fantastical art, a sense of incongruity immediately proceeds from this conjunction of subjective terror and the terms of a scientific exactitude normally reserved for common reality. What form of truth or reality can be assigned to terror, and how can it have an *actual anatomy* or *physiology*? In Thurber's account, this question is answered through reference to common elements of hereditary subjectivity. He speaks of 'the exact sort of lines and proportions that connect up with latent instincts or hereditary memories of fright, and the proper colour contrasts and lighting effects to stir the dormant sense of strangeness' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45).



A claim to universality and thus some manner of 'absolute' veracity may be derived from instinct and heredity in this argument, but this is less important than the perceptual mechanism implied here. Thurber appears to be arguing that there are lines and proportions, colours and lights, which may be extracted and conjoined so as to have effects which exceed objective representation. They speak to dormant senses only awoken by exposure to these aesthetic constructs, thus depending on a mutually-implicating transformation of both subject and object. Just as realistic art may be haunted by representation, horrific art may be haunted by the fantastical representation of unconscious material. This is why 'a cheap ghost-story frontispiece merely makes us laugh' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45) while the 'really weird artist' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46) produces work with a life of its own, not merely replicating the lived, liveable or even imaginable, but fusing subjective perception and extracted singularities on the level of the medium itself. As Thurber puts it, 'there's something those fellows catch – beyond life – that they're able to make us catch for a second' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45). Lovecraft's words here are carefully chosen. As will soon become apparent, the story's narrative turns upon the lines of influence which draw art and life into proximal relation. The nature of this relation forms a motif which resurfaces throughout, and the assertion that weird art catches something 'beyond life' sets the ground for the story's dénouement, which implicitly problematises the model of weird art proposed here.

Thurber clarifies his point further through an analogy with the distinction in 'ordinary art' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45) between the 'vital, breathing things drawn from Nature or models' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45) and the 'artificial truck' of 'commercial small fry' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46). He appears to suggest that, in the first case, an artist paints *what is there*, without introducing a filter of conventionalised human perception. In the second, the commercial artist paints what he thinks others want to see, overlaying actual with psychic reality so as to produce images which fulfil pre-existent wishes. Yet this analogy can only take us so far. While weird art may be to horror hack-work what the life-painter's results are to those of the 'correspondence-school cartoonist' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46), the life-painter paints from a life which is externally visible to all, even those who can't free themselves from the limitations of habitual perception. What does the weird artist see? Thurber has this to offer: 'the really weird artist has a kind of vision which *makes models*, or summons up what

amounts to actual scenes from the spectral world he lives in' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46). For the first time, this provokes him to intimate a linkage between the perceptual effects of Pickman's art and subjective transformation. 'Gad,' he exclaims, 'I wouldn't be alive if I had ever seen what that man – if he was a man – saw!' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46). The sense in which Thurber would cease to be alive if he had shared Pickman's vision is unclear, though there is the implication that he might have died of sheer fright. Pickman, however, has not died in this sense. Instead, his disappearance suggests a link between this form of artistic practice and the loss of clearly delineated human subjectivity.

Resonances between this view of weird art and the conditions of schizoid writing are immediately apparent. In Thurber's account, weird art seeks more than a reproduction of actuality or a representation of fantasies derived from the individual unconscious. Instead, it extracts virtual singularities in order to produce sensations with a life of their own, on the level of their medium (lines, proportions, colours, light) rather than simply repeating their object. What Thurber describes evokes Deleuze and Guattari's model of art as a compound of sensations formed from percepts and affects, 'beings whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived' (1994: 164) so that 'the smile on the canvas is made solely with colors, lines, shadow, and light' (1994: 166). These percepts and affects depend upon a crystallisation of actual and virtual which cannot stem from subjective human perception. They are the product of becomings in which subject and object of perception become mutually detached from their predefined actuality. In creation, the artist (like Pickman) disappears. I will shortly consider further how the case of Pickman may be related to schizoid becoming.

In the course of his research, Thurber becomes 'nearly a devotee' of Pickman, to the point of hero-worship (Lovecraft 1985c: 47). This devotion derives from the paintings Pickman has made public, and the 'art theories and philosophic speculations' upon which he expounds at length (Lovecraft 1985c: 47). Eventually, though, Pickman offers to show him 'something a bit stronger' (Lovecraft 1985c: 47), revealing that he has another studio in Boston's North End, which contains pictures he thinks Thurber will enjoy because 'I've let myself go a bit there' (Lovecraft 1985c: 50). Eager to visit the studio, Thurber accompanies Pickman not merely to a different part of the city,

but into the altered states of time and space in which Pickman's artistic vision resides. Boston's North End, Pickman explains, is a part of the city especially suited to the production of his kind of art, because 'the ghosts of beings highly organized enough to have looked on hell and known the meaning of what they saw' still reside there (Lovecraft 1985c: 48). It is isolated from the forces of modernity, and steeped in a past which retains a duration detached from chronological time, still conditioned by the spirit of the 'old time' when 'people knew how to live, and how to enlarge the bounds of life' (Lovecraft 1985c: 49). Similarly, its spatial coordinates operate differently from those of the modern city, with 'bricked-up arches and wells leading nowhere' (Lovecraft 1985c: 49), and lost alleys that do not appear on any maps. Pickman's studio 'isn't so very far from the elevated as distance goes, but it's centuries away as the soul goes' (Lovecraft 1985c: 50).

As Lorraine observes, normative subjectivity is typically oriented according to conventional notions of space and time, viewed in terms of 'totalised wholes within which everything can be either spatially or chronologically related with respect to everything else' (2005: 159). According to Deleuze, this experience of space-time is constructed only retrospectively, in accordance with a traditional ontology of identity. When viewed according to difference rather than identity, however, the 'movements of life' may be understood as relating to one another in 'heterogeneous blocks of space-time that defy such representation' and 'are not necessarily linked into a rational whole of measurable units' (Lorraine 2005: 159). The experience of spatio-temporal coordination described by Thurber clearly evokes this Deleuzian conception. Pickman experiences the area according to spatial and chronological relations which defy normative rationalisation. It is impossible to differentiate Pickman the artist from this experiential environment, which operates as a milieu of becoming uniquely conducive to his more extreme artistic experiments. If Thurber was to subsequently experience the streets and alleys of the North End from the position of a normative subjectivity, he would be unable to reproduce the cartography of Pickman's movements within it.

At the house, Thurber is first shown those completed works which Pickman keeps on display above-ground. He is unable to describe them adequately because their true horror is produced by 'simple touches quite beyond the power of words to classify'

(Lovecraft 1985c: 51), but we are nonetheless offered suggestive hints. The paintings feature real-life settings, often a backdrop of the nearby Copp's Hill Burial Ground, reflecting Lovecraft's observation that weird effects derive their intensity from 'close consistency and perfect fidelity to Nature except in the one supernatural direction which the author allows himself' (2004: 116). Against this backdrop, they offer a 'daemonic portraiture' of ghoulish figures which 'were seldom completely human, but often approached humanity in varying degree,' typically depicted in the act of feeding on corpses (Lovecraft 1985c: 52). For Thurber, it is not so much the representational content of the pictures which is disturbing as 'those accursed faces, that leered and slavered out of the canvas with the very breath of life!' (Lovecraft 1985c: 52). He reiterates this point: 'I verily believe they were alive! That nauseous wizard had waked the fires of hell in pigment' (Lovecraft 1985c: 52). Thus, it is apparent that Thurber experiences the paintings as living beings of sensation, which by extension constitute 'nonhuman becomings of man' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 169). In a very real sense, when one looks at them, one ceases to be quite human.

This impression is affirmed by the very literal evocations of becoming which attach to the ghouls. Viewing a picture of a changeling child taught to feed on human corpses by 'nameless doglike things' Thurber detects 'a hideous relationship in the faces of the human and nonhuman figures' (Lovecraft 1985c: 53). He realises that Pickman was, in his 'gradations of morbidity between the frankly non-human and the degradedly human, establishing a sardonic linkage and evolution. The dog-things were developed from mortals!' (Lovecraft 1985c: 53) Moving in the direction of the ill-formed (Deleuze 1997: 1), these gradations suggest the zone of proximity between the terms of a becoming. We encounter a 'becoming-dog' which at once evokes the Deleuzio-Guattarian notion of animal-becoming, and Kristeva's abject 'territories of *animal*' (Kristeva 1982: 13). As I have argued, though, for Deleuze and Guattari such anomalies produce positive transformations rather than reinforcing the boundaries of the self. That Thurber regards this linkage as sardonic implies that he views Pickman as passing comment on human nature, suggesting virtual potentialities of the human which, if never actualised, are nonetheless real as they are revealed in the medium. In what Thurber interprets as 'a spirit of supreme irony' Pickman has even given the features of a ghoul changeling in his painting of a Puritan family at leisure a 'perceptible resonance to his own' (Lovecraft 1985c: 53).

Yet Thurber has still not grasped the true nature of Pickman's work. While the first set of paintings depicted colonial New England, he is next shown a collection of Pickman's 'modern studies' (Lovecraft 1985c: 53). Further enhancing the contextual realism which makes Pickman's works so troubling, these show ghouls at large in Boylston Street subway, or amidst the tombs of Copp's Hill 'with the background of today' (Lovecraft 1985c: 54). These works gradually lead Thurber toward the disturbing realisation that Pickman's greatness comes from a fundamental adherence to realism. His work is not 'mere artist's interpretation' which represents 'the churning, prismatic ephemera of dreams' (Lovecraft 1985c: 53). Rather, he is forced to acknowledge that 'Pickman was in every sense –in conception and in execution – a thorough, painstaking, and almost scientific realist' (Lovecraft 1985c: 55).

Thurber is now led down into the cellar to view Pickman's unfinished canvases, bringing us near to the culmination of his journey. We have followed him on a gradual ascent through a hierarchy of immediacy and realism. Having ventured back into the durational time of Boston's North End, where the echoes and vibrations of the past impinge upon present life, we first encounter paintings depicting scenes from that past, though in disturbingly local settings. We then see the ghouls depicted in the modern day, giving the realism of their depiction an ever more troubling acuity. In the cellar, we encounter such visions in the process of formation, 'nauseous sketches and half-finished monstrosities' (Lovecraft 1985c: 56). The true potentiality of Pickman's visions as possibilities of life is drawn into sharper focus. The cellar itself signals this process, with its large well in the floor, not sealed with bricks but simply covered by a disc of wood. It connects both physically and 'as the soul goes' with the subterranean past of the North End, forming what Burroughs might later describe as an 'interzone' between actual and virtual. Significantly, too, Thurber notices a camera which Pickman claims to use for taking scenes for backgrounds.

Beyond a narrow doorway leading into Pickman's studio proper, Thurber discovers a further painting which makes him scream, and stifle with difficulty a burst of hysterical laughter. It depicts a 'colossal and nameless blasphemy' gnawing on the head of a man 'as a child nibbles at a stick of candy' (Lovecraft 1985c: 57). Again, he is less affected by the subject matter than by 'the cursed, the impious, the unnatural

technique' (Lovecraft 1985c: 57), stating that he 'never elsewhere saw the actual breath of life so fused into a canvas' (Lovecraft 1985c: 57). This is not simply a representation of a monster, 'the monster was there – it glared and gnawed and gnawed and glared' (Lovecraft 1985c: 57). He is forced to conclude that 'only a suspension of Nature's laws could ever let a man paint a thing like that without a model' (Lovecraft 1985c: 57). It seems strange for Thurber to view the possibility of painting such an image *without* a model as the clearest indicator of a suspension of the laws of nature, since the existence of such a model would itself imply the suspension of these laws. As I will shortly discuss, this anomaly suggests Lovecraft's true interest in the works in question.

Thurber notices a photograph pinned to the canvas, which he assumes was used for background as Pickman had earlier claimed. He has no time to inspect it, because Pickman is suddenly alarmed by noises coming from the main part of the cellar. Pickman produces a revolver and ventures out, closing the door behind him. Thurber is witness to a series of anomalous sounds: 'squeals' and 'beats' which put him in mind of huge rats, and a 'furtive, groping kind of clatter' (Lovecraft 1985c: 58), and hears Pickman discharge his revolver. When Pickman reappears, he tells Thurber that his screams had stirred up the rats that infested the cellar. Thurber's visit is now hastily concluded, and Pickman leads him back to the familiar streets of Boston. Returning to the framing narrative, Thurber states that he found the photograph in his pocket the next morning, having inadvertently taken it with him. He now explains that it was not Pickman's paintings which caused him to shun the artist, nor even what he experienced in the cellar. It was what he saw when he looked at the photograph. It shows 'the monstrous being he was painting on that awful canvas,' set against 'the wall of the cellar studio in minute detail' (Lovecraft 1985c: 60). As Thurber tells us in his closing line, it is '*a photograph from life*' (Lovecraft 1985c: 60).

With this dénouement, the paradox surrounding Thurber's account of Pickman becomes fully apparent. At the outset, Thurber had asserted a distinction between the 'ordinary art' of the life-painter, who paints from actual models, and the weird artist, who paints subjectively. Until this point, he has continued to view Pickman's paintings as instances of the latter. Now, though, a different inflection is introduced. How are we to understand the claim that Pickman is in every sense, and particularly

'in conception', a realist? It is in reconciling Pickman's status as a weird artist with the fact that he paints 'realistically' from life that the schizoid component of Lovecraft's conception of weird literature most clearly emerges.

On the level of technique, Lovecraft's ascription of a realist aesthetic to Pickman's work mirrors his own views on the importance of realism in the creation of horror effects. As noted earlier, Lovecraft described the central concern of weird fiction as being the *conception* of a suspension of the laws of nature (2004: 84). In his 'mechanistic materialism' (Joshi 1996: 29), Lovecraft clearly believed that such a suspension could only be conceptual, or illusory. He valued a realistic style over the mannered conventions of Gothic fiction because it allowed the illusory to be experienced as convincing. In a letter of October 1930 to Smith he stresses that 'the mere photographic reproduction of unselected detail' has no artistic merit in itself (Lovecraft 1971: 194). Its importance stems from the fact that a work of weird fiction, if it does not accurately depict life and psychological motivations in sufficient detail, 'will not have enough contact with any deep sense of truth to form the unifying or liberating influence desired' (Lovecraft 1971: 195). It must begin in a world that the reader can recognise as real, rather than fantastical, since 'no avenue can lead us away from the immediate to the remote or the shadowy or the universal unless it really does begin at the immediate' (Lovecraft 1971: 195).

Here, realism is defined simply in contrast to literary convention, and its significance is purely technical. Yet the particular mode of realism which Lovecraft ascribes to Pickman suggests a subtler and more profound meaning than this commentary implies. Pickman, after all, is not a realist in the sense that every detail he produces is realistic apart from the ones which diverge from the laws of nature. Rather, Pickman's horrific creations are taken from life in every detail. This hints at the presence of a deeper engagement with the question of the real in Lovecraft's thought and writing. In a letter of February 1931 to Frank Belknap Long, Lovecraft writes:

Reason as we may, we cannot destroy a normal perception of the highly limited & fragmentary nature of our visible world of perception & experience as scaled against the outside abyss of unthinkable galaxies & unplumbed dimensions (Lovecraft 1971: 294).

Lovecraft's artistic endeavour is not directed simply towards achieving the fantasy of escape from natural laws themselves. He is concerned, rather, with the inability of conventional thought to escape their terms. From the perspective of a schizoanalytic view of literature, his interest can be more clearly understood as an escape from a perceptual framework which disbars the virtual in favour of an absolutely conceived actuality. If we cannot achieve this escape through pure reason, we must find another way to reach the unthinkable. There is a resonance here with Deleuze's claim that, if one experiences the exteriority of relations to their terms as 'repugnant to thought' then relations must become thought's hallucination point (2006: 41). This aligns Lovecraft's literary project with an attempt to experience reality in distinction from actuality; a liberation of the virtual.

MacCormack attributes to Lovecraft a form of realism which she describes as 'mobilisation' (2010). In support of her argument, she quotes Joshi's assertion that '[R]ealism is [...] not a goal but a function in Lovecraft; it facilitates the perception that "something which could not possibly happen" is actually happening' (MacCormack 2010). For MacCormack, this observation resonates with the Deleuzio-Guattarian position that 'becomings are not metaphors and do not occur in a theatre of representation but rather actualize potentialities of thought' (2010). If we apply this conception to Pickman's work in the tale, it can be seen that Pickman's 'realism' can be understood in precisely this way. His paintings emerge as becomings which actualize potentialities of thought. Pickman may be painting from life, in the sense that the ghouls he paints enjoy an objective reality, but his work is more than mere reproduction. Pickman draws *from life* that which is *beyond life*, extracting a profoundly transformatory encounter with virtual possibility.

As indicated by Thurber, it is the technique which Pickman employs in his painting that brings the ghouls to life on the canvas, producing living monuments which exist on the level of the medium. Thurber himself never sees the ghouls in person, his terror resulting purely from their sensational reality as lines, colour, proportions and light, and this is a reality which goes beyond the actuality of any living ghoul. The existence of the photograph, although it proves the actuality of the ghouls, seems almost secondary to the main event of their realisation in Pickman's art. Any man could take such a photograph, but Pickman's paintings are not produced from the



subjective position of a man. Faced with Pickman's rendering of the 'colossal and nameless blasphemy' (Lovecraft 1985c: 57), Thurber exclaims that 'it doesn't seem to me that earth can hold a dream like that!' (Lovecraft 1985c: 57). Nobody, he observes, could paint in this way 'without some glimpse of the nether world which no mortal unsold to the Fiend has ever had' (Lovecraft 1985c: 57).

Despite Thurber's satanic inflection, it is more accurately a demonic allegiance which has been established here. Pickman does not paint what a man sees when he sees a ghoul, but instead produces the ghouls in their minoritising force as becoming-ghoul. His paintings are thus monuments of the becoming in which Pickman is swept up, relating as much to his mutating subjective status as to any objective reality. Pickman may have painted himself into his picture of the Puritan family at leisure, but increasingly the pictures constitute the act of Pickman painting *himself* out. To paraphrase Deleuze, we might say that man becomes ghoul when the ghoul, for its part, becomes sound, colour or line (2006: 55). In this way, Pickman experience can be compared to Deleuze's account of how 'Ahab's whale-becoming forms a bloc with Moby Dick's white-becoming' (Deleuze 2006: 55). Ultimately, and at least partly as a result of his artistic practice, Pickman-as -man disappears altogether.

The question of whether Pickman's transformation is the result of his genetic heritage, or is in some way induced by his artistic practices, remains unresolved. Thurber observes that 'either he was born in strange shadow, or he'd found a way to unlock the forbidden gate' (Lovecraft 1985c: 59). In this context, it is clearly Pickman's paintings which would constitute that gate. There is no doubt that Pickman exists in a state of subjective flux. Reid, a member of the Boston Art Club with an interest in 'comparative pathology' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46), reportedly detects in Pickman an actual physical alteration that 'repelled him more and more every day, and almost frightened him towards the last – that the fellow's features and expression were slowly developing in a way [...] that wasn't human' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46). Thurber is initially dismissive of these claims, but later insights lend them an ominous significance. The revelation that the ghouls are painted from life, together with the observation that 'Pickman comes of old Salem stock, and had a witch ancestor hanged in 1692' (Lovecraft 1985c: 47) raise the possibility that

Thurber's transformation signifies more than his being merely 'abnormal and eccentric' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46).

This physical mutation appears to be the corollary of a deeper change in Pickman, which manifests on both a cultural and moral level. We can assume that, at least initially, he did work and behave in a way compatible with the interests of the Boston Art Club. It seems to be only recently that 'people generally were commencing to have less and less to do with him' (Lovecraft 1985c: 47). There is the clear implication from Pickman's paintings that he has been at least a passive observer to acts of extreme savagery, and is evidently untroubled by the ghouls' repellent conduct. At the same time, we have no clear indication that he has himself engaged in such practices as yet (with the exception of Reed's 'talk about diet' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46)) and he seems to enjoy only partial acceptance by the ghoul community, as his use of the revolver testifies. Pickman evidently exists in an anomalous relationship to the ghouls, a demonic figure of bordering in some uneasy zone of proximity between majoritarian man and the ghoul-pack as 'a population, a peopling, [...] a multiplicity' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 239). I will consider this animal-multiplicity in greater detail in my reading of 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key'.

Thus, on the surface, the objective existence of the ghouls appears to give the lie to Pickman's status as a weird artist. It indicates that Pickman does not paint from 'a kind of vision which *makes models*' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46), since the very point of the story's dénouement is the revelation that his models already exist. Thurber's responses reveal, however, that the true horror of Pickman's work, and the foundation of his weird vision, lies in what he makes *of* those models – and what they make of him. It is in this that Lovecraft's conception of the weird has a perceptual dynamic which aligns closely with the Deleuzian model of writing. Presenting the ghastly zones of proximity between human and ghoul, in which both become transformed at the level of the artistic medium, Lovecraft makes relations the hallucination point of thought. In Pickman's art, the human becomes hybrid with that which is not itself.

When we consider the close parallels between the views expressed by Lovecraft regarding weird fiction, and the treatment of Pickman's weird art in the tale, the

schizoid intensities of Lovecraft's vision sharpen their focus. Lovecraft's conception of weird writing is driven by the impulse to liberate desiring-connections from conventional categories of thought, mobilising the virtual so as to transform the experience of human life. Traversing both fantasy and the 'mere photographic reproduction' (SL 3: 194) of the actual/real, it serves to produce new virtual possibilities of life beyond the actually lived.

### 3.2 Becoming through the force of horror

For Deleuze, the unique power of imaginative art lies in its ability to render indiscernible the distinction between real and imaginary, actual and virtual, present and past. It does so by producing an 'objective illusion' in which actualised and virtual states form crystalline images, the two sides reflecting and constituting one another (Deleuze 2005: 67). Such images effectively produce pure difference, the force of becoming. Their implications for any human 'self' that encounters them are profound, since they reveal that what we experience as the self is merely the actualisation of a given set of variable possibilities, arising from a multiplicity of prepersonal desires and their connections. To encounter desire and subjectivity as abstract, freed from the restraining constructions of ordinary experience, may well appear horrific from a molar perspective. In considering various pictures of flowers as becomings, Deleuze and Guattari find a 'pure and simple terror' in the notion that 'the flower sees' (1994: 175). From the perspective of a schizoid sense of subjectivity, by contrast, this experience might also be one of liberation and joy, particularly if the neurotic nature of molar existence has previously been experienced as restrictive. In Lovecraft's writing, there is a constant interplay between these two affective states, although horror typically appears as the more overt response to becoming.

As I have previously suggested, the oedipal implications of much Gothic scholarship have tended to focus on constructions of horror as a response to subjective threat. Even from the perspective of a schizoanalytic model of writing, this understanding may be upheld since, as Deleuze states, psychoanalytic interpretation is perfectly relevant to oedipal forms of literature. Accordingly, MacCormack presents horror as

'ambiguous at best and trite at the worst' (2010). For her, it raises 'the political question [...] "of what are we afraid?"' and the answer to this question is clear: 'becoming-minoritarian is frightening' (MacCormack 2010). From this perspective, horror becomes an emblem of the neurotic Gothic subject. It is a fear of something which only appears frightening from an unregenerated majoritarian perspective, but would be experienced quite differently after the fact. For MacCormack, therefore, its presence in Lovecraft's narratives is tertiary to the main event; an epiphenomenon of transformation. In her account, the schizoid functionality of Lovecraft's literary machine is thrown into relief only through an excision of the (Gothic) horror which permeates his work.

I would counter this position by proposing that it is impossible to separate the fearful elements of Lovecraft's work from his production of indiscernibility, the 'objective illusions' through which virtual possibilities are released. As noted above, Lovecraft asserts that horror facilitates 'the creation of nature-defying illusions' in his work and thus the sensory experience of 'outsideness' (2004: 176). This approach can be related to Deleuze's assertion that to think through relations, rather than via terms and identities, is 'repugnant to thought' and must be achieved through 'an experimentation which does violence to thought' (2006: 41). Lovecraft employs horror as a means of shocking the reader from established patterns of thought, which typically focus on the actual, producing instead a hallucinatory crystallisation of virtual and actual. For Lovecraft, this radical change is achieved through that very intensity of horror which attends upon threats to our majoritarian status. I noted earlier Lovecraft's belief that 'no avenue can lead us away from the immediate to the remote [...] unless it really does begin at the immediate' (Lovecraft 1971: 195). We could apply this view to the schizoid power of horror by noting that equally, no avenue can lead us away from the majoritarian perception of the actual towards apprehension of the virtual unless it begins with the former. The hallucinatory effect which is central to Lovecraft's effective mobilisation of the virtual thus proceeds directly from his use of horror. Horror does not merely make us recoil; it shocks and confuses us, and through that confusion opens new pathways for the flow of prepersonal desires.

'Pickman's Model' contains elements of both terror and horror. In respect to the former, more of the tale's effect derives from suggestion, intimation and atmosphere than from explicit depictions of 'a positive object of fear' (Cameron 2003: 21). We could consider the ghouls to be 'objects' in this sense, although the only 'positive' indication of their presence is in the photograph glimpsed by Thurber, who never actually sees a ghoul in the flesh. Nonetheless, the atmosphere which permeates the tale, and the 'pure optical and sound situations' (Deleuze 2005: 124) which replace any real action, are undoubtedly horrific in their implication and effect. What suffuses the tale, and the true source of its horror, is the sense of an unnatural morphosis of the human which threatens to overwhelm subjective boundaries.

In this sense, the tale's horror resides, in Botting's formulation, at that point where human nature is 'most in danger of disintegration' (1998: 131). As MacCormack argues, though, horror arises at the loss, not the (threatened) destruction of the self (2010). There is a different dynamic at work from the more customary abjection of Gothic horror, because here, we move *through* this confrontation to experience a disintegration which is actualised. The ghouls, of course, can be understood as imaginary entities; they are not real. Nevertheless, Pickman's becoming is not simply imaginary. It is 'perfectly real' in the same sense as an animal-becoming, even though 'the human being does not "really" become an animal any more than the animal "really" becomes something else' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 238). A becoming, Deleuze and Guattari argue, 'produces nothing other than itself' (1988: 238). Being and identity fall away, to be replaced by the force of pure difference.

In the context of art, this process is subtended by crystalline imagery in which real (actual) and unreal (virtual) pass into and through one another, producing the virtual/real (Deleuze 2005: 123). In 'Pickman's Model' becoming is inseparable from the paintings themselves; it only resides in Pickman to the extent that he is a multiplicity rather than an individual being. No becoming can be personal, for as soon as a becoming occurs the fixed terms by which it is bracketed become subsidiary to the relational zone between them. What *becomes* is not Pickman, but those forces of desire which run through him and enter into zones of proximity with the ghouls. As Pickman's personal and categorical 'manhood' falls away, it is replaced by a mode of existence which implicitly challenges the personal and

categorical. Pickman's becoming thus lies in the zones of proximity which we encounter chiefly in Lovecraft's description of the paintings themselves. In these, the becomings are not simply 'personal' to Pickman. Instead, they take on a 'collective' resonance, implying the existence of virtually possible forces within human multiplicity.

