

Life-Destroying
Diagrams

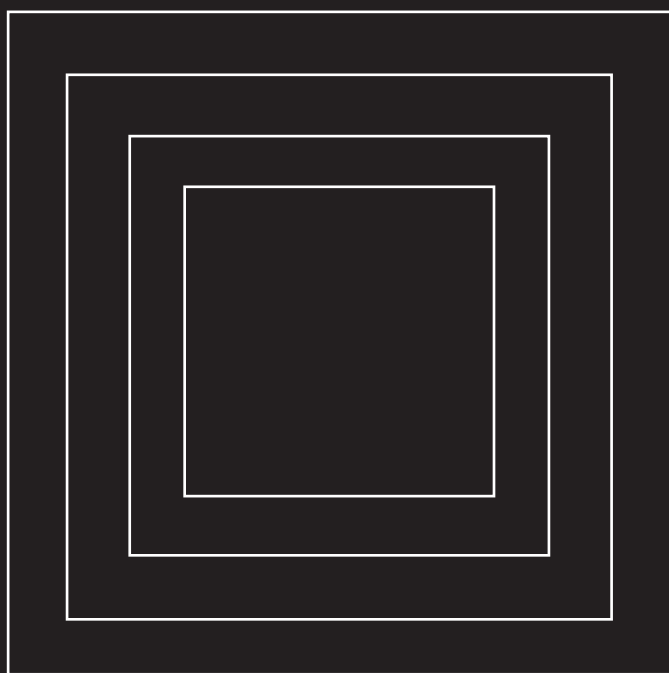


Eugenie Brinkema



Life-Destroying Diagrams





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Life-Destroying
Diagrams



Eugenie Brinkema

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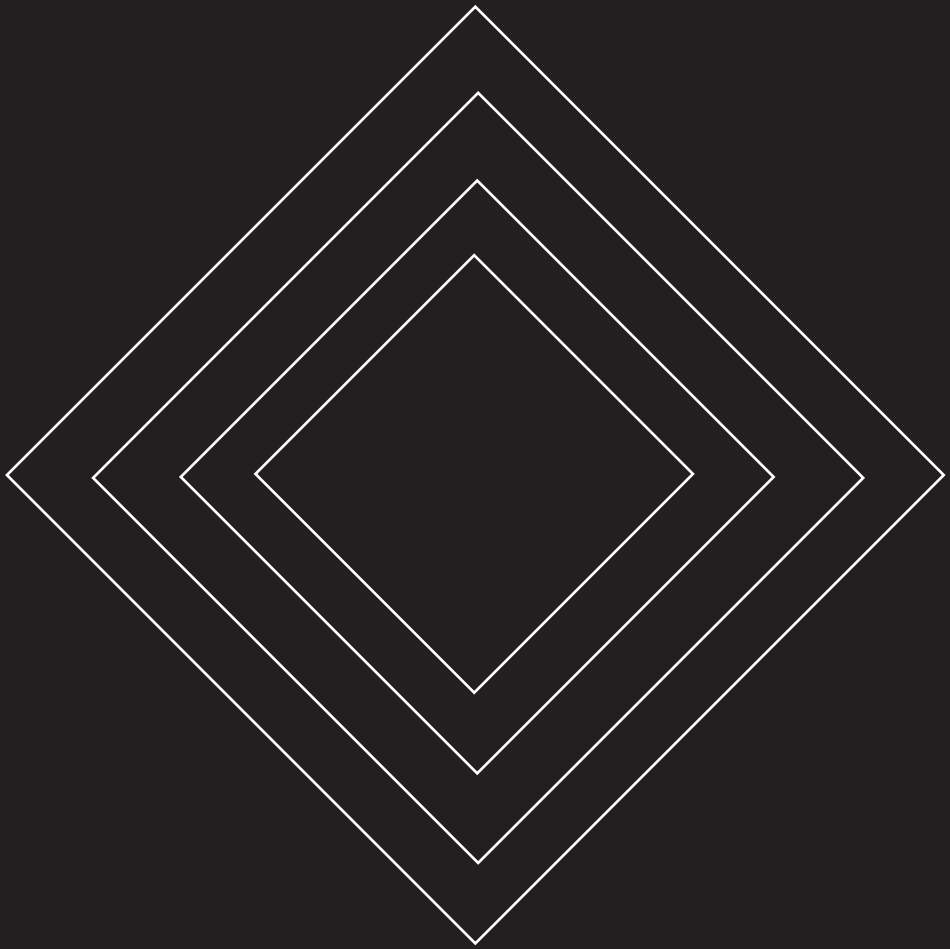
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exordia

A white wall. Nothing distinct from the white wall.

(Enter All, centre centre.)

WITOLD GOMBROWICZ

The primary task of creative literature is to rejuvenate our problems.

GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNIZ

(Crossing left. Meeting him.)

The best method is to make as many comparisons as one can.

ROLAND BARTHES

(Crossing right. Meeting both.)

The affectivity which is at the heart of all literature
includes only an absurdly restricted number of functions:
*I desire, I suffer, I am angry, I contest, I love, I want to be loved,
I am afraid to die*

(All speakers now joining.)

—out of this we must make an infinite literature.

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

(Aside.) This book might well be equipped with diagrams.

A BURSTING VOICE (OFF).
EVERYTHING MATTERS.

A BURSTING VOICE (OFF).
ANYTHING MATTERS.

(Adopting various attitudes, Exeunt None.)

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This book will argue the priority of the ~~political~~ formal interpretation of ~~literary~~ texts. It conceives of the ~~political~~ formal perspective not as some supplementary method, not as an optional auxiliary to other interpretive methods current today — the psychoanalytic or the myth-critical, the stylistic, the ethical, the structural [, the historicist, the new materialist, the affective] — but rather as the absolute ~~horizon~~ ground of all reading and all interpretation. This is evidently a much more extreme position than the modest claim, surely acceptable to everyone, that certain texts have ~~social and historical — sometimes even political —~~ formal ~~resonance~~ aspects.

— Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, adjustment

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xvi ♦ EXORDIA

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ALWAYS FORMALIZE!

In his 1679 *Consilium de Encyclopaedia nova conscribenda methodo inventoria* (*Project of a New Encyclopedia to be written following the method of invention*)—an unpublished fragment, written in Latin, and only one of several plans for various (and variously structured) encyclopedias he developed—Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz sets out to discover a work that would “comprise all the sciences that are based on reason alone or on reason and experience.”¹ He presents the sciences to be considered in order:

- 1 — Grammar, “the art of understanding what the body of this Encyclopedia will convey to us” (in other words, an effort at a rational language);
- 2 — Logic, “the art of inferences, i.e., the art of judging that which is proposed”;
- 3 — Mnemonic Art, “the art of retaining and recalling into memory what we have learned”;
- 4 — Topics of “the art of discovery (*ars inveniendi*), i.e.[.] the art of leading our thoughts towards the elicitation of some unknown truth,” which includes dialectics, rhetoric, invention, divination, cunning, algebra, &c.;
- 5 — *****;
- 6 — Logistics, “which treats of the whole and the part, of magnitude in general, as well as of ratios and proportions”;
- 7 — Arithmetic, “magnitude by means of numbers”;
- 8 — Geometry, “the science of place (*situs*) or figures”;
- 9 — Mechanics, “the Science of Action and Passion,” power, movement, statics, ballistics, &c.;
- 10 — Poeographia, “the Science of sensible (*sensibiles*) qualities”;
- 11 — Homeographia, “the science of substances (*subjecti*) that are similar at least in appearance”;
- 12 — Cosmography, “the science of the larger bodies of the world”;
- 13 — Idographia, “the science of organic bodies, which are called species”;
- 14 — Moral Science, “the science of the mind (*animus*) and its emotions (*motus*): knowing and directing them”;
- 16 — Geopolitics, “which treats of the state of our Earth in relation to the human species. It comprises all History and civil Geography”;
- 18 — Noncorporeal substances, “i.e.[.] of natural theology” (i.e., metaphysics).

His listing concludes, “This Encyclopedia should contain also a *Practical* part, dealing with the use of the sciences for happiness, that is, of how to act taking into account the fact that we are only human.”²

Date: June 15, 1679

Edition: A VI 4 A 338–49; C 30–41

Science 15 is missing. Science 17 is missing. (One of them might have been Mathematical Geography; there are hints, traces in the drafts.)

Science 5 is the one that concerns us.

5 — Quinta est ars formularia quae agit de eodem et diverso, simili ac dissimili, id est de formis rerum, abstrahendo tamen animum a magnitudine, situ, actione. Huc pertinent formulae formularumque comparationes, et ex hac arte pendent multae regulae quas Algebraistae et Geometrae in usum suum transtulerunt, tametsi eae non tantum circa magnitudines sed et circa alias considerationes locum habeant.

The fifth is the *ars formularia*, which deals with the same and the different, the similar and the dissimilar, i.e., the art] of the forms of things, taking the mind away (*abstrahendo*) from magnitude, place (*situs*), and action. This art includes formulae as well as comparisons of formulae, and many rules that the algebraists and geometers have devised for their own use depend upon it, although these rules do not pertain to magnitude but to other factors.³

What precedes Leibniz’s *ars formularia*—the discovery and comparison of the forms of things, the exploration of the same and the different—is the promiscuous category of the *ars inveniendi*, the art of deciphering, experimenting, interrogating, conjecturing, guessing, questioning, doubting in relation to unknown things. This is the technique of discovery that is the ground of the new encyclopedia itself, which folds to contain a thinking of this very practice. Techniques of wonderment thus give way to techniques of regarding same and different forms autonomous of their size, position, or action, which we might rephrase as follows: in order to pass from the most abstract rules (of language, of logic, of understanding) to the concrete study of place, action, and sensible qualities, two things are required—the speculative and the formal. These, for Leibniz, are the general powers that bridge theory and the world.

a work, then, not about form but of form

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EXORDIA ♦ xix

We need a thought which does not
fall apart in the face of horror.

