

Posthumous/ Posthuman: Reexamining the Gothic Corpse in Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Body Snatcher" and Arthur Machen's "The Inmost Light"

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Abstract— *This article examines the gothicness of the corpse as a liminal and posthuman figure in Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Body Snatcher" and Arthur Machen's "The Inmost Light." Situating these texts within the anatomical culture of the late nineteenth century, this study investigates how the posthumous body destabilizes conventional distinctions between human and nonhuman, life and death, and self and matter. Drawing on critical posthumanism and Gothic studies, the article argues that the corpse functions as an "abhuman" entity whose materiality exposes the instability of the humanist subject. Stevenson's tale mobilizes the uncanny return of the dissected body to expose the contingent nature of human identity while Machen's story interrogates contemporary theories of cerebral localization to challenge the presumed relationship between consciousness and bodily identity. By reading the corpse as a site of posthuman critique, the article demonstrates that fin-de-siècle Gothic fiction anticipates some of the contemporary debates on materiality, embodiment, and the limits of human exceptionalism.*



Keywords— *gothic, corpse, posthuman, 19th century anatomical culture, the uncanny*

I. INTRODUCTION

The posthumous body or, simply put, the corpse, plays a key role in both the short stories examined in this article. It is dissected as an anatomical subject by the medical students in Stevenson's "The Body Snatcher" and as a forensic subject in Machen's "The Inmost Light". While these two stories share in common, in their representation of the human corpse, a deeply entrenched sense of doubt and uneasiness regarding the status of the corpse as "human", how this sense of doubt and uneasiness is registered is what makes these stories significantly differ from each other. Moreover, they foreground, in their own unique ways, a culturally dominant image of the human that is fundamentally incompatible with the posthumous state of the body. For example, as the dissected and dismembered body of Gray, at the end of "The Body Snatcher", is mysteriously restored to the corporal integrity of his former human self, one realizes that it was not simply his dying but the mutilation of his physical form which had robbed Gray

of his humanity. The source of terror here is a particular interpretation of the notion of "uncanny": what should have appeared alien (in this case inhuman) appears perfectly familiar (human). A similar logic informs Machen's "The Inmost Light" where the coroner, after examining the dead body of Mrs. Black, comes to his own personal conclusion that the brain of the corpse could not have belonged to a human being at all. What strikes the reader most while going through the coroner's account of the autopsy is his extreme reluctance to identify the body that he examined as human. It seems, for him, to be acknowledged as human is to be something more than a mere body. But since he does not know about Dr. Black's experiment, this so-called "something" ultimately eludes his understanding. Interestingly, in both the stories, the corpse obstinately clings to its humanity, forcing the reader to confront the inextinguishable corporality of being human. In Machen's tale, the crux of being human is located not in the corporal frame itself, but in the enigmatic zone of soul or

consciousness where questions of will and moral agency find their ultimate meaning. While the mind or the consciousness is shown to be capable, at least temporarily, of existing independently of the body (Dr. Black succeeds in extracting his wife's soul from her body), human life is portrayed as being essentially a sacred covenant between the soul and the body, to be unbroken until death, and once broken, the body, without the "inmost light" to guide it, is judged as simply unworthy of the epithet "human". Thus, the corpse is perceived in its stark, unapologetic materiality as something fundamentally subversive, polymorphous and inhuman.

II. POSTHUMOUS/ POSTHUMAN

The posthumous, as Erin E. Edwards puts it in the "Introduction" to her book, *The Modernist Corpse: Posthumanism and the Posthumous*, is "literally posthuman in that it follows human life", but also, and more importantly, because the corpse unravels "the exclusionary category of the humanist subject" and even leads to "a reconceptualization of what counts as life". (3) Such a reconceptualization also foregrounds the subject of humanist discourses not as a "bounded entity", but as "constituted through productive exchanges and transfers with the nonhuman". (Edwards 5) Far from being something that lacks all forms of agency, the corpse is, quite ironically, vital to the organization of our world, through both its material presence in the environment and its role in shaping the notion of the human through cultural discourses. While the human corpse is still "human" to the extent its anatomical and physiological characteristics tether it loosely to a specific species, historically, it has always signified, in various cultural imaginings, something either more or less than human. But the corpse can be better understood as a radically different mode of existence rather than through the simple but equivocal distinction between vitalism and mortalism. (Edwards 8)