Thus, in the painting of the changeling child, it is the '*relationship* [my italics] in the faces of the human and nonhuman figures' which he finds 'hideous' rather than simply the nonhumanity of the forms (Lovecraft 1985c: 53). The horror of the scene derives from Thurber's perception of a 'linkage and evolution' between non-human and human states (Lovecraft 1985c: 53). Though this effect strongly evokes Kristeva's account of the animal-bject, here, when Thurber's sense of hermetic human identity is shaken, his impulses towards abjection fail him. He is forced to experience human being as a multiplicity transected by unthinkable virtual forces which, once glimpsed, can never be exorcised. Thurber feels his 'self' reel, as will Carter in 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key', though to a different degree. Nevertheless, the damage has already been done. Through this, and the succession of other paintings in which this gradation is realised, Thurber too is drawn into Pickman's transformation. It reaches out of the paintings, and (for the reader) off the page, to fragment and unravel human identity, in a process of what Powell, after Guattari, has termed 'affective contagion' (2005: 23).

While at this point Thurber's horror does not derive from any knowledge that Pickman's paintings are taken from life in a literal sense, the distinction is really irrelevant. What Thurber already grasps when he looks at the gradations and relations that subtend human form is that, in a very real sense, he is seeing virtual forces which Pickman has *brought to life*. For Thurber, Pickman's paintings work as images in which actual and virtual become crystallised, indiscernible. This is not a subjective response; rather, this indiscernibility is an objective quality of the images themselves.

Some of the same effect permeates the remediation of our own ekphrastic encounter with the paintings, though it is arguably less forceful. Indeed, this constitutes one of the particular points of interest the tale bears for an analysis of weird fiction, since

the paintings may be taken as paradigms of weird effectuation which are perhaps more successful than Lovecraft's own images. Nevertheless, the same principle applies at both levels of mediation: what must be produced is an indiscernibility of real and unreal. Each writer, or artist, must find her own ways of revealing the force of difference by this means. It is clear that Lovecraft perceived horror as integral to his own process, facilitating the production of sensory 'illusions' which facilitate altered perceptual states. One of the changes which began to occur in Lovecraft's writing, around 1926, was an increasing confidence and fluency in his attempts to refine this force of Gothic horror and make it work for his purposes. It is nonetheless clear that there is an unbroken continuity of underlying effect both between Lovecraft's earlier and later work, and between his body of work and the horror of the Gothic mode.

Through Lovecraft we can understand that horror may not only constitute a shocked response to the threat of subjective transformation, but also it can be *that which shocks us into* such transformation. In this sense, we must view it not purely in terms of neurotic, majoritarian anxiety, but also as a machine of schizoid desire. Lovecraft develops this process to a more obvious extent than in much earlier Gothic fiction, to the point where we might understand his use of horror as different from that of much Gothic writing. Yet it is also clear that Lovecraft's distinctive style and approach could not have developed except through reference to the Gothic. By repeating, through difference, the characteristic affective operations of Gothic literature, his writing discloses 'hidden forces' (Colebrook 2002: 120) which existed as virtual potentialities of the mode. In this way, and particularly in the context of horror, he produces a minor, schizoid writing of the Gothic.

Yet it is necessary to measure and qualify Lovecraft's effectuation of this dynamic. My focus on his radical, schizoid employment of horror is designed to illustrate a particular sense in which Lovecraft brings Gothic and schizoid modes into a proximal becoming, through the line of development characterised here as weird fiction. Nonetheless, this should not obscure the fact that horror also retains its majoritarian, reactive face within Lovecraft's total affective framework, deriving from the 'hatred, disgust, and fear' towards minorities which Houllebecq identifies as a motivating force within his writing (2005: 102). Thus, the persistent co-presence of this more

traditionally Gothic sense of horror in Lovecraft's work acts as a limiting influence on the liberation of schizoid desire in his tales. Just as Lovecraft's weird fiction is incompletely Gothic, it is also incompletely schizoid, cleaving to recognisably Gothic impulses towards abjection. As I will shortly argue, this accounts for the tensions and fluctuations which attend Carter's responses to multiplicity in 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key', and for his all-too-human falling-back into majoritarian horror at the culmination of that tale.

### 3.3 Gothic and Baroque subjectivities in 'Pickman's Model'

In his discussion of what he calls, after Leibniz, the fold, Deleuze (1993) distinguishes between the Gothic aesthetic, predicated upon construction, frame and enclosure, and the Baroque aesthetic, where matter escapes its formal framing in a process of infinite enfoldment. Following Deleuze, MacCormack (2007) extends this distinction to a literary context, identifying individual protagonists as Gothic or Baroque according to their relationships to their milieu. Thus, Baroque subjectivity is denoted by a willingness to act and be acted upon, to become in concert with other forces, so that 'one's nature depends entirely on the forces and malleable, supple forms with which it folds' (MacCormack 2007). By contrast, the Gothic protagonist fears this possibility, and striving to maintain the boundaries that define the individuated self, exists as 'a form within the world who fears the world will come within them' (MacCormack 2007). MacCormack thus understands the Gothic as 'alienated from, and alien to, a dialectic relation [...] where borders are more important than qualities' (2007).

For MacCormack, both Gothic and Baroque texts include encounters with delirious 'cracks and hollows' within the 'singular plane of perception' (2007). These points of perceptual slippage constitute the 'the supernatural or the horrific' in Gothic fiction and 'must be exorcised to reiterate the protagonist as a person within society' (MacCormack 2007). Baroque fiction, by contrast, moves to explore these other worlds. She argues that the Baroque or Gothic quality of a text is thus indicated by its treatment of the characters who encounter these slippages. Consequently, 'the



Baroque protagonist in Gothic fiction is the one that dies' but 'the death of the Gothic protagonist is the birth of the Baroque' (MacCormack 2007).

By this formula, Thurber appears to express a typically Gothic sensibility. He describes himself as "'hard-boiled'" (Lovecraft 1985c: 51) and 'not easily knocked out' (Lovecraft 1985c: 53), but as Joshi (1996: 406) notes, this plot-driven characterisation is undermined by Thurber's hysterical tone and his less-than-steely screaming and keeling over in reaction to the paintings. It is clear that he has a fascination for the weird, and he proclaims that 'morbid art doesn't shock me' (Lovecraft 1985c: 45). Yet when finally confronted with the truth about Pickman's artistic inspiration, he is terrified and repulsed by its implications. As a character, Thurber ultimately reacts to the subjective threat contained within Pickman's work by striving to distance himself from it. In this respect, the text can be read as enacting an essentially Gothic dynamic. By contrast, in MacCormack's terms, Pickman's becoming signal his status as a Baroque protagonist. As noted earlier, Thurber expresses the view that had he followed Pickman's path, he 'wouldn't be alive' (Lovecraft 1985c: 46). From his point of view, whether he is dead, or has undergone the transformations hinted at in the text, Pickman has disappeared. Arguably, the latter outcome is more strongly suggested, and in Lovecraft's contemporaneous *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* (1927) we encounter Pickman once more, now partially transformed into a ghoul. Here, he is presented in ambivalent terms as horrific, yet also beneficent. Consequently, we might view the earlier text as Baroque from the perspective of Pickman's experiences.

As I argued at this chapter's outset, 'Pickman's Model' can be seen as bridging the concerns of what MacCormack presents as Lovecraft's successive Gothic and Baroque phases. It incorporates elements of his earlier, more fulsomely horrific tales, but is both contemporaneous and thematically resonant with the emerging mythos works. In demonstrating a close overlap between the two, I would contend that Lovecraft's concerns are more consistent than MacCormack suggests, and that the changes which occur across his work can be better understood as technical or stylistic refinements. When Lovecraft's horror is considered as an integrally functional agent of becoming, rather than as epiphenomenal to it, an impulse towards becoming may be discovered throughout his oeuvre. I would argue that

MacCormack's arguments take insufficient account of this issue as a result of the emphasis on the fate of individual protagonists in her account.

In the first place, the attribution of an absolute significance to the demonstrated fate of characters does not fully account for the trademark ambivalence of Gothic fiction. At the level of moral didacticism, the punishment of transgressive behaviour on the part of Gothic protagonists is not incompatible with the intention that readers might derive pleasure from witnessing such behaviour. As Botting states, 'moral endings' can sometimes serve as 'little more than perfunctory tokens, thin excuses for salacious excesses' (1996: 8). This ambiguity, not least with regard to endings, can be extended to Gothic representations of neurosis and paranoia. These may have the double-edged quality of an anxiety which arises from the threatening of boundaries, and an excitement and sense of possibility which is provoked by just such threats.

Similarly, while MacCormack plausibly argues that there is no cure but death for what she terms 'the Gothic pathology' (2007) the inevitability of this outcome does not necessarily denote a total closure of possibility. Deleuze and Guattari argue, in a different context, that while the existence of the schizo is not itself revolutionary, 'the schizophrenic process – in terms of which the schizo is merely the interruption or the continuation in the void – is the potential for revolution' (2004: 374). In the same way, Gothic pathology, to the extent that it can be identified with the schizo (as in the cases of Wringhim in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) or Jekyll-Hyde in the *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886)) may not constitute a Baroque revolution of the subject, but its evocation of a *potential* for revolution is important nonetheless. Gates may be opened in the Gothic through which individual characters do not successfully pass, but which nonetheless produce new thresholds of subjective transformation.

Secondly, MacCormack's emphasis on individual protagonists places an exclusive weight on the importance of the representational literary character. Characters as the representations of differently-configured 'selves' thus become the arbiters of subjectivity in a given text, demonstrating different models of relation to the infinite. Yet to approach a text from a Deleuzian perspective enables the possibility of

understanding the relationship between character and (textual) subjectivity in a different way. As I noted in Chapter One, for Deleuze and Guattari, the subjective 'self' is epiphenomenal to a collection of fragmentary 'subjectivities' which only emerge as a unified form in retrospect. Although it may be misconceived as a fixed entity it is in fact 'forever decentred, *defined* by the states through which it passes [...] the lived state coming first, in relation to the subject that lives it' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 22).

We *could* apply this dynamic to our reading of a particular protagonist, but this approach contains an inherently reterritorialising momentum. It invokes the danger of emphasising the very kind of sovereign individuality which schizoanalysis is designed to disrupt. As Bruce Baugh argues, 'since they are nothing outside the forces and relations that constitute them, characters need not be coherent [...] and it would be pointless to look for a decisive moment of 'recognition' where the true nature and fate of an individual is revealed' (2000: 44). As he affirms, 'it is not the 'truth' or 'meaning' of a character we are after, but an understanding of the forces at work in that character' (Baugh 2000: 44).

In this way, subjectivity in a text may emerge, not as the property of a character as individual 'person', but through haecceities which involve a traversal of self and milieu. In speaking of Thomas Hardy, for instance, Deleuze notes that 'his characters are not people or subjects, they are collections of intensive sensations, each is such a collection, a packet, a bloc of variable sensations' (2006: 30). These sensations are not those of an individual self in isolation, but in relation to its milieu, and as a haecceity. Individuations do not, Deleuze explains, take place 'in the manner of a subject or even of a thing' (2006: 68), while Guattari speaks of 'individuation by "hecceity" [sic] not by subjectivity' (in Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 89). By emphasising the significance of the fate of individual protagonists, MacCormack applies a transcendental logic to the text, introducing a 'dimension supplementary to what occurs' (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 69). She thus diminishes the possibility of finding a subjective escape in Gothic fiction which goes beyond the level of the personal journey.

Considered in the light of these arguments, 'Pickman's Model' demonstrates the difficulty of rigidly distinguishing Gothic and Baroque textual dynamics. Taken individually, we might say that Thurber's abject fear denotes a 'typically' Gothic subjectivity, while Pickman's fate demonstrates the Baroque leaning of the text. To do so, though, would be to overlook an ambivalent tone which contributes importantly to the effect of the story. We must, on one level, identify with Thurber's sense of egoic threat and his need to reinforce boundaries, because it is precisely this fear which lends intensity to Pickman's countervailing instinct towards subjective enfoldment. The two responses, as this story shows, are not binary opposites but two faces of the same desire. Thurber is, from the start, drawn to Pickman's horrific images, taking care to distinguish himself from the conventional sensibilities of the 'old women' of the Boston Art Club. It is he who draws us into Pickman's world. When things go too far for Thurber, and he experiences the real implications of his desires, we must feel his horror for us to simultaneously experience the dark possibilities of that world. We have been taken a certain distance, but must feel the possibility of going further.

Pickman, too, remains in the middle. Not yet a ghoul but no longer a man, he must still fend off the ghouls by force and is, after all, painting their actions rather than carrying them out himself. Ultimately, though, Pickman is involved in a becoming-other than the molar male the Boston Art Club would prefer him to be. Neither Thurber nor Pickman wish to be left behind with the narrow-minded 'old women' but to avoid this fate, the security of molar identity must be left behind. To do this is not easy – it requires shock, hallucination, radical escape – and Thurber's Gothic horror is the demonic agent of that escape.

There is, here, no single 'subjectivity' as may be applied to Thurber or Pickman as 'men', but instead a haecceity, a milieu of subjective becoming which arises from the synthesis of their experiences. The true 'subject' and 'subjectivity' in the story is not Gothic Thurber, nor Baroque Pickman. It is a 'becoming-ghoul' which depends upon the interaction of both characters with each other and with their milieu – the Boston Art Club, the North End, Pickman's cellar, the unseen ghouls themselves. All these things taken together constitute the becoming which passes through the tale, and that becoming is driven by the horror which ties them together. This horror has both

a majoritarian, abjecting face, and a schizoid effect, but the interplay between the two in this context renders them ultimately indiscernible.

In my analysis of 'Pickman's Model' I have followed the narrative of that tale closely, since it is the tale's imbrication of narrative and theoretical exposition which lends it a particular interest. I have used the tale to demonstrate how Lovecraft's model of weird fiction serves as a bridge between the paranoid and schizoid undercurrents of the Gothic mode. I will now turn to 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' (1934) in order to show how Lovecraft's approach progresses from an emphasis on personal, paranoid fantasy towards a more fully-developed crystalline regime.

#### 4. 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' (1934)

'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' was completed, in collaboration with E. Hoffman Price, in 1933, and first published in the July 1934 issue of *Weird Tales*. Joshi describes the tale as 'nothing more than a fantastic adventure story with awkward and laboured mathematical and philosophical interludes' (1996: 527). Yet, for Deleuze, its value as an aesthetic event resides precisely in the conceptual force of Carter's fantastical adventures in perception. Despite his references to 'Lovecraft's powerful oeuvre' (1997: 1), the specific examples Deleuze draws from that oeuvre are almost invariably restricted to 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' (1932). Scenes from this 'horrific and luminous' (2006: 50) story feature as prominent figurations, in Deleuze's thought, of 'the doorways, thresholds and zones' (1997: 1) of becoming of which the universe is composed. As I will show, the tale can be read as articulating the line of flight of the molar subject as it progresses towards the 'far side' of molecular becomings: becoming-imperceptible (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 248).

In the analysis which follows, I will develop Deleuze's rather cursory engagement with the tale, explicating its nature as an instance of the literary flight towards becoming-imperceptible. This flight occurs in tandem with a transformation of normative spatio-temporal modalities inseparable from the transformations of subjectivity implicit to becoming (Lorraine 2005: 159). As I will argue, the crystalline

image-regime through which Carter's altered states of perception unfold develops directly from the conceptual liberation authorised by its fantastical underpinnings. One of the primary aims of my analysis is to demonstrate continuities between the ideologically interrogative orientation of supernatural fantasy in the Gothic mode, and the subjective transformation embodied in schizoid writing. Here, I will read Carter's becoming-imperceptible as representative of the schizoid potential virtually present within the Gothic. I will show that, in this tale, we witness personal dreams and fantasies as they cease to *signify* personal desires and instead come to *produce* new flows of desire which escape and rupture the personal. What emerges from this can no longer be related 'back' to pre-existent states of oedipal self-configuration, or understood as an abjection of that which threatens those states. Instead, it must be understood as activating schizoid subjectivities as processes of becoming.

#### 4.1 From 'The Silver Key' to the death of the subject

Randolph Carter, the central character of 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key', appears in three earlier tales by Lovecraft: 'The Statement of Randolph Carter' (1920), 'The Unnameable' (1923) and 'The Silver Key' (1926), as well as in the short novel *The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath* (1927). His recurrence in these works makes it possible to read them as episodes within an ongoing fiction, and Lovecraft's references to them in this last tale lend some authority to this strategy. Despite this, there are inconsistencies in Carter's characterisation across these works, and 'The Silver Key' is the only one which bears significantly on the tale now under consideration.

'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' was originally conceived by Price as a sequel to that tale. As will become apparent, although there is a superficial narrative continuity between the two, this is less important than their disjuncture. As I will argue, 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' should be understood not as a sequential continuation, but as a qualitative transformation. It is in the course of this transformation that Carter's schizoid subjectivity emerges. At the same time, it is in considering the tale's relationship to 'The Silver Key' that we can trace the origins of this force in supernatural fantasy.

In explicating the production of Carter's 'animal-becoming, molecular-becoming, imperceptible-becoming' (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 50), I will place less emphasis on narrative than in my examination of 'Pickman's Model'. Lovecraft's writing, as MacCormack notes, 'rarely privileges event and narrative' (2010), understood in terms of sensory-motor situations and the 'localizable relations, actual linkages, legal, causal and logical connections' (Deleuze 2005: 123) which govern them. Lovecraft's becomings rather occur within the 'pure optical and sound situations' of the crystalline narrative, 'to which characters, who have become seers, cannot or will not react, so great is their need to 'see' properly what there is in the situation' (Deleuze 2005: 124). As Lovecraft states, in a letter of November 1931 to Smith, 'my natural –and only genuine – form of imagination is that of *passive witnessing*' (Lovecraft 1971: 436). He declares himself 'constitutionally unable to see anything interesting in mere *motions* and *events*. What absorb me are *conditions*, *atmospheres*, *appearances*, and intangible things of that kind' (Lovecraft 1971: 436). The sensory-motor aspects of a narrative offer 'truthful' (Deleuze 2005: 123) representations which affirm the actualised realities that precede the text. By contrast, as MacCormack argues, 'becomings [...] do not occur in a theatre of representation but rather actualize potentialities of thought' (2010). Accordingly, the becomings Lovecraft unfolds within this tale must be grasped as actualizations of virtual potentialities, incompatible with 'truthful' narrative ordering.

At the same time, my purpose is not merely to offer a schizoanalytic reading of Lovecraft's text. I also intend to show how its schizoid properties arise from possibilities initially framed within more conventional supernatural fantasy. As I noted earlier, Deleuze and Guattari view dreams as essentially egoic, yet still containing, as with fantasy, machinic indices of deterritorialization (2004: 348). These desiring-machines, Deleuze argues, introduce 'breaks and flows that prevent the dream from being reconfined in its scene and systematized within its representation' (2004: 348). Carter's line of flight finds its genesis within a desire originally conceived purely in terms of dream; its origins are fantastical. Yet against this backdrop, desire finds new zones of connection which disrupt the oedipal structuration this implies. To reveal this effect, it is useful to give some attention to the essentially neurotic representations as the ground against which these 'machinic indices of desire' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 348) form. Of particular significance here are the

overlaps and contrasts which exist between the narrative functionality of 'The Silver Key' and its sequel.

In contrast with his disapproving assessment of 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' Joshi describes 'The Silver Key' as 'a poignant reflection of some of Lovecraft's innermost sentiments and beliefs' (1996: 527). As he succinctly notes, 'this story depicts Carter's entire lifetime from his childhood up to the age of fifty-four, at which point he doubles back on his own timeline and reverts to boyhood' (Joshi 1996: 410). At the outset, we are told that 'when Randolph Carter was thirty he lost the key of the gate of dreams' (Lovecraft 1985a: 488). Much of the tale concerns his subsequent attempts to live in this state, and his dissatisfaction with prevalent literary and philosophical ideas. Finally, he retreats into reveries of his early life, even 'refitting the house as it had been in his early boyhood' (Lovecraft 1985a: 494). Amidst this memorialization, he begins to dream again, and his dreams guide him to the discovery of a box in his attic, which contains 'a huge key of tarnished silver covered with cryptical arabesques' (Lovecraft 1985a: 495). Again inspired by dream, he returns to his childhood home in Arkham and undergoes a strange temporal transition, returning his experience of boyhood. With memories of his adult life fading, he still possesses the key, which he brings with him to a mysterious nearby cave that he frequented as a boy. We learn little of what happens after this, but it appears that the boy-Carter begins his childhood life anew, though sometimes displaying 'an odd gift of prophecy' (Lovecraft 1985a: 500).

It is possible to see why the tale might be of less interest to Deleuze than its sequel. The weird effect of 'The Silver Key' derives purely from movements within linear time. Carter moves back and forth along a line of time between two points, but this time remains 'the object of an indirect representation' (Deleuze 2005: 124). It is still a consequence of action, dependent on movement, and inferred from space (Deleuze 2005: 124). Though it may be disordered, 'it remains in principle a chronological time' (Deleuze 2005: 124). Through this adherence to an organic chronology, the tale leaves unchallenged 'the submission of the line to the point' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 293). As Deleuze and Guattari assert, 'one does not break with the arborescent schema, one does not reach becoming or the molecular, as long as a line is connected to two distant points' (1988: 293). Here, the line of time continues



to be defined by the distant points it connects, rather than effecting a pure *passing between*, capable of 'sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 293). Within this organic image-regime, boy-Carter and man-Carter remain distant points in relation to one another. There is no zone of proximity which might undermine their notional distinction or cohesive individuality.

From the perspective of observers alive at the time of the adult Carter's return to Arkham, 'The Silver Key' ends with his disappearance. From Carter's own perspective, by contrast, he appears to embark upon a renewed boyhood to which he will presumably return in an endlessly recurrent loop. As will become apparent, the crystalline aspects of Carter's narrative and its powers of becoming begin precisely where 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' deviates from this apparent resolution. This latter tale initially appears to begin where the preceding tale ended, offering a condensed version of Carter's life and the events surrounding his earlier disappearance. The narrative is framed through the deliberations of four men who have gathered to settle Carter's estate in the light of his presumed death. As is revealed in the dénouement, one of these men is Carter himself, now trapped in an alien body and so forced to conceal his identity. It is from him that we receive an account of his fate which both overlaps with, and deviates from, events in 'The Silver Key'.

In that tale, after spending time in the cave, Carter returned to his family home as a boy. Yet in this new account, he performs a rite with the silver key which allows him to 'cross the barrier to the untrammelled land of his dreams and the gulfs where all dimensions dissolved in the absolute' (Lovecraft 1985a: 515). His odyssey opens up a new plane of reality which neither conforms to nor contradicts the previous version but is, rather, supplementary to it. In 'The Silver Key' the man-Carter 'miraculously leaped a gulf of years' and left the cave as the boy-Carter, the division between these two states remaining distinct (Lovecraft 1985a: 516). In 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key', by contrast, it is quickly apparent that a different temporal modality is in play. We are told that 'now there was no distinction between boy and man. There was only the entity Randolph Carter, with a certain store of images which had lost all connection with terrestrial scenes and circumstances of acquisition' (Lovecraft

1985a: 516). In the same universe, Carter leaves the cave, or he does not. Rather than being simply the result of an intertextual aporia, these forking, Borgesian, 'impossible' (Deleuze 2005: 127) presents mark the emergence of Carter's subjective transformation.

In the narrative, Carter passes through various stages in his approach to imperceptibility. The barrier through which he initially passed is not yet the 'Ultimate Gate' (Lovecraft 1985a: 520). This, he will navigate only with the help of 'the frightful Guide and Guardian of the Gate – 'UMR AT-TAWIL, the ancient one' and his Companions (Lovecraft 1985a: 519). Only after this will he fully realise the 'despair which flows from a loss of identity' (Lovecraft 1985a: 527), and undergo his strange merger with Yog-Sothoth, the 'All-in-One and One-in-All' (Lovecraft 1985a: 528). Yet from the very beginning, we witness Carter leaving behind molar subjectivity, objectivity and form, and opening into molecularity: 'from the first gesture and syllable an aura of strange, awesome mutation was apparent, a sense of incalculable disturbance and confusion in time and space' (Lovecraft 1985a: 516). The spatio-temporal predicates of his identity are beginning to break down, leaving him neither boy nor man, in a place which is 'neither cave nor absence of cave' (Lovecraft, 1985a: 516).

Necessarily, this progressive egoic fracturing is attended by altered modes of perception. As MacCormack points out, 'the decision to open toward a revolution in perception is the point of becomings' (2010). Lovecraft's exploration of Carter's revolutionary perceptual alteration leads him into radically new conceptualisations of perception itself. Moreover, to actualise these perceptual potentialities, he must force language into uses foreign to the regime of an established order of relations. The concept of becomings depends upon a prioritisation of relations as 'external and irreducible to their terms' (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 41). Such prioritisation, as Deleuze recognises, is 'repugnant to thought' (2006: 41). Nonetheless, thought must be forced into a hallucinatory encounter with relations, causing them to 'penetrate and corrupt everything, undermine being, make it topple over' (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 41). Carter is drawn into just such an encounter and its infectious ontological instability demands more than a representational description of the altered perceptual modes which subtend becoming. Language itself must hallucinate,

forming connections and effects which are 'illegitimate' in terms of logical and grammatical relations.

What happens after Carter performs the rite of the silver key 'is scarcely to be described in words' because it contains 'paradoxes, contradictions and anomalies' which are incompatible with an 'objective world of limited causation and tri-dimensional logic' (Lovecraft, 1985a: 515). Carter's perceptions cannot be described in any ordinary way because Carter himself becomes increasingly indiscernible from them, and they from him. Indeed, Lovecraft finds that they cannot be *described* at all, since they are potential modes of perception which do not exist in an actualised state prior to the text; there is nothing to re-present. Instead, he must discover them *through* writing, which is also to create them, to make them real. What Lovecraft is seeking to produce here must be understood as 'immanent-interpretations' of perception rather than simply as 'reflections' thereof (MacCormack 2010).

Rather than perceiving his environment in terms of molar human categories Carter receives 'only a flux of impressions not so much visual as cerebral, amidst which the entity that was Randolph Carter experienced perceptions or registrations of all that his mind revolved on, yet without any clear consciousness of the way in which he received them' (Lovecraft 1985a: 516). Carter may still think in terms of 'his mind' but this is now a mind which 'revolves on' what it perceives, rather than serving as a fixed point around which perceptions revolve. It is not merely his impressions which are in flux, but the state of that which receives them, and these two fluxes are becoming mutually indiscernible. This is the very beginning of a becoming-imperceptible, where that which perceives and that which is perceived lose their categorical distinction, each entering into mutual construction with the other.