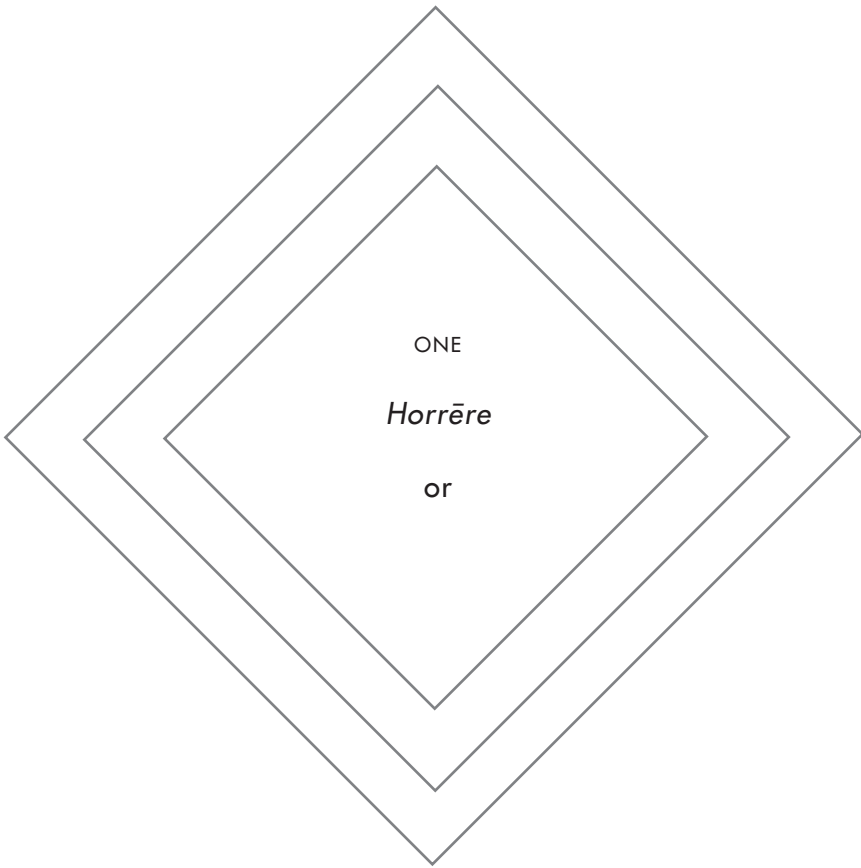
—GEORGES BATAILLE, *The Accursed Share*

So if I draw a boundary line that is not
yet to say what I am drawing it for.

—LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN, *Philosophical Investigations*

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I am done with the neck.

In thrall to an etymology that details nervy vibrissae's standing on end—a *bristling, shaking, trembling; a shuddering; being roughed up, excited, stimulated by, moved by the terrible, the dreadful, from intense (& painful) feelings of fear, loathing, disgust, this icy unease, what chills all spines (a symptom; a sign), piercing and roiling shivers & unsteady movements* (cf. the gestural recoil of abhorrence), *a frisson, a thrill (some shock); even what sickens to tell* (horribile dictu: *opposite of miraculous, what wastes lovely wonder*) or *is revolting, or detestable, each nervous ascent of each rigid raised pilus, rippling skin and bloomy plain, pointing and stiffened and exhibiting, so then awful is soldered to body as*

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what sudden strikes, rustles, waves (as in the sea), a fouled flesh now embossed with these displaced traces of all that undoing—thinking has capitulated to this finely stippled field, purchased the ability to speak of Horror at the cost of keeping close to the sensitive receptions of the nape.

The Latin *horrere*, hairs stood on end, itself from *ghers-* and the prickly, the spiky, what becomes stiff, sticks out, protrudes (as in the spines of plants, a leaf with coarse cilia)—such that *horridus*, from which arrives *horrid*, suggests the hispid and the hairy—this rude, unpolished line of fibers made erect, delicate but still too many of them, links *horror* even to the woollier, shaggier *hirsute*. Virgil writes of Cerberus in *Aeneid* VI, “Cui vates, horrere videns iam colla colubris”—about the watchdog’s several necks are glimpsed rising bristling snakes.¹ Try—you will fail—to make a verb of it. Horror is what is obtained or taken delivery of, experienced by or felt as and *done to*, a form of the *made* or what is intended, produced, or caused, not the performance of some doing. One may horrify solely as bequeathment: a giving of some quality in the act—but one does not, may not, horror as such. The *horrious* is what causes horror; the *horrible*, that capacity for dreadful realization indicated by the suffix class denoting possibility. Its shivering intensity may be paired with pity, with bitterness or unease, bonded to *le carnage* (for a Voltaire who repudiates both as faddish), figured as ataraxic in Edmund Burke’s 1757 sublime (object of a “delightful horror, a sort of tranquility tinged with terror”), or its strangling aversion sewn to an unable-to-bear revulsion: when Mary Shelley’s famous doctor glimpses his gray corpse-made creation, he gasps, “breathless horror and disgust filled my heart.”²

*(Augustine, in one of the most famous passages in Confessions,
writes of the overwhelming moment when,
for the first time,
he knew God,
“contremui amore et horrore.”
—I trembled [violently shook] with love and horror.)*³

These terms for hideosity move between the literal and the figurative, such that the unshorn is also the rude, involuntary tremble, also a tone or mode of disquieting dread. (The Spanish *horripilante* and Italian *orripilante*, the literally hair-raising, are, evocatively, the grisly and creepy; the late eighteenth-century *Schauerroman*, a subset of the Gothic, is a shudder-novel.) Rough, coarse (as of cloth), and therefore ugly—the negative rotation of aesthetics,

ill formed, what degrades the cultivation of form. And what a lack of clarity in form may compel: Brutus marvels to the ghost of Caesar, “Art thou any thing? / Art thou some God, some Angell, or some Devill, / That mak’st my blood cold, and my haire to stare?”⁴ In *Dracula*, Stoker writes in Seward’s diary of coming upon the terrible sight of Mina’s blood exchange with the Count: “With his left hand he held both Mrs. Harker’s hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by *the back of the neck*, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man’s bare chest which was shown by his torn-open dress.” The resulting horror, which is textually antecedent, performs a bodily reading of the scene—the affective turn circa 1897: “What I saw appalled me. I felt my hair rise like bristles on *the back of my neck*, and my heart seemed to stand still.”⁵ The reaction to the carnal tableau mimics the gesture that is its provocation—a transaction with substitutive body parts. Echoing the claret reciprocity between victim and bat, the novel turns on the figure of exchanged necks: At (the sight of) Mina’s scruff, gripped (by aristocratic hand), Seward’s (lived) column is convulsed (by raw affect). All neck, only necks, and neck a tender text that shows over and over the same familiar swell.

What is *horrent* or *horrendous* stirs and rouses the recipient not merely as raised flesh, but as though hackled with the projecting filaments of a beast (as in the stiffness prized for boar-*bristle* brushes, as in the uniform body and flagged end of boiled pig *bristle*). In his consideration of the muscularities of disturbance, Darwin treats the raising of these threads generously, at first focusing on the involuntary contractions of the *arrectores pili* on the capsules of separate hairs, now on end, as in the spines of the hedgehog. “Hardly any expressive movement is so general as the involuntary erection of the hairs, feathers and other dermal appendages,” he writes in *The Expression of Emotions*. “These appendages are erected under the excitement of anger or terror; more especially when these emotions are combined.”⁶ When turning to the special case of humans, Darwin offers examples of the rough excitement seen in both rage and fear, mania and madness: “the bristling of the hair which is so common in the insane, is not always associated with terror. It is perhaps most frequently seen in chronic maniacs, who rave incoherently and have destructive impulses; but it is during their paroxysms of violence that the bristling is most observable.” Strands function as an index of the mental state, visibly attesting to feverish disturbances of mind. If a lunatic is a lunatic all the way down, Darwin posits, it is “to the extremity of each particular hair.”⁷

Entranced by this roughed-up, shuddering neck, critical work on horror and representation—whether in painting, literature, film, or other media; for necks extend, elongate: they *stretch*—has overwhelmingly, stubbornly, taken this etymological cartography as a nonnegotiable sign of the bad affect's essence, limit, purview, function, and conceit. Horror thus takes on the burden of all root-aesthetics dating back to Baumgarten's *aisthanomai*: I sense, I perceive, I feel. A disturbed viewer, reader, spectator is demanded by the force of the word's origin, this figuration that is seductively straightforward and simple—the positivism of goose bumps—while also poetic, evocative with all its rippled waves of flesh and nerve. There seems to be neither critical need nor desire to travel beyond the suggestion of a fundamental affective aim and purpose for the entire concept (or, perhaps it is in fact the case that horror fails even to be regarded as a *concept*, treated as nothing but an *affect*). Consider, for example, this proposition from James Twitchell's 1985 *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror*, an early and oft-cited study, and one that begins (and ends) with a horrère tinged with necessity. Fixing on “the way nape hair stands on end,” Twitchell argues that “the shiver we associate with horror is the result of the constriction of the skin that firms up the subcutaneous hair follicles and thus accounts for the rippling sensation, almost as if a tremor were fluttering down our back. From this comes the most appropriate trope for horror—creeping flesh or, more simply, the ‘creeps.’ [. . .] Medical science is now exploring the biochemical substance, corticotropin, that triggers this response by signaling the pituitary gland to produce hormones, but for our purposes just the hair on the neck will do.”⁸

Theories of horror relying on this entrenched Latinate neck quickly become repetitive, rote, undifferentiated despite profound divergences in their theoretical approaches. Although in his influential analytic-cognitivist account *The Philosophy of Horror, or, Paradoxes of the Heart*, Noël Carroll expressly writes in opposition to the psychoanalytic hermeneutics on which Twitchell relies, he returns to sensation through the same spiny receptions of the back of the head. The affective priority Carroll attributes to his subject derives explicitly from an authority surrendered to source, even if bristling remains only a heuristic. “The word ‘horror’ derives from the Latin ‘horrère’—to stand on end (as hair standing on end) or to bristle—and the old French ‘orror’—to bristle or to shudder,” he writes. “And though it need not be the case that our hair must literally stand on end when we are art-horrified, it is important to stress that the original conception of the word connected it with an abnormal (from the subject's point of view) physiological state of felt ag-

itation.”⁹ The sensorial claim furnishes a generic claim: “Novels are denominated horrific in respect of their intended capacity to raise a certain affect. [. . .] I shall presume that this is an emotional state, which emotion I call art-horror.”¹⁰ Carroll’s recourse to provocation renders his cognitive-aesthetic philosophy of horror above all a philosophy of physiological feeling, one that does not require or grip a neck so much as stand on it.