The body, living or dead, is, in Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology, a machinic assemblage of both molar and molecular multiplicities (Deleuze and Guattari 34), a rhizomatic network of both lines of stratification and lines of flight, molar segmentarity and molecular deterritorialisation, capable of freely distributing the endless flow of intensities. There is, however, no binary opposition between the molar and the molecular (34). They simply occupy different layers of organization. There is, similarly, no fundamental distinction between living and dying as both are just ways of articulating two different modes of becoming. The corpse is a "body without organs" which is not "a dead body but a living body all the more alive and teeming once it has blown apart the organism and

its organization." (30) Thus, while the living body, which has historically served as the model for the classical image of Man, seems to be aligned, when seen through anthropocentric lens, to the idea of a single organism, that is, an organization of organs, of molar aggregates, of structures, strata or territorialisation, the corpse embraces its molecular multiplicities distributed according to crowd phenomena (30) or as deterritorialized intensities (33). The corpse is an essentially nomadic and rhizomatic entity that subverts the hierarchical ordering of the human and the nonhuman, the living and the inert, or the mind and the matter.

Rosi Braidotti, in her seminal book, *The Posthuman*, argues that death is not a human prerogative (130) but a manifestation of *zoe* which is "a posthuman yet affirmative life-force" (115) active in all things human and nonhuman. Nor is it a final event or a teleological destination (133). While life as *zoe* already incorporates what we know as death (134), it also blurs any perceived distinction between living and dying. (115) The vital and self-organizing powers of *zoe* continue working even after the so-called "dissolution of the subject" (136). Death brings about the disintegration of the so-called "atomized, individual self" and heralds the moment of the subject's "merging with the web of non-human forces that frame him/her, the cosmos as a whole" (136). We fear death because it stands for "the unrepresentable, the unthinkable, and the unproductive black hole" marking the limits of all rational/empirical discourses about it. Death pertains to "the inhuman within us, which frees us into life" (134) even as it returns us to what we have always been: "a virtual corpse." (136)

If the corpse does indeed anchor us to the inhuman within us, it also ties us to everything inhuman around us and plugs us into the material oneness of all that exists. It calls into question the very idea of human exceptionalism on which all our anthropocentric ideas and values rest, and, thus, critiques the very ontological category of the "human" enshrined in history with all its metaphysical glory.

III. THE ANATOMY OF BIOPOLITICS

The present day biopolitical and necropolitical forces which have turned the body of both the living and the deceased into an intensely contested zone- a site where biopower is produced and exercised in tandem-did actually emerge, as traced by Foucault in a number of his writings, around the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century when institutions of power started monitoring the biological processes of a population like birth, reproduction, disease and death. (Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* 106-8) This moment in western

history when politics became biopolitics coincided, not at all by chance, with the development of a forensic/anatomical gaze that opened up the secrets of the corpse to the living light of "truth" and "knowledge" and with the proliferation of various medico-legal discourses about what should or should not be called the normative human body. In fact, if we are to follow Foucault's genealogy of modern clinical science in his *The Birth of the Clinic*, it was through the anatomical culture of the post-Enlightenment West that the Western Man constituted himself as a subject of purely discursive existence while his dissected corpse was subjected to erasure. (197)

In any case, a simple binary of life and death which might have contributed to the consolidation of the traditional constructs of humanness in the West had already sustained considerable damage by the late nineteenth century. In this same work, Foucault discusses at length about the difficulties faced by the anatomists in the early years of the nineteenth century in distinguishing in the corpse of a patient the visible effects of decomposition from similar effects of the disease itself. (Foucault, *Birth* 134) If the living body of the patient and its corpse display, at a visceral level, almost identical tissual formations and deformations, it is because organic matter behaves in the same way before and after the so-called death of the organism. Furthermore, medical science was suddenly confronted with the fact that the distinction between life and inorganic matter is but superficial from an anatomical point of view. (155) So, what was at stake was not a simple case of medical knowledge needing refinement or readjustment, but an epistemic change in the way death was to be perceived. Death had lost its metaphysical grip over the living, but it gained a new centrality in the process of understanding the pathological nature of life. (144) On the one hand, death allowed the anatomist to have valuable insights into the pathological forms of life. On the other hand, life could only be fully understood when turned into corpse.