Becoming-imperceptible, Colebrook argues, 'is the challenge of no longer acting as a separate and selecting point within the perceived world, but of becoming different with, and through, what is perceived' (2002: 132-133). Carter perceives images; scenes of 'Earth's primal, eon-forgotten past' (Lovecraft 1985a: 518), and those of his own surroundings. Though these pertain to 'memory and imagination' he senses that this medium is nonetheless artificial, that 'some vast reality, ineffable and undimensioned [...] surrounded him and strove to translate itself into the only

symbols he was capable of grasping' (Lovecraft 1985a: 517). As MacCormack states, the way in which Lovecraft's protagonists 'shift their modes of perception to dreams and memories that do not belong to their history or imagination [...] already implies the suspension of any recognisable modes of apprehension' (2010). Already, his maintenance of a perspective distinct from the images he receives is diminishing, 'the images bore no fixed relation to one another or to him. He himself had no stable form or position, but only such shifting hints of form and position as his whirling fancy supplied' (Lovecraft 1985a: 518). As Carter passes through the Ultimate Gate, this subjective erosion achieves its full intensity.

A fluctuation of affective response attends Carter's passage through the gate. He experiences 'triumphant, godlike surges of deadly sweetness' (Lovecraft 1985a: 525) which quickly transform into a new form of terror 'from which he could not flee because it was connected with himself' (Lovecraft 1985a: 525). It is, rather, connected with his loss of self. Before, he had still retained some 'sense of unity [...] he had still been Randolph Carter, a fixed point in the dimensional seething' (Lovecraft 1985a: 525). Now, though, with 'consuming fright' he begins to fully grasp that he is 'not one person, but many persons', and in 'many places at the same time' (Lovecraft 1985a: 525). Carter's realisation here affirms the impossibility first hinted at in the disparity between the ending of 'The Silver Key' and the beginning of this tale. As his imagination extends along this line of realisation, moreover, he becomes aware of the extended implications of this crystalline impossibility. It is not merely that there are multiple Carters recognisable as himself but at different points along his own timeline, but 'in a chaos of scenes whose infinite multiplicity and monstrous diversity brought him close to the brink of madness, were a limitless confusion of beings which he knew were as much himself' (Lovecraft 1985a: 526). In this delirious liberation of the virtual, he is faced with a simultaneous awareness of 'Carters of forms both human and non-human, vertebrate and invertebrate, conscious and mindless, animal and vegetable' (Lovecraft 1985a: 526).

For Deleuze and Guattari, animal-becomings are always becomings with 'a band, a pack' (1988: 239). They should be understood in relation to this multiplicity, rather than in terms of the characteristics of an individual animal, which can all too easily blur into the oedipal or archetypal. Thus, 'a fascination for the pack, for multiplicity'

must necessarily precede all animal-becomings (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 240-241). One way to understand this fascination, they suggest, is that 'the multiplicity that fascinates us' is 'already related to a multiplicity dwelling within us' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 241). Carter's encounter with this 'external' multiplicity is therefore also an encounter with internal multiplicity. In the face of this, neither Carter's individual identity, nor the sovereignty of any molar human position, can be sustained. Encountering this internal multiplicity, the boundaries of Carter's individual identity (and his categorical humanity) become permeable, permitting entrance into illegitimate relations with the other multiplicities which border them.

It is at this point, Deleuze observes, that Carter 'feels his "self" reel and [...] experiences a fear worse than that of annihilation' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 240). As Carter discovers, 'no death, no doom, no anguish can arouse the surpassing despair which flows from a loss of *identity*' (Lovecraft 1985a: 527). Physical death would be only a 'merging with nothingness' and, as such, mere 'peaceful oblivion' (Lovecraft 1985a: 527). By contrast, Carter is undergoing an inescapable merging with everything, which equates to a loss of individual molar identity but not wholly of consciousness: the fearful experience of schizophrenia itself. 'To be aware of existence and yet to know that one is no longer a definite being distinguished from other beings [nor, interject Deleuze and Guattari in their treatment of this passage, 'from all the becomings running through us' (1988: 240)] – that one no longer has a *self* – that is the nameless summit of agony and dread' (Lovecraft 1985a: 527).

In this condition, language itself becomes a shifting ground beneath Carter's feet, unsuited to the thoughts he is attempting to frame. Faced with being a 'legion of selves' (Lovecraft 1985a: 527) in simultaneity with his loss of self, he is forced to question 'if indeed there could, in view of that utter nullity of individual existence, be such a thing as *he*' (Lovecraft 1985a: 527). There is the sense here that Lovecraft is uneasily contemplating the literary demands this situation produces. The indescribability of Carter's experiences has already been signposted, but without even a unified central subject of those experiences, how can any kind of narrative unfold? One gambit Lovecraft employs to circumvent this problem is to fabricate temporary, artificial impositions of molar subjectivity. In his encounter with Yog-Sothoth Carter has 'a certain amount of the illusion of identity' restored so that he

can cognitively choose whether to continue on his course (Lovecraft 1985a: 528). Later, he realises that even within the First Gate 'much of the frightful revelation would have come upon him - splitting up his ego amongst myriads of earthly counterparts' had not 'Umr at-Tawil prevented this so that he could 'use the silver key with precision' (Lovecraft 1985a: 532). Under these conditions, language temporarily returns to its normative state, although always with the recognition that this modality is illusory, supporting a state of being which is equally illusory. These re-assimilations are only partial, and Lovecraft continually seeks techniques for undermining and compromising normative experiential description.

Upon encountering Yog-Sothoth, Carter's experiences are thus cast in a way which shifts primary emphasis to language and perception itself. Carter is an observer, but becomes increasingly indiscernible from a depersonalised field of perception so that, as MacCormack argues, 'perception itself' comes to stand in for 'character, content and narrative (2010). Accordingly, in reading a 'narrative' of this kind, emphasis must shift to concepts of perception, and the language which embodies and produces those concepts. As MacCormack points out, becomings cannot be accessed by means of 'description or speech that interiorizes entities with genesis and destination, content and limits of possibility' (2010). Such writing simply 'affirms and reifies the known' and this is precisely what Lovecraft is attempting to reach beyond (MacCormack 2010).

Using writing as a process of creative discovery rather than representation, Lovecraft strives to discover visionary possibilities in what language *cannot* say, 'in the interstices of language, in its intervals' (Deleuze 1997: 5). Confronting 'the indescribability of what he is compelled to describe' Lovecraft thus finds himself 'groping for affects, adjectives and pronouns without his language alighting on form, nouns, or entities apprehensible through human perception' (MacCormack 2010). He is not always successful in his attempts to traverse molar language; there is the sense of a forcing of language against its own boundaries rather than an outright escape. His task, as MacCormack argues, is an almost impossible one, since it is that of 'writing the un-writable' (2010).

For Deleuze, 'the whole of grammar' works to privilege identity over relation and difference, by 'maintaining the subordination of conjunctions to the verb to be, [...] making them gravitate around the verb to be' (2006: 42). One measure of minor writing lies in its attempt to overturn this subordination, to 'substitute the AND for IS' (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 42). A grammatical insurrection of just this kind becomes increasingly evident in the tale, as Lovecraft engages with the problem of an encounter with becoming within a language of being. When Carter encounters Yog-Sothoth in the region beyond the Ultimate Gate his horror is of something which he experiences as 'largely external' (Lovecraft 1985a: 527), in contrast to the horrifying sense of internal multiplicity. Even so, the idea of a division between externality and internality becomes increasingly untenable amidst the breakdown of Carter's cohesive identity. Lovecraft seeks to convey this corrosion through proliferating branches of conjunction and contradiction. There is the sense of:

A force of personality which at once confronted and surrounded and pervaded him, and which in addition to its local presence, seemed also to be a part of himself, and likewise to be coexistent with all time and conterminous with all space (Lovecraft 1985a: 527).

There are no pre-existent modes of sense which can be pressed into service to describe Carter's perception of Yog-Sothoth. Such modes depend upon a separation of perceiver and perceived which can no longer be maintained. Instead, Lovecraft seeks new sensory modalities in the overlapping proximities and relations of the old, breaking down boundaries and seeking new states for which there are no words. Thus, what emerges instead is something which can be grasped only as a function of the relations between various different forms of apprehension.

Most radically, Carter's 'sense of entity' is at once sensory and conceptual, 'an awful concept of combined localism and identity and infinity' (Lovecraft 1985a: 527). For Deleuze, 'abstract ideas' can 'inspire powerful spatial dynamisms' (1997: 119). They can be 'intimately linked up with the projected images' of 'things, bodies, or beings' (Deleuze 1997: 119) to form 'visions' which can be heard and seen in the interstices between established language (Deleuze 1997: 5). Minor language has the unique power of discovering abstract concepts as virtual doubles of extended bodies

experienced on a sensory level. Carter's apprehension of Yog-Sothoth involves a doubling of just this kind.

In this sense, we can see that the 'awkward and laboured mathematical and philosophical interludes' (Joshi 1996: 527) subsequently revealed to Carter are also sensory experiences, modes of perception. By conventional standards these are awkward interludes indeed; they disrupt the representational continuum of sensory-motor action by which such narratives affirm the human order. Through them, the dramatic tension of egoic struggle is altogether lost. Viewed within the minor linguistic field of crystalline narrative, though, this disruption and incongruity can be seen as entirely congruent with an altered mode of perception enabled by language. When Yog-Sothoth communicates with Carter, it is not in words, but through 'prodigious waves that smote and burned and thundered' (Lovecraft 1985a: 528). 'Perhaps with eyes, perhaps with imagination' he also receives 'impressions' of forms 'beyond those conceivable to the eye and brain of man' (Lovecraft 1985a: 530). By these ineffable means, Yog-Sothoth can be understood as offering Carter visions aimed at 'reconciling' him to his nature as a 'multiform entity' (Lovecraft 1985a: 530).

In this vein, the waves tell Carter that 'every figure of space is but the result of the intersection by a plane of some corresponding figure of one more dimension' (Lovecraft 1985a: 530). Each of these corresponding figures is intersected, on this plane, by figures of further dimensions, 'and so on up to the dizzy and reachless heights of archetypal infinity' (Lovecraft 1985a: 531). For Deleuze and Guattari, though it may be 'grandiose and simplified' this vision is Lovecraft's attempt to 'pronounce sorcery's final word' (1988: 251). What we think of as actualised forms have fixed identities only from a restricted human perspective. If we can escape our adherence to this perspective, we will see that such forms are multiplicities, in a continual state of becoming with any number of other multiplicities which border them. Thus, what Yog-Sothoth evokes here can be aligned with 'the plane of consistency', which cuts across all multiplicities, intersecting them 'in order to bring into coexistence any number of multiplicities, with any number of dimensions' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 251). This is the conceptual model for the plane of sorcery, through which becomings are transacted.



Thus, Carter sees that, 'though men hail it as reality' the 'world of men' as defined through formal identity is better understood as 'illusion' (Lovecraft 1985a: 531). Equally, 'that which we call [...] illusion' is 'reality' (Lovecraft 1985a: 531) in the sense that it can permit a liberation of virtual potentialities from their established actualisations. This dynamic applies equally to conventional chronology: 'men think of time only because of what they call change, yet that too is illusion. All that was, and is, and is to be, exists simultaneously' (Lovecraft 1985a: 531). Once again, this should not be read as a voicing of 'philosophical claims' by Yog-Sothoth, as interpreted by Carter or contrived by Lovecraft. These realisations are inseparable from Yog-Sothoth as sensory entity, virtual emissions which are concomitant with the dissolution of molar identity and its perceptual field. As such, they are inseparable from Carter's becoming. The 'man' Carter can no longer be separated from the waves that smite. What we read here is, rather, Lovecraft's attempt to produce a mode of subjectivity through fiction which escapes any conventional predicates. In other of Lovecraft's tales we witness physical transformations and mutations which are becomings-animal, becomings-monstrous. What we encounter here is becoming at the far side of the molecular trajectory, beyond relations between gender, species or other molar categories. By exploring the subjectivity of his Carter-entity in this way, Lovecraft confounds the expectations associated with the treatment of characters in any conventional (fantasy) narrative. The 'interludes' are where Carter now lives.

As previously noted, this 'philosophical' framing of Carter's status renders explicit the impossible, yet virtually possible, forking of his spatio-temporal identity. From this viewpoint, the fact that Lovecraft's narrative remains fixed around the trajectory of one particular 'Carter-fragment' could be seen as a failure to accede to the subversions of narrative this status demands. We understand Carter's nature as only one possible actualisation of a range of almost infinite experience. Yet by continuing to afford him a special status as egoic centre-point of the tale, Lovecraft implicitly re-affirms the sovereignty of his situation at a structural level.

It is true that, with Carter fully reconciled to his multiform condition, we encounter through him a sampling of different possible Carters. Some are human, with a flavour of old-time Lovecraftian fascism, such as 'that Pickman Carter who in the year 2169

would use strange means in repelling the Mongol hordes from Australia' (Lovecraft 1985a: 533). Others are quite other: 'a four-dimensioned gaseous consciousness' or 'a vegetable brain of the future on a dark, radio-active comet of inconceivable orbit' (Lovecraft 1985a: 534). In the conclusion of the narrative, Carter even transfers his own 'consciousness-plane' to the body of one particular fragment, the alien wizard Zkauba, out of 'sheer cosmic curiosity' (Lovecraft 1985a: 535). This final twist, though, conveys the sense of a return to dream-fantasy, the restoration of the 'neurotic impasse' out of which Lovecraft has temporarily risen. After Carter enters into his Zkauba-facet, driven by an apparently very human search for fantastic gratification, he experiences only majoritarian horror at the otherness with which he is physically compounded, and a longing to return to his original human form.

We understand that all these Carters exist as equal and simultaneous virtual potentialities of life. Yet without this observation influencing the focus of the narrative its effect is ultimately limited. Lovecraft is not alone in this failure. Deleuze and Guattari argue that all those writers who strive 'to leave, to scramble the codes, to cause flows to circulate' inevitably 'fail to complete the process' and return to the 'old fascist dream' (2004: 144). Nonetheless, 'through the impasses and the triangles a schizophrenic flow moves, irresistibly' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 144). Lovecraft's triumph is to wrest, albeit temporarily, new desiring-machines, new pathways of desire, from within the oedipal structure of fantasy. In so doing, he discovers a new sensibility, an undiscovered and collective minor voice, within this literary field. Yog-Sothoth, which is 'limitless being and self [...] the ultimate animating essence of existence's whole unbounded sweep' (Lovecraft 1985a: 528), is presented as the 'archetype' of all the possible Carter-fragments. Rather than an archetype in any classical sense, Yog-Sothoth can best be understood as the force of pure desire, preceding and informing localised subjectivities. We are told that from this force is derived 'the glutless zeal of Carter and all his forebears for forbidden cosmic secrets' (Lovecraft 1985a: 534). This claim is deliriously extended still further: 'on every world all great wizards, all great thinkers, all great artists are facets of It' (Lovecraft 1985a: 534). This quality of 'sheer cosmic curiosity' (Lovecraft 1985a: 535) is intensely personal to Lovecraft, and yet in this tale it becomes the voice of a people.

In his letter of October 1930 to Smith Lovecraft writes:

Phantasy, as a genuine art-form, is *an extension rather than a negation of reality* [...] The true function of phantasy is to give the imagination a ground for limitless expansion, & to satisfy aesthetically the sincere & burning curiosity & sense of awe which a sensitive minority of mankind feel toward the alluring & provocative abysses of unplumbed space & unguessed entity... (Lovecraft 1971: 196)

Lovecraft's 'sensitive minority' turn from the majoritarian assumptions which underlie realist aesthetics towards the 'unguessed entity' contacted by Carter in 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key'. For Lovecraft and his fellow sensitives, this involves fantasy, but not the kind which simply conflates imagination and reality for psychic ends. Rather, it is a mode of the fantastic which *extends* the experience of reality. Here, we can see Lovecraft reaching for a conception of his literary project which extends from the simply fantastic towards something which approaches the falsifying quality of schizoid narrative. It is in this sense that 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' bears such useful implications for Gothic schizoanalysis.

#### 4.2 Behind all scenes and dreams: from supernatural fantasy to schizoid imperceptibility

In 'The Silver Key' Lovecraft mobilises fantasy and dream in order to imagine impossible movements through space and time. In this respect, the tale serves merely as wish-fulfilment, dramatising 'the struggle of the ego to transcend the known & established order of time' and other natural laws (Lovecraft 1971: 197). Yet as we have seen, Lovecraft's aesthetic approach is governed by a desire, not merely to depict this struggle, but to vividly evoke it on the level of sensation. Ultimately, rather than simply reproducing perceptions and experiences which affirm prior actualities, this leads him to seek new sensations, new senses of the world, through the medium of language. In 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' this pursuit draws him into a confrontation with that 'last and inmost of secrets' (Lovecraft 1985a: 529) which lies behind fantastical spatio-temporal transformations. Egoic human identity is itself constructed and maintained through normative constructions of linear time and spatial presence. The ego cannot escape the natural temporal order without a breaking-down of the order through which it is itself maintained. The flow of virtual possibility unleashed through this overturning of ideologically enforced actualisations

thus infects and undermines individual human identity, and increasingly, the molar category of the human itself. The unified egoic self begins to fragment into infinite multiplicity, and to enter into becomings-with the other multiplicities which border it. There is no longer a discrete individual, perceiving objects from/against which it can be distinguished, but a continual flow of becoming which involves both and is reducible to neither: a becoming-imperceptible.

It is not necessary to refer to 'The Silver Key' in order to understand 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' as a line of flight into becoming-imperceptible. The contrast between these two tales, the first essentially neurotic fantasy and the second a schizoid escape from neurotic human subjectivity, is clear. Their juxtaposition does, however, serve to reveal zones of connection and deviation between supernatural fantasy and minor writing. In considering their relationship, it can be seen that the latter tale's schizoid force unfolds through the development of a germinal potential already contained within the more conventionally fantastic narrative of the former. By definition, supernatural fantasy imaginatively enacts the violation and overturning of the natural laws within which the egoic subject is defined and maintained. From both psycho- and schizoanalytical perspectives, this process can be understood according to a predominantly oedipal dynamic. Yet, as the contrast between these two tales shows, this dynamic can also run in reverse. When natural laws are overturned, this can open up new possibilities for the perception and experience of egoic subjectivity. The shift from neurotic to schizoid which occurs between 'The Silver Key' and 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' exists within a framework which can nevertheless be characterised as fantasy.

The prospect of subjective dissolution may always induce anxiety, but within the ontologically anarchic fantasy environment desire can discover new pathways, new routes of escape. Deleuze affirms this possibility in conjunction with dreams, and Carter's flight through and beyond the Ultimate Gate exemplifies its operation within a literary field. In terms both of generic and specifically intertextual relations, 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' transforms the personal fantasy of 'The Silver Key' into the schizoid force of minor writing. Here, narrative is interrupted and overwhelmed by conceptual irruptions born from pure sensation. Action and dramatic tension is subordinated to the perceptual and visionary. Language ceases to

represent nature, even the violation of nature, and becomes itself unnatural. Finally, the egoic subject exits the stage altogether and fragments into desire and multiplicity. As with Carter, so with Lovecraft the writer: 'he had wished to find the enchanted regions of his boyhood dreams [...] Now, intoxicated with wider visions, he scarcely knew what he sought' (Lovecraft 1985a: 518).

'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' exemplifies the schizoid force of Lovecraft's work at its most intense, assaulting and disordering our senses with delirious configurations of words and images that leave the 'self' reeling. In 'Pickman's Model' and many of Lovecraft's other tales we encounter monstrous becomings, non-figurative configurations or 'figures' (Baugh, 2000: 43) brought to life between the molar, organised self and free-flowing schizoid investment. These are becomings-schizoid which are nevertheless on the 'near side' of becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 248). Carter's becoming, though, edges toward the 'ultimate regions' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 248) of molecular subjectivity, a becoming-imperceptible which must be understood as *schizophrenising*. When Carter's subjectivity fragments into an infinite number of alternate selves, the effect of this is not to produce multiple individual subjects but to transform the unity of the subject into a multiplicity. In confronting this process of subjectivity 'teeming' or 'spreading' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 245) into multiplicity, Carter experiences the horror and sweetness of self-destruction, which is also the horror and sweetness of a schizophrenic loss of egoic organisation. Born out of the fertile ground of initially 'personal' fantasies, and swept on by horror, Carter's line of flight shows us the schizoid destiny of the Gothic subject.

##### 5. Conclusion: Lovecraft's Schizo-Gothic minority

My analyses in this chapter have explored connections between the schizoid power of Lovecraft's weird fiction and the Gothic mode. For Lovecraft, as we have seen, there was no direct contradiction between his own aims and the historical tradition of supernatural horror in literature. He conceived his experimental literary program, rather, as a development and refinement of tendencies always already present in that tradition. It is clear that there is little compatibility between imaginary,

oedipalised structures of dream and fantasy and the crystalline doubling of actual and virtual in schizoid writing. There is an apparent contradiction, moreover, between horror, as an emotional response to egoic threat, and the schizoid dissolution of egoic boundaries. Yet in Lovecraft's work, what begins in fantasy develops, through the dynamic of the weird, into visions and sensations which subtend transformed subjective states. Lovecraft's crystalline images are saturated with horror, but horror emerges here as a tool expressly designed to shock the reader from established pathways of thought and perception. For Lovecraft, these powers of writing are merely actualisations of variables implicitly suggested by the Gothic mode.

As Colebrook argues, 'minor literature repeats the past and present in order to create a future' (2002: 120). What is repeated, in this process, is 'the hidden forces of difference that produce texts, rather than [...] the known texts themselves' (2002: 120). In this way, minor literature works 'to disclose the specific *style* of voice' contained within earlier forms (Colebrook 2002: 120). Lovecraft's relationship to the Gothic mode should be understood in terms of this eternal repetition of difference. He seeks to accentuate and actualise those aspects of Gothic writing which *for him* are the most significant qualities of the mode, even though they may have been invisible to others. These qualities reside in the imaginative possibilities of supernatural fantasy, the affective force of horror as a vehicle of subjective liberation, and the hallucinatory stylistic excesses in which these effects are embodied. Lovecraft's work succeeds, as minor writing, to the extent that it effectuates the qualities of difference contained within these elements, while avoiding a deadening repetition of their conventional dynamics. Although he takes influence from earlier writers, Lovecraft can only achieve this aim by forging his own, unique pathways for the liberation of desire.

Deleuze, as we have seen, offers a measured assessment of the transformative power of the imaginary in art. He attaches little value to the imaginary in itself, to the extent that it maintains a clearly discernible distinction between real and unreal. In this form, it is all too susceptible to the 'introjection' (Deleuze 1997: 2) of an oedipal structure, rather than offering machines of escape from legalised actuality. Reality, as an 'ongoing linkage of actualities' according to fixed laws, is of course notionally distinct from unreality, the imaginative actualisation of virtualities at the level of

consciousness (Deleuze 1995: 65). Confusion between the two is 'a simple error of fact' (Deleuze 2005: 67). There is, though, a potential zone of indiscernibility between them, where their distinction becomes 'unattributable' through a relationship of 'reciprocal presupposition, or reversibility' (Deleuze 2005: 68).

Works of imagination, as in the case of supernatural fantasy, have transformative power only when they produce indiscernibility. It is at this point that narrative becomes falsifying, in the sense that it 'brings into question any formal model of truth' (Deleuze 1995: 66). For Deleuze, this power of falsity resides primarily in crystalline time-images, in which time can be grasped as becoming, a force of difference rather than identity. More generally, though, it can be associated with any image which produces a crystalline reciprocal indiscernibility of actual and virtual, real and unreal. This is not an 'imaginary' indiscernibility, it does not exist 'in someone's head' (Deleuze 2005: 67). Rather, it is an 'objective characteristic' (Deleuze 2005: 67) of certain images in themselves, which create an 'illusion' of indistinction (Deleuze 2005: 68). Deleuze attributes 'a heuristic role' to the crystal-image alone, and 'all that matters about the crystal is what we see in it, so the imaginary drops out of the equation' (1995: 66).

Lovecraft dedicated his writing to 'the creation of nature-defying illusions' (2004: 176). Though he understood this process primarily in terms of the imagination it is clear that, at its best, his work produces 'objective illusions' of a kind recognisable to Deleuze. As we have seen, the images of monstrous transformation in 'Pickman's Model' literally mortify the molar human subject, a horrific toppling which simultaneously actualises new subjective potentialities. In 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' the 'truth' and unity of the human subject is disrupted through images which mobilise the direct, falsifying force of time. We can easily contrast images of these kinds with those produced in the primarily organic fantasy narratives of earlier Gothic writing, which imaginatively blur real and unreal without falsifying the form of truth. Yet Lovecraft argued that 'the imaginative phenomena of escape are always legitimate material for artists built that way' as long as they don't try 'to remodel the workings of the cosmos to suit an infantile idea of how events ought to dovetail together' (Lovecraft 1971: 344). Lovecraft found the oedipal environment of dream

and fantasy to be 'legitimate material' precisely because it allowed him to discover machines of escape from that structuration.

We must ask, nonetheless, how well 'built' for this process Lovecraft was, in terms of his ability to accede to the schizoid potential of fantasy and avoid oedipal recuperation. This question is, at once, a political and aesthetic one. Lovecraft has been castigated for his overt sexism and racism, and for that apparent negativity towards human possibility for which L. Sprague de Camp coined the term 'futilitarianism'. Yet these personal tendencies do not necessarily circumscribe the force and potential of his writing. As MacCormack notes, Lovecraft 'ironically catalyzes the becomings of the human through infinite and abstracting paradigms' and thus propagates a reorientation of power relations along 'poststructuralist, feminist, and postcolonial' lines (2010). Similarly, Buhle, writing in a different politico-philosophical context and comparing Lovecraft to the surrealists, argues that Lovecraft does not foreground the fragility of the human to diminish human existence. He does so, rather, to 'reopen the vents' closed by capitalist axiomatisation (1980: 208).

In these ways, Lovecraft's writing is informed by a minoritising impulse and, despite appearances to the contrary, forms a collective enunciation. He speaks for himself, writes only for himself, yet in doing so he discovers a minor people, a 'sensitive minority' (Lovecraft 1971: 196). Sensitive, that is, to the waves and particles of existence which traverse socially established categories of being: perhaps the purest, most abstract distillation of minoritarian sensibility.

It is these very qualities of purity and abstraction, though, which also compromise Lovecraft's political and literary momentum. In speaking of the delirious displacements produced by literature, Deleuze cautions that delirium has two poles, the diseased and the healthy. The latter is that which resists imprisonment, and sets free flows of desire in conjunction with oppressed peoples. The former, that which 'erects a race it claims is pure and dominant' and thus re-admits a 'larval fascism' (Deleuze 1997: 4). Lovecraft's work oscillates between these two impulses, creating positive deterritorialisations and perverse reterritorialisations in turn. In the first place there is the tendency for the purity of his sensitive minority to become conflated with



other, darker paradigms of purity: Lovecraft's Nordic exclusivity (Lovecraft 1971: 196). Related to this, and even inseparable, is his egoic attachment to the weird, that 'exotic territoriality' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 144) which spurs his schizoid escapes but is then perversely re-invested. Thus, in 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' Carter's becoming-imperceptible ultimately stalls, and minoritising power falls away. We experience the breakdown of Carter's individuated self; a gate opens into new realms of experience. Then it closes, so that when Carter becomes Zkauba, he has never been more aware of being himself, a lost, trapped subject in normative space-time. The ultimate horror: to be 'this foreigner – this damned nigger' (Lovecraft 1985a: 547).