Just as changes in theoretical allegiance do little to vary appeals to this etymological line, the decades-long evolution of horror studies has not diminished the priority of a bodily affect legible in flesh and follicle. A tidy finding of bearings folds this line of scholarship and makes it resemble itself in its citation of etymological authority.¹¹ Linda Williams quotes Twitchell extensively in “Film Bodies,” her meditation on body genres (melodrama, horror, pornography) whose “success [. . .] seems a self-evident matter of measuring bodily response.” “The aptly named Twitchell,” she continues, “thus describes a kind of erection of the hair founded in the conflict between reactions of ‘fight and flight.’ While male victims in horror films may shudder and scream as well, it has long been a dictum of the genre that women make the best victims.”¹² Although Williams’s version of neck is now multiply surveilled on shuddering represented victims and bristling empirical spectators—and though that neck is particularized, given a relation to sexual difference—this model of a productive-receptive mimicry has not moved far from Tolstoy’s late nineteenth-century definition of art as the means by which a creator “infects” spectators or auditors (admittedly, there, with the feeling during the act of creation; here, with the feeling represented within the creation), and the erection of strands on nape is still the fulcrum for affective criteria of generic “success.” Williams’s use of that word is telling; Carroll writes it often as well. So long as a definition of horror relies on dogma derived from neck, it will turn on the attainment of a specific, predictable outcome, which invariably returns to the demonstrated accomplishment of raised downy hairs. This is everywhere a language of purpose, a discourse of efficacy. Neck is a template predicated on the idealism of a positive aesthetic experience, realized with neither loss nor noise. Neck is a machine doing a good job. Neck names the well-behaving commodity.

Even Anna Powell’s Deleuzian rejoinder to psychoanalytic horror criticism—with theoretical sympathies resolutely opposed to Twitchell, Carroll, and Williams—opens with a definition of her subject, “films designed to horrify by their depiction of violence and the supernatural,” that turns on the by now familiar shivers—using language nearly identical to that of earlier critics. “The word horror,” she writes, “is derived from the Latin *horrere*, to bristle or shudder. Its

historical usages incorporate sensory associations, such as ‘roughness or nauseousness of taste such as to cause a shudder or thrill’; ‘a painful emotion compounded of loathing and fear’; and ‘the feeling excited by something shocking or frightful’ which is ‘revolting to sight, hearing, or contemplation.’ These definitions emphasize the genre’s affective potency, and intriguingly do not differentiate the impact of actual and fictional horror.”¹³ We might go on, assemble a vast archive of barely differentiated claims for horripilation, but the dissatisfaction is primed: *Is there only this one narrow neck in the all of critical history?*

Critical valuations have consequences. Twitchell puts it most nakedly. Following on his primary assertion from the neck—the insistence that “the experience of horror is first physiological, and only then maybe numinous,” figuring horror as an immanent experience of the body and a body-addressing genre—he declares its upshot: “the instructions embedded in horror resist literary, especially formalist, interpretation.”¹⁴ If it is unsurprising that one result of neck essentialism has been a suspicion of, if not outright derision toward, critical approaches that are indifferent to the affected corpus, more troubling is that the privileging of neck has led to a contempt for all the marvelous detailed difficulties of formalist interpretation that engender theoretical reach and for which I advocated in *The Forms of the Affects*. To the point: there is a bartering of form for neck in this broad critical tendency, bristles purchased at a great cost. It is impossible to say which comes first: it is both the case that neck interiorizes a (sensitive, sensing) body to horror in order to impossible reading for form and that it interiorizes a resistance to reading for form in order to posit a (sensitive, sensing) body. Horrère as an affective apodicticity, promising only to recover the isthmus and receptive, thereby forecloses modes of reading that would be generative and speculative.

Horrère, more than any signifying monster, is the meta-trope unifying horror studies. There is an economy to the genealogical fix that horrère locks in—but it is a restricted economy. If, within its own thinking, horrère allows irruptions symptomatically (the return of the repressed, disturbing cultural leakages and excess), what it systematically refuses and suppresses is irruptive discontinuities in the neck-orientation of its name.

I take no interest in this neck, will derive no interest from it.

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6 ♦ CHAPTER ONE

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Although a constriction, although a slender structure, neck is also a strait. What connects (skull and shoulders; two bodies of water) is a channel, an outline of a fluid body, and channels above all beg to flow, to go otherwise.

Let us reread *horrère* with care.

Suppose the problem was one of language all along. If etymological sedimentations beholden to the restrictions of a hairy, bristly map have engendered the critical obsession with a feeling, receiving, receptive body, might recovering a different tradition let us decisively move on from the neck?

Perhaps the trouble is with the Latin.

Our words are tired; they repeat, they are old. Words get worn. And so, then: Do we merely need some other ones?

The Greeks deployed an extensive vocabulary for the bad affective state we call fright, with tonalities varying according to stimuli, the sense of a justified or unjustified reaction, and valences related to experiences by individuals or groups. Within this substantial set, the most common words for fear were *deos*, *phobos*, and *ekplexis*, with nuanced resonances of, respectively, doubt, running, and shock.¹⁵ *Deos*, from *du-, two, takes the sense of being unsure in the face of a double option or alternative (to be *in doubt* is to be *in two*): in *Iliad* 9.230–31, as everything hangs in the balance, Odysseus entreats Achilles, “We are afraid. It can go either way, whether we save or lose our well-benched ships”; in *Odyssey* 11.43, as Odysseus watches the shades drink blood he is seized with “*chlóron deos*,” green fear, a favorite Homeric idiom sometimes rendered “pale fear” (think: blanching terror) and, classicists suggest, associated with the uncertainties endemic to the underworld or the supernatural.¹⁶ (This terror inherent in doubled alternatives will be reimagined in twentieth-century structuralism as the hesitation between the uncanny and the marvelous—*An Event Occurs*: & was it a trick of the senses, an undermining of self and perception but against the field of a world preserved, knowable, firm *or* did this thing really happen as perceived correctly by the sure senses and now the world, before so stable and natural-seeming, is now changed, undermined, devastated? How to decide? *All is unsurety*—the duration of which Todorov will dub the Fantastic.)

Phobos takes the root “to run,” but *phobeo* specifically means “I cause to run away,” put to flight, that from which one moves violently apart, with an irrational and shivering, cold dimension; for example, Thucydides writes that “Night supervened, and the Macedonians and the mass of barbarians took sudden fright [*phobeisthai*], seized by that unaccountable panic to which large armies are liable.”¹⁷ The Greek grammarian Ammonius offered a treatment

on the difference between *deos*, “a presentiment of evil [*kakou huponoia*],” and thus a project of mind, and the more corporeally bound *phobos*, “a sudden quivering [*parautika ptoesis*]”—and from *phobos*, of course, our modern sense of that thing from which one flees, the often idiosyncratic, often inexplicable, yet powerfully visceral cause of an outward display of great and panicked fear.¹⁸ To be rough, to take an uneven surface (as on the sea), or to bristle (as in a mane), to ruffle, to shudder: the words that share the territory of *horrēre* are, first, the Greek *phrissō*, poetically as in *hote phrissousin arourai* (Meneleus’s heart is stirred like the *bristling growing fields* of corn) in *Iliad* 23.599, and viscerally as in a chill, a shiver from great fear, as invoked by the chorus in Aeschylus’s *Seven against Thebes* when they speak *pephrika tan ôlesioikon theon, ou theois homoian*, shuddering in dread at all this laying waste. (In his *Oedipus*, Seneca personifies horror as *Phrike*, *daimona* of fear, horror, terror, tremor, her name sharing the root *phrittō*, to shudder, to shiver.) Second is the rarer, often poetic or dramatic novelty *orrōdia*, affright, dread, terror, fear; *orrōdeō*, to be terrorized, to dread, to shrink from.¹⁹

—No, we have not moved so far from the telltale erectable hairs, from mistaking bristle for ontology.

New words, new new words: we were tired of the old ones,—but new words have not saved us here. The diachronic impulse to trace the transfer and crossings from Latin to Greek, to find our way to a neckless imagining, has returned the same shivering quake, merely adding the gesture of recoil: the spring or flinching that demands elasticity in the spine, muscularity in the back, what holds fast to body, strikes and rustles forcibly, disasters the stable ridge and waves the stem. Both Greek and Latin lines end in Goethe’s “*Das Schaudern ist der Menschheit bestes Theil*,” in which an overwhelming *sublime tremble*—smelt of fear, anxiety, anguish, awe—is the very finest experience of the human; and the critical track runs loyally straight on to now.²⁰ The history of the concept of horror is the very opposite of unfindable: it is, like its namesake, too much unconcealed, works on the surface of a skin. Neck persists; neck *insists*. It carries a lack of theoretical affect: assuredly displaces nothing, about which nothing is unknown. It is remarkably easy to remain with the body’s narrow feeling field of muscle, chain, and nerve.

So much thinking is catastrophobic, sticking with violences to the neck because of anxiety about its overturning, frightened to bring its fecund disorders to a close. But necks veil a more disturbing violence; necks shield and delay confrontations with unsuspected modes of horror, ones linked to forces of order, systematicity, languages, schemes, shapes, and structures.

What is a philosopher?