IV. THE GOTHIC CORPSE

The gothic body is a recalcitrant body: a body that obstinately resists erasure. The gothic of the corpse lies in the manner it exceeds the frames of its own representation or exhausts the parameters of its own rationalization. The corpse is gothic to the extent it is a liminal entity perversely traversing the borders of the living and the non-living, the human and the non-human, or the organic and the inorganic. The gothic corpse is a deviant entity, both as a host to multiple heterogenous lives-pathological, sexual or racial (Halberstam 3-4) and as a witness to its own divergent, material future.

The gothicization of the corpse is tied, to a large extent, to its "abhuman" status. The "abhuman", according to Kelly Hurley, is "a not-quite-human subject, characterized by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming-not-itself, becoming other." (4) The "abhuman", paradoxically, reaffirms the "fully human" identity to which it is opposed. (Hurley 25) It also exposes humanness as a merely discursive construct or a provisional category always in danger of being threatened. (28) The "abhuman" thus points to the body's "loss of human specificity": to becoming matter that is no longer obedient to its designated form, to the "Thing-ness" of undifferentiated matter. (30-32) The "abhuman" aspects of the corpse is evident in the way the corpse is barely recognizable as human, the way it morphs and disintegrates through decomposition or is fragmented and defamiliarized through dissection, the way it is disposed of and erased as a "Thing", and most importantly, the way it is treated as an empty shell devoid of any essence.

As the cadaver undergoes decomposition or dissection, it is increasingly alienated from the so-called ideal model of human physique ensconced in western iconography since Da Vinci's "Vitruvian Man". The fragmentation of the corpse at once challenges the very idea of the body as a system of symmetry and coherence and tests the limits of anatomical reconstruction. Thus, the anatomical culture of the nineteenth century was responsible, as Laurence Talairach-Vielmas has aptly delineated, for the slow but irrevocable undermining of the very ontological ground of a pure, unitary and integral "human" subject. (8-9) Images of the corpse, anatomized and objectified, instilled in popular imagination an unshakeable anxiety regarding the corporal basis of life, an anxiety which eventually found its cultural expression in gothic terror. (8-9)

V. THE UNCANNY SYNECDOCHE

Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Body Snatcher" is a gothic tale involving two young, excessively ambitious and grossly hedonistic medical students who turn into graverobbers to supply cadavers for dissection as anatomical subjects and are, eventually, met with an uncanny and terrifying experience. It is in connection with this scandalous and reprehensible past life of Fettes, one of the two medical students of the tale, that the narrator of the frame story comes to refer to the corpses as "unfriended relics of humanity". (Stevenson 78) In a narrative in which the corpse is almost a living presence, the dead body is imagined, quite ironically, as a relic, at once, in its archeological sense, that is, as what remains, or, is left after the body's precious "humanness" is gone- as a form emptied

of its essence- and in its profoundly sacral context. The latter connotation appears to be all the more pertinent when the story is viewed as a perversely secular and a nearly grotesque version of the Resurrection myth. In fact, the characters of Mr. K and his two henchmen, Fettes and Macfarlane were based on the actual "resurrection men": the controversial anatomist Robert Knox and his infamous associates, William Burke and William Hare. The untimely exhumation of the bodies- what the narrator of the story describes as a "hasty, lamp-lit, terror-haunted resurrection of the spade and mattock" - disturbs the corpses in their "joyful expectation of a far different awakening". (Stevenson 87) An inversion of the gothic motif of "premature burial" popularized by Edgar Allan Poe, the rude, premature "awakening" of the corpses pushes them into a timeline not proper to their eschatological journey. The disinterment also forces the corpse to a space that is the very opposite of the familiar graveyard whose paths are "worn by the feet of worshippers and mourners". (87) By displacing the corpse from "bonds of blood or fellowship" to the indignities of the dissecting rooms where it is "to be exposed to the last curiosity of the anatomist" (87), the corpse is "unfriended" or dissociated, through an act of exclusion of which it is both the cause and the effect, from everything that is considered human, and is reconstituted in its pure, unmitigated materiality as the inhuman "other". According to Judith Halberstam, Gothic monsters represent "the being that cannot be imagined as community", and are, therefore, posed as the "other" of the imagined community of men. (15) The corpse, through its exclusion from the community of the living, approaches this image of monstrosity.