These political strengths and weaknesses account for the achievements, and limitations, of Lovecraft's writing. He developed a unique style, designed to produce a cumulative effect of weird transformation through rhetorical excess, syntactical subversion and repetition. This excess clearly derives from the traditions of earlier Gothic writing. Just as the Gothic mode is subject to criticism from the perspective of classical aesthetics, Lovecraft's style has been frequently perceived as awkward and overblown. Edmund Wilson, writing in 1945, famously observed that 'the only real horror' in most of Lovecraft's fiction 'is the horror of bad taste and bad art' (1980: 47). Wilson's comment is apposite, though not in the way he intended. Lovecraft's fiction does, indeed, violate the standards and conventions of majoritarian literary style, and it is precisely in these violations that its power lies. The minoritising power of Lovecraft's work cannot be grasped in distinction from the style in which he writes. At the same time, in its deviations from majoritarian convention his writing also repeats the force of difference virtually present within Gothic excess. Here, we can see the heightened intensities and affective density of Gothic writing not as neurotic expostulations but as a schizoid diffusion of subjectivity into language itself. From Gothic excess, Lovecraft wrests crystalline images which liberate the virtual from ordinary perception.

From the preceding discussion, it may often appear that, just as MacCormack (2010) asserts, Lovecraft achieves a schizoid force in his writing at that point where it is furthest from its Gothic origins. As I have argued, though, there is never a 'point' where the schizoid vocation of Lovecraft's work is fulfilled, or where a Gothic

sensibility is truly abandoned. Over time, in relation to such earlier tales as 'The Hound', Lovecraft's work becomes increasingly different, in many important respects, from its Gothic sources. Yet this is not simply a difference in kind, but a repetition of the forces of difference already implicit in the Gothic voice. Lovecraft detects the stirrings of a schizophrenising flow in the horrors and fantasies of the Gothic, and accentuates that flow. Nevertheless, a continued attachment to the purity of his weird sensitivity hinders his abandonment of the egoic and oedipal forces which first shaped his fantastical visions. He senses the multiplicity of the human subject, but is unable to embrace the sense of becomings which unfold in concert with other multiplicities. Consequently, his narrative rebellion remains simplified and limited.

What if Lovecraft had gone further, finding ways to extend this process, so as to explore through his writing the possibilities for subjectivity in a crystalline time-mode? In the following chapter, we shall explore how this extension is unfolded, both politically and aesthetically, in the work of William S. Burroughs. As we shall see, tales such as 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' prefigure and evoke Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy in important ways. The various characters of *Cities* appear to function, in any given section of the trilogy, as individual subjects moving through an organic spatiality. Yet taken across the work they merge and dissolve in complex ways into one another and into their author, the 'truth' of their identities and experiences becoming false in the light of Burroughs' delirious temporality. Burroughs *does* go further, but his project is a continuation of possibilities glimpsed in Lovecraft's weird fiction.

### **Chapter Three: El Hombre Imperceptible: Schizo-Gothic Subjectivity in William S. Burroughs *The Cities of the Red Night***

#### **1. Introduction: the Burroughs experiment**

Burroughs' short story 'Wind die. We die. You die' (1977) begins with the narrative of a man bringing warning of an impending natural disaster to the local officials of Puerto de los Santos. Before the first two pages are out, we understand that what we are witnessing is the man himself in the act of reading his own account, some years later. After another page, the narrative dissolves into a scene of locals defending their rural home against hideous chimeras, whose most disturbing feature is their femininity, denoted by 'pendulous leathery breasts' (Burroughs 2008: 38). A moment later, we are in the company of Mr Seward, in a waiting room, closing the page on the magazine he has been reading. 'Funny what you find in old pulp magazines,' he reflects. 'Quite haunting actually...the middle-aged Tiresias moving from place to place with his unpopular thesis, spending his days in public libraries, eking out a living writing fiction for pulp magazines...good stories too...' (Burroughs 2008: 40). 'Curiously enough,' Seward ruminates, 'I had myself come to sound a word of warning, a warning I was reasonably sure would not be heeded' (Burroughs 2008: 40).

D.M. Mitchell would later include this story in *The Starry Wisdom*, an anthology dedicated to Lovecraft's vision of man 'seen from a universal perspective - his anthropocentricity torn to shreds' (1994: 10). It serves as a fitting introduction to the differences and repetitions which bring Lovecraft's tales and Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy into proximity. It is unclear to what extent Burroughs' references in this tale are to Lovecraft specifically, or even whether Burroughs ever actually read Lovecraft's work. His listing of 'Kutulu, the Sleeping Serpent who cannot be summoned' amongst the other 'Ancient Ones' (Burroughs 1982: 13) to whom his late trilogy is dedicated suggests that he had. Nevertheless, the story offers suggestive hints of how Burroughs would himself have perceived his relationship to his Providence forebear. (William) Seward (Burroughs) and his nameless pulp-fiction analogue both have warnings to offer. The pulp horror returns in Burroughs' fiction, and the fantastic sense of schizoid delirium and ontological insecurity. Here, though,

the horror and the fantasy are consciously expanded into a literary process which comprehensively explodes human perception.

My aim in this chapter is to highlight some of the ways in which Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy can be read both as an example of schizoid literature, and as an extension of the Gothic mode. In doing this, my intention is to highlight areas of interrelation and convergence between the concerns and effects of these paradigms. As part of this process, I will also demonstrate throughout the chapter the connections and differences between Burroughs' late trilogy and the short fiction of Lovecraft in regard to this schizo-Gothic convergence. After briefly situating Burroughs' late trilogy within an overall view of his work, I will begin by considering those connections which have already been established between Burroughs' writing and Deleuzio-Guattarian philosophical and literary paradigms. As I will argue, although Deleuze has given some consideration to the nature of these connections, it appears that this analysis has focussed chiefly on work produced prior to *Cities of the Red Night*. Given certain areas of marked divergence between that trilogy and Burroughs' earlier works, this opens up the possibility of identifying schizoid or minoritarian qualities in the trilogy to which Deleuze has directed no specific attention.

In addressing this, I will demonstrate that Burroughs' trilogy engages in narrative strategies which bear striking affinities with the crystalline regime of the image, and the notion of falsifying narrative, as presented in Deleuze's *Cinema 2: The Time Image*. I will then consider how these minoritarian aspects of the trilogy can be related to key elements of Gothic writing. In the first instance, I will explore how the trilogy's use of crystalline time and revolutionary-becoming relates to the temporal modalities implied within Gothic historicity. Secondly, I will relate the deterritorialising force of horror within the trilogy to the wider context of Gothic horror. On the basis of these observations, I will conclude by considering the ways in which Burroughs' trilogy can consequently be read as an extension of implicit (schizoid) trajectories within Gothic writing. This will form the basis for a comparative tracing of these trajectories through the work of both Lovecraft and Burroughs.

## 2. Deleuze and Guattari on Burroughs

References to the writing of Burroughs appear across the work of Deleuze, and in his joint writings with Guattari, and these present an obvious starting point for considering the schizoid effect of Burroughs' late trilogy. However, these references do not offer a clear guide to the reading of Burroughs' later work. In many instances, Burroughs is referred to in general terms, without the stipulation of specific texts or textual effects. Although Burroughs has himself suggested that 'in a sense, all my books are one book' (Miles 1992: 159) significant variations of style and approach do exist across the work produced in different periods of his career, and it is not always clear to which of these periods Deleuze's comments relate. To the extent that such attribution is possible, Deleuze's observations are typically linked to *Naked Lunch* (1959) and to the ten-year period of cut-up experimentation which followed it. Consequently, appraisal of Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy in terms of a schizoanalytic literary dynamic must largely proceed through extrapolation.

Nonetheless, important pointers can be derived from what Deleuze *did* say about Burroughs, and these relate to two main areas of inquiry. In the first place, underlying points of commonality between can be established between Burroughs and Deleuze in respect of their general philosophical and political positions. Secondly, there is the question of how this common ground relates specifically to the status of Burroughs' writing as schizoid intervention. In some respects, Burroughs enjoys a similarly ambiguous position within Deleuze and Guattari's work to that occupied by Lovecraft. In viewing Burroughs' work as an 'experiment' they signal its connection to their formulation of literary modernity as defined by its experimental production of effects (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 405). This does not imply, though, that such experiments always 'work' and in *A Thousand Plateaus* they describe Burroughs' cut-up methods as shattering linear unity (and thus the order of representation) on one level, only to restore that unity on another (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 6). Thus, Deleuze and Guattari's attribution of modernity to Burroughs does not definitively establish his status as a writer. Despite Deleuze's analyses of Burroughs' work primarily referencing writing produced prior to *Cities of the Red Night*, many features of that trilogy inevitably reflect, or have grown from, Burroughs' earlier fiction. Thus, the question is whether the fragmentary, chaotic tenor of

Burroughs' writing should be understood as enacting a schizoid *form* of writing, or whether it serves merely to reproduce schizoid experience through oedipal modes of signification and representation.

In order to derive evidence in regard to this question from Deleuze's own assessments of Burroughs' work, it is first necessary to begin by considering some of the key statements made by Deleuze concerning his politico-philosophical affinities with Burroughs. Since the weight of my attention in this chapter will focus on the minor, schizoid qualities of Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy, it is beyond my remit here to offer a comprehensive exploration of these points of interface. Nevertheless, a valuable starting-point is suggested by Deleuze's view, in a letter to Timothy S. Murphy, that comparisons of his work with that of Burroughs bear on three points: 'the idea of a body without organs; control as the future of societies; the confrontation of tribes or populations in abandoned [...] spaces' (Murphy 1997: 7). These remarks, dating as they do from 1991, post-date the publication of Burroughs' late trilogy, though it is not clear whether they reflect the changed emphases of that later work, particularly if we consider issues of translation. They serve primarily to restate Deleuze's references to Burroughs' work in previous writings.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari recall *Naked Lunch* (1959) to illustrate the development of the body without organs, specifically in reference to 'the drugged body, the experimental schizo' (1988: 150) and the idea of organs as pure intensities (1988: 153). In Dan Smith's phraseology, what Burroughs provides in this context is 'a vivid literary description' of the schizoid body (1997: xxxvii). Thus, Deleuze validates Burroughs insights into particular aspects of schizoid experience. This does not, though, preclude the possibility that such insights exist in a chiefly representational way in Burroughs' fiction, rather than influencing the form of the fiction itself.

In a similar way, Deleuze draws upon Burroughs in his analysis of control societies (1995). This derives from Michel Foucault's concept of disciplinary societies, in which social life and production are organised around sites or institutions of confinement such as schools, hospitals and prisons. In the Deleuzian formulation, disciplinary societies of this kind have been succeeded by systems of continuous control and

monitoring facilitated by instant communication, in which the individual is in a condition of 'modulation' rather than being 'placed in various "moulds" at different times' (Marks 2010: 55). Thus, for instance, schools and universities as closed sites of education become less clearly differentiated from workspaces, 'both disappearing and giving way to frightful continual training, to continual monitoring of worker-schoolkids or bureaucrat-students' (Deleuze 1995: 175). Although Deleuze finds the emergence of control societies already implied within Foucault's disciplinary model, he states that Burroughs 'was the first to address this' (1995: 174) and the first to use the term 'control' to 'characterise the new monster' (1995: 178).

It is apparent, then, that Deleuze and Burroughs align closely in their respective critiques of the control mechanisms of late capitalism. For Deleuze this system is, indeed, monstrous. 'Compared with the approaching forms of ceaseless control in open sites,' he asserts, 'we may come to see the harshest confinement as part of a wonderfully happy past' (1995: 175). This intense and very real horror at the propagation of control mechanisms accounts, similarly, for much of the affective power of Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*. A more complex question arises when we consider their respective approaches to resisting or escaping such control. For Murphy, 'Burroughs's literary career is defined by the central challenge he sets himself: to find an escape route from the linked control systems of capitalism, subjectivity, and language' (1997: 4). In broad terms, this statement could be applied equally to Deleuze, although at a more detailed level the comparison becomes less clear.

Against the backdrop of the social control, the Deleuzian notions of minority and schizoid becoming emerge as strategies of political resistance at a molecular level. In the control society, control is no longer simply exercised over the individual as subject of the state, but is directed towards what Deleuze terms the 'dividual' (1995: 180), the prepersonal flows of desire which constitute the individual. Consequently, resistance must function at the same level. As Toscano argues, the notion of minority implies 'the constructive autonomy or externality of certain forms of subjectivation to the mechanisms of control and exploitation' (2010: 214). If 'the impersonal and the preindividual become the very material of control' then they become, too, the material of 'minoritarian subjectivation and the construction of

effective alternatives' (Toscano 2010: 215). The dialectical terms of class warfare are no longer relevant here, coming to be replaced by models of 'combat or guerrilla' struggle (Toscano 2010: 215). It is here that the line of flight takes on its full importance as a political intervention, serving to enact the 'independent ontological creativity' of minoritarian subjectivity and, in the process, to cause ruptures in the matrix of control. Dialectical models of revolutionary activity are thus replaced by becoming-revolutionary as 'a trans-temporal event that can detach itself from the fate of an actual revolution' (Toscano 2010: 214). Inevitably, since communication plays a key role in control, language becomes a key battleground. This is not, as Deleuze notes, a question of minorities 'speaking out' since speech and communication are themselves corrupted by capitalism. 'We've got to hijack speech,' he argues, and 'the key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control' (Deleuze 1995: 175).

The importance Deleuze places here on language and the arrest of complicit forms of communication reflects aspects of his thought considered in Chapter One. Deleuze views writing as bearing an implicit political responsibility to pass to the 'outside' of dominant modes of language, making language 'stutter' and become foreign to itself. By using language to express and produce intensities, rather than following an oedipal framework of representation and signification, it thus challenges the subjectification enacted by communicative control. In this respect, there are close parallels between Deleuze and Burroughs, who viewed language itself as a virus productive of consciousness, arguing that 'at the real beginning of point of what we call modern man was speech. In the beginning was the word. I think the next step will have to be beyond the word' (TJ: 98). Despite this shared viewpoint, Burroughs followed responsive strategies which differed in varying degrees across the course of his career from those espoused by Deleuze, including the cut-up.

There can be little doubt that Burroughs and Deleuze are in accord over questions of social symptomatology, and this commonality, together with some certain shared views on resistance or escape, will be more fully explored in my analysis of *Cities of the Red Night*. As I will argue there, these three novels constitute Burroughs' most fully-developed engagement with the question of control and subjectivity. In addition to exploring the role of language and literature in producing modes of consciousness



capable of subverting mechanisms of control, it develops models of revolutionary collectivity which align closely with Deleuze's observations concerning subject-groups and the relationship between politics and sexuality. What remains in question, though, is the extent to which Burroughs' writing itself actually enacts the revolutionary linguistic and literary transformations conceived by Deleuze. For this task, Deleuze's comments are of limited use since they concern writing produced at earlier stages of Burroughs' career.

Two areas of analysis are, nevertheless, important here. In his 'Letter to Serge Daney' (1986) Deleuze presents cinema as offering 'the most radical criticism' of information as a mechanism of control, but also notes that Burroughs affords literature a comparable critical power, 'by substituting the viewpoint of control and controllers for that of authors and authority' (1995: 75). This observation relates most obviously to the agent-addict figuration developed in *Junky* (1953) and *Naked Lunch* (1959), and implies that it is from these novels that Deleuze extracts Burroughs' notion of control. Relating this comment to his analysis of cinema, it is evident that Deleuze sees Burroughs' earlier writing as a valid form of artistic critique. As with cinema, with its montage of 'routines' *Naked Lunch* does not merely comment on society 'from outside' (Deleuze 1995: 75) but affords images an independent power of their own, producing forms of affective immanence independent of cohesive subjectivity. Yet Deleuze gives little attention to the critical powers of Burroughs' writing in the more fulsome discussions of Anglo-American literature offered elsewhere in his work. This may be because, as Murphy suggests, *Naked Lunch* culminates ultimately in a form of impasse, its critique threatening 'to collapse into idealism, compromise, and collaboration with the dominant order of control' (Murphy 1997: 101).

Burroughs' own initial response to this problem was to develop the cut-up method, which is overtly addressed in *A Thousand Plateaus* in conjunction with the figuration of the book as a rhizomatic assemblage of multiplicities. This response to the cut-up constitutes Deleuze's second area of direct response to Burroughs' writing as *writing*. As noted earlier, the cut-up method is instanced most clearly in Burroughs' *Nova* trilogy (1961-1964) and by 1969, Burroughs had largely abandoned the cut-up in its pure form, stating: 'I doubt if the whole problem of words can ever be solved in

terms of itself' (Burroughs and Odier 1969: 51). As such, the analysis offered in *A Thousand Plateaus* cannot refer directly to work produced by Burroughs either before this period (including *Naked Lunch*) or after.

Nevertheless, it is worth briefly considering Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of Burroughs' method. Although the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy displays Burroughs' later stylistic experimentation, and does not reflect directly the principles underpinning the cut-up, it employs a fragmentary style to which some of the same concerns might be directed. In this trilogy, texts are folded into one another, as in the cut-up, but without randomisation and in a manner which is narratively rather than syntactically disruptive. As I will argue, this narrative disruption serves to produce an effect comparable to crystalline narrative structure. As Deleuze's remarks indicate, though, it is important to guard against the assumption that fragmentary narratives which disrupt structural and chronological organisation are in some way implicitly schizoid. At the same time, there may be dangers in accepting Deleuze's assessment of the cut-up, and the consequent overall tenor of his response to Burroughs' methods, uncritically.

Deleuze and Guattari present the rhizome-book in contrast to the idea of the classical 'root-book' (which represents a world external to it through a unified mode of signification) and the book as 'radicle-system, or fascicular root' (in which a multiplicity of secondary roots replaces the primary unity of the book, while retaining that unity 'as past or yet to come, as possible' (1988: 5)). In this instance, 'an even more comprehensive secret unity, or a more extensive totality' appears in compensation (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 6). They present Burroughs' cut-up method as an example of this type of writing, arguing that 'the folding of one text onto another, which constitutes multiple and even adventitious roots (like a cutting), implies a supplementary dimension to that of the texts under consideration. In this supplementary dimension of folding, unity continues its spiritual labor' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 6). Here, unity is simply transferred from the object to the subject, with the result that 'the world has become chaos, but the book remains the image of the world: radicle-chaosmos rather than root-chaosmos' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 6). In their view, the cut-up serves merely to *represent* a world which is *experienced* as fragmentary, thus retaining both the notional reality of an underlying unity beyond

immanent experience, and of the book as an image of that world. To the extent that the chaotic, fragmentary nature of Burroughs' writing can be understood in this way, it fails to accord with a schizoid literary process.

Deleuze and Guattari present Burroughs' use of the cut-up without regard to the fact that this method was deployed by Burroughs in different ways across his body of work. At times, Burroughs certainly presented it as a means of representing more accurately the fragmentary nature of lived experience, arguing that 'any writer who hopes to approximate what actually occurs in the mind and body of his characters cannot confine himself to such an arbitrary structure as 'logical' sequence' (TJ: 34). In this sense, Burroughs' cut-up follows the representational dynamic suggested by Deleuze. However, as Chris Land argues, 'the theory of the word-virus points to an essential otherness at the very heart of the formation of the subject itself. The cut-up needs to be understood in response to this otherness: not to represent the subjective but to destroy the subject as a subject of linguistic control' (2005). In this way, the method might be seen as a way of freeing creative impulses and perceptions from unifying control. This accords with Murphy's assertion that 'Burroughs' cut-up experiments [...] produce uniquely exhaustive styles of writing,' comparable, in his view, to the way Deleuze and Guattari consider Artaud and Céline able to 'exhaust the possible to produce writings of pure intensities'(2000: 233).

In the light of such considerations, my aim will be to explore the extent to which Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy fulfils the schizophrenic vocation of literature in a more complete way than any of his earlier work. As I will show, the trilogy presents a symptomatological study of the social control inherent in late capitalism, replacing Burroughs' emphasis on the explicatory figure of the agent-addict with a model of life, death and immortality. Going beyond the symptomatological analysis and dialectical opposition of his earlier work, though, it also offers 'affirmative ways to reorganise society in order to avoid the powerful dialectics of social and linguistic control' (Murphy 1997: 5). I will consider these affirmative possibilities in connection with the strategies of escape and resistance presented by Deleuze and Guattari, revealing the trilogy as an acute fictionalised representation of the political imperatives of schizoanalysis. My primary concern, though, will be to establish how far these texts go beyond a dynamic of signification

and attain to the formal schizoid deterritorialisation associated with minor literature proper. I will argue that, by conjoining the strategies of fragmentation and disjunction found in Burroughs' earlier work with more conventionalised modes of narrative, the desubjectifying force of those earlier strategies is intensified, raising them to the level of a fully crystalline narrative. Finally, in doing this, I will suggest that the trilogy both extends and subverts implicit qualities of the Gothic mode in a way which reveals the potential for these tendencies in earlier Gothic writing.

### 3. The falsification of history in *Cities of the Red Night*

In this chapter's introduction I drew broad parallels between Deleuzian thought and the politico-philosophical orientation of Burroughs' work. Although useful as a starting-point for discussion, identifying such parallels is very different from understanding how Burroughs' writing can be said to function as specifically schizoid literature. As already noted, the several references made by Deleuze to Burroughs' work do little to clarify its status in this regard, and none pertain specifically to the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy.

Given the size and complexity of *The Cities of the Red Night* it is impossible to offer a comprehensive account of the trilogy within the scope of the current study. My focus will be restricted to the question of how and why the trilogy, in its subversion of the molar experience of space and time through narrative, is congruent with Lovecraft's very different work. The Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (Ccpu) states that 'the superiority of Burroughs' analysis of power – over 'trivial' ideology critique – consists in its repeated emphasis on the relationship between control systems and temporality' (2004: 281). Drawing upon Deleuze's discussion of image-regimes and the powers of the false, I intend to show how Burroughs' late trilogy not only analyses this relationship, but works to counter its conscious effect. I will argue that the trilogy presents the spatio-temporal modalities reproduced within organic, chronologically-ordered narratives as key determinants of paranoid subjectification. Using these conventional, 'punctual' models of history and memory as 'a springboard to jump from' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 295), it subverts this narrative form through a crystalline or falsifying regime of narration. By this means, the text seeks

to extract and give life to a revolutionary mode of subjectivity resistant to conventional spatio-temporal determination, enacting what Burroughs calls 'the transition from Time to Space' (1987: 195).

The three volumes of Burroughs' late trilogy are united by a counter-historical engagement with the question of revolution. Burroughs begins *Cities of the Red Night* with reference to the historical account of a failed pirate commune which anticipated, by a hundred years, 'the liberal principles embodied in the French and American revolutions' (1982: 9). Established on the coast of Madagascar, this commune laid down a series of Articles designed to ensure personal freedoms and equality, and considered itself to be necessarily in a state of war with the imperial powers of the day. As an insurrection, it was short-lived, falling prey to a surprise attack by the native population. Burroughs takes this failure as reflective of the more widespread dissolution of the principles underpinning the French and American revolutions, which became 'windy lies in the mouths of politicians' and resulted in 'the deadly impasse of insoluble problems in which we now find ourselves' (1982: 11). In all such cases, 'the chance was there, the chance was missed' (1982: 11), and, Burroughs notes, 'only a miracle or a disaster could restore it' (1982: 12). Such a miraculous or disastrous intervention would, necessarily, imply a removal of what Burroughs calls 'the temporal limits' (1982: 33, 153), and thus a transformation of our relationship to time. For Burroughs, this transformation plays a central role in reviving or re-discovering the virtual possibility inherent in these revolutions.

Offering us this possibility in the form of a putative 'black hole, a hole in the fabric of reality' (1982: 37), Burroughs invites us to imagine 'how the history of the world could have been altered' (1982: 10) had the pirate insurrection survived and proliferated. He posits a 'retroactive Utopia' based on what 'actually could have happened in terms of the techniques and human resources available at the time' (Burroughs 1982: 11). One of the two extended narrative sequences in this opening volume constructs a fantastical re-envisioning of the insurrection, and revolutionary movements are also invented in the second and third volumes of the trilogy – the 'Johnson Family' of cowboy rebels in *The Place of Dead Roads* and Margaras Unlimited, 'a secret service without a country' (Burroughs 1988: 24) in *The Western Lands*. Yet Burroughs' initial presentation of this exercise is deceptive. As the

volume and the trilogy progress, it becomes increasingly clear that the focus of this 'utopian' vision does not rest upon an imaginative act of reconstruction. Rather than leading us to simply imagine how the world could have been different, Burroughs' writing seeks to rediscover and manifest that difference as a material force of consciousness. The revolutionary impulse which informed the Madagascar uprising, and which is postulated in Burroughs' other insurrectionary movements, is brought to life through the text's escape from a chronological narrative structure.

Thus, although predicated upon the historical failure of revolution, Burroughs' trilogy also opens up the possibility of recuperating a revolutionary consciousness not subject to historical truth. For Deleuze, the view that 'revolutions turn out badly' stems from understanding them according to their actualised historical outcomes rather than as irruptions of 'revolutionary becoming' (1995: 171). Rather than seeking to understand how such an event unfolds historically, 'how it's prepared and then decomposes in history' (Deleuze 1995: 170), he suggests that one needs 'to go back into the event, to take one's place in it as in a becoming, to grow both young and old in it at once, going through all its components or singularities' (Deleuze 1995: 170-171). Already, we have seen a process of this kind in the becoming of Lovecraft's Carter.

Becomings, as we have seen, are not confined to a specific point in chronological history but rather occupy their own durational bloc, irreducible to actual spatio-temporal coordinates or outcomes. As such, they are the special territory of art and writing. Here, virtual singularities can be extracted from the actual and assembled into beings of pure sensation, which live as monuments in the textual medium. The 'fundamentally falsifying' nature of crystalline narrative, which 'poses inexplicable differences to the present and alternatives which are undecidable between true and false to the past' provides the requisite medium for such becomings (Deleuze 2005: 127). Viewed in this way, the opening sections of *Cities of the Red Night* signal Burroughs' intention to give life to a revolutionary becoming capable of resisting assimilation into the framework of historical meaning. Irreducible to the medium of organic narrative, this emergent becoming underpins the trilogy's subsequent formal experimentation.

The narrative directly concerning the Madagascar uprising forms one of the two most conventional and extended narrative sequences of the volume, or of the trilogy as a whole. Nevertheless, it unfolds sporadically across the first two books of the volume, with frequent interruptions, and is never resolved or completed. It is interlaced with two other narrative strands. The first of these details the missing persons investigation of 'private asshole' Clem Snide, while the second offers fragmentary glimpses into the viral effects of the disastrous 'black hole' incident associated with the titular Cities of the Red Night. In the third book, the narrative enters a more obviously crystalline image-regime. Here, the episodic adventures of a new character, Kim Carsons, are dispersed across the 'disconnected places and de-chronologized moments' associated by Deleuze with falsifying narrative (2005: 129). To understand the role and importance of the Madagascar account in Burroughs' overall scheme, it is necessary to recognise its inextricable imbrication with these other narratives amongst which it is dispersed.