- That is perhaps an anachronistic question. But I will give a modern response. In the past one might have said it is a man who stands in wonder; today I would say [. . .] it is someone who is afraid.
- Philosophers are numerous then, excepting Socrates and Alain—both famous for having been good combatants and having drunk hemlock without trembling [. . .] . But perhaps philosophical fear is of a more noble character.
- Not at all. Fear, whether it be cowardly or courageous, is intimate with what is frightening, and what is frightening is what makes us leave peace, freedom and friendship all at the same time. Through fright, therefore, we leave ourselves, and, thrown outside, we experience in the guise of the frightening what is entirely outside us and other than us: the outside itself.
- Then common fear would be philosophical fear insofar as it gives us a kind of relation with the unknown, thereby offering us a knowledge of what escapes knowledge. Fear: anguish. And we thus approach philosophies that themselves are not unknown. Yet there is in this experience a movement that collides as though head-on with philosophy. The fearful man, in the space of his fear, participates in and unites with what makes him afraid. He is not only fearful, he is fear—that is, the irruption of what arises and is disclosed in fear. [. . .]
- But is it thought that can be afraid? Are you not already using here a language that is symbolic, full of imagery or “literary”? It is the thinker who becomes frightened; he is frightened of what threatens his thought. And what does he fear, as a man of thought? Nothing other than fear.
- The philosopher, in this case, would be someone who is afraid of fear.
—Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*

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FOUR WAYS OF LOOKING AT A SHUDDER

Questions from the neck:

1) **What is frightening** (to me; to you; to group X; at historical period Y; across national differences Z)? Under the banner of which is discussed all monsters and monstrosity, cultural othering, allegorical anxiety, themes and tropes, epistemic uncertainties, ontological indeterminacies; all symptoms, sexual differences, bad families, doublings, abnormals; twists and pods and hybrids, the massified and excessive; a relentlessly replicating virus; all metaphors and fascinations; what is in between or violates categories (cf. abjection); when what was once imaginary appears in reality, the uncanny, the fantastic, the sublime, the dreadful or awe-induced terrible; true solitude or mobbish hordes, or the supernatural, or the natural, or what arrives from without or, then again, what is inborn or immanent (Mr. Edward Hyde; calls from inside the house; deposits in a skin, a stomach, a uterus, a brain); or all general hazy instability, modes of unmaking, societal transformation, antitheses of progress, underside of the Enlightenment, fallout of industrialization, Goya's "Sleep of Reason," the Nothing, pain, the pain of loved ones, dying, never dying, other people's panic, This Is the End (cf. There Will Never Be an End), self-folding fear itself, &c. (Relatedly: What does the frightening mean or express or symbolize in the context of a broader politics of representation; of what is it an allegory [of sexual/political/unconscious repression, with all the ideological implications related to normativity and naturalizing thereby articulated]? [The promiscuity of this question is legendary, as flexible as the signifier itself will allow in monstration, demonstration; it is extraordinarily generative, as evidenced by the influence of Robin Wood's famously open formula for horror—"normality is threatened by the Monster"—or as goes the claim in Jack Halberstam's *Skin Shows*: "Monsters are meaning machines. They can represent gender, race, nationality, class, and sexuality in one body."²¹ Many of these claims are a glossed version of Althusser's notion of "expressive causality," which he attributes to {and vigorously critiques in} Hegel, in which narrative productions are the phenomenal expressions or reflections of cultural essences.]²² This praxis adjudicates inclusions [and traces exclusions], taxonomizing rules for membership, articulating expectations so tenacious that they are secured precisely through departures, self-conscious violations, and postmodern knowingness.) Inquiries into the ostensible timelessness of repeated, re-makeable, bad-time myths—appealing to Bettelheim, Freud, Jung, Jones, Campbell; or promising generous reach as in Wood's defi-

nition of the genre as “our collective nightmares”; or settling in vague bromides such as Stephen Prince’s claim that horror explores “fundamental questions about the nature of human existence”—are found alongside insistences for the ineluctable specificity of a situated time or place or event (Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Selma, Mý Lai; One World Trade Center; Chernobyl; or Juárez, s-21, Abu Ghraib, and all the rest of all such things).²³ Here find emphasis on the importance of the biological impropriety of scientifically uncountenanced things (your large flies and mutants, half-wolves, and the undead) alongside opposing claims that the monster, in fact, has died, has been replaced with an ordinary sadist—as early as 1946, Kracauer wrote how “Nightmares are seen in bright daylight, murderous traps are sprung just around the corner. Everyday life itself breeds anguish and destruction”—or a violent normality in the guise of an awkward Norman Bates or an impassive killer named Henry, himself to be replaced, still others propose, with the post-humanity of the cyborg or a decentered technological gaze.²⁴ Much psychoanalytic work is located herein, plus Marxist, cultural studies, feminist and queer, critical race and postcolonial, most historicist, and national cinema contextual treatments; the broad nature of the investigation effortlessly places film, television, and new media studies in dialogue with literary and visual studies. (Though it comprises the largest group, by mass, of scholarly claims, all such writing purports to grapple with and answer the same single question: What makes the little hairs leap?)

2) **When, where, and how does this fright textually occur** (in film A, with effect B, from aesthetic logic C, or across cycle D)? Here find the lists of elements, the resemblances and consolidations of genre studies (ones that emphasize narrative and trope in addition to those more concerned with medium-specific *ciné-genre* characteristics), considerations of expressionism against realism, lurid compared with avant-garde styles, spectacles and solicited astonishments; plus studies of the suspenseful dimension of offscreen space or strategies of blocked vision (architectural occlusions, occasions for partial or delayed glimpses), or, alternately, the wide-open expanse across which every coming thing is visible but ineluctably unalterable; in addition: elaborate treatments of shadows, staircases, fog, and I-cameras, of darkness, violins, and syrup-blood, and attention to the explicit, graphic, gory; but also mere suggestion, offscreen woundings only heard or Val Lewton-esque elegance, crafts of restraint. Here find aesthetic maps separating classic from New, Hollywood from J-; here find auteurist signatures; here find histories of technique that—justly—insist on the innovations of horror, whose lighting,

makeup, and effects trickled down to other modes of cinema. (Variant: How have these aesthetics of fright been produced, manipulated, transformed, branded, rebranded, and reinterpreted for global dissemination?) Add to this group the extensive catalogues, illustrated histories, fanzine portraits, and general fetishism of visual iconography, enthusiastic in place of critical, but parasitically related to scholarly work on horror. Although ample anthologized stills and beloved details are thereby produced from individual films, within the framework of this question the aesthetic is instrumentalized for the larger sake of a rippled nervous system—textual details are regarded for the sake of their effects, and aesthetic strategies are reduced to provocations that successfully produce the paramount frisson. All these (aesthetic, generic) *conventions* are thus taken as primarily affective (neck-oriented) *intentions*.

3) **How is the body** (this will be defined differently) **addressed, agitated, displaced, and moved in the instance of this fright?** Treated by phenomenological studies of horror, much cognitivist work, analyses of body genres (following Williams, that in which “audience sensation mimics what is seen on the screen,” engendering an “over-involvement in sensation and emotion”), Deleuzian claims for the visceral agitations of the spectator, and more recent deployments of affect theory.²⁵ (This query may be posed very narrowly, as in Robert Spadoni’s investigation of how spectators uncannily received early Hollywood monster movies by comparing “the first year of the classic horror cycle to a pattern of response that characterized general film reception during the immediately preceding sound transition years,” or very broadly, as in Anna Powell’s Deleuzian account of how the horror viewer “experiences corporeal responses as our senses stimulate the neural networks linked to organs like the heart (pace, pulse-rate), the genitals (warmth, tightness, moisture), and the lungs (depth and rapidity of breathing).”)²⁶ While this question participates in long-standing discussions in aesthetics dating back to the eighteenth century about the specific sensations felt in the presence of representation containing certain qualities, also herein resides a good deal of work outside the humanities, including the measurement of physiological reactions, “self-reported arousal” metric compilations in neurobiology and social science, data about startle and scream (see Zuckerman’s Sensation Seeking Scale), but also those who would ask, say, in the wake of a mass shooting, about mimicry and media effects, about the visceral pedagogy of violence, about being moved to move in the ways one saw on the screen (though it is never the investigator but always the faceless other who is vulnerably instructed by watching vile things). Finally, also here find, perverse ideological

bedfellow, predictive models by industry to anticipate audience appeal and arousal, to maximize the profitable elicitation of precisely such neck-borne responses.

4) **Why do spectators** (or specific group Q, e.g., adolescents, i.e. adolescent males [cf. not adolescent males]) **take pleasure in terror and fright?** (Variant 1: Why do spectators take pleasure in disgust or what repulses them?) (Variant 2: What is the [personal, social, historical, collective, national] purgative value of pleasing-unpleasing shock? [see: catharsis]) (Variant 3: Is this masochistic or sadistic? [3a, Or both, as in Philip Brophy's account of a gratification "based upon tension, fear, anxiety, sadism and masochism—a disposition that is overall both tasteless and morbid. The pleasure of the text is, in fact, getting the shit scared out of you—and loving it; an exchange mediated by adrenalin."])²⁷ (But still, despite all that, variant 4: Why would groups consistently represented as harmed—women, children, all queer identities—enjoy hours of sadistic-masochistic watching of designations of their destruction? [However, pause; suspend that question for variant 5: Not pleasure, but investment, as in Carol Clover's interest "in the male viewer's stake in horror spectatorship" {this turns on a theory of identification that will nullify variant 4; Clover dubs it "horror's system of sympathies"} {or, again, not pleasure, but compensatory thrilling-draining experience, as in Morris Dickstein's thesis that "Horror films are a safe, routinized way of playing with death (. . .) a way of neutralizing anxiety by putting an aesthetic bracket around it" (see, again: catharsis).})²⁸ (Variant 6: Is the fan's pleasure somehow otherwise [resistant, participatory, knowing {further var.: replace pleasure with connoisseurship; alt.: following Matt Hills in *The Pleasures of Horror*, regard that connoisseurship of subcultural capital as performative, which involves a methodological inversion, attending to the discursive texts of fans *in place* of reading horror texts}]—[And furthermore: How has this changed in postmodernity? {Isabel Pinedo's urging} {alt.: How has this not changed at all in postmodernity?}])²⁹ Some psychoanalytic, most cognitivist, much feminist, most analytic philosophical, all fan studies, and almost all conservative deriding and general worries about the coarsening of culture are to be found herein (which itself replays the Plato-Aristotle dogfight about whether tragedy is corrupting or purgative, inciting or pedagogical).³⁰