The dislocation of the corpse from the oblivion of the grave to the clinical gaze of the anatomist cannot be understood as a simple clash between science and superstition. It is, instead, symptomatic of a broader and deeper shift in the way "humanness" is conceptualized vis a vis the "inhuman" status of the corpse. Thus, the superstitious fear echoed by the narrator of Stevenson's tale may be regarded as misleading in the sense it prevents the readers from acknowledging the true nature of the uncanny experience encountered by Fettes and Macfarlane. A superficial reading of the story would suggest that it is either their guilty conscience which triggers their hallucination or there is something supernatural at work behind their experience. But a closer analysis of the ending of the narrative leads to a far more unsettling realization. While there is little doubt about the role of the unconscious behind the conjuration of this terrifying scene, especially in the way the repressed memories of their terrible crime are uncannily brought into play, there is something more to this scene than is immediately discernible. Much of the gothic effect of this

scene rests on the last few words of the tale which refer to the anatomical impossibility of restoring the so-called "humanness" of a dissected corpse. (Stevenson 91) This makes sense as dissection of a corpse, within the logical framework of the narrative, ensures not merely its disposal, but its erasure from memory, and, more importantly, its unrecognizability. In a story about medical students casually dissecting corpses, Gray's corpse should not hold any special meaning (notwithstanding its forensic value as evidence of Macfarlane's crime) and, yet, it does, because it remains stuck, along with the corpse of Jane Galbraith, within a pattern of recognition or its denial. When the corpse of Jane Galbraith is brought to Fettes and Macfarlane, they pretend not to recognize her and, surprisingly, others also fail to identify her during dissection. (Stevenson 82) The same sequence is repeated in the case of Gray which is, in Macfarlane's own words, just "another case". (84) Thus, Stevenson's story exposes "humanness" as something not inherent in the human being but entirely contingent upon the recognition of others, willing or forced.

In light of the above discussion, the real source of terror in the end no longer appears to be the so-called "unnatural miracle" through which the mortal remains of an old woman is transformed into the dead body of Gray. It is, rather, the eerie return of a corpse that steadfastly resists erasure even after dissection and demands recognition from the protagonists. If the process of dissection renders a corpse unrecognizable as human, the corpse, when anatomically reconstructed by any hypothetical means, should appear familiar enough to elicit recognition. But, in reality, the corpse is now familiar and strange, human and inhuman at the same time and the recognition it draws out is involuntary and disturbing. It is because the image of the "human" is reconfigured in the narrative through an uncanny synecdoche: the whole, when fragmented, is supposed to lose its essence, and yet the fragments, when joined together, appear identical to the whole as if this so-called essence never existed. The most crucial part of Freud's theorization of the uncanny is how it is something that was once familiar to the psyche, and only became strange and frightening after being repressed. (148) It is possible, however, to expand upon Freud's notion of the uncanny so as to include that which is expected to appear alien through ages of conditioning of the conscious mind and still ends up looking quite familiar. After all, what the two young anatomists of the story struggle admitting is that the human form is in no way unique or transcendent. It is simply matter, fragments of which fit into a corporal shape neither final nor stable, and, somewhat sadly, allows no special or grand meaning to being human.

VI. "THE BRAIN OF A DEVIL"

Dr. Raymond's feverish, almost maniacal speech to Mr. Clarke before commencing his experimental brain surgery on Mary in Machen's *The Great God Pan* has a definite context in history:

You may look in Browne Faber's book, if you like, and you will find that to the present day men of science are unable to account for the presence, or to specify the functions of a certain group of nerve-cells in the brain. That group is, as it were, land to let, a mere waste place for fanciful theories. I am not in the position of Browne Faber and the specialists, I am perfectly instructed as to the possible functions of those nerve-centers in the scheme of things. With a touch I can bring them into play, with a touch, I say, I can set free the current, with a touch I can complete the communication between this world of sense and ... It will level utterly the solid wall of sense, and probably, for the first time since man was made, a spirit will gaze on a spirit-world. Clarke, Mary will see the god Pan! (11)