The account is related primarily as a third-person narrative in the present tense, and follows the adventures of a young American, Noah Blake, who leaves home for a life at sea. Once at sea, Blake's story is presented in the form of diary entries, in which we learn of the staged capture of his ship by pirates, and his subsequent recruitment into their ranks. As it is initially presented in final published form, the account appears to follow a conventional spatio-temporal structure. Thus, for Murphy, it corresponds to Deleuze's 'truthful narration' in which 'the protagonist has a stable, pre-established identity [...] so that action always has a subject' (1997: 177). I contend, though, that this argument is only valid if Blake's account is read in notional separation from the other narrative elements within the novel. In fact, these elements can be said to ultimately form a single narrative, in that they are eventually realised to be inter-related, and in a decidedly crystalline manner. Thus, the apparent truthfulness of Blake's account must be qualified against the many levels of falsehood or forgery which permeate the other narrative strands within the trilogy. This falsifying quality, moreover, is already signalled at many points throughout its development, even before it becomes retrospectively clear in the light of later events.

Initially, Blake assumes that his material contribution to the insurrectionary war proposed by the pirates will proceed from the fact that he is the son of a gunsmith. A

diary entry from Captain Strobe, one of the revolutionary leaders, indicates otherwise. According to Strobe, Blake's 'primary role' stems from the diaries themselves, which Strobe proposes to have printed as a chronicle of the revolution (Burroughs 1982: 90). Although Blake's account initially appears to resemble an organic narrative, the mediated 'unreality' of situations and characters undermines the representational appearance of the text. The events and situations he records appear even to him as somehow mediated or falsified. He frequently describes what he is seeing as if it were a painting, 'a painting in a gold frame: the two ships riding at anchor in the still blue harbor, a cool morning breeze, and written on the bottom of the frame: "Port Roger – April 1, 1702"' (Burroughs 1982: 92). At other times, he is struck by the sense that his fellow characters appear to be actors, 'a troupe of travelling players a bit down on their luck but united in determination to carry out their assigned roles' (Burroughs 1982: 94). Port Roger is associated continually with the medium of paint – and by extension, the medium of words. Just as its settings appear to Blake as paintings they are also, literally, painted: when Blake enters the town through what he believes to be a screen of bamboo, he finds that 'the bamboo trees are painted on a green door that swings open like the magic door in a book I have seen somewhere long ago' (Burroughs 1982: 95). Introducing Blake to Waring, an 'official' of the community, Strobe tells him 'he painted the town' (Burroughs 1982: 95). By drawing attention to their status as mediated representations, the scenes Blake describes evoke not so much real places as zones of possibility.

The status of the residents of Port Roger as truthfully representational individuated characters is also revealed as an illusion, both within this narrative and the rest of the novel. Blake is unconvinced by them, viewing them as 'seedy players with grand roles but no money to pay the rent' (Burroughs 1982: 94). Their individual identities are overtly shifting and interchangeable, as when Blake and his friend Bert Hansen encounter Juanito, the 'Master of Ceremonies':

I notice that he can be warm and friendly from one eye and at the same time cold and mocking from the other. The effect is most disturbing. Bert Hansen, not knowing how to respond, smiles uncomfortably, and his smile is immediately mimicked by the youth with such precision that it seems for a moment they have switched places (Burroughs 1982: 96).



They interchange, moreover, not just with one another but with other characters elsewhere in the trilogy, sharing names and biographical details. Blake's friend Sean Brady for instance, described as 'black Irish with curly black hair and a quick wide smile' (Burroughs 1982: 40), is an obvious corollary to Clem Snide's 'black Irish' assistant Jim Brady (Burroughs 1982: 76). Similarly, it is quickly revealed that the leaders and officials of the revolution are not the people they appear to be. 'How long will it take him to find out that Captain Jones and Captain Nordenholz are interchangeable?' Captain Strobe asks himself, or 'to see that I am the de Fuentes twins?' (Burroughs 1982: 90). This revelation is quite incompatible with a 'truthful' narrative given that Blake reports himself to have had dinner with all of these characters at the same time (Burroughs 1982: 99). Again, these characters appear in different times and contexts as the various narrative strands progress, particularly Strobe/the de Fuentes twins, who play an important role in the volume's second extended narrative.

In the context of Burroughs' earlier novel *Wild Boys*, Jenny Skerl argues that 'the imagery and actions of the wild boys define them as embodiments of demonic energy; and it is as energy that they are best understood, not as characters' (1991: 192). They are utopian, she argues, 'as a *force*, not as literal images of the ideal community' (Skerl 1991: 192). Skerl conceives this force psychoanalytically, as representing 'the release of demonic energy in conscious fantasy' (Skerl 1991: 192), but her observations are pertinent to a schizoanalytic reading of Burroughs' late trilogy. From this perspective, these personages can be seen, not as representations of characters that 'claim to be true' (Deleuze 2005: 123), nor as cathartic figures of wish-fulfilment, but as depersonalised packets of sensation (Deleuze 2006: 30). As such, they form forces of pure subjective desire, constituting part of the 'revolutionary milieu' of the Port Roger commune. In combination with the other forces at work in the commune, they catalyse the emergence of a 'becoming-revolutionary' in the text. Deleuze and Guattari argue that becoming 'is born in History, and falls back into it, but is not of it. In itself it has no beginning nor end but only a milieu' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 110). Port Roger is part of this process, but the milieu should not be understood as beginning or ending with it. Rather, I would argue that it extends to the textual form of the entire trilogy. As Wayne Pounds notes, both *Cities of the Red*

*Night and The Place of Dead Roads* 'are not only utopian in content but also in their semiotic structure' (1991: 223).

If read organically, the Clem Snide narrative which appears alongside Blake's account seems at first to belong to both a different time (the present) and a different popular genre ('hard-boiled' detective fiction). Snide is a private investigator whose missing persons case leads him into a conspiracy involving the enforced transmigration of souls. After resolving the case, Snide encounters the Iguana twins (who are also the de Fuentes twins from Blake's narrative) who introduce him to 'a short pamphlet bound in heavy parchment' entitled 'CITIES OF THE RED NIGHT' (Burroughs 1982: 137). The female Iguana twin gives him a number of other books which she tells him are only copies, but that she will pay him for recovery of the original. The copies are 'almost perfect' but as she explains:

Changes, Mr Snide, can only be effected by alterations in the *original*. The only things not prerecorded in a prerecorded universe are the prerecordings themselves. The copies can only repeat themselves word for word. *A virus is a copy*. You can pretty it up, cut it up, scramble it – it will reassemble in the same form (Burroughs 1982: 151).

Despite the Iguana's emphasis on the importance of the originals, Snide immediately interprets his brief as being to forge the complete originals: 'I felt sure that this was exactly what I was being paid to do' (Burroughs 1982: 154). Snide is thus revealed as the forger both of Blake's account, and of the 'Cities of the Red Night' segments which appear throughout the volume. Just as in 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key' we are thus presented with an image of Borgesian forking paths, a proliferation of impossible worlds which serve to falsify any originally 'true' version of the world.

When Snide examines the copies he has been given, he finds that they vividly evoke legends portrayed 'with a child's casual cruelty,' leading him to ask 'what facts could have given rise to such legends?' (Burroughs 1982: 152). We are told that the books are the products of a virus which produced 'terminal hallucinations [...] at a point where the line between reality and illusion breaks down' (Burroughs 1982: 152). As representations, the books are worthless, 'no more representative of life at the time than a *Saturday Evening Post* cover by Norman Rockwell represents the complex

reality of American life' (Burroughs 1982: 152). Yet the virus in question was 'a *color* [sic] virus, as if the colors themselves were possessed of a purposeful and sinister life' (Burroughs 1982: 152). As Snide reads them, he is physically affected by the colours on the pages, 'rising from the books palpable as a haze' (Burroughs 1982: 153) and his thoughts become 'hazy and somehow not my own' (Burroughs 1982: 153). It is difficult to ignore parallels here with Pickman's paintings, and with the alien colour in Lovecraft's 'The Colour out of Space' (1927), which possesses a strange life of its own, spreading a viral wave of mutation across the locale where it falls to earth. Such images strongly evoke the Deleuzio-Guattarian sense of becomings which live in 'colors, lines, shadow, and light,' irreducible to any actual being (1994: 166). Moreover, as time-defying images shift and change before Snide's eyes, he feels the virus as a living entity capable of influencing his present, and realises that 'they have removed the temporal limits' (Burroughs 1982: 153). Like Carter, the chronological coordinates of his being are now fatally compromised.

This section is crucial for understanding the nature of Burroughs' project in the trilogy. The female Iguana denies that she is an 'idealist' but recognises that her emphasis on the importance of the original might appear to suggest otherwise (Burroughs 1982: 151). Murphy asserts that, despite her disavowal, her approach is 'clearly Platonic' (1997: 176). Yet, if this were the case, why would Snide 'feel sure' that he is being commissioned to fabricate the originals? In one sense, history *always* removes the temporal limits, in that it causes past actualities to exert a repetitive effect on our perceptions of present and future possibilities ('revolutions turn out badly'). As Snide quickly recognises, the Iguana twin does not want copies of the originals because they would only repeat what is already in the originals word for word, changing nothing. She wants him to produce *new* prerecordings, which would allow the influence of the past on the present to be altered according to her purposes.

Snide's role as forger, together with that of subsequent characters in the trilogy, resonates directly with Deleuze's figure of the forger in his discussion of falsifying narrative. In such narratives, Deleuze states, the forger displaces those characters associated with sensory-motor, action-based narrative: 'the criminal, the cowboy, the psycho-social man, the historical hero, the holder of power' (2005: 128). There is no

standard of truth in such narratives, against which the forger can be determined to be a 'liar or traitor' (Deleuze 2005: 128). Instead, the forger permeates the text with 'the indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary' (Deleuze 2005: 128). By provoking 'undecidable alternatives and inexplicable differences between the true and the false' (Deleuze 2005: 128) he changes the narrative's presentation of time. As I discussed in Chapter One, in an organic narrative, time is indirectly represented as a consequence of action and movement through space. Our 'image' of time is extrapolated from the linear progression of points of action in the narrative. In the falsifying narrative permeated with forgery, by contrast, we are given a 'direct time-image' which cannot be coordinated against a 'true' perspective notionally distinct from experience (Deleuze 2005: 125). Just as the distinction between what is real and imaginary falls away, so does the distinction between 'true' and 'false' possibilities in the past and present. Thus, as Murphy argues, Burroughs' forgers 'all work to produce the indiscernibility of imaginary and real in order to break the control of truth and law over time, to break the determinism of repressive history' (1997: 177).

Within a falsifying narrative, Deleuze notes, the forger will 'be inseparable from a chain of forgers into whom he metamorphoses. There is no unique forger, and if he reveals something, it is the existence behind him of another forger' (Deleuze 2005: 129). Thus, Blake's diaries are exposed as false creations of Snide, who is himself revealed to be an 'incarnation' of Audrey Carsons (Burroughs 1982: 236). Carsons, in turn, emerges as the writer of all the narratives we have encountered in the novel, sitting 'at a typewriter in his attic room, his back to the audience' (Burroughs 1982: 284).

This dynamic continues, moreover, throughout the rest of Burroughs' trilogy. In *The Place of Dead Roads*, the cowboy hero Kim Carsons conducts his 'Johnson Family' revolution by means of the manipulation of history, following the guidance of the photographer Tom Dark. Carson actively embraces Dark's exhortation that '*all pictures are faked*. As soon as you have the concept of a picture there is no limit to falsification' (Burroughs 1987: 81). Yet it is always clear that Carson's revolution is *itself* a falsification and forms part of such a strategy. Initially, Carsons is presented as the fictional creation of William Seward Hall, a 'man of many pen names, of many

times and places' (Burroughs 1987: 107), who 'wrote western stories under the pen name of "Kim Carsons"' (Burroughs 1987: 13). The relative ontological precedence of the two is unclear, though, since we are later told that Hall is Carsons' ghostwriter: 'Kim's first book, a luridly fictionalised account of his exploits as a bank robber, outlaw, and shootist' is 'ghostwritten by William Hall' (Burroughs 1987: 181). The novel begins with Hall's death, in 1889, after being shot in the back by an unknown gunman during 'an Old Western shoot-out' with his adversary Mike Chase (Burroughs 1987: 13). At the end of the novel, this incident is reprised, but this time it is Carsons who attends the gunfight with Chase and is shot in the back. Hall reappears as the 'old writer' (Burroughs 1988: 1) of *The Western Lands*, although this time he is not a writer of westerns, having found fame earlier in his life with a single novel entitled '*The Boy Who Whittled Animals Out of Wood*' (Burroughs 1988: 250). A new character in the novel, Joe the Dead, turns out to have been the unknown gunman who murdered Hall/Carsons, seeing him as 'a part of himself not useful or relevant to the present time' (Burroughs 1988: 29). Joe is, nonetheless, Hall's creation, as are 'all the recurring characters from the earlier novels' (Murphy 1997: 179).

Yet, significantly, for Deleuze forgers 'are not all so to the same degree or with the same power' (2005: 141). Burroughs' forgers metamorphose into one another, but there are significant differences between their powers of falsification. As with the organic narrative, which 'claims to be true, even in fiction,' a forged history does not become inherently falsifying simply by presenting alternative historical 'facts' which it nonetheless 'claims' to be true (Deleuze 2005: 123). If these falsifications maintain the formal criteria of truth then they remain ultimately 'truthful'. Dark's assertion that all pictures are faked by their very nature reflects Deleuze's assertion that 'what is false is not simply a copy, but already the original' (2005: 141). Similarly, the female Iguana twin recognises that the original prerecordings are inherently open to alteration, thus denying them the status of absolute truth. Yet through their attempts to reshape history by changing its form, both Snide and Carsons at least partially accord with Deleuze's criticism of forgers as displaying an 'exaggerated taste for *form*' (2005: 141). Deleuze and Guattari argue that 'history is made only by those who oppose history (not by those who insert themselves into it, or even reshape it)' (1988: 295). That is to say, the *form* of history itself must be changed in nature,

rather than repeating the same form but with differences of detail. It is not a question merely of who controls the 'prerecording' of historical truth, as a means of influencing the future, but of overcoming the notion of historical truth itself. This is because it is the chronological mode of space-time itself which serves as an instrument of control, regardless of how that time is composed. Burroughs recognition of this is made clear in his observation that the 'One God' or One God Universe (OGU, his figure of control) 'is *Time*. And in Time, any being that is spontaneous and alive will wither and die like an old joke' (1988: 111).

In *The Western Lands*, Burroughs engages overtly with this problem. Joe the Dead, in himself and through his complex inter-relationship with Hall, is almost the last in Burroughs' metamorphosing chain of forgers. Reflecting Burroughs' own position by this stage in his narrative experimentation, we are told that Joe 'understood Kim so well that he could afford to dispense with him as a part of himself not useful or relevant to the present time' (1988: 29). Superseding the formal complicity of Snide and Carsons, 'Joe didn't have ideas about rewriting history like Kim did. More of Kim's irresponsible faggotry: he's going to rewrite history while we wait' (Burroughs 1988: 59). Joe's more radical position places him amongst 'a select breed of outlaws known as the NOs, natural outlaws dedicated to breaking the so-called natural laws of the universe' (Burroughs 1988: 30). To the NO, Burroughs explains, 'breaking a natural law is an end in itself: the end of that law' (1988: 30). Joe's particular focus in violating natural laws rests upon those laws which concern evolutionary biology, taking the form of experiments in hybridity (Burroughs 1988: 32). Raised to the level of animal-becomings, Joe's experiments are aimed at the production of 'potentials rather than actual separate beings' (Burroughs 1988: 42). Their purpose is not to produce alterations of form, but to replace form with transformation. This violation of natural law is reflected in intriguing linguistic distortions:

When mules foal  
Anything goes.  
When mules glow  
Anything foals (Burroughs 1988: 34).

Ultimately, though, it is the creative artist who stands at the furthest extreme of Deleuze's chain of schizo-forgers (2005: 141). While most forgery remains restricted to formal alteration, Deleuze states, 'only the creative artist takes the power of the false to a degree which is realized, not in form, but in transformation (2005: 141-142). All Burroughs' forgers may be understood as 'parts' of himself, just as their activities constitute his various experimental forays into the weakening or subversion of actual history. Through their metamorphoses into one another, though, and their permeation of the text, Burroughs finally makes them 'the only content of [his] narration' (Deleuze 2005: 129). Snide's fabrication of Blake's adventures is also, of course, Burroughs' own – but Burroughs has no wish to take this story to its conclusion, to show 'what followed' (1982: 287). He realises that, by merely inserting changes into actual history, the same outcomes will always reassemble: 'better weapons led to better and better weapons, until the earth is a grenade with the fuse burning' (Burroughs 1982: 287). He has 'blown a hole in time with a firecracker' but remains 'bound to the past' (Burroughs 1982: 287). It is not Burroughs' re-writing of history which is important, but the total contribution of his various forgeries to an overcoming of history.

This overcoming arises, then, not from Burroughs' alterations to history but from the transformations produced by his 'metamorphoses of the false' (Deleuze 2005: 130). He began the trilogy by offering us a 'retroactive Utopia' but, as Deleuze and Guattari caution, 'utopia is not a good concept because even when opposed to History it is still subject to it and lodged within it as an ideal motivation' (1994: 10). Abandoning this approach, Burroughs increasingly seeks, instead, a way to make the revolutionary event 'in its becoming, in its specific consistency, in its self-positing as concept' escape history (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 110). The revolutionary event, as with all events of becoming, 'is born in History, and falls back into it, but is not of it. In itself it has no beginning nor end but only a milieu' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 110). Recognising the fatal consequences of time for any being which is spontaneous and alive, Burroughs seeks instead an alternative temporal modality which can allow the possibility of immortality in relation to that fate. Near the close of *Cities of the Red Night* Audrey Carsons experiences an epiphany:

Audrey felt the floor shift under his feet and he was standing at the epicentre of a vast web. In that moment, he knew its purpose, knew the reason for suffering, fear, sex, and death. It was all intended to keep human slaves imprisoned in physical bodies while a monstrous matador waved his cloth in the sky, sword ready for the kill (Burroughs 1982: 267).

Time, Audrey realises, serves as the functional medium of a fear that restricts possibility and produces subjects of control. As Steven Shaviro notes, in this 'closed economy of death' desire is 'short-circuited' so that 'any movement of liberation merely re-enacts the pattern from which it is trying to escape' (Shaviro 1991: 200). As Burroughs' trilogy develops, it is clear that alterations in the course of linear time can do little to counteract this effect. Rather, we must learn to exist within a different medium of experience that can free us from control. He offers the analogy that 'we are like water creatures looking up at the land and air and wondering how we can survive in that alien medium. The water we live in is Time. That alien medium we glimpse beyond time is Space' (Burroughs 1987: 43-44).

To avoid confusion, it should be noted that Burroughs' use of the term 'space' here in opposition to 'time' does not correspond exactly to Deleuze's use of the term in his discussions of smooth, versus striated, space. For Deleuze, just as with time, the notion of the virtual means that space must be understood as something other than 'a universal grid within which objects can be located' (Lorraine 2005: 171). As Lorraine explains, 'just as the events of sense have virtual relations that may never be actualised in an embodied thinker, so do spatial haecceities have virtual relations that insist in the experience of embodied perceivers even if they are imperceptible' (2005: 171). 'Space', as Burroughs uses the term, does not refer specifically to the spatial in this sense, but stands rather as a general figuration of the modes of experience which arise following the abandonment of molar conceptions of space-time. In this context, 'space has to be understood not as empirical extension, still less as transcendental given, but in the most abstract sense, as the zone of unbound potentialities lying beyond the purview of the OGU's already-written' (Cru 2004: 282). This notion relates closely to the time-defying synchronic spaces of Pickman's North End, and the 'space outside dimensions' (Lovecraft 1985a: 533) in which Carter encounters Yog-Sothoth. It is not space as opposed to time, but rather the Ultimate Abyss 'outside space and time' (Lovecraft 1985a: 533) as they are conventionally related.



Learning to exist in Space rather than Time, then, requires a profound change in our conscious relationship to time, on the level of both history and memory, and it is this change, this new power, which Burroughs' trilogy seeks to effectuate. In *The Western Lands* he explains that rather than experiencing life as 'sequentially presented' you should 'imagine that you are dead and see your whole life spread out in a spatial panorama, a vast maze of rooms, streets, landscapes, not sequential but arranged in shifting associational patterns' (1988: 138). Burroughs' crystalline narrative is designed to serve as just such a vision, and by doing so to empower his readers to acquire the same state of consciousness. Rather than conceiving time, history and (through memory) our lives in terms of a series of points, we must grasp time in accordance with Deleuze's wider ontology of difference, as a medium of becoming. Viewed in this way, becomings can form between any two points irrespective of chronological order, with the line of becoming between those points taking precedence over the points themselves. The power of the crystalline image-regime is its ability to reveal this time-image in itself, thus producing the possibility of becoming.

Burroughs portrays the move from time to space as an inherently political conflict, 'a conflict between those who must go into space or die and those who will die if we go' (1987: 195). It is the movement whereby desire and subjectivity escape the paranoid configuration imposed by capitalism, shattering the forces of control which compel people to live as docile, unquestioning consumers of ideology. As such, it can be understood as a profoundly *ethical* move, offering resistance against the patterns of thought associated with the neoarchaisms of patriarchy. In this context, crystalline or falsifying narrative becomes a powerful weapon, because anything which can challenge the labour of normative spatio-temporal coordination of the self inherently challenges the fabric of control.

They need us for their film. They have no other existence. And as soon as anyone goes into space the film is irreparably damaged. One hole is all it takes. With the right kind of bullet, Kim thought, with that little shiver...  
(Burroughs 1987: 195)

Yet, although Burroughs seeks to make narrative falsification into 'the right kind of bullet', he is realistic about the obstacles to effecting this change in consciousness. 'To reach the Western Lands is to achieve freedom from fear' (Burroughs 1988: 162), he asserts, but the omnipresent controlling power of that fear permeates his trilogy. As I will discuss shortly, Burroughs' treatment of fear constitutes a key point of linkage to, and variance from, the Gothic encounter with difference. Burroughs' narrative operations constitute explorations of this territory, attempts to forge pathways for desire which can penetrate the delineating barriers of paranoia. Like the Madagascar uprising, though, or the other revolutionary movements which populate the trilogy, this conflict remains unresolved.

Speaking of Burroughs' later fiction, with particular reference to *Cities of the Red Night*, Skerl valorises it as the creation of 'powerful imaginary worlds that critique present reality and that show the reader how to alter his consciousness and thus his world' (1991: 196). He does this, she argues, by empowering his readers 'to create alternative realities with the basic human ability to dream and tell stories' (1991: 196). Skerl's approach, though, remains bound to an oedipal conception of literature, implicit in her association of story-telling with dreams, and informing her assertion that 'everyone is an artist in that everyone can create his own fantasies or stories' (1991: 191). This position runs the risk of admitting a dangerous political complacency. As Deleuze argues, stories which merely represent personal memories or neuroses serve only to rehearse control-complicit modes of paranoid subjectivity. To give us new powers of desire, new ways of connecting to the world, the stories we tell must scramble the formal and representational logic which underpins egoic determination. Textuality, as Shaviri argues, can serve as a 'control mechanism which creates the imprisoning illusion of the 'real'' but it can function, too, as 'a liberating movement whose only reality is that of illusion' (1991: 203). As I have indicated, the liberating force of Burroughs' falsifying textuality can only be apprehended from a schizoanalytic, rather than psychoanalytic, perspective.

In his late trilogy, then, Burroughs employs narrative as a performative vehicle for the construction of an altered experience of spatio-temporal reality. Highlighting normative spatio-temporality as a political force which operates at a pre-personal level to produce subjects of control, he seeks to force the gates of this reality by

producing an experience of time as revolutionary becoming. In the process, normative subjectivity itself is exploded and reconfigured in such a way that desire is freed to form connections which elude paranoid self-definition. As I have shown, through the figure of Randolph Carter, Lovecraft attempts a similar crossing. In that instance, though, the consequences are revolutionary purely on the level of personality, and ultimately subject to paranoid recuperation. Lovecraft does not explore the further implications of this transition in regard to the collective destiny of becomings and their implications for the social body. As Burroughs reveals, by contrast, revolutionary becoming is social as soon as it is personal.

Yet Burroughs himself is never complacent about the chances of successfully 'writing one's way to freedom'. As Deleuze reminds us, although everyone can create fantasies or stories, few can write without memory, without ego. It is only writing of this kind which can produce a depersonalised desire resistant to control. In his experiments with narrative, Burroughs attempts to show the way, but as he would be the first to point out, 'you'll have to make it from there on your own. Most of them don't. Figure about one in a million. And, biologically speaking, that's pretty good odds' (1988: 113).

#### 4. Schizo-Gothic in the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy

##### 4.1 Burroughs' historical falsification and Gothic temporality

Burroughs' engagement with questions of time and historicity relates to crystalline narrative, and thereby to the terms of schizoid or minor literature. By its nature, this form of narration subverts normative patterns of spatio-temporal experience, producing states of perception which both escape and rupture cohesive human subjectivity. It is therefore a specifically *schizophrenising* narration, inducing anti-oedipal modes of experience in which 'the' subject falls away to be replaced by flows of pure desire and transient, 'nomad' subjectivities. By enacting forms of experience which replace linear chronology, at both personal and historical levels, with 'de-actualized peaks of present' and 'virtual sheets of past' (Deleuze and Guattari 2005: 126), Burroughs establishes a mode of schizoid subjectivity which is in a continual

state of becoming. Specifically, given Burroughs' emphasis on the untimely virtual force of revolution, this takes the form of a revolutionary-becoming which overcomes both historical actualisation and individual memory. This emphasis on the return or recapture of moments of excluded history signals an important area of resonance with the Gothic mode. Similarly, but on a more specific level, the centrality of the figure of revolution in Burroughs' trilogy invites comparison with the influence of key revolutionary events on early Gothic. Considering each of these points in turn, I will explore the connections which Burroughs' late trilogy can reveal between crystalline historicity and Gothic writing.

In order to do this, I will briefly revisit existing critical perspectives on the relationship between the Gothic mode and conventionally linear or punctual modes of history. As noted earlier, the Gothic uses encounters with a revived or anachronistic past to explore rifts within contemporary models of subjectivity. What remains less clear, though, is the precise nature of the imbrication of past and present which the mode effectuates, and the values it is designed to promote. Critical responses to this question vary. Just as the Gothic cannot be said to unfold a single discourse on subjectivity, it would be equally problematic to impute a single dynamic to the Gothic mobilisation of the past. The shift from interpreting Gothic fiction in terms of historically 'universal' psychic structures towards specific socio-historical influences allowed psychological interpretations to be tempered with attention to contemporary social concerns, thus permitting recognition of this discursive multiplicity.