Perhaps the critic takes herself for a fan. Accordingly: **Question 3**, var., addendum: How is *my* body addressed, agitated, displaced, and moved in the instance of this fright, disgust, shock, &c.? **Question 4**, var., addendum: And why do *I* take pleasure, satisfaction, rueful glee, wild joy in this revol-

sion, fright, and thrill? For example, Powell: “I have chosen horror cinema because of my own engagement with it as fan and academic, and because I want to assert the genre’s aesthetic complexity.” Williams: “When my seven-year-old son and I go to the movies, we often select from among categories of films that promise to be sensational to give our bodies an actual physical jolt.” Clover: “The initial dare took me into a territory I might not otherwise have explored, and against all odds I have ended up something of a fan. Like others before me, I discovered that there are in horror moments and works of great humor, formal brilliance, political intelligence, psychological depth, and above all a kind of kinky creativity.”³¹ One of the consequences of this tendency to phenomenologize the affective experience of horror and to make autobiographical (and confess to) its unpleasurable pleasures is a rabid evaluative drive—generic judgments of bad, better, and best in addition to omissions of texts solely because they are not to the critic’s taste.³² In a book whose subtitle promises a survey of modern and postmodern horror, Tony Magistrale apologizes for his (lack of) method: “I’m afraid there will be little here of interest to aficionados of zombies or the werewolf. [. . .] It is my belief that the zombie movie is better off dead. [. . .] For this writer, the cinematic world of the werewolf is similarly limited. [. . .] Precious few [. . .] films in this subgenre hold my interest for very long.”³³

Is it always the critic’s own neck that must be saved in or by her writing? If so, it is at the cost of positing an ungeneralizable, untheorizable, and ultimately not all that compelling neck, which no one has ever derided better than the musicologist Eduard Hanslick in his critique of the “aesthetics of feeling”: “We say nothing at all concerning the crucial aesthetic principle of music if we merely characterize music in general, according to its effect upon feeling, just as little, perhaps, as we would get to know the real nature of wine by getting drunk.”³⁴

(Who cares what you like? Who cares what you fear?)

Neck is a trap. Luring with promises of theoretical reach, it shows in the end only the faint traces of a small patch of stirred skin, and it offers nothing new in the way of thought about texts themselves. Neck is antithetical to speculation. Decide—as in *decaedere*, cut off, cleave—to be done with one’s own dull column.

The final query, [Q4] Why would readers or spectators or viewers or users seek out occasions for unpleasurable feelings?, is fundamental to the broader aesthetics of the negative affects, ranging from Kant’s prohibition on *Ekel* in *The Critique of Judgment* (1790)—for that which arouses loathing is an ugly-

ness that “cannot be represented in a way adequate to nature without destroying all aesthetic satisfaction, hence beauty in art”—to Freud’s rejoinder in *Das Unheimliche* (1919) that “As good as nothing is to be found upon this subject [the uncanny] in comprehensive treatises on aesthetics, which in general prefer to concern themselves with what is beautiful, attractive and sublime; that is, with feelings of a positive nature; and with the circumstances and the objects that call them forth, rather than with the opposite feelings of repulsion and distress.”³⁵ In 1757, Hume posed the wonderment that has become a general model for this fourth question and its many variations: “It seems an unaccountable pleasure which the spectators of a well-written tragedy receive from sorrow, terror, anxiety, and other passions, that are in themselves disagreeable and uneasy. The more they are touched and affected, the more are they delighted with the spectacle.”³⁶ That same year, Burke likewise derived from a theory of sympathy’s substitutions that “It is by this principle chiefly that poetry, painting, and other affecting arts, transfuse their passions from one breast to another, and are often capable of grafting a delight on wretchedness, misery, and death itself. It is a common observation, that objects which in the reality would shock, are in tragical, and such like representations, the source of a very high species of pleasure.”³⁷ (Burke and Hume share the language of “delight,” a form of pleasure linked to the alluring, to charm; sublimity’s awe is a pain that does not derange the body, that is not the force of violence itself, delightful horror above all a *delicate* horror.) More than two hundred years later, Hume’s formulation still has currency: Twitchell follows the blueprint with his interest in “why we have been drawn to certain images in art and popular culture that we would find repellent in actuality,” while Stephen King offers a worldly translation of this philosophical curiosity: “Why do people [. . .] *pay* to be horrified?”³⁸

Carroll’s version of Hume’s tragic wonderment runs thusly in *The Philosophy of Horror*: “why would anyone *want* to be horrified, or even art-horrified?” This foundational question articulates the paradox of his book’s title: “If horror necessarily has something repulsive about it, how can audiences be attracted to it?”³⁹ Why do all this to those poor necks? Although reviving the Humean aesthetic meta-concern, Carroll’s preferred interlocutor is the lesser known 1773 meditation “On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror” by the poet Anna Laetitia Aikin. For her, “well-wrought scenes of artificial terror” are not themselves pleasurable, but they engage “the pain of suspense, and the irresistible desire of satisfying curiosity,” which “once raised, will account for our eagerness to go quite through an adventure, though we

suffer actual pain during the whole course of it. We rather chuse [*sic*] to suffer the smart pang of a violent emotion than the uneasy craving of an unsatisfied desire.” Aikin deploys the figure of fascination to extend the affective range of displeasures that can be made aesthetically endurable, from boredom to the extremest sympathetic suffering in cases of representational cruelties: “And it will not only force us through dullness, but through actual torture—through the relation of a Damien’s execution, or an inquisitor’s act of faith. When children, therefore, listen with pale and mute attention to the frightful stories of apparitions, we are not, perhaps, to imagine that they are in a state of enjoyment, any more than the poor bird which is dropping into the mouth of the rattlesnake—they are chained by the ears, and fascinated by curiosity.”⁴⁰ (And, in a further rotation, Aikin the critic is also, in a manner, positively fascinated by these mixed captivations of fascination and curiosity—turning from aesthetic law to metaphor to put to *her* reader’s imagination the death-bringing snares of the chaining by the ears of these pale, mute, hostages children.) The poet concludes with a hierarchy of aesthetic evaluations, in which the highest promise of the gothic text, she submits, is the good feeling offered by “surprise from new and wonderful objects,” such that, stimulating the imagination, “the pain of terror is lost in amazement. Hence, the more wild, fanciful, and extraordinary are the circumstances of a scene of horror, the more pleasure we receive from it.”⁴¹ Likewise, Carroll resolves his paradoxical presumptions in favor of a deeply pleasurable fascination and curiosity at precisely the category admixtures that constitute the provocative object of fear and loathing.⁴²

Returning obsessively to the site of a phrasal trauma, the form of this last question cannot, it seems, be moved past, nor can thinkers shed the figure of the paradoxum: that term for an absurd truth is the tic of a nervous criticism. Alex Neill responds to Carroll in an article entitled “On a Paradox of the Heart,” while Berys Gaut quibbles with, and ultimately nullifies, the contradiction in “The Paradox of Horror”; years later, and considering both of those essays, Katerina Bantinaki pens “The Paradox of Horror: Fear as a Positive Emotion.”⁴³ Offering a titular interrogatory that crystallizes the emotional puzzle, “Why Horror? The Peculiar Pleasures of a Popular Genre,” Andrew Tudor turns his version of the query into a meta-inquiry—“precisely what we are asking is far from clear”—and then into endless iterations of the question, insisting it really should be “why do these people like this horror in this place at this particular time?”⁴⁴ Though a plea for proliferating distinctions, the fundamental tension of [Q4]—What positive gain from negative

affects?—*is only thereby scattered into a hall of mirrors, reflecting back an infinity of curiosities turning on the same self-negating oxymoronic terms: liking what is unlikeable, taking pleasure in displeasures borne out on neck.*

Dilemma: paradoxes tense a field; they yearn to be unknotted. And so, in place of an aporetic thinking with undecidability, this affective contradiction is constantly resolved. Each verdict forgets and forgoes the negativity in negative affects, supplants it with curiosity, fascination, palliative playing at anxiety, regressive wallowing in the culturally prohibited, gleeful temporary identification with othered sites, adolescent thrill-seeking, visceral temporal intensity, confirmation of fan identity, the delight of mixed sentiment, &c., all recuperating the abyssal negativity of unstable representations for something resembling a discourse of the diminution of pain or a neutralization of displeasure, a quiet reinstatement of pleasure—which is a judgment of value, a way of reviving a priority of the good, the establishment of noncontradiction at the cost of failing to read the negativity of negative affect as such. In other words, these resolutions deny the very object the theorist would contemplate in the first place.

These four questions that linger with the neck are often—indeed, usually—multiply present in critical work on horror and across diverse and otherwise irreconcilable camps: psychoanalytic, antipsychoanalytic, Marxist, feminist, cognitivist, analytical-philosophical, phenomenological, Deleuzian, &c. Within a span of a few sentences, Angela Ndaliansis travels through the entire range of claims made possible by the set:

In New Horror Cinema, the label often given to this recent phase of the genre, the horror spectator enters a space that operates as a ritualistic violation of taboos and, in the process, fears and desires are unleashed that often threaten “normal” society and its onscreen ideologies [**Q1—What is frightening?**]: murder and displays of sadomasochistic violence, perverted sexual acts, incest and interbreeding, the return of the dead, cannibalism—these themes are at the core of New Horror [**Q2—When, where, and how does this fright textually occur?**]. Yet these themes rely heavily on the spectator’s senses in order to achieve their full impact. New Horror, like all horror, relies on the sensorium, an integrated unit that combines cognition and the senses, the mind and the body [**Q3—How is the body addressed, agitated, displaced, and moved in the instance of this fright?**]. Horror media offers us a gamut of experiences—horror, laughter, fear, terror, the cerebral pleasures of intertextual play [**Q4—Why do spectators take plea-**

sure in terror and fright?]