The second half of the nineteenth century saw meteoric advancements in a number of scientific fields, not the least of which was brain science or neuroscience. The scope of late nineteenth century brain science was no longer limited to the descriptive knowledge of certain broad regions of the human brain, but encompassed the newly emerging theory of cerebral localization which managed to assign a particular mental or somatic function to each specific site of the brain. Acquiring such detailed, localized knowledge of complex brain activity was made possible, partly, through a shift in methodology from using clinical records of patients to conducting postmortem examinations and practicing vivisections on live animal brains. (Stiles 16) Experimental brain surgeries, which often entailed sending an electrical pulse into the brain tissue, were frequently conducted on animals like dogs and monkeys, and information gathered from those experiments were superimposed on comparable cases of study of the human brain. One may here be referred to the controversial experiments on live monkeys by the Scottish scientist David Ferrier, to his sensational trial in 1881 on the charge of animal cruelty, and, most importantly, to his cortical mapping of the human brain which traced its intricate neural pathways at an unprecedented scale of accuracy. (Stiles 12-13) Besides the ethical ramifications of such experiments, which, however, is a concern in any possible reading of Machen's novella, there were also wide-

spread philosophical and cultural implications taken up by some of the most perceptive storytellers of the time like H.G. Wells, Robert Louis Stevenson, and, of course, Arthur Machen. Reducing every thought, emotion, or mental quality of a person to the electrical/chemical activity of a physically observable brain left no room for a unified soul or consciousness, a moral centre or, for that matter, a divine creator to exist. (Stiles 9-10) Moreover, the proximity of the human brain to the brain of the so-called baser animals foregrounded by the localizationist experiments was in itself a disturbing notion. So, while a boldly materialistic science demolished the last sacred bastion of human identity-the idea of an extraphysical soul or consciousness, speculative fiction started frantically gushing forth its most lurid, most paranoid and most far-fetched versions of this scientific project. Dr Raymond's wild theory in *The Great God Pan* is a case in point. If his argument, that a surgical alteration of a specific point in the brain can not only change the nature of consciousness, but open a portal into the world of spirit, sounds almost plausible, it is because it cleverly inverts the logic of cerebral localization to reintroduce the spiritual element while exploiting the language of contemporary neuroscience. But both Dr Raymond and Mr. Clarke seem to be aware of the dangers of tinkering with this inhuman spirit-world as measured against its titanic scale and its inscrutable presence, the human world appears puny and insignificant. Machen's cautionary tale, thus, turns science into an occult practice and challenges the ubiquity of the flesh with the esoterism of the soul.

This interface between matter and consciousness was an inexhaustible source of mystery for the late 19th century writers of popular fiction and Machen was invested in it enough to use it in another of his stories called "The Inmost Light". In this story, however, the existence of the soul is preestablished and its extraction, through an obscure experiment conducted on a woman by her own husband, permanently deforms the brain of the subject to such an extent that it can no longer be identified as the brain of a human being. In fact, the doctor who examines Mrs. Black's corpse after she is murdered by her husband, uses the phrase "the brain of a devil" to refer to her cerebral deformity. The doctor is completely unaware of Dr. Black's experiment, and he comes to his conclusion independently, relying only on his scientific knowledge of the human brain. Notwithstanding his somewhat strong and unprofessional choice of words for his description of Mrs. Black's brain, he appears to genuinely admit of the limitations of contemporary science in understanding the meeting point between matter and consciousness:

No one recognizes more decidedly than I do the impassable gulf, the fathomless abyss that separates the world of

consciousness from the sphere of matter. We know that every change of consciousness is accompanied by a rearrangement of the molecules in the grey matter; and that is all. What the link between them is, or why they occur together, we do not know, and the most authorities believe that we never can know. (Machen 68)

It is this grey area between knowledge and cluelessness, this shadowy realm between light and darkness that ultimately builds the gothic premise of Machen's tale. Indeed, the theory of cerebral localization mystified certain aspects of the human brain as much as it shed light on others. For example, compared to the left hemisphere of the human brain, which was associated with the exclusively human qualities like rationality and intelligence, very little was known about the right hemisphere except that it "housed primitive instincts and emotions." (Stiles 5) It was believed that an overgrown right brain was responsible not just for criminal insanity and moral depravity, but for an overall intellectual regression and a return to animality. (5) Such beliefs operated within the very cultural framework laid by Social Darwinism and the theories of Degeneration prevalent at the time and shared its secret ties with the pseudoscientific discipline of phrenology which the science of cerebral localization was supposed to have replaced. In fact, Machen might have been familiar with the case of a criminally insane woman who murdered her own children in 1871. Ferrier examined her brain postmortem and recorded his findings, which predictably focused on her abnormal right brain, in an article published in 1882. So, Dr. Raymond in *The Great God Pan* was most likely referring to the right hemisphere of the human brain by what he called "mere waste place for fanciful theories." (11)