What is important about this shift, for my current discussion, is that it necessitated not only a more historicised critical approach, but also a more careful consideration of the mode of historicity attributed to Gothic texts themselves. For critics working from a broadly psychoanalytic perspective, the Gothic could be read as effectuating a wholesale defeat of conventionally linear history. If Gothic writing is viewed as dream-like fantasy open to symbolic interpretation in terms of universal psychic structures, then the role of history is effectively erased altogether. Actions are situated in past times, or in places where the past still inheres, purely so as to explore elements of human nature which are universal, irrespective of time and place. William Patrick Day, for instance, argues that Gothic fantasy is 'an assertion of the existence of a timeless reality outside of history' (1985: 32), thus finding in the

Gothic 'a rejection of the very idea of history' (1985: 33). Coral Ann Howells similarly describes the Gothic as producing a 'fantasy world which was both timeless and placeless' (1995: 8). As I discussed in Chapter One, such approaches have been criticised in two primary ways. In the first place, as Mighall argues, their emphasis on psychological 'interiority' may cause specific, localised socio-political concerns to be overlooked (1999: 7). Secondly, in accordance with Freud's own view, they assume the universal status of a broadly Freudian personality dynamic, and thus a single Gothic discourse on subjectivity.

As I have argued, this does not in itself conflict with a schizoanalytic perspective on oedipal forces in Gothic literature. Deleuze and Guattari reject the universal veracity of oedipal forces, but acknowledge their localised purchase within the capitalist *socius* and affirm their applicability to some writing produced in this context. Of course, from a schizoanalytic perspective, this oedipal quality would devalue Gothic texts as writing in the sense commended by Deleuze, and would similarly devalue critical attempts to reveal or interpret such qualities. Moreover, to the extent that Gothic texts can be correctly read in terms of oedipal forces, this would deny the possibility of discovering crystalline temporal modalities within them.

Yet Deleuzian appraisals of literature indicate an almost invariably partial quality to schizoid writing, viewing it as typically falling back into fascist recuperations at some point. As I have argued, the question which must be applied to Gothic texts is not whether they can be read psychoanalytically, but whether it is also possible to discover their nascent schizoid tendencies. What must be determined is whether the temporality of Gothic texts must be aligned wholly with models of 'memory', as Deleuze uses the term, or whether it includes a dynamic of becoming which incorporates a sense of crystalline time. In either case, this position does not lend support to the ahistorical quality of psychoanalytic readings, since Deleuze's interpretation of Oedipus is itself socio-historically specific. From a Deleuzian perspective, the appearance of oedipal influences within Gothic writing must be attributed, quite specifically, to its originary context within a period of transition from feudal to capitalist social structures.

In addressing these problems, critical approaches emphasise what Mighall calls the 'the importance and the unimportance of history (in any precise sense) in Gothic fictional representation' (1999: xviii). For Mighall, a consistent and centrally-defining feature of the mode is 'the imputation of historicity, of "Gothic-ness", regardless of immediate or calendar time' (1999: xviii). Thus, material could be described as 'Gothic' if it displayed the characteristics of a barbaric or medieval past, regardless of the time in which they themselves existed. In this sense, the Gothic *does* attend to a broadly historical 'past' but does so only in order to highlight truths about the present, through a form of doubling or repetition of past and present which troubles purely linear temporal constructions. Botting, for example, argues that the Gothic 'condenses a variety of historical elements and meanings' according to their usefulness in being 'opposed to the categories valued in the eighteenth century' (2001: 3). For Botting, therefore, through its 'play of distance and proximity, rejection and return' the Gothic 'telescopes history, both condensing the past into an object of idealised or negative speculation and unravelling and disarming the gaze of the present with its ambivalent return' (2001: 12).

According to Botting's account, it is possible to view the Gothicised past as a construction which relates exclusively to present concerns, with the present then being explored through reference to a past invented in its own terms. In this sense, the Gothic emerges as a 'a reconstruction of the past as the inverted, mirror image of the present' (2001: 5). Presented in this way, the Gothic interplay between past and present can be seen to function according to a logic which defies conventional models of linear history. This does not necessarily align it, though, with the notion of crystalline time as employed by Deleuze. Rather, what emerges in place of linearity and a 'punctual' understanding of history is a dynamic of uncanny return, in which the past serves as metaphor for present repression. Incestuous rather than crystalline, linearity is replaced here with a circuit of repetition which obscures the play of difference behind an interface founded upon obverse identity. As such, this interplay could be understood as a process of mutual *territorialisation* which serves to explore but ultimately recuperate fragmentations in present subjectivity, 'a bobbin on a string, cast away and pulled back in the constitution of the subject of the present' (Botting 2001: 12).

This view, though, is complexified in relation to the values and subjective conditions this Gothic reflection valorises. For Mighall, 'the Gothic [...] identifies 'pastness' in the present, to reinforce a distance between the enlightened now and the repressive or misguided then' (Mighall: *xviii*). Rather than seeking to explore problems or gaps in contemporary models of subjectivity, or to address concerns about the enlightenment *socius*, Baldick and Mighall thus see the Gothic as simply reinforcing values of 'modern rationality, Protestant scepticism and enlightened Whiggery' (Baldick and Mighall 2001: 215). By contrast, other critics have discovered more complex and ambiguous layers, incorporating both nostalgia for lost freedoms, and a problematisation of prevailing social assumptions. A common feature of such approaches is that they see the mode as an interrogation of ideological normativisation which necessarily entails an interrogation of the historicity upon which such normativisation is founded. Punter, perhaps the primary exponent of this approach, thus views the Gothic as 'a mode – perhaps *the* mode – of unofficial history' (1996: 187).

In what sense, though, does the Gothic constitute an 'unofficial' version of history? At one level, the simplest statement of Punter's position appears in his recent study of Burroughs' *Nova Express* series. Here, Punter argues:

what we choose (or what happens to us in a realm beyond choice) to know as history – the history of the species, the history of Europe, for example – is at root a *perversion* of history, it is a 'way of putting it' that depends on the dominance of certain interest groups, in whose 'interest' it is that we view history in a certain way (2009: 79).

In its existing form, as Punter acknowledges, this view is simply a restatement of Marxist and Althusserian models of history. The 'perversion' of history he highlights turns upon 'asserting a progression of subjectivity' cast into doubt by Gothic writing (Punter 2009: 77). The notion of perversion appears to imply the possibility of historical 'truth' grounded in accurate versions of linear historical actuality. In this sense, Punter's arguments might suggest that Gothic writing does not undo conventional historical linearity, but simply engages with a 'version' of linear history at odds with that promoted by dominant interest groups. Yet at the heart of his position is a questioning of the notion of historical progression, in which earlier

subjective states have been left behind, their influence on the present negated by the forces of enlightenment.

Consequently, in Punter's view, the historical dynamic of the Gothic is not 'a simple one in which past is encoded in present or vice-versa,' but must rather be seen as 'dialectical, past and present intertwined and distorting [...] each other with the sheer effort of coming to grips'(1996: 198). On one level, this process is obvious: for instance, the barbarities of the past 'have an intrinsic connection with the hidden barbarities of the present, the social and economic barbarities of injustice and forced labour' (1996: 198). In this sense, as Punter argues, 'what is talked about is always double' (1996: 198). At the same time, though, his position offers the possibility of reading the dialectical distortion which occurs between these two moments of barbarism as a crystalline becoming. The barbarities evoked within Gothic fiction are not important as representations of any actual historical past, and nor do they simply refer directly to present barbarities. Instead, they stand as 'monuments' of becoming which exist only between the two. Extracting the virtual potentialities which inhere in past situations and connecting these to virtual present moments, the Gothic could thus be read as creating untimely fictional moments which exist in no actual past or present time but only *between*.

It in this sense that Burroughs' late trilogy, in drawing past and present together into a mutually reflective concatenation, can be related to Gothic historicity. Numerous fragments of actual and imagined history appear throughout the text, intermingling with one another in crystalline fashion: historical revolutionary events, the mythological and religious forces of ancient Egyptian society, and the imagined ancient past of the Cities of the Red Night. These are intertwined, in turn, with present consciousness and consciousness of the present. Here, the dynamic of 'doubling' can be understood as something more than a mutually-territorialising reflection. Instead, there is a mutual *deteritorialisation* of self and actualised history, leading to perceptive and affective states which exist only between the two, deriving identity from neither.

This general area of commonality between Burroughs' trilogy and the Gothic is more specifically demonstrated in the centrality attached by both to the figure of revolution.



The trilogy assumes as its starting point the historic failure of the world's great revolutions. Similarly, Botting points to the political instabilities associated with 'the American Revolution's rejection of imperialism (1776), and the French Revolution's overthrow of absolutist monarchy (1789)' as significant influences on early Gothic writing (1996: 47). In his contemporaneous essay '*Idee sur le roman*' (1800), the Marquis de Sade suggested that the excessive violence and upheaval of the Revolution created a demand for more extreme forms of literary response, prompting writers to 'call upon hell for aid [...] and to situate in the land of fantasies what was common knowledge' (in Mulvey-Roberts 1998: 204). This view suggests a linkage, therefore, between revolution and the Gothic emphasis on both fantasy, and terror and horror.

In a more complex analysis, Ronald Paulson argues that the Gothic provided a metaphor through which contemporary writers could explore 'the widespread anxieties and fears in Europe aroused by the turmoil in France,' seeking 'sublimation or catharsis in tales of darkness, confusion, blood, and horror' (1981: 536). The political attitudes espoused within the Gothic mode towards the impulses underlying the French Revolution and its outcomes are complex, but Paulson asserts that it was primarily adopted by 'those who were either against or merely intrigued by the Revolution, or by problems of freedom and compulsion' (1981: 527). Beginning with 'the rebellion itself with the enormous possibilities and hopes it opened up' this Gothic exploration quickly moved on to the 'delusion, dangerous and unforeseen consequences, and disillusionment' which followed (1981: 543). For Paulson, the 'sense of unresolved mystery' characteristic of many Gothic plots, 'the feeling the reader has [...] of never knowing exactly where he is, where he is going, or what is happening' reflected many contemporary readings of the Revolution (1981: 541). So too, the 'constant potential for simple inversion of the persecutor-persecuted relationship which events in Paris had so terribly exemplified' (1981: 538).

In Paulson's view, the Gothic focussed primarily on the negative repercussions of revolution. Those writers who positively embraced revolutionary principles, such as Godwin, Holcroft, Bage and Inchbald, rejected 'Gothic and theatrical trappings' in their explorations of revolution, working instead in the tradition of the Jacobin novel of reform (1981: 537). For such writers, Paulson argues, greater emphasis was

placed on the evils of the preceding governmental structure in France than on the disruptions caused by the revolutionary movement (1981: 538). Where Gothic writing did offer positive perspectives on revolution, as in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), these tended to stop [...] at the burst of sexual energy, which was creation' (1981: 551). By contrast, it was the 'negative, dark side of the Revolution' which tended to be reflected in the Gothic, with 'the beautiful, passive, feminine, chivalric, pastoral world that is embodied in the maiden' threatened by 'the active, masculine, sublimely aggressive force of the French revolutionaries' (1981: 552).

In many ways, the response to revolution within Burroughs' late trilogy is as ambivalent as that found in Gothic writing. In his embrace of the liberation of desire which existed as a promise or potentiality of the world's great revolutions, Burroughs' response mirrors the positive reactions which Paulson detects in the Gothic. Yet he is also keenly aware of the failures and hypocrisies which have gripped most revolutions on the level of their historical outcomes. Burroughs is thus not necessarily more positive regarding actual revolutions than many Gothic writers of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Certainly, the idea of the rapid interchanges possible between the roles of persecutor and persecuted is a central theme of much of Burroughs' earlier writing, as depicted through the figure of the agent-addict. In the almost uniquely positive tenor of his late trilogy, though, Burroughs is seeking a way out of this impasse. He does this, as I have argued, by attempting to deconstruct the whole framework of linear egoic unity upon which subjectification is founded. This may be understood as a 'revolutionary' form of consciousness, and Burroughs does indeed draw upon the idea of societal revolution as inspiration. He is thus attempting to mobilise a force which transcends the failures and horrors of specific revolutions and draws only upon the creative possibilities underlying them.

The nature of Burroughs' approach here is perfectly exemplified through his relationship to Hassan i Sabbah, a historical revolutionary figure in twelfth-century Persia who founded a mystery cult of assassins and to whom the phrase 'nothing is true everything is permitted' (which recurs throughout the trilogy) is attributed. It is clear that Burroughs takes Sabbah as a primary source of inspiration, particularly in *The Western Lands*, viewing his own revolutionary approach as an extension of

Sabbah's. Sabbah's assassins would exist in normal social positions, sometimes for years, until the call came to carry out their work, to 'strike at the right time in the right places' (Burroughs 1988: 200). In the same way, Burroughs argues, 'we have a human lifetime with a few moments of meaning and purpose scattered here and there ... need not be superb pieces of deadly tradecraft, can just be the night sky over St. Louis, or anywhere' (1988: 200). The question is how we live 'through the dreary years of deadwood, lumbering our aging flesh from here to there' until this moment arises, and for Burroughs the answer is that we do so 'by knowing that you are *my agent*, not the doorman, gardener, shopkeeper, carpenter, pharmacist, doctor you seem to be' (1988: 200).

Burroughs feels a tenuous sense of connection with Sabbah as a historical figure, noting that 'very little of the man emerges' from the rumours of his life, 'and what we do see is not sympathetic' (1988: 198). As 'a man with many faces and many characters,' Burroughs concludes, 'I knew him personally, but I never knew him at all' (1988: 198). Yet in his quest to understand the promise of immortality contained within the Western Lands, Burroughs considers him a crucial figure. Although the Western Lands are a conception of ancient Egypt, he asserts, the 'present-day reality' of Egypt is truncated, and 'has lost all connection with the historical past, to create a solid time-block' (Burroughs 1988: 202). It is thus 'the last place to look for clues to ancient Egypt' (Burroughs 1988: 202). It is, rather, in the activities and beliefs of Sabbah that such clues can be found, since Sabbah studied in Egypt 'about a thousand years ago' (Burroughs 1988: 198) and 'presumably learned the secret of secrets' there (Burroughs 1988: 199). Yet in attempting to incorporate Sabbah into his narrative, Burroughs receives a 'severe visitation of writer's block' (1988: 203) and is forced to confront an inherent problem in his approach:

I realise that my whole approach to HIS has been faulty. I have put him on a remote pedestal: then, with a carry-over of Christian reflexes, have invoked HIS aid, like some Catholic feeling his saint medal. And when I was defeated I felt betrayed. I did not stop to think that he was also defeated, that he is taking his chances with *me* (1988: 203).

Burroughs' treatment of this problem is of signal importance in defining his approach to becoming-with the past, and more specifically to becoming-revolutionary. What

Burroughs realises here is that he has been attempting to employ Sabbah as a figure of representation, viewing him historically in relation to his contemporary circumstances. The remoteness of the pedestal Burroughs has placed him on is that which stems from distance in linear time. Once again, as with the pirate insurrection in Madagascar and the other revolutions referred to at the outset of the trilogy, this approach is revealed as ineffective. Sabbah was 'defeated' just as Captain Mission was, and the value he has to offer to Burroughs' present consciousness cannot stem from the outcomes of his actions. Burroughs realises that Sabbah's effectiveness within his literary operations must be derived from forming connections with him which defy linear history and its outcomes.

Thus, 'instead of asking about the juicy secrets, I asked another question: Did HIS have as bad a time in Egypt as I had in the Empress Hotel? Immediately I knew that the answer was Yes!' (Burroughs 1988: 203). By establishing a linkage which cuts across time and individual circumstances, Burroughs is able to discover and enter a zone of proximity between himself and Sabbah. There is an intrinsic connection here – an empathy concerning the same desires and setbacks – which leads Burroughs to assert 'I am HIS and HIS is me' (1988: 203). Yet what arises from this proximity is a state of consciousness which is that of neither Burroughs nor Sabbah but rather a becoming which occurs between the two. This is repetition, but with difference: Burroughs realises that what he seeks does not lie with Sabbah, nor wholly with himself, but with a new force which arises between the two, depending upon the identity of neither.

What arises from this realisation is a lifting of Burroughs' writer's block, leading to an extended narrative sequence describing the experiences of 'HIS' in Egypt which merges curiously with Burroughs' personal experiences (presumably at the Empress Hotel): 'isolated in Egypt, without money and without followers, HIS's position is desperate' (1988: 204). When we consider that Burroughs is HIS, and HIS is Burroughs, we read this narrative account as a concatenation of past and present, Burroughs and Sabbah. Who is desperate here, Burroughs or Sabbah? Strictly speaking it is neither since what is produced here must be understood as a becoming.

Burroughs had spoken earlier of Sabbah's defeat but now he observes that 'he did not, as some say, fail' because what he was attempting had nothing to do with 'old-style territorial politics' (1988: 215). Rather, Sabbah 'intended to gain time to train a few operatives for the future struggle, which is right here, right now, in front of all of you. The lines are being drawn' (Burroughs 1988: 215). The struggle, then, is repeated – but that repetition contains an inherent recognition of virtual possibility, the sense that it is difference, rather than identity, which is repeated. Just as in the Gothic mode, Burroughs constructs a past which is inseparable from the present, serving as a foundation for explorations of contemporary possibilities for subjectivity. Just as in the Gothic, that past is filled with threats and darkness, with the fears and confusions of revolution, and with momentous repetitions which undermine the sense of subjective progression. Yet in Burroughs' trilogy, a particular imbrication of past and present is engineered which follows a very different dynamic from that of psychoanalytic repetition or doubling. The virtual possibilities which inhere in Burroughs' imaginary pasts connect with virtual layers of the present moment, extracting avenues of escape which exceed the terms of actual historical outcomes.

In this way, Burroughs provides an articulated vision of how 'unofficial' linkages between the present and a dark, repressed and often fantastically-construed past can be understood as becomings. The past, as represented and utilised in Gothic fictions, is frequently understood as a 'construction' of the (contemporary) present, created to confirm what is already believed about the self, or to explore anxieties about aspects of present selfhood which have been repressed. Interrogating the notion of history as a progression of increasingly 'enlightened' subjectivity, this Gothic sense of the past may be viewed as offering an alternative to conventionally linear histories of the actual. Yet in their place appears a Gothic doubling of past and present, a repetitive process in which nothing truly new emerges from the encounter with the old. In this sense, as I have argued, the process appears to be one of mutual territorialisation, in which the nature of the present is revealed or confirmed through reference to a past constructed in direct reference to present concerns.

Burroughs' trilogy offers an alternative way to understand this process – one in which blocks of becoming are formed between past and present times, undermining the identity of both terms and producing instead something new: a play of difference

which connects purely virtual possibilities inherent in both. When Burroughs gazes at Hassan i Sabbah, Sabbah gazes back, and the encounter leaves neither of them unchanged. This is a different dynamic from that usually imputed to the Gothic. As such, in itself it can be taken neither as evidence of Burroughs' Gothic status nor, by extension, as evidence of a schizoid temporality in the Gothic mode. Yet there are close resonances between the two approaches, and Burroughs' trilogy suggests ways in which the Punterian notion of Gothic as 'unofficial history' can be taken further. While it might not be possible to discover a fully-fledged dynamic of historical becoming in early Gothic, it may have been the first literary mode to explore connections between the nature of our subjectivity and our manner of relating to time itself; to discover new virtual potentialities in the past in connection with the virtuality inherent in our own present moment. As such, it may have offered the foundation for what would later develop into more clearly schizoid or 'minor' modes of writing.

#### 4.2 Silly little boys like you: Gothic horror and deterritorialisation

The second aspect of Burroughs' late trilogy to consider in relation to Gothic writing concerns the text's approach to horrific affect. While supernatural horror occupies a position of obvious prominence in Lovecraft's fiction, Burroughs is less commonly thought of as a writer of horror. Despite this, as I will show, the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy is permeated with fearful events and imagery, contributing to a distinctively Gothic atmosphere of dread and subjective threat. Moreover, the nature and political implications of this horror receive explicit textual consideration, signalling Burroughs' awareness of its importance within his overall literary framework. Once again, and in a way which shows important parallels with the work of Lovecraft, I will argue that Burroughs employs horror within his trilogy as a vehicle for the furtherance of subjective transformation. At the same time, in a considerable refinement of Lovecraft's stance, he gives careful attention to its nature as a politically-contested force. For Burroughs, although horror has potentially radical and subversive effects, these are shown as arising only through a dynamic which ultimately masters the emotional impact of the horrific, and turns it back upon the forces of control. By this means, as I will show, Burroughs extracts from horror a

revolutionary force which remains only a virtual dimension of Gothic horror in its traditional forms.

In the *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy, the fear, violence and confusion traditionally associated with revolution in Gothic writing is reflected in Burroughs' own negative summation of historical revolutionary outcomes. These negative outcomes, though, serve as the starting point for a creative and experimental engagement with revolutionary possibility. In accordance with Deleuze's exhortation that revolution should be understood as an ongoing virtual force, rather than in its linear historical actualisation, Burroughs' trilogy is directed towards the forging of an untimely revolutionary consciousness. This untimeliness is itself revolutionary, serving to disrupt linear conceptions of both personal and historical time, and in the process fragmenting the cohesive egoic subjectivity imposed by capitalist control. In this way, Burroughs' de-historicises the Gothic encounter with revolution, extracting from it a pure irruption of schizoid desire.

Nonetheless, the outcomes of Burroughs' attempt to foster revolutionary becoming remain as uncertain as the historical outcomes of revolution itself. Although Burroughs has 'blown a hole in time with a firecracker' (1982: 285), whether others can step through will depend upon their ability to escape the 'suffering, fear, sex and death' which imprisons them within egoic subjectivity (1982: 267). As the Gothic mode testifies, encounters with the anomalous, fragmenting forces which portend subjective dissolution are frequently attended by adumbrations of fear and death: the fear which the molecular induces in the molar subject. In Burroughs' late trilogy, though, as in Lovecraft's fiction, horror does not serve simply as a deterrent to transformation, binding or abjecting that which disrupts subjective unity. Rather, as I will show, the encounter with horror is transformed into an experience which is inherently deterritorialising, liberating new pathways of desire.

Burroughs does not deny the purchase of oedipal anxieties on the psyche of the contemporary subject; such fears permeate the text, threatening to curtail the process of escape. Yet the political intentionality behind such states is laid bare. Fear is not construed as a natural response to otherness, whether intra- or inter-personal, but is instead ideologically conceived as precisely that which traps possible

flows of desire in an illusion of selfhood, allowing control to function at an internalised level. In response to this situation, Burroughs' seeks, particularly in the second and third volumes of his trilogy, to establish a different relationship to fear. This depends, in part, upon embracing such fear and allowing it to deconstruct in a mutual action with the deconstruction of the psyche. Rather than denying fear or being trapped by it, Burroughs thus engineers a close encounter with the horrors of death and dissolution which reconfigures the fearful response as an integral element of the journey to molecularity. At the same time, running throughout Burroughs' trilogy is a sense that fear is not restricted to the oppressed, but can also be revisited upon the agents of control. Burroughs shows that, by embracing the deterritorialising force of horror, we can find ourselves becoming an object of fear for those who would control us. As Burroughs' depiction of the guerrilla struggle of the Madagascar pirates suggests, it is necessary to 'get out of the defensive position' (1982: 146) and reverse the conception of horror as a conservatising force.

The closing stages of the first volume of *Cities of the Red Night* reveal both the urgency and complexity of this approach. Audrey's epiphany regarding fear follows closely upon a scene which is redolent of Gothic abjection. Audrey has been captured by the Countess de Gulpa, one of a succession of iterations of 'all the bad characters of history' (1982: 274) which interchangeably people Burroughs' trilogy. He is taken to a conservatory in de Gulpa's palace, to witness a vision of the fate which awaits those who defy the forces of control. The room is filled with 'a horrible black smell of filth and evil [...] a smell of insects and rotten flowers, of unknown secretions and excrements' (Burroughs 1982: 266). It contains a small garden, where Audrey sees 'a pink shaft growing from the ground, a penis-shaped shaft, red and purple, and as he watches the shaft moves and pulses' (Burroughs 1982: 266). The Countess turns the plant out of the ground with a hoe revealing that 'the shaft is attached to a pink sac with insect legs like a scorpion or a centipede. It scrabbles to cover itself up with dirt' (Burroughs 1982: 266). As the Countess then explains, 'that was once a silly boy like you, Audrey, and that's where I'm going to plant you' (Burroughs 1982: 266). In contradistinction to the body without organs, we witness here an organ without a body, a powerful image of the (gendered) 'organisation' that underpins social control. Just one of many irruptions of excessive horror which appear throughout Burroughs' late trilogy, this scene is immediately recognisable in



terms of the thematic elements of Gothic fear which it contains. Further, de Gulpa's reduction of Audrey to the status of 'silly little boy', a frightened and subjectivised victim of control, prefigures Audrey's vision of the fear which is 'intended to keep human slaves imprisoned in physical bodies' (Burroughs 1982: 267).

A dramatic reversal is about to follow, though, as de Gulpa's revolutionary enemies invade her stronghold, and Audrey's epiphany at this point leads to an unexpected transformation. Rather than being cowed by fear, 'from the depth of his horror and despair, something was breaking through like molten lava, a shock wave of uncontrollable energy' (Burroughs 1982: 267). Following this, 'Audrey smiled and licked his lips' (Burroughs 1982: 267). He proceeds to chase and murder the Countess in a frenzy of violence, but this violence comes to a sudden end when he wakes up in a hospital bed 'looking at a ruptured pillow' (Burroughs 1982: 268). As Shaviro points out, Audrey's outburst 'changes everything and yet accomplishes nothing' (1991: 204). His encounter with horror in this sequence culminates simultaneously in 'apotheosis and anticlimax', forming an 'intense point of metamorphosis and of illusion' (Shaviro 1991: 204). The horrors of de Gulpa's conservatory represent an intense example of the 'compulsion, fixation, and obsessive repetition' (Shaviro 1991: 204) which runs throughout Burroughs' trilogy, redolent of Gothic affect. Despite their intense manifestation here, though, as Shaviro argues, they constitute '*at the same time* a space of radical fragmentation, of difference and discontinuity, of illusion and parody' (1991: 204).

The energy which grips Audrey in response to this horror does not, in itself, achieve anything 'real' in the uncertain sense in which that term can be applied within Burroughs' trilogy. At the end of the first volume, Burroughs expresses his scepticism of the possible benefits of revolutionary violence, which can only leave the earth as 'a grenade with the fuse burning' (1982: 287). As has always been clear, his true intent is to discover a revolutionary conscience which is not limited to the actualities of active struggle. To this end, it is not Audrey's actions which resolve the situation, nor those of the revolutionary forces marching on de Gulpa's palace. Rather, the horror Audrey encounters leads ultimately to a deterritorialising ontological breakdown which undermines the very terms in which such horror can have meaning. This is achieved, as Shaviro argues, not by 'negating or transcending [...]

horrors and obsessions' but instead 'by affirming them even to excess, in a tireless movement of repetition and intensification' (1991: 204). Indeed, in *The Place of Dead Roads* Kim/Audrey will once again encounter the same 'hideous insect plants' which 'were once (an evil old-woman voice tinkles in his brain) 'silly little boys like you' (Burroughs 1987: 236). Thus, Burroughs never denies the egoic force which horror can exert on the individual subject, but rather bombards the reader with a series of successive repetitions and combinations thereof, to the point where their meaning becomes eroded. The very horror which can serve to keep us rooted within our individual selfhood becomes, through this process, a vehicle for escape from the self.