—and, depending on the sensory, emotional and intellectual encounters each example throws our way, we perceive, sense and interpret the fictional spaces of horror in diverse and distinctive ways.⁴⁵

That the upshot of such an approach remains on the slender side of neck is made explicit in Ndaliansi's subsequent declaration that "in conjunction with this cognitive and intellectual involvement is an insistent focus on the body on- and off-screen. Horror films, especially since the 1960s, have performed their textual journeys on the bodies of the characters that populate their fictional worlds. In turn, the bodily destruction depicted onscreen unrelentingly weaves its way offscreen and onto the body of the spectator."⁴⁶ The second shudder question, the one turning on the aesthetic, iconographic, or auteurist, is implicit across the above passage, as it appears in a chapter entitled "Horror Aesthetics and the Sensorium," which promises to examine "a key premise of horror: the tug of war that occurs between wanting to look and not wanting to look."⁴⁷ Ndaliansi figures this tension in the history of the genre through the privileged figure of the extreme close-up of an eye. Attend, however, to what value is to be derived from such an attention to images on the screen: "as the zombie forces her eye closer and closer to the sharp splinter of wood [Q2], my perception responded physiologically to what I saw onscreen, triggered by the memory not of being attacked by a zombie, but of corresponding sensory and somatic responses [Q3]."⁴⁸

Neck is what indentures form to feeling, placing [Q2] in the service of [Q3]. Neck aesthetics constitute that minimal attention to image, sound, duration, and structure sufficient to make a claim for the provocative impulse that stirs bodies. Form is thereby taken as means, put to work for affective claims: the text merely *in terrorem*.

It is not that critical language falters here or that the ineffable resists representation. Horror's risk is in its very etymological tidiness. Horrère has rendered a reductive generic form marked at every turn by an ontological affectivity, whose essentialized joining to the moved corporeal scene has instrumentalized the aesthetic, blindly overvalued the spectatorial, colluded with the either cynical or fannish impulses of industry, exhausted the same theoretical models while entirely ignoring others, depleted the capacity to generate theoretical shock, and willfully ignored horror's capacity for a low formalism and the restricted forms, neutral forms, and speculations derived from reading for form that constitute an analytic (of finitude; of force; of eth-

ics; of aporias of critique itself; &c.). This is why accounts of horror aesthetics have looked repeatedly at expressive lighting and suspenseful editing, but almost never at lines and shapes, constructed grids, formal games, rhythms unrelated to physiology, the nonhuman (without converting it to a provocation to a humanism of neck), eccentric typography, hypotactic structures, or the cold rigors of arbitrary restraint: for it is not immediately obvious how to make these things efficiently work for generic shudderclaims. Functionalizing the aesthetic, this theory can tell us nothing about the aesthetic, nor can it adequately grapple with formal elements that are indifferent to affect, opaque, neutral, blank, abstract. Thus, shadow will be overemphasized and number ignored; close-up of corpse valued at the expense of alphabet.

Paradoxically, well after *la mort de l'auteur*, a naive notion of intention is thereby brought back to the fold—for what is an affective tautology of horror other than an insistence on the centrality of intention-to-arouse-fright, not by a singular Romantic genius but by industry: the undead author as marketer, the text returned to a prestructuralist utopia of singular, successful, limited transmission of something shuddersome. Indeed, the entire impulse behind this critical tendency is a rabidly pre-poststructuralist fidelity to a model of nondifference between a word and a thing. Negativity is recuperated for a successfully expressed, successfully commodified affect-experience (criticism in collusion with a drive toward profit), and, paradoxically, the affectively disturbing is also thereby domesticated, contained and bounded by the idealisms of sensing and feeling that thrive at the site of the neck. Taken in this register, horror inverts Frege's definition of zero—what is not self-identical—and becomes that fullness which belongs to the concept *identical with itself*: Horror as the provocation of what horrifies. Horrère has thereby constituted the finitude of the infinitely transformative task of *theoria*. In the midst of seemingly radical claims for the destabilizing, destructive, lustily entropic dimension of this mode of representation (all those dark themes! all those terrible tropes!), the body's fleshy connector functions as a way of keeping critical work on the side of essence, origin, totality, center, stability, integrity, unity, meaningfulness, put in the service of confirming noncontradiction and purity—all those anodyne ideals that will never fail to find their adherents.

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If you wanted to write of difference. If you wanted to speak of change. If you chose to speak about the same but not presume it. If you wanted to think many, not one, or not even one but nothing, or what is becoming or unfurling or what isn't yet but might and how that might might take shape. If the body isn't enough, or if the body regarded differently might be enough but the body is not the neck and the neck is not enough. If you ache for other words. If you don't want to presume you already know. If you suspect that knowledge, in fact, is not the right term and suspect that knowledge might, in fact, be part of the problem if knowledge is presumed to afford the critic with something in advance. If you require surprise, to be surprised, to surprise. If you don't know beforehand what is missing or where things will go or how it will all end up and if that seems like the way to create something unforeseen even if it also does mean that no certain outcome would ever be guaranteed. If you wanted to think something new. If that feels risky. If you wanted to think something new and were willing to accept every risk.

CERVICAL FRACTURES

Neck is the supreme extratextual referent; it is what suspends, as in amber, infinite deferral, referral, difference, play—equilibrium of thought, neck is stasis. Necks are a single principle.

And so: What becomes possible if the theorist does away with the expressive-affective neck of horror, this flare so attractive for a mothy thought, this insinuating atlas that has so stubbornly gotten in the way?

Ossified concepts demand fracturing. And what, if not horror, teaches how nimbly bones can break.

—Neck thereby ruined, what now will prop us up?

The answer is a radical formalism, though it makes no promise to keep any skull or system afloat. For radical formalism—not a formalism in thrall to radical politics but radical as in *radix*, to return to the speculative *ground*

or *roots* of what thinking can claim—involves reading without guarantee; its terms, affordances, and stakes cannot be declared and secured beforehand. It takes as its motto for theoretical ethos something like Heidegger's description of the primordial truth of existence: "The Situation cannot be calculated in advance or presented like something present-at-hand which is waiting for someone to grasp it."⁴⁹ An extraordinary vulnerability exists in this charge of being absolutely open to possible determinations. Reading without guarantee always risks defaulting on the contracts that purport to stabilize and restrain signification. Its promise, however, is enormous, allowing thought to proceed beyond the constraints of bad affect, to revitalize exhausted concepts, generating surprise in the unfolding act of reading itself—all that which is derived from its quality of being an uncertain investment, resisting economies that promise high returns and predictable yields.

One must begin with the priority of grid over neck, chart over feeling, design over affect, toroid over terror, drawn *graphikos* over the vividly graphic, arrangement (of textual form) over derangement (of represented corpus)—the totality of what can be neither paraphrased about a text nor instrumentalized for claims of intensity or experience. (Only pornography has been more durably regarded as exhausted by its affective provocations—and it, too, demands a resolutely formal reading. *Speculative pornography* is not an oxymoron.) I am not insisting that the transdisciplinary thinking of the most negative affect add to its tally a greater quantity of formal readings, nor that formalism is a *correction* or merely a new critical *emphasis*, but, rather, that rotations of the affective-expressive neck have operated at the explicit expense of speculative modes of thinking. The aim herein is a total effort to reapproach form as the root of all reading, and as what grounds theoretical work on every one of the figures—violence, cruelty, finitude, relation, ethics, care, and debt—that will carry across this book. What is revealed en route is a bond that sutures horror to philosophy as a site that (humiliatingly, problematically) also treats those figures themselves *as* problems of form. Perhaps at so late a moment it seems willfully odd to insist that, accordingly, this is not really a book about horror. But: this is not really a book about horror. It is a work that puts the extremest pressure on formalism's promise, reach, and aporetic limit at the site of extremities: of force, of construction, of thought. Horror will be the occasion where radical formalism is, as it were, *put to the test*, posing the question of the limits of formalism on its most difficult but urgent terrain—precisely where it might seem as though the raw materiality of destroyed bodies, of brutality and torture and the world's worst stuff

demanded a renunciation of all abstractions and aestheticisms. That this is a book about form will not become visible—or, rather, the speculative stakes and risks of radical formalism will not become earned—until rather late in the text. Formalism reminds us that one must always begin thought from a particular concrete somewhere. Horror is one place to begin.

At stake in a radical formalism of horror is simultaneously a revision of our approach to the body, that body whose neck has so insistently been lodged at the center of critical concern. Insisting that a thinking of horror shed the neck and its affective teleology does not require renouncing the remainder of the body, only a wholesale shift in thought about what constitutes the body, what violence and force against the body are possible, and what bodies can formally do. Far from an idealism that would deny the materiality of the body, but equally divorced from an interest in the body as a discursive construction, horror regards the body as *nothing but formal material*, treating it as a compositional aspect that is navigated by, intersects with, interprets and is interpreted by, distorts and is distorted by, devastates and is devastated by, reconfigures and is reconfigured by, unfolding relations with countless other formal aspects that mutually and continuously interact, bearing out the potential for being otherwise. Bodies do not possess form, detaining it like a *thing*; rather, for horror the body is nothing but a trajective process of change that is formally navigable, which is to say givable and manipulable, and which does not disappear with an encounter with violence but in fact is positively enabled *by* it. This is not a matter of adding a formal consideration of the body as a supplement; it is to regard the body as a formal problem from the very beginning. It will, however, radically change the relation (strictly: the correspondence or connection) between the body and violence—one set of connective relations will be severed, while another will appear and be affirmed.

Quite late in *The Forms of the Affects*, I wondered, but left it alone: “Indeed, we might more broadly consider whether horror is the genre in which the body is formalized, given textual shape only to be subjected to the bare destruction of its form.” We might indeed.