The fear of the human brain devolving into its animal counterpart is noticeably present in "The Inmost Light". When asked by the coroner whether the brain of the subject resembled that of an animal, the doctor could only reply with absolute indeterminacy:

'No,' he replied, 'I should not put it in that way. Some of the appearances I noticed seemed to point in that direction, but others, and these were the more surprising, indicated a nervous organization of a wholly different character from that either of man or the lower animals.' (Machen 61)

What is most intriguing about the doctor's "scientific" opinion is how freely it blends a diagnosis of cerebral regression with a case of evolution-gone-berserk, both

nightmarish scenarios haunting the *fin-de-siecle* gothic imagination. But what the doctor interprets as the shameful and lamentable loss of humanness in Mrs. Black may as well be a pathological phenomenon unfolding beyond scientific supervision. Thus, far from being a neutral and objective view of the human brain, the discourse of cerebral localization was, from the outset, inflected by the dominant definitions of the human. So, it is possible to imagine the doctor opening up the brain of a female victim of murder and finding nothing meaningful to his idea of the human except pathologically altered, deviant and animalistic brain-matter that disgusts him to the core, so much so that he ends up legitimizing a crime. The ineluctable materiality of the corpse baffles him as it did his fellow-anatomists, Fettes and Macfarlane from Stevenson's tale, and with the authority vested in him by the nineteenth century scientific culture, he decides to withdraw from the corpse the very status of a human being.

VII. CONCLUSION

The avowed aim of this paper is to explore, through a critical reading of the two selected short stories of Robert Louis Stevenson and Arthur Machen, namely "The Body Snatcher" and "The Inmost Light", the gothic potential of the corpse as a liminal figure that blurs the lines of distinction between the human and the nonhuman or the familiar and the monstrous, and as an "abhuman" entity that facilitates the construction of the "human" by opposing it. This line of enquiry is supported by the critical works of Kelly Hurley, Jack Halberstam and Laurence Talairach-Vielmas on gothic fiction. Since the anatomical culture of the nineteenth century acts as the subtext for both the stories, Talairach-Vielmas's view of how the fragmentation of the corpse symbolically corresponds to the fracturing of a stable and coherent human self is particularly useful here. And so is Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic* which treats the rise of anatomical science in Post-Enlightenment Europe not as a random historical development but as one of the epistemic processes through which the human subject of modern biopolitics was born. Freud's notion of the uncanny serves directly as a theoretical point of entry for our understanding of Stevenson's short story. Similarly, Anne Stiles's *Popular Fiction and Brain Science in the Late Nineteenth Century* proves to be invaluable for our reading of Machen's weird tale.

Apart from examining the gothic of the corpse, this paper has another, convergent goal of engaging with the corpse as a site of posthuman critique of the "human". As Cary Wolfe notes, the invention of the "human" is accomplished only by repressing our animality and by transcending our material bonds with the nonhuman world.

(15) Thus, the corpse, in its proximity to our animal nature and in its radical materiality, does not just stand as an inhuman counterpart to the so-called 'human' but casts serious doubts on the ontological stability of this privileged human subject, forcing its reconfiguration. The scope for such a posthumanist reading is amply realized in both the stories dealt with in this paper. After all, critical posthumanism does not limit itself to envisioning a technomaterialist future in which the question of the "human" will be entirely irrelevant. Rather, it embraces all modes of critical thought that resist or subvert the underlying assumptions of anthropocentric discourse. By subjecting the gothic representation of the corpse to a posthumanist perspective, this paper traces some of the earliest symptoms of the "posthuman" condition back to the late nineteenth century when a profound uncertainty regarding the actual meaning of being human delivered the soul to its darkest and wildest fantasies. Finally, this paper hopes to contribute, in some small measure, to the theorization of the "posthuman Gothic" which, according to Anya Heise-von der Lippe, reveals the monstrous Other that we fear to be "an essential part of our (human) identity construction". (6) The corpse, in this sense, is not what we leave behind and try our best to disown but what we actually are and have always been: matter in becoming.

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