This, indeed, constitutes one of the primary intentional functions of Burroughs' trilogy, and conditions all of his subsequent meditations on fear and control. It is only possible, though, to derive this effect from horror, if we are able to ultimately move through it and abandon the egoic cohesion upon which it depends. Once again, as Burroughs asserts, 'to reach the Western lands', the state of existence in which egoic fear is replaced with depersonalised desire, 'is to achieve freedom from fear' (1988: 162). It is in this sense that Burroughs' approach deviates most clearly from that adopted by Lovecraft since, for Lovecraft, horror remains always an integral component of states of altered consciousness. As Burroughs argues, you cannot free yourself from fear 'by cowering in your physical body for eternity' (1988: 162). The body is, rather, 'a boat to lay aside when you reach the far shore' (Burroughs 1988: 162). Burroughs' emphasis on the bodily here can of course be equated not merely with physicality, but with the organised body of the oedipal subject, which is 'full of holes' (1988: 162) and which must be laid aside in the course of achieving molecularity.

Burroughs nonetheless remains uncertain about the chances of actually achieving this state, the 'one in a million' possibility of overcoming the biological, psychological and social conditioning which traps us within the egoic self (1988: 113). It is clear, though, that his late trilogy makes an attempt to effectuate such change which is more positive than any of his earlier writing. In this spirit, Burroughs guides his reader towards that freedom from fear which is necessary for entrance into the Western Lands. A key example of this is to be found in 'Sayings of the Old White

Hunter' (Burroughs 1988: 246), which offers a number of pointers on how to respond to fear. Burroughs states, for instance, that 'you never have real courage until you have lost courage. Lost it abjectly, completely' (1988: 246). The experience of abject horror is not, from this perspective, to be avoided. Rather, it must be sought, embraced, fully experienced: fear itself. Audrey's encounter with de Gulpa is an experience of this sort. As in that case, though, Burroughs observes that the result of regaining courage is 'almost always fatal. How can you top it? And if you haven't got anything left to top, what are you waiting around for?' (1988: 246). This fatality, of course, is that of the subject, not of all subjectivity. With his courage regained, and de Gulpa now his victim rather than the reverse, Audrey's own sense of identity appears to dissolve, his life appearing as just one more illusory layer within a shifting, uncertain narrative: death and abandonment of the molar self. This victory may occur on the level of dream or fantasy, but again the *form* of the dream is important here, its disruption of narrative meta-determination.

'Never fight fear head-on', Burroughs further counsels, 'that rot about pulling yourself together, and the harder you pull the worse it gets. Let it in and look at it. What shape is it? What colour? Let it wash through you' (1988: 246). This position can be related directly to Botting's observation, noted earlier, that horror is 'the feeling that preserves a sense of humanity' at the point where it is 'most indefinite, most unbearable and most in danger of disintegration' (1998: 131). Here, Burroughs offers an alternative view: it is the continued attempt at 'pulling yourself together' which causes the frightened subject to remain trapped by horror. Burroughs suggests, by contrast, that the correct response is to allow horror to deconstruct itself, experiencing it fully by abandoning hermetic egoic cohesion. The implication here is that horror loses its structure and meaning in the same process as the structure and meaning of the self is abandoned. No longer subjectivised as a 'silly little boy' whose resistance to control can only denote temerity, the former subject of control becomes deterritorialised in the same movement as horror itself.

In this way, Burroughs' trilogy reveals the hidden, schizoid force within the experience of horror, the outside of the process which, from a molar perspective, connotes threat and destruction. It is this very deterritorialising power which lends horror such significance as an affective vehicle in Lovecraft's work, since it is through

the impact of horror that Lovecraft is able to achieve detachment from the self to the extent necessary to realise altered sensations of spatio-temporal modality. In that case, though, since Lovecraft's intentions are so directly personal, further realisations of the political importance of this detachment are restricted. For Burroughs, by contrast, the implication is clear: it is horror, or more properly the direct threat of horror, which maintains subjective cohesion even as it promises to destroy it. This threat is, as Shaviro points out, is tautological, since if the monstrous matador 'were ever actually to swoop down for the kill, he would obliterate the "human slaves" whose fear and continuing capacity for death is the source of his power' (1991: 204).

It is upon this tautological impasse that control depends for its power, its 'reality film', and it is precisely towards the breaking of this impasse that Burroughs' exhausting repetitions of horror are directed. Punter highlights an implicit premise within Burroughs' work – the possibility that fear 'can be revisited onto the custodians of a suspect, state-sanctioned sanity' (2009: 77). This fear, Punter argues, would be of the 'rhizomatic', that which radically undermines the 'arborescent', progress- and development-oriented myths by which we are taught to live our lives' (2009: 77). By reversing the directionality of horror, Burroughs seeks to turn this fear of the rhizomatic, of the molecular, back upon the forces of control, whose purposes it truly serves. It is they, after all, who 'need us' and 'one hole is all it takes' to disrupt the closed circuit of fear and control (1988: 195). This hole, in effect, is the realisation that horror promises destruction only for the molar self, while beyond it a new life of molecularity awaits.

## 5. Conclusion: Burroughs and the Schizo-Gothic

In his *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy, Burroughs writes to discover a mode of subjectivity free of the constraining influence of the control society. It is in this process of discovery that the schizoid effect of his writing lies, and it is also here that it resonates with Gothic concerns. As I have demonstrated, Burroughs associates the subjectification of control with normative conceptions of linear time, within which the neurotic subject is constructed. Moreover, he identifies the mortal, egoic horror

which attends our experience of existence in time as a mechanism for maintaining this constructed form, through a dynamic of constant threat. In response, Burroughs thus seeks to create new modes of temporal experience, through which subjectivity can be dissolved into flows of desire traversing egoic cohesion. In doing this, he transmutes the imprisoning boundaries of horror into zones of deterritorialisation which actively effectuate liberation from egoic subjectivity. What emerges from this process is a becoming-schizorevolutionary which takes up, and draws forward, virtual lines of transformation first evident in the fantasy and horror of the Gothic mode.

Burroughs' late trilogy is a long and complex work. It would be impossible, within the limitations of my current remit, to consider in detail all aspects of the trilogy's schizoid functionality, or of its relation to Gothic fiction. Accordingly, I have emphasised those features of central importance to an understanding of the trilogy as schizoid writing, which relate most obviously to the Gothic mode. Of course, each instance of schizoid writing is distinctive. By its nature, we cannot ascribe to it a set of standards or principles which allow it to be judged according to criteria outside the text. In Chapter One, I offered a set of conditions for distinguishing it from its major counterparts. Nevertheless, these are best understood as guidelines for reading; points of orientation for the navigation of territories which cannot be known in advance. In viewing a work as a machine, rather than a source of signification, we can ask only what that machine does, and what it can do for us. Writing enacts its schizoid vocation to the extent that it produces machines which escape the repetitive dynamic of signification and allow the actualisation of new forces of desire.

In the current context, this is achieved through the formation of transversal historical becomings, which simultaneously disrupt the personal temporality underlying subjective cohesion. These becomings are framed, as I have shown, through narratives which posit an initially organic ordering, before dissolving into and problematising one another. George Snedeker describes the narratives in *The Western Lands* and elsewhere as 'movie-like' (2003), and it has been Deleuze's discussion of the crystalline image-regime in *Cinema 2* which has most directly informed my reading of them. Both individually and in concert with one another the narrative 'routines' or fragments of which Burroughs' late trilogy is comprised subvert

punctual and 'truthful' readings of history. Producing images of time as pure difference, they instead elicit transversal becomings in which present consciousness and historical event become indiscernible, circling around one another in mutually-constitutive interrelation: the time-crystal.

This process raises distinct, though complex, parallels with some primary Gothic concerns. In the first edition of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Walpole appears in the guise of a translator, offering a historical forgery later revealed as an attempt to release 'the great resources of fancy' from a 'strict adherence to common life' (Walpole 1996: 9). Walpole's ancient-modern romance may have initially appeared to be 'the eccentric product of a literary antiquarian' (Fiedler 1997: 126). Yet it introduced a new literary structure, pre-eminently suited to processing the personal and political disorder congruent with both the great revolutions and the birth of capitalism. The Gothic offered a medium of fantasy which facilitated the exploration of present and future tensions through constructed pasts. It was equally apt for processing the horrors of revolutionary violence (as de Sade claimed) or the fear that the 'break-through' had 'opened a way for the intrusion of darkness: for insanity and disintegration of the self' (Fiedler 1997: 129).

The *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy appears to resonate with this early Gothic. When enumerated on a surface level, these resonances suggest a *prima facie* thematic resemblance, although a more careful consideration reveals profound disparities. Burroughs dwells on the convergence of past and present barbarities with a characteristically Gothic ambivalence, the roles of persecutor and persecuted dizzyingly interchangeable. He offers us doublings of the present and future with multiform pasts ranging from fantastical prehistoric eras (the cities of the title) through ancient Egypt to the nineteenth-century of the American West. Figures of ancient, aristocratic menace pursue their terrified victims down dark corridors, though Radcliffe's young maidens are now young men, less virginal but retaining the innocence of youth. Finally, the narratives are overshadowed by the spreading impact of the same great historical revolutions which exercised the early Gothic writers.

Yet Burroughs is not concerned, here, with the Gothic (or indeed anti-Gothic) need to shore up the present through abjection of the past, or to retroactively rehabilitate that past as a romantic wellspring of freedom. His general concern is rather with how we encounter the past-in-general in relation to the present. More specifically, he seeks ways to derive from the historical revolutions a disruption of consciousness in a becoming *between* the historical and the current. A more characteristically Gothic focus on the darkness and negativity of revolution is here replaced with a revolutionary call to arms. Juxtaposing the great revolutions against the all-too-ordered *socius* of late capitalism, Burroughs observes that the promised disruptions have failed fully to emerge. Shunning the oedipal anxieties surrounding social transformation, he searches, instead, for antidotes to those anxieties. His fleeing victims stop and turn back upon their oppressors, blocking a groin kick before visiting orgiastic violence upon them.

As I have argued, though, these thematic variations are less germane to the argument at hand than correspondences at a technical, textual level. In the previous chapter, I focussed upon the ways in which Lovecraft's fiction can be understood as refining the Gothic functionality of supernatural fantasy and horror. The same approach can be applied to Burroughs' late trilogy. As with Lovecraft, Burroughs mobilises a fantastical, anti-realist aesthetic and develops it into a crystalline narrative regime capable of producing images of time as pure difference. Through these images, he effectuates subjective becomings which escape the conditioning power of linear temporality. He extends this process beyond what is achieved in Lovecraft's work, but a similar debt is owed here to the liberation from realist aesthetic principles first enacted in the Gothic mode. Similarly, Burroughs places considerable focus on the horror which attends dissolution of majoritarian patterns of identity, signalling a further connection with the Gothic mode. Again, Burroughs' treatment of this omnipresent horror goes beyond a dynamic of abjection or mastery. Instead, it comes to serve as a force for deterritorialisation of the subject.

As noted, Punter identifies an 'opposition to realist aesthetics' (1996: 182) as the single most definitive characteristic of Gothic writing, and associates this opposition with a challenge to ideology. The mobilisation of an anti-realist sensibility in Burroughs' trilogy, through its production of effectively 'supernatural' experiences

(temporal and otherwise) carries an ideological impetus of just this kind. The precise uses and effects of this anti-realist or fantastical approach, though, are best understood through a schizoanalytic literary dynamic. In Punter's account, it is the 'portrayal' (1996: 185) and thus the representation of the real which is at stake. In the context of minor literature, by contrast, writing serves to produce the real, escaping the restrictions of the established actual/real so as to actualise virtual/real potentialities. If Burroughs' writing were restricted to the 'authentic' *portrayal* of schizoid experience, the former approach would be sufficient for encapsulating his literary functionality. The Ccru, though, offer a particular formulation of Burroughs' anti-realist approach. In their account, 'realism merely reproduces the current dominant reality program from inside, never identifying the existence of the program as such' (Ccru 2004: 276). Burroughs, by contrast, 'seeks to get outside the control codes in order to dismantle and rearrange them' (Ccru 2004: 276).

In this respect, Burroughs' work should not be understood as merely representing the image of a world of schizoid disorder. Rather, it produces a schizophrenising delirium, through which 'intensities and becomings [...] directly invest the social field' (Smith 1997: xxxviii). Burroughs produces narratives which evoke generic expectations (of science fiction, the historical drama, the western and indeed the Gothic or 'weird' tale) before comprehensively subverting them. Narratives which initially appear to function on an organic, sensory-motor, and so 'truthful' level emerge, through their subsequent fragmentation and inter-folding, as falsifying, impossible, rhizomatic.

The import of this falsification lies not merely in destruction, but in the fact that it allows us to engineer a new relationship with reality, in which the virtual/real is released from determination according to the established actual/real. Hence, the Ccru describe Burroughs' writing as 'hyperstitional' in the sense of 'fictions that make themselves real' (2004: 275). The crucial process here, they argue, is that of 'differentiating between "degrees of realization"' (2004: 276). We can align this process with the Deleuzian dynamic of liberating the multiple possibilities of the virtual/real from the established categories of the actual/real: the 'process of entities 'making themselves real' is precisely a passage, a transformation, in which potentials – already-active virtualities – realize themselves' (Ccru 2004: 276). In this way, the



Ccru argue, Burroughs' 'writing operates not as a passive representation but as an active agent of transformation and a gateway through which entities can emerge' (2004: 276).

Although clearly anti-realist, Burroughs' approach to narrative must therefore be aligned in one precise sense with the supernatural fantastic. For Deleuze, as we have seen, works of imagination, including supernatural fantasies, accede to the unique genius of minor writing only to the extent that they obscure the division between reality and unreality in such a way as to produce the powers of the false. A conceptual blurring of the imaginary and real, or the suggestion that the imaginary has a psychic 'reality' of its own, often serves only to facilitate an introjection of oedipal structure into the imaginary. In *Cities of the Red Night* Burroughs mobilises fantasy in order to wage revolutionary struggle against the dominance of the reality-program. He writes as a 'natural outlaw', striving to undermine the ideologically 'natural' at every turn. His purpose is not to represent an alternative, psychically 'authentic' experience of the world, but to birth an unnatural new subjectivity. The supernatural is not *portrayed*, as an antidote to the imposed cohesion of realism. Rather, modes of subjectivity are *enacted* which are super-natural in relation to an ideologically 'natural' reality.

As I argued in my analysis of Lovecraft's fiction, this particular utilisation of a fantastical, anti-realist aesthetic does not accord directly with early Gothic counterparts. Minor writing does not conflict with a realist aesthetic by relatively privileging perceptions derived from psychic interiority. Yet we find in the Gothic the first stages of a literary overture towards this dynamic. The task of minor writing is to actualise forces which initially exist only in a virtual state as undiscovered variations on established reality. This task cannot proceed except on the basis of a rejection of the exclusive dominance of the established actual/real. By first engendering such rejection as an alternative to ideologically dominant perceptual states, the Gothic created the conditions for anti-realist modes of artistic production which would eventually accede to the schizoid.

This dynamic first developed in the form of projections of egoic conflict, thus resulting in an oedipal form of literature. This does not, though, necessitate our viewing the

Gothic as inherently opposed to the schizoid. As we have seen, Deleuze and Guattari detect machines of desire at work even within dream and fantasy, working to escape their contextual structuration. This observation provides the key to understanding the innate virtual potentialities of Gothic fantasy. Previous scholarly approaches, as we have seen, have examined the ways in which the mode reflects its socio-historical milieu. Whether applied explicitly as a conceptual filter (emphasising the Gothic's socio-historical responses in terms of neurosis, paranoia and abjection) or implicitly through an oedipal dynamic of literature, these approaches themselves reflect underlying psychoanalytic assumptions. Accordingly, they offer a picture of the Gothic as responding to (or even intervening in) cultural debates through what Deleuze would call an oedipal form of literature. Such approaches are not always sensitised to the possibility that Gothic writing might itself *actualise*, rather than simply represent, new modes of subjectivity.

Transposed from the context of dreams to that of supernatural Gothic fantasy, these machines affect their escape when they produce a transformed narrative regime. When the organic presuppositions and imaginative excesses of fantasy mutate into a crystalline mode of functionality, they subtend lines of flight with the power to disrupt molar perception. In order to provide the means for detecting the subtle, virtual presence of such machines within the structures of Gothic fantasy, I have shown, using Burroughs' late trilogy, how they would appear in a more fully actualised state.

Here, we witness the Gothic doubling of past and present developed to a point of schizoid delirium. We can see the fantastical settings and strangely ahistorical contexts of the Gothic as forming 'a body without organs with its own geopolitical and racial coordinates' (Smith 1997: xxxix). It is easy, of course, to read much Gothic writing as functioning primarily according to a paranoid polarity of delirium, in which 'the intensities of the body without organs are invested in fascizing, moralizing, nationalist and racist tendencies' (Smith 1997: xi). In Burroughs' late trilogy, though, we can perceive an alternative, schizophrenic polarity, in which this delirium invokes 'an impure and bastard race that resists everything that crushes and imprisons life' (Smith 1997: xli). Like Lovecraft, Burroughs seeks to create a new minor voice. In this context, though, Lovecraft's 'sensitive minority' equates to a directly political consciousness, in which perceptions of virtual possibility are simultaneously

rejections of control. Avoiding Lovecraft's fascistic attribution of 'purity' to this group, moreover, Burroughs presents the consciousness which unfolds through it as a legacy of all oppressed or subjugated peoples. His work shows us that if we can read not only with psychoanalytic paradigms, but with those of schizoanalysis, we can discover alternative constructions of the fantasizing sensibility of the Gothic.

The related question of horror in Burroughs' late trilogy must be considered within this political context. In one sense, it is the emphasis on terror and horror in the Gothic mode which most obviously extends an invitation to psychoanalysis, since it suggests the operation of unconscious, egoic conflicts and anxieties. Furthermore, as noted, a privileging of horrific affect may be readily associated with a specifically majoritarian anxiety: 'becoming minoritarian is frightening' (MacCormack 2010). As I argued in that context, though, it is possible to discover supplementary formulations of the literary horrific which afford horror, in particular, a different import. In the case of Lovecraft's fiction, I contended that horror functions as a tool for shocking thought from its established pathways, facilitating direct experience of the 'objective illusion' of the crystalline. As such, although it *draws* its power from the majoritarian fear of subjective transformation, this is not the power it *produces*. While for Lovecraft this transformative encounter with horror functions at an (initially) personal level, in *Cities of the Red Night* our encounter horror is at every point inseparable from the political forces of control.

Burroughs is keenly attuned to the role of fear in producing and maintaining neurotic subjectivity, and thus in subjugating desire to the forces of control. In his writing, fear is exposed as at once personal and political, in a way which closely mirrors the Deleuzian account of the relationship between oedipal neurosis and the capitalist *socius*. Like Deleuze, Burroughs recognises fear as a contingent, psycho-social construction, rather than as an innate, universal feature of the human psyche. As such, he does not deny the tenacious purchase it holds upon human experience. He views its dismantling, though, as both a possibility, and an urgent political imperative. We cannot free the flows of prepersonal desire which run through us from organisation and imprisonment in an oedipally-structured psyche as long as we remain in the 'defensive position' (Burroughs 1982: 146) with regard to horror. In *Cities of the Red Night* Burroughs seeks to write his way out of this position,

engineering mutually deterritorialising encounters between horrific sensation and the sense of self, which simultaneously raise the possibility of turning horror back upon the forces of control.

For Burroughs, the immortality of the Western Lands equates to the condition of escaping from the construction of the self through linear chronology. As our consciousness gradually moves in the direction of dis-organised desire, that is, we must free ourselves from our attachment to the organised self. We cannot achieve this freedom, though, by resisting that which horrifies us or projecting it through abjection onto external *loci*. Horror is not something which can be *mastered*. Rather, we must open ourselves to it, losing courage 'abjectly, completely' (Burroughs 1988: 246) and allowing it to do its work of egoic destruction. In *Cities of the Red Night*, therefore, horror comes to serve as a nexus of deterritorialisation, repeatedly overwhelming the selfhood of the characters who encounter it. In the process, horror itself becomes deterritorialised; the fear of egoic destruction proves itself to be, quite literally, groundless, since the ego as the ground of personality is revealed in its true nature as merely a function of neurosis.

The encounter with horror in Burroughs' late trilogy, then, serves as a schizophrenising dynamic which actively transforms the self. The political importance of this transformation, moreover, is clear: when we lose our fear, we are empowered to forge positive relations with others on the basis of prepersonal desiring connections. We are freed for political action. Ultimately a political, rather than simply personal affective territory, the question of horror thus emerges here as a contested ground. We become able to see that horror of the minoritarian, far from being an inevitable predicate of the human psyche, originates within the forces of social control. It is not *our* horror, but that of the capitalist *socius*. As Punter argues, it is 'the custodians of a suspect, state-sanctioned sanity' who are frightened of 'everything to which Deleuze and Guattari refer as the 'rhizomatic'' (2009: 77). By embracing horror and letting it 'wash through us' it is *we* who thus become objects of horror from the perspective of paranoid capitalist consciousness. Viewing horror in this radically different light, Burroughs thereby compels us to reconsider the intrinsic valence traditionally attributed to horror in the Gothic mode.

## **Conclusion: Getting Out of the Defensive Position**

### **1. Reading the Schizo-Gothic: new directions for methodology**

As I noted at the outset, the aim of this thesis has been to formulate grounds for a productive dialogue between schizoanalysis and the Gothic. By considering the work of Lovecraft and Burroughs, I have thus proposed new ways to discover and chart the functional presence of a movement towards schizoid subjectivity in the mode, a Schizo-Gothic turn. Yet this is a difficult and necessarily ongoing task. The approach developed by Deleuze and Guattari involves a radical reconceptualisation of the uses of literature not just in the Gothic field, but at the wider level of institutional criticism. This raises the obvious question of how so radical an approach can be integrated into the existing academic-critical framework without being compromised and recuperated into majoritarian discourses. Complete resolution of this issue inevitably remains outside the scope of this thesis. However, as Lambert notes, one way to move towards such resolution is 'to provoke creative dialogue around the [...] conditions that would make a Deleuzian pragmatics distinct from other hermeneutic models' (2000: 136). In one respect, my thesis can be understood as a provocation of precisely this type, applied specifically to the field of Gothic fiction.

Even aside from wider questions of literary theory, I have shown that schizoanalysis offers a dynamic for approaching the fragmentations, dissolutions or incommensurable lacunae of Gothic subjectivity which is completely different from that implied by psychoanalysis. In the broadest sense, it presents these phenomena as positive, life-affirming developments which are experienced as negative only in contextual relation to the recuperative social paranoia which surrounds them. It allows us to understand the deliriums and horrors of the Gothic response not just in terms of crumbling walls but also as a series of provisional, uncertainly-constructed bridges. If it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the two, if what we encounter must sometimes be understood as paradoxically *both*, this reflects the ambiguity of paranoid-schizophrenic oscillations, which is also the ambiguity of the Gothic itself.

The charting of these oscillations, which involves an evaluation of the conflicting schizoid and oedipal forces at work in any given text, is one of the key tasks of schizoanalysis. At one level, this schizoanalytic charting of ambiguous terrain is not incompatible with existing approaches based in historicism and cultural studies, allowing new ways to understand the fantasies and fears of the Gothic mode in terms of their reflection of wider psycho-social forces. Schizoanalysis certainly *recognises* and accounts for the neurotic, oedipal and paranoid subject-states foregrounded by psychoanalysis, and combined in complex ways with socio-historical readings of the Gothic in recent criticism. However, in contradistinction to the psychoanalytic approach, it also demands that such states be grasped as reflections of pre- and extra-personal movements of social desire, rather than pressing the personal and the familial into service as explicators of the social. The single greatest contribution schizoanalysis can offer to Gothic criticism in this regard is to enhance critical awareness of the intrinsically political and ethical questions at stake within the oscillating subjective modes of the Gothic. In essence, these turn upon acquiescence or resistance to the particular forms of subjectification imposed by the modern capitalist system for the maintenance of social control.

Yet integration of this kind raises difficulties of its own. The problem of oedipal neurosis is not restricted to content but extends always to form and structure, to style or mode of expression. As Deleuze and Guattari make clear, this observation applies just as much to criticism as to literary production. When we read texts as signifying structures, we implicitly repeat and affirm the oedipal neurosis we so often discover within them. When we understand texts in terms of 'aesthetic molar formations that are characterised by goals, schools, and periods' and relate these formations to 'greater social aggregates' we 'enslave art to a great castrating machine of sovereignty' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 404). We effectively 'oedipalise' texts in the moment of our encounter with them, delimiting their ability to effect alternative schizoid processes, and our ability to enter into a shared relationship with those processes. If we ignore this radical implication of schizoanalysis, reducing it to just 'one approach among others in a pluralism of critical styles and methodologies' (Lambert 2000: 136) we thus run the risk of overlooking or neutralising those qualities which make it so distinctive and important.

How, then, *should* schizoanalysis be integrated into the field of Gothic criticism? There can be no single answer to this question. As I argued in my introduction, the concepts and methods of schizoanalysis themselves do not imply a single clear 'manifesto' for how this dynamic should be enacted. This is not least because, if we are to uncover the schizoid dimensions of any given text, we must approach that text as a unique entity, creating its own immanent 'conditions' for schizoid writing. Generalised formulations which depend upon 'constants' external to texts themselves are by extension majoritarian, 'invoking a transcendental function' which defines in advance what those texts can do and how they do it (Lambert 2000: 140). Consequently, they cannot account for this process. Instead, we must understand schizoanalysis as offering a 'tool box' of critical possibilities; what Deleuze might term a 'programme' rather than a manifesto, a 'means of providing reference points for an experiment which exceeds our capacities to foresee' (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 37). In this sense, my thesis is designed to offer a programme for navigating the zones of schizoid transformation within the Gothic mode: I have offered some initial reference points, and have used these to explore the work of two writers who exemplify them. This in turn suggests ways in which further schizoanalytic readings of the mode might proceed.

Inevitably, no programme of this kind can be final or definitive. The approach I have developed here illustrates my own application of some of the tools of schizoanalysis, and is exemplified through the work of authors particularly suggestive of the mechanisms which I have described. As indicated in Chapter One, the question of whether a given work 'works' for the reader depends upon 'the work, the reader, and the manner of their encounter' (Baugh 2000: 52). That is, while being partly a quality of the work itself, it depends also upon reading schizoanalytically, and upon the 'forces and resources' which each reader brings to the encounter (Baugh 2000: 54). Thus, we cannot predict in advance the outcome of any particular reading-encounter for any given reader, or which texts will 'work' for different readers. Moreover, it is important that we should not try to do so, if we are to avoid the risk of creating formulations which are transcendental rather than deriving immanently from each text.