Consider Luca Guadagnino’s 2018 reimagining of Dario Argento’s *Suspiria*, which is orchestrated around the wild transformations, transfixions, and modifications of various female bodies, most spectacularly early in the film with the blackmagical joining of the bodies of dancers Susie and Olga (a corporeal sympathy), such that as Susie moves through space, dances, leaps, bends, and strains, Olga’s body is forced to mimic the coordinates of the dance, will-less, volition-less, and art-less, which is to say dance reduced

to its formal navigation of force on and through extremities, through limbs and joints and organs. The force of Susie's dancing forces Olga's body into new postures (plate 1). The dancing of one form, structured and purposive, is commuted to the dragging of another form, deprived of the freedom to choose aesthetic force, reduced to nothing but force qua force: Olga's form is dragged; that form is bent; its form is torn; this form's structural things (= bones) are made discontinuous (= broken; = fractured); the formal touching parts (= joints) are cleaved (= burst), their formal relation to container, to surface (= skin) made perpendicular (= pierced); one form (= unified) is made multiple, one form (= the upright, linear) is made different (= the spiraled, bent). Olga-as-form is neither deformed nor malformed: this She is taken for a This and the form of this This is re-formed. From the point of view of the feeling body—that is, neck—the scene is one of agonizing unending torture and the destruction of essential living quality. From the point of view of visible form, the same event is the construction of and generation of and attestation of new forms. *Torture* recalls its Latin roots from *torquere*—to twist, turn, wind, wring, distort—refusing to settle in itself the subject of what is twisted, turned, wound, wrung, distorted. *Suspiria* is not a horror film because of the presence of witches or any vague affective account of its effect on implied or empirical spectators; it is neither more nor less than a horror film because it attests to the state in which the deformation of the body from an anthropocentric perspective is formally generative of a new possibility for aesthetic construction, in other words, invents a new genre of dance from a compositional perspective. *Suspiria* demonstrates that the gestures of violence do not negate—violence is what positively ex-presses new choreographic potential precisely *because* horror regards the body purely formally.

Questions without necks:

What does it mean to linger with the formal languages of any given text? This requires close reading, the digressions, deferrals, and inefficient detours of interminable interpretation. Texts are not to be reduced to the paraphrase of themes or itemization of tropes; broken is the empiricist circularity that confirms, in any given film, the set {horrific} determined in advance. This thought rebukes Twitchell's oft-invoked insistence that the affective-cognitive-physiological-sensorial priority of etymologically derived affect supplants the need to attend to the autonomous forms of texts and will work against what

Althusser dubbed in *Reading Capital* “the illusion of immediate reading,” the myth of “an innocent reading.”⁵⁰ To what use are put formal restraints (the compilation, the anthology, an abecedarium, but also the sequential, the enclosed, limited cartographies); and to what use are put forms such as the diagram, the ordinal; the cell or grid or table; graphs, maps, or sequences; formal rules; typography; the shapes of things; shapes themselves? Aesthetic, formal, structural dimensions are treated as indifferent to affective provocation; they bear out their own force. *Neutral horror* is no longer a zero-sum phrase. Jurisdictions of horror will now include being, relating, the relation of being and relating, and the relation of being and relating to form. Neck will come to seem less radical than grid, torture less brutal than diagram. More violence will be done in A, B, C than on flesh. What analytic (of finitude: as limit, of being, of thought) is thereby demonstrated, which is to say what analytic is put on formal display, or for which analytic is a purely formal display *necessary* for its demonstration? How does ontological finitude cut into and across aesthetic infinitude? What cold formalisms of philosophical thought on being and relationality are attested to in the formalisms of cinematic and literary objects? How to think the nothing, and for what reason? What is the feel of political terror and violence, not as a question of sensation but as a matter of rapidity, sensitivity, and mechanical action? How does an abecedarium, a list or a table, a chart or a grid, or a fascination with form itself bear out a specific kind of violence? And finally—with the aim of making as many comparisons as possible—what lines of thought are set loose by regarding horror as a deliverance *into* formality, not just for the aesthetic but for philosophy itself, that which intimately shares with horror the problem of how to think violence and ethics as nothing but problems of form?

a list, design, a table, a chart, a map, a grid, a database, a matrix, a line, a ray, an alphabet, order, a sequence, a diagram, number, system, set, a chain, an action, a rhythm, a color, a shape, a field, a spacing, duration, an increment, all thresholds, a pattern, extension, contraction, a toroid, a speed, a curve, a pressure, slowing, a field, a block, evasion, a figure, figures, and rubble and tread and sound or spool, silence, a word, light, lightlessness, repetition, a gap, a match, a difference, a givenness, a change, something, nothing, anything, but never a neck

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First voice: How can theory reactivate an exhausted concept of horror?

Second voice: The problem is that the word already is *there* where this re-activation is called for.

First, again: Shall we merely say nothing, then?

How to think a horror that might be untranslatable, ambiguous and multiple, self-contradicting, self-annihilating—frustrating to the purview of genre in refusing a belonging, disturbance to the proper (horror that *does not want* the proper root that most intimately belongs to it: the height of *impropriety*)? Play as if to dishonor its name: forget *etymon*, true sense, from *etymos*, real, actual—give its form in active falsity, offer up only a lie. Exclude its familiar reified tones, and start over with the word, subject the concept to the urgent problem, the absurd difficulty, that is the promise of language itself, which is to say: confront it always again as though it had never been said first. Neologisms and hyphenations are not enough; contextual parentheses are not enough; elaborate and ever-finer taxonomic distinctions, the lexical equivalent of Freud’s “narcissism of minor differences”—the careful midlevel ordering of horror versus terror against the sublime (different from wonder) and opposed to dread, related to loathing (var., contempt), not quite the grotesque, the uncanny, the fantastic, narrow monstrosity (contrast deformity [cf. freakery]) or the strange, or repugnance, anguish or the hateful, or , , , , , &c.—only defer down the long signifying chain another arrival at shuddering spine, disgusted gut, prickling skin—and these are all ways of still writing *Neck*.

If horror remains lodged to *horrère*, the leech sucking off the host—though which is the fed-upon and which the segmented worm is an open question—then the critical risk is an etymology that seems to speak of plenitude, exhausting itself in its debts to what is prior; the word would be taken to exhaust the concept, in an exhaustion that converts a concept into a deixis for its affect, converting its affect into the commodity the object offers, and in doing so perversely works against Deleuze’s insistence that concepts must above all be *generated*. Yet one is, as one is, stuck with exhausted terms, that liability for new thoughts. The question will always be how to retain the word without getting lodged in (trapped by) tautologies.

The crisis of horror, then, is that it requires *horrère* be contradicted—say it for the new while denying that anything new might be said in its name; repeat, restate, reuse the very term under erasure.

On the other hand, of course, there can be no concept without a (provisional) word. We must retain it (—though not at any cost).

And so, the first task for thinking a nonaffective horror is to contemplate with rigor the form of a circle.

This is the fundamental problem of critical tradition, whether one of history, origin, development, or generic evolution: one cannot merely leap over the wasted heavy grounds of a concept to reinvigorate X without remaining stubbornly bound to them. We will not not write horror. As Derrida phrases this dilemma in *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*, in his reading of the question of the origin of geometry, “The traditional sedimentations must be reduced in order for us to be able to return to the originary foundation; but at the same time it is because there is sedimentation and tradition that this return is possible.”⁵¹ If this methodological problem is a circle, the solution is also a formal figure, graphic and geometric. Husserl's proposed method in *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften* is that “we have no other choice than to proceed forward and backward in a zigzag pattern; the one must help the other in an interplay.”⁵² Husserl writes *Zickzack*—after all, what better to break into roundness than line? Disorderly, messy, a course of digressions and swerves, abrupt alternations between clarity and opacity, snaking oscillations between analysis and inclarities that block or frustrate, understandings that do not precede investigation—patterns that leave a record of dangerous, angular descents, of erring off course—all obliquity, a roughening up of graphic propriety. Unlike neck, that straightforward path on which one will never lose oneself, the energy of a zigzag is in its inefficiency as movement, recalling what Jean-Claude Lebensztejn beautifully dubbed “the extravagant patience” of Derrida's strategy of close, subtle, winding, indirect reading, reading that can surprise (“direct attention [. . .] through strangeness”), which generates new concepts in the act of reading as transverse travel. Detouring bends being themselves the point.⁵³

A horror that does not stand on neck constitutes something unassimilable to genre's obsession with the genetic (origins) or the sorting tasks of *genre*. Instead of taking horror from the point of view of neck's pleasures or unpleasures, this book turns to textual particulars, and in place of *genre*, it considers horror in relation to the *general*. Genre—whether conceived via the semantic or the syntactic—is miserly; the general is generous. In attending to the general, however, horror will come back around—and with great force—to violence and wreckage, to the inescapable limits of understanding, to the par-

ticular undoing of particular things and to the ruination of being. If there is anything interesting still to result from thinking with horror—if it is to be reactivated, reanimated—we cannot remain with the widespread assertoric bias of criticism, or what Andrew Tudor dubs “the empiricist dilemma” of genre, assembling an existing membership and then retroactively identifying shared characteristics in the group already assembled because it was determined to possess precisely those qualities in common in the first place. Genre ends up, as he neatly puts it, being what “we collectively believe it to be”—the archive held to be true solely as what already *is*, thus inherently on the side of the antispeculative.⁵⁴ For the rhythms of thought—at their best—disorganize their object of inquiry. The negative effort of critique is beset by the affirmative positing of new conceptual targets. The task, therefore, of unearthing the limitations of horror cannot remain with the project of unmasking what is already declared; it must also generate, through that interplay of what it is attempting to do violence to, a new form—that *something else something new* that is to be done.

And yet one cannot do away entirely with genre either. As Derrida frames this secondary dilemma in “The Law of Genre,” “there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging.”⁵⁵ The risk is in confusing the law of genre—a standard of unity, a test of distinctness, an establishment of limit—and the law of the law of genre, that while every genre contains a defining mark (by minimal definition), said mark is not itself within that genre. Any given work of horror is both classified and declassified by the problem of generic membership. Its impurity is a participation that is never a belonging. This is precisely what functions as an origin of interpretation, opening up fields of possibilities in relation to reading form. Consider the impasse of a purely generic reading of Drew Goddard and Joss Whedon’s 2011 meta-horror extraordinaire *The Cabin in the Woods*, in which the film reflexively deploys stock generic conventions in its “upstairs” teenagers-in-eerie-location narrative, but requires that criticism relinquish precisely those aspects in order to grapple with the grid of possible database inclusions in the “downstairs” narrative conceit of panoptic controllers who manipulate the conditions of possibility “upstairs” (the meta-/hypertext grammatically and architecturally hypotactic). Rather than reflexively subverting conventions (the knowingness that so many critics have aligned with the quintessential postmodern horror sensibility), *Cabin in the Woods* effects platform leaps, spatialized and homologized in the glass grid of all possible monstrous narrative components that might have arrived in the

textual universe “upstairs” but did not. If laws of genre explain the logic of inclusive membership, the law of the law of genre points to the failure to account for this grid from within any generic heuristic. *Neck can never account for database.*

One cannot entirely sever horror from genre, and yet a ready-made horror cannot think the *Zickzack* that is the methodological grapple required for undoing its name. The aim, then, is not to replace *horror* with merely another placeholder—one either indifferent to what has been said in its name or one that merely says the same name by way of a shift cipher. The charge is to not-define, to suspend definition, to move in the space between and in the irresolvable blanknesses that beg to be filled in. Back to Husserl, Derrida neatly outlines the form of the dilemma: “If I empty geometry of its traditional, present, effective content, nothing will remain for me, or only a formal concept of geometry that will itself be constituted or derived. [. . .] Thus I will get to a description that will oscillate between an *a priori* formalism and an absolute empiricism.”⁵⁶ This if-then formulation is itself a conditional statement (if *p* is true, then *q* will result), performing the very dilemma thereby named: geometry can never be emptied such that truly nothing of it remains—for the very formalism of protasis and apodosis (of *p* and *q*) is foundational to pure geometry; writing cannot avoid the sedimentations of geometry to make a claim about geometry. (Geometry is a problem of genre as well. So many things are.)

Every reading method comes at a cost, and here our dilemma is a properly affective one, a matter related to love—it is, to the point, a problem of fidelity.

In *The Work of Mourning*, in his piece on (in the wake of) Barthes, Derrida posits an ethical dilemma for the friend who remains after the other dies. He casts this as “two infidelities”—“an impossible choice: on the one hand, not to say anything that comes back to oneself, to one’s own voice, to remain silent [. . .] but this excess of fidelity would end up saying and exchanging nothing. It returns to death. [. . .] On the other hand, by avoiding all quotation, all identification, all rapprochement [. . .] one risks making him disappear again, as if one could add more death to death and thus indecently pluralize it.” To recall through citation risks anesthetizing death’s loss as pain, neutralizing friendship as love, and points only to the friend as dead; but to avoid quotation risks a re-disappearance, and so one must “do and not do both at once, with having to correct one infidelity by the other.”⁵⁷ This accounting of the responsibilities of love in the midst of grief holds something of the fundamental difficulty of speculative thought derived from reading with form—itsself a kind of amative project amid laborious troubles.

It's a fucking intolerable choice: On the one hand, if one remains bound to all that has been said in the name of horror (or anything that will be at stake in this book—finitude, violence, ethics, love, form itself), then critical work merely cites and reiterates the exhaustion of concepts; concepts and their specificity (all difference) disappear altogether and nothing new can be generated from their thinking. On the other hand, if one is indifferent to that density, one risks making the very subject disappear (killing it off, as it were, over and over again, at the origin). Even worse, of course, would be to be overwhelmed by the all-that-has-been-said and to thereby remain mute, repeating the dilemma of Cratylus of Athens: Aristotle's *Metaphysics* tells of a skepticism so extreme that he “finally did not think it right to say anything but only moved his finger.”⁵⁸ So one must honor the impossible choice and *do and not do* both at once—correcting exhaustion and saturation (the *nothing-more-nothing-new-to-be-seen*; the *Has not everything been said on the subject of X?*; the *Doesn't death, or violence, or love, or _____ return us to meaningfulness as such?*) with bold indifference, with a callous refusal to remain faithful to accumulated saturations. The zigzag this book accordingly traces moves between a formalism of horror and a horror of formalism, a formalism of violence and a violence of formalism, a formalism of ethics and an ethics of formalism, and ultimately a formalism of love and a love of formalism, not allowing any single term to serve or stand on any other. Interest remains with the *Zickzack*: the disaffordance of critical possibilities, the disqualification of critical oppositions, lingering with the awkward, arduous, inefficient zigzag, holding fast only to the veering speculative potential of a great infidelity.

The words we know will be retained as worlds and as words; there will be no new words to save thought from the problems of sedimentation and exhaustion. But they will be retained as impossible and yet insistent; retained, but only unfaithfully. And then, as goes the essential promise of all close reading, the venture turns now to: let us see what happens.

We have heard that we do not know all it is that form can do.

What can form do in the face of horror?

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It may be supposed that a little bit of formalism turns away from the material body subject to finitude, but radical formalism brutally, viciously, relentlessly, and movingly will bring thought back around to it. In time.

And in a manner we did not know was coming.

—Even when death as the possible impossibility of being is precisely what is seen to certainly be coming:

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Notes

EXORDIA

1. Witold Gombrowicz, *A Kind of Testament*, ed. Dominique de Roux, trans. Alastair Hamilton, intro. Maurice Nadeau (Champaign, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 2007), 87. Leibniz, “Methode de la certitude et l’art d’inventer”: “la meilleure Methode qu’il y a c’est d’y faire le plus de comparaisons qu’on peut, et des indices les plus exacts, les plus particularisés, et les plus diversifiés qu’il est possible” (the best method is to make as many comparisons as possible, and the most accurate, the most particular, and the most diverse indices possible). Here, and for Leibniz’s proposal for a new encyclopedia, I have relied on the collection of Leibniz’s essays found in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *The Art of Controversies*, trans. and ed. Marcelo Dascal (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), A VI 4 961, A VI 4 338–49. Roland Barthes, Preface, *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972), xvi–xvii. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks, 1914–1916*, 2nd ed., ed. G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 12e. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 17.

2. Leibniz, “Encyclopedia,” in *The Art of Controversies*, 134–39.

3. Leibniz, “Encyclopedia,” 136.

CHAPTER ONE. HORRÈRE OR

1. “Cerberus haec ingens latratu regna trifauci / personat, adverso recubans immanis in antro. / Cui vates, horrère videns iam colla colubris, / melle soporatum et medicatis frugibus offam / obicit” (These realms huge Cerberus makes ring with his triple-throated baying, his monstrous bulk crouching in a cavern opposite. To him, seeing the snakes now bristling on his necks, the seer flung a morsel drowsy with honey and drugged meal). Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1–6*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), Book VI, lines 417–21, 561.

2. “Aujourd’hui tous nos mauvais versificateurs emploient le carnage et l’horreur à

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la fin d'un vers." Voltaire, "Remarques sur Sertorius," in *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, vol. 9 (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères, 1855), 609.

Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. T. O. McLoughlin and James T. Boulton, in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Volume 1: The Early Writings*, ed. Paul Langford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 288. Burke's theory of "delightful horror" is a rejoinder to John Locke's reduction of all affects to degrees of either pleasure or pain, themselves mutually exclusive conditions and the one the negative of the other. Burke's account of the particular delight of a certain type of pain linked uniquely to aesthetic feeling proposes mixed sentiments that are processual in addition to composite and multiple: a cessation of pain produces a certain form of relieving pleasure that then returns to what Burke dubs "indifference," and a cessation of pleasure involves a certain form of unpleasure named as disappointment or grief. A pain that does too great a violence is merely terrible and holds no delight.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: Or the Modern Prometheus* (1818). Oxford World's Classics. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 39.

3. Augustine, *Confessions* VII.10.16. See the first volume of James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions, Latin Text with English Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

4. Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, act 4, scene 3, lines 278–81.

5. Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 262 (emphasis added).

6. Charles Darwin, *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*, in *From So Simple a Beginning: The Four Great Books of Charles Darwin*, ed. Edward O. Wilson (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 1314.

7. Darwin, *Expression of Emotions*, 1435.

8. James B. Twitchell, *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 10.

9. Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 24.

10. Carroll, *Philosophy of Horror*, 14–15.

11. Or something stronger than resemblance—overt critical recycling. Linda Badley, in a passage that explicitly cites Twitchell, repeats his etymological claim: "Horror is also the most physiological of genres—with the possible exception of pornography. [. . .] As pornography's purpose is to arouse desire and stimulate pleasure, horror's is to arouse and exorcise latent fear. [. . .] At its simplest, it delivers a frisson that originates as a somatic response. Horror comes from *horrēre*, which refers to the 'bristling of the hair on the nape of the neck' [. . .]. The phenomenon has been taken to its logical conclusion in images of the body that evoke the greatest possible physical response." Linda Badley, *Film, Horror, and the Body Fantastic* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 11.

Likewise, Bruce Kawin intones in *Horror and the Horror Film*, "in Latin the verb *horrēre*—the source of 'horror'—means to tremble, shiver, shake or shudder, not

necessarily because of disease, but in some cases because of fear; it also means to loathe and to dread as well as to bristle, to stand on end as hair does, and to be rough. The hair-raising shudder is part of the term. [. . .] There it is: rough, nauseating, dreadful, frightening, hair-raising, repulsive, unspeakable, nameless, loathsome—an odd foundation on which to build an art.” Bruce Kavin, *Horror and the Horror Film* (London: Anthem Press, 2012), 4.

12. Linda Williams, “Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess,” *Film Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (summer 1991): 5.

13. Anna Powell, *Deleuze and Horror Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 8.

14. Twitchell, *