As Baugh observes, Deleuze tends to assume that 'certain works will have the same effect on everyone,' even though this approach appears to be 'profoundly at odds with his basic ontology' (Baugh 2000: 53). As we have seen the Deleuzio-Guattarian account of perception lays emphasis on the singularity of perception, in which the virtual predicates possible within any given situation are actualised variously and unpredictably in relation to the desires of the perceiver. Yet, in his encounters with literature, Deleuze tends to place almost exclusive emphasis on overtly experimental modernist works. As Powell suggests, this may be partly reflective of a 'bourgeois' prejudice which leads him to consistently derogate most examples of popular or 'mass' culture (2005: 6). On the other hand, Deleuze does appear to recognise a greater flexibility in this process when he asserts that, above all, we must simply ask whether and how a given text works for us: 'if it doesn't work, if nothing comes through, try another' (1995: 8). This leaves open the possibility that we can form a schizoanalytic relationship with aesthetic material other than that typically valorised by Deleuze. One of the reasons that I have concentrated on reading the Gothic mode in terms of the schizoid rather than minority is that this allows us to more easily focus on individual zones of effect within a given text, rather than being drawn into questions of whether a text 'is' or 'isn't' minor as a whole work.

This possibility, though, must be approached with caution. Although we cannot determine in advance which texts will carry a schizoid charge for a particular reader, this should not necessarily be taken as implying that all texts are 'equal' in their value as machines capable of producing schizoid effects. 'We will learn nothing of what the work can do,' Baugh suggests, 'if we attribute to it powers it does not have' (2000: 45). We may question Deleuze and Guattari's modernist predilections. Nonetheless, we must still take seriously their distinction between writing which is designed to create a cohesive, finished 'commodity' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 405), saleable because it speaks to cohesive, finished subjects, and the work of writers such as Artaud, Kafka, Lovecraft and Burroughs, who engage in the process of artistic production as an experimental quest. That is, we must acknowledge that not all work is equally 'explosive' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 146). To do otherwise is to do a disservice to the writer 'who returns from what he has seen and heard with bloodshot eyes and pierced eardrums' (Deleuze 1997: 3). In practice, this distinction may never be absolute, but it nonetheless provides us with a significant orienting criterion in our



own approach to reading. In reading evaluatively, we must acknowledge that some texts achieve greater breakthroughs of the 'schizophrenic wall' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 147) than others, regardless of how we read them and what we bring to the encounter.

In forming such determinations, though, it remains clear that no work can be viewed as wholly neurotic or schizoid, wholly oedipal or anti-oedipal. There are always degrees of oscillation. As Baugh notes, 'a text [...] can produce a vast number of effects,' so we must be 'selective, and focus on those effects which matter to us' (2000: 41). As I have argued, the most useful way to apply schizoanalysis to the Gothic mode as a whole, rather than exclusively to individual texts, is to chart the relations between these effects as they appear across the different works constituting the mode. While I have identified how some characteristic features of Gothic writing may be understood as subtending schizoid transformations of desire, reading the Gothic schizoanalytically must thus be seen as an ongoing experiment, with outcomes which remain unpredictable. Nevertheless, I contend that the identification and deployment of schizoid potentialities within Gothic fiction represents a critical dynamic which is important both for understanding the mode as a whole, and for grasping the new directions and imperatives which are emerging for the Gothic in the current milieu.

## 2. Lovecraft and Burroughs: a Schizo-Gothic trajectory

To demonstrate these possibilities, I began my thesis by identifying areas within Gothic fiction in which it is possible to discern processes of schizoid subjectivity which escape the oedipal, paranoid tendencies often associated with the mode. I then explored the different ways in which these processes are exemplified in the work of Lovecraft and Burroughs, revealing a continuum of schizoid effect particular to the Gothic mode: a Schizo-Gothic.

As I have noted in each of my respective analyses, the Gothic 'status' of these two writers does not lie in their adherence to established qualities of Gothic writing. Rather, it is to be found in the way their work discloses 'hidden forces of difference'

(Colebrook 2002: 120) in the relationship between narrative textuality and egoic fragmentation particular to Gothic writing. Extending this process, they work to replace unity (of being) and linearity (of time) with schizoid disjuncture, forming new becomings or desiring connections from the linguistic and narrative interstices which result. Working in this way, they reveal the revolutionary potential of the Gothic mode at a technical and formal level, rather than in terms of the personal and socio-political concerns often considered thematically central to the Gothic. Rather than anxiously attempting to restore and resolve disintegrating subjectivity, such disintegration serves in their work to liberate new flows of desire. As such, their work must be viewed as 'Gothic' according to an understanding of what Gothic writing *can do*, not what it *means*.

At the same time, I have stressed that important differences exist in the transformative effect with which each author deploys fantastical, spatio-temporally distorted structures and horrific imagery. To clarify the terms of this progression, it is useful to stress once again that works of supernatural fantasy accede to a schizoid vocation only to the extent that they obscure or 'falsify' the division between reality and unreality. When the organic presuppositions and imaginative excesses of fantasy mutate into a crystalline order, they subtend lines of flight with the power to disrupt molar perception.

Lovecraft's work originates from the milieu of Gothic and supernatural horror. It must be acknowledged that those of his tales which produce the most fully-realised examples of schizoid writing are distinct from the mass of earlier work in that milieu. Yet this distinction stems as much from a cumulative and gradual refinement of tendencies already present within supernatural horror as from a sudden, qualitative shift. By repeating the forces of difference within Gothic writing, Lovecraft actualises virtual potentialities within characteristic features of the mode. In reading his work, our sense of those features is changed, alerting us to nuances and virtual forces within them which would otherwise remain undetected.

As articulated in Chapter Two, though, Lovecraft's approach is experimental and uncertain. From a Deleuzio-Guattarian viewpoint, he detects and extends schizophrenising possibilities within the Gothic, but never fully escapes the oedipal

forces which also hedge it. In his work, he wrestles with, and at times transcends, the limitations of both genre and language; he offers us intense thresholds of transformation and momentary, luminous becomings. Yet the sensitive minor voice he discovers is all too easily recuperated into a larval fascism, isolating him from the chance to become in concert with other multiplicities, other minorities. Unable to truly relinquish the majoritarian tensions which attend his visions, he fails to realise the narrative possibilities they portend. Consequently, fantasy often continues to serve as a projection of unfulfilled wishes and anxieties in his work, while horror still sometimes represents his abjection of racial and cultural otherness.

As noted in Chapter Two, this stopping-point in Lovecraft's literary exploration can be understood as the starting-point of Burroughs' own exploration of crystalline becoming in *Cities of the Red Night*. To use an analogy from *The Place of Dead Roads*, if Lovecraft is like a water creature reaching out towards the land, without knowing how to live in that medium (1987: 43), Burroughs' project is precisely directed towards discovering modes of subjectivity which can allow us to escape time and live in space, 'the zone of unbound potentialities' (Cru 2004: 282). Burroughs not only understands that 'there are basic changes involved in space travel' (1987: 44), but attempts to equip us for such change through the altered subjective states produced through his subversive deformation of narrative order. He offers us a narrative without the reference points that would proceed from cohesive subjectivity, in which beings and perceptions flow into and distort one another in accordance with movements of desire. In this way, Burroughs shows us the further destination of the fantastical subversions of spatio-temporally confined human experience hinted at in Lovecraft's work. Through reference to Burroughs' writing, the direction or orientation inherent to Lovecraft's work is rendered clear. At the same time, we can see more clearly the literary-schizoid progression which Lovecraft leaves unfulfilled. Lovecraft reveals the pathway between fantasy and the crystalline; in his *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy Burroughs walks that path.

A similar trajectory can be observed in these authors' respective treatment of horror. As has frequently been argued within the field of Gothic studies, horror can serve as a means of rehearsing and mastering anxieties about that which threatens to disrupt egoic cohesion. It can be used to abject anything which compromises the hermetic

border between human and inhuman, world and perceiving ego, inner and outer. In Deleuzian terms, as I have shown, such cohesion and unity is itself a delusion imposed after the facts of collective and prepersonal desire. As such, literary treatments of horror can be seen as a force for majoritarian control, serving to ward off irruptions of schizoid, minoritarian perception. Yet both Lovecraft and Burroughs discern within horrific affect a potential force for deterritorialisation. For both, it is precisely through the encounter with that which most horrifies us that we can attain perceptions which escape the habitual conditions of molar thought.

This process is inevitably complex, attended by nuances and associations which resist neat formulation. Since the source of horror must be understood as that which threatens majoritarian human boundaries, its affective force continues to be derived from majoritarian anxiety. If such anxiety were to be altogether abandoned, the affective force upon which horror depends for its deterritorialising effect would be lost. Although comparable in some respects, the respective treatment of horror in the work of Lovecraft and Burroughs differs in terms of how this continued anxiety feeds into a transformative dynamic. While Lovecraft employs horror for purposes which go beyond mastery and abjection, he remains closely affiliated to the *ressentiment* and racist abjection which underlie that horror. His use of horror produces movements away from normative perception; brief moments in which the codes of neurotic signification are scrambled and flows of desire allowed to circulate (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 144). Yet ultimately, his writing turns back to signification and the neurotic impasse, never fully realising the transformative implications of these movements. Although I have stressed that Lovecraft does not employ horror *merely* as an end in itself, he nonetheless remains attached to it as pure sensation. While he uses that sensation in the service of producing objective illusions, he rarely questions the forces from which it originates.

The limits of Lovecraft's use of horror as a schizophrenising force are thrown into relief when contrasted with the treatment of horror in Burroughs' late trilogy. Lovecraft's engagement with horror is inevitably, to a certain extent, political. By seeking ways to challenge the limits of human perception, he offers an implicit challenge to the sovereignty of the white molar male as a perceptual standard. Yet the deeper political implications of horror – the reasons *why* we fear egoic

transformation, and the political interests which that fear serves - remain unexamined. In psychoanalytic terms, this fear would be viewed as merely human; a natural, universal response to that which endangers the self. Yet, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, this egoic, oedipal selfhood is anything but natural and universal. Rather, it is a production of the capitalist *socius* formed in order to curtail the innately schizophrenising effects of decoding and axiomatisation.

Echoing this approach, in his *Cities of the Red Night* trilogy Burroughs presents fear as a central mechanism for maintaining human subjectivity within the forms ascribed by the control society of late capitalism. To disrupt these formations, in order to produce new senses of subjectivity, Burroughs thus views it as necessary to contest the conditioning effects of fear. Like Lovecraft, Burroughs draws frequently upon the affective intensity of horror in order to overload normative patterns of thought and experience regarding the nature of the self. At the same time, though, Burroughs remains always conscious that this sensory overload must take us towards a freedom from fear, and a comprehensive deconstruction of neurotic subjectivity. Like Lovecraft, he engages with horror as pure sensation, but unlike Lovecraft, he does not remain attached to that engagement, seeing it as merely a 'cog in an extra-textual practice' (Deleuze in Smith 1997: xvi).

In Burroughs' late trilogy, horror derives less from encounters with otherness and minority than from the threat of egoic destruction implicit to temporal mortality itself. In *The Western Lands*, he argues that responding to the fearful conditions of life with either 'frozen disgust' or 'prurient fixation' is equally fatal, 'two sides of the same counterfeit coin' (Burroughs 1988: 155). Rather, we must 'achieve a gentle and precise detachment' (Burroughs 1988: 155). In Lovecraft's writing, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between disgust and prurience, but some amalgam of the two undoubtedly retains considerable sway over his responses. If it is never clear that Burroughs fully achieves the 'precise detachment' to which he aspires, this can nevertheless be seen as an underlying aim of his work. Thus, while Lovecraft continues to be fascinated with the *experience* of horror, Burroughs' approach demands an ultimate break from such attachment. In particular, Burroughs stresses that horror itself, while a real force in human experience, is not internally derived, but rather issues from the forces of control. By following the direction in which

Burroughs' writing takes us, it is thus we who ultimately become objects of horror to those who retain a commitment to majoritarian, oedipal models of subjectivity.

In summation, Lovecraft's closer and more obvious adherence to the techniques and imagery of the 'original' Gothic texts throws into clear relief the nascent schizoid possibilities contained therein. He offers us a vivid picture of how fantasy can elide into crystalline, impossible subversions of egoic experience, revealing the prepersonal multiplicity of desire and the nature of time as a force of difference and becoming. Horror in his work operates as an adjunct to this process, facilitating objective illusions which ontologically undermine organic representation in favour of a crystalline image-regime. As I stressed in Chapter Two, these effects can be viewed as refinements of the affective terrain of Gothic fiction, and the imagery and stylistic techniques underpinning it. In this way, his work actualises the virtual power of Gothic fantasy and horror to produce a schizoid rearrangement of the organised self, liberating new forces of desire and becoming. His experiments are ultimately compromised by a persistent attachment to fantasy's superegoic structurations, constantly drawing his work back to the Gothic conventionality he sought to transcend. Nonetheless, his fleeting achievements sensitise us to the anti-oedipal potential which traverses the reactionary surface of the mode, allowing us more readily to perceive a line of connection between that mode and Burroughs' later work.

The paranoia, abject imagery and nightmarish excess in Burroughs' late trilogy can be understood as an essentially Gothic expression of the tensions between individual internality and ideologically-construed subjectivity. As I have argued, though, Burroughs does not merely repeat this established template of Gothic reaction, but points us to new realms of Gothic possibility, in which the formal operations of the mode subserve an acceleration of the subjective *schiz*. Here, Lovecraft's tentative derivations of crystalline time-imagery from the spatio-temporal subversions of Gothic fantasy extend into a wholesale assault on the fabric of the capitalist subject. Burroughs' deconstruction and politicisation of linear time unfolds in concert with an instrumental disruption of narrative form. The resultant literary medium serves not merely to signal the dissolution of the self, or even to actively effectuate such dissolution, but to promote the forging of new, prepersonal lines of

becoming. The anxieties and fears which inevitably hedge this process closely resemble those familiar within the Gothic mode. Here, though, they are re-cast as ideological mechanisms of control which must be assimilated into the subjective transformations at stake in Burroughs's work. Like Deleuze, Burroughs rejects the assumed psychic universality of these fears, identifying them as impositions of a control society eager to ensure the continuity of its 'reality film'.

Of course, rationalising them in this way does not automatically rob them of their power to induce neurotic recapitulation. Their psychic reality cannot be ignored or denied. Instead, repetitive, direct and ultimately overwhelming encounters with abject horror throughout Burroughs' texts serve to release a deterritorialising energy. The direct encounter with that which polices the boundaries of selfhood becomes the very thing that destroys the self. This in turn allows the birth of new beings of sensation, which are by their very nature revolutionary interventions in the politics of subjectivity. This virtual, innate political momentum within Gothic horror and fantasy is first detectable in Lovecraft's short fiction. In Burroughs' late trilogy the innate ethical and political force of the Schizo-Gothic is revealed.

In this way, I propose that a progressive line of deterritorialisation can be traced between Lovecraft and Burroughs, taking us from the recognisably 'oedipal' structures of the Gothic to the 'schizoid' disruptions evinced most vividly in Burroughs' work. This line can help us to understand the work of both authors in terms of a succession of experimental deployments of language, syntax and style aimed at the generation of modes of subjectivity which escape the determinations of the prevailing capitalist *socius*. These experiments in turn serve to exemplify more generally how key features of the Gothic mode carry within them a charge of schizophrenic desire which can be most effectively brought to life through a schizoanalytic methodology of reading.

In one sense, these experiments 'never cease failing' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 144). As Deleuze argues, the line of flight is always an 'ambiguous operation' since in the case of any particular author it is so often brought to an end in the form of a 'rediscovery' of everything from which that author was fleeing (2006: 29). I have illustrated this tendency at work in Lovecraft's short fiction. It is less evident in

Burroughs' late trilogy, but there is certainly a reticence about Burroughs' conclusions there, a sense that despite having 'blown a hole in time' for others to step through, he himself remains 'bound to the past' (1982: 286). This is why, Deleuze notes, the line 'jumps from one writer to another,' and what is interesting 'is never the beginning or the end' but 'the middle' (2006: 29). In the same way, the destiny of Schizo-Gothic subjectivity itself can best be understood, not in terms of any fixed point of origin or ultimate realisation, but as a line which exists only in the middle, flowing through 'the impasses and the triangles' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 144) characteristic of Gothic writing. It does not begin with Lovecraft or end with Burroughs; rather, by revealing this flow in its schizoid orientation, and in all its oscillations and failures, their work allows us to discern it as a wider process running across the Gothic mode.

### 3. The Schizo-Gothic imperative in late capitalism

In closing, I wish to consider why a schizoanalytic perspective on Gothic fiction is so important for understanding and facilitating the mode's ongoing cultural relevance. This is best achieved by contrasting the conceptual possibilities of the Schizo-Gothic with a recent, psychoanalytically-inflected analysis of the place of Gothic within contemporary culture offered by Fred Botting (2008).

Here, Botting argues that the mode, only ever valuable as a modernist formation, has been left redundant by the late capitalist proliferation of postmodernity (2008: 26). In earlier times, he suggests, through its 'destruction of threatening, unsanctioned otherness' it 'allowed cultural anxieties [...] to be expunged and limits and values to be pleasurably reasserted' (Botting 2008: 26). With the onset of postmodernism, though, and the growing dominance of technology, this 'conservative or restorative function' can no longer be maintained (Botting 2008: 26). This is because postmodernity's disruption of the symbolic narratives of modernity has eroded the purchase of paternal authority (Botting 2008: 26), supplanting it with 'a machinic imperative that expectorates, technically and affectively, humanity' (Botting 2008: 175). Without the symbolic framework provided by an 'authoritative figure, metanarrative, or unifying institution' (2008: 61), Botting argues, there is



nothing to 'direct, suppress, exclude and prohibit' the transgressive flows of desire within Gothic fictions (2008: 38). As a result, what passes for Gothic now, 'cyber' or 'postmodern' Gothic, is not Gothic at all, but simply a complicit, 'highly marketable' (Botting 2008: 29) reflection of 'free-floating capitalism' (Botting 2008: 28).

Botting's analysis highlights the difficulties of encompassing current forms of Gothic production within the parameters of a primarily psychoanalytic conception of the mode. In some ways, his arguments resemble those of Fredric Jameson, whose critique of postmodernity turns upon its complicity in the process whereby aesthetic production is 'integrated into commodity production' and thus relinquishes the possibility of critique (1991: 4). As Jameson notes, the 'offensive features' of postmodernism 'no longer scandalise anyone and are not only received with the greatest complacency but [...] are at one with the official [...] culture of Western society' (1991: 4). Botting applies a similar argument to the Gothic, asserting that the horror he views as central to it, that which 'returns upon the present from a past to reveal guilty secrets' (2008: 176), is 'exhausted of any strong charge' (2008: 184). For Botting, since postmodern times are characterised by an ahistorical, nostalgic relationship to the past, the fundamental dynamic of the Gothic has become meaningless. Through a 'temporal shift' (Botting, 2008: 184), which can be broadly aligned with the end of history, the future 'has collapsed on an indifferent present' (Botting 2008: 14), so that Gothic horror can now reflect nothing but 'a terrifyingly prospective gaze, a blank staring ahead' (Botting 2008: 217).

From a psychoanalytic perspective, it is certainly possible to understand society, and the Gothic itself, in these terms. Schizoanalysis, though, offers us a different view. Botting's perspective reflects Deleuze and Guattari's characterisation of capitalism as the 'nightmare' of earlier social formations, 'the dread they feel of a flow that would elude their codes' (2004: 154). Botting understands the economic and technological machinery of capitalism as engendering such a flow, but for him this is flow is 'difficult to countenance or bear' (2008: 83), since it equates simply to 'psychosis' (2008: 26) or 'desire deregulated' (2008: 38). Moreover, it leaves no place for a Gothic understood exclusively in terms of the transgression and sublime restoration of codes, 'as if all was not already gone [...] game over' (Botting 2008: 217). By contrast, schizoanalysis shows us that it was only with the onset of

capitalism that the game *began*. As Deleuze notes, 'one thing we reject is all talk of a conflict between man and machine, of men being alienated by machines' (1995: 19). Rather than viewing the machinic as threatening, schizoanalysis affirms that desire itself is machinic, 'everywhere *it* is machines' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 1). Thus, Deleuze argues, 'people's interest will never turn in favour of revolution until lines of desire reach the point where desire and machine become indistinguishable' (1995: 19). What psychoanalysis presents as a nightmare, schizoanalysis views as both an opportunity and a challenge. As I have argued in my thesis, both dimensions of response have always been present, ambiguously and uneasily entangled, in the Gothic mode.

As I have shown, although it may be 'psychotic' the schizoanalytic position in no way 'aligns [...] with the values of free-floating capitalism' (Botting 2008: 28). To the contrary, it involves viewing the capitalist *socius* as a machine which actively works to stave off its own schizophrenic limit for the purposes of social control. Because the role of patriarchal authority as a guarantor of symbolic structures appears to have been eroded, Botting claims that humanity has become 'post-oedipal' (Botting 2008: 45) to the extent that control and repression are now impossible (Botting 2008: 37). This is to assume, though, that the oedipal configuration was ever a natural, universal phenomenon rather than always having been itself an artificially-revived mechanism conceived by psychoanalysis to 'evade' its own schizophrenic limit (Deleuze 1995:19). To the contrary, schizoanalysis understands capitalism as working always to create new archaisms 'where it has destroyed the old ones' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 283). Capitalism has presided over 'the withdrawal of the overseeing and overcoding object from on high,' but only so as to reinstate the Oedipus at the level of 'a social field of immanence where the decoded flows produce images and level them down' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 290). Here, the Oedipus lives on at the level of atomised subjects, functioning no longer through the structures of a disciplinary society, but at a dispersed 'dividual' (Deleuze 1995: 180) level of control, replacing triangles with triangulations (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 59).

From a schizoanalytic perspective, arguments such as Botting's subtend an oedipalising agenda, even if shaped by anxiety at the perceived failure of

oedipalisation. They can only contribute to feeding the negativity and paranoia which the state requires in order to counteract its own incipient schizophrenic flows with revived oedipal anxieties: 'the established powers need our sadness to make us slaves' (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 46). By contrast, Deleuze argues, 'it's not a question of worrying [...] but of finding new weapons' (1995: 178). In this regard, the task of schizoanalysis is that of 'establishing always further and more sharply the schizzes and the breaks well below conditions of identity; and assembling the desiring-machines that countersect everyone and group everyone with others' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 396). Schizoanalysis certainly recognises the postmodern tendency towards a simulacral 'realm of incessant metonymic associations without a presiding, unifying or organising metaphor' (Botting 2008: 25). However, it seeks to push that simulacrum 'to the point where it ceases to be the image of an image, so as to discover the abstract figures, the schizzes-flows that it harbours and conceals' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 294). In this regard, schizoanalysis is vital to understanding the ongoing role and importance of Gothic fiction and criticism.

If, with Botting, we read the Gothic exclusively as signifying the transgression and restoration of patriarchal boundaries, then we might understand the mode as obviated within a social context where post-human, machinic desire has supplanted patriarchal values. As I have argued though, such exclusivity overlooks the presence of other forces at work in the Gothic mode – forces which cannot be reduced to a simple dialectic of modernist positivity and postmodern capitulation. While Alex Link (2009) and other scholars have already highlighted the common ground shared by postmodernism and the Gothic from its inception, I would argue that this is not the most crucial question to pursue in conjunction with the idea of Schizo-Gothic. Instead, a more useful approach is suggested by Murphy's notion of 'amodernism,' (1997: 2) which, like postmodernism, 'accepts the failure of modernist ends [...] and means' but does not imply a 'homogenizing [of] all remaining difference' or a 'disavowal of mass politics' (1997: 2). Instead, it produces 'peripheral totalizations' which are 'real without being either stable or necessary' and 'function as strategic or heuristic tools for the constitution of new forms of collectivity' (1997: 37). For Murphy, one such peripheral totalization is the revolutionary model of schizophrenia advanced by Deleuze and Guattari, which 'seeks to push the flows that capitalism

tries to manage to the point at which they overflow and make the extraction of profit and the exercise of control impossible' (1997: 38).

Murphy's model of amodernism is elaborated through his Deleuzio-Guattarian reading of the work of Burroughs, and it provides a useful way to situate the idea of Schizo-Gothic within debates regarding the modernism and postmodernism of the Gothic mode. As Murphy stresses, 'amodernist literature does not come *after* reflexive postmodernism, but contests it throughout the contemporary period' (1997: 3). In the same way, it can be argued that a schizoid, amodernist strand has been present throughout the development of the Gothic mode. This idea raises the possibility of further scholarly investigation into the viability of Murphy's 'heterogeneous third term' (1997: 2) as an alternative point of orientation for understanding earlier Gothic periods. Additionally, it can allow us to better understand how the Gothic mode should be situated with regard to the conflictive synthesis of axiomatic commodification, recuperation and schizophrenia governing aesthetic production in the current context. Rather than viewing the Gothic as a once-valuable modernist enterprise now lost to self-reflexive flows of commodified aesthetic production, it allows us to consider the mode as having always offered an alternative avenue for resistance to capitalist subject-states, irreducible to the discourse of modernist critique.

Botting's arguments demonstrate the unsuitability of a psychoanalytic approach for grasping the movements of capitalism, since it begins with the familial as a point of orientation, rather than viewing the family (as it functions in the capitalist *socius*) as itself a construction of capitalism. Reproducing the psychoanalytic assumption that oedipal subjectivity is a natural, inevitable, and ultimately necessary condition, his views reflect the complicity of psychoanalysis in the subjectivising force of capitalism, even as they overtly criticise the transformations which capitalism produces. Clearly intended to provoke, his views do not, of course, represent the only possible response to the question of the Gothic's ongoing role as viewed from the perspective of psychoanalysis. They do, though, present a useful counterpoint to the alternative possibilities for approaching the Gothic made available through schizoanalysis, offering a psychoanalytic destiny of the Gothic subject which leaves the mode no further scope for social engagement.

By contrast, schizoanalysis shows us that the Gothic, as both a mode in itself and within those other genres and modes into which it is spliced, remains a vital avenue for contesting the dispersed, dividualised proliferation of oedipal subjectivity in late capitalist society. It illuminates a hidden, repressed schizoid force at work in Gothic fiction which reflects the incipient schizophrenia of capitalism; an objective tendency towards the fragmentation of the oedipal subjects so often *represented* in the Gothic, which itself eludes representation. It can be argued that this Schizo-Gothic dynamic should not be described as Gothic at all. Beyond questions of etymology, though, I have contended that this force does not exist *despite* the apparent abjection of uncanny fears in the mode, but is precisely shaped and facilitated by those fears, which can now be understood as the reverse side of a schizoid impetus. If schizoanalysis has a positive role to play within Gothic criticism, it is to promote and intensify these alternative tendencies, to lend strength to producers and to sharpen and sensitise us as receivers. It can help us to activate the schizoid destiny of Gothic subjectivity, an 'objective chance' brought to life only when connected outwards to other images, other moments. If grasped, this chance can release the new weapons which Gothic fiction offers us, leading us towards the empowerment experienced by Kim in *The Place of Dead Roads*: 'he was under no pressure to maintain the perimeters of a defensive ego and this left him free to *think*' (Burroughs 1987: 105).

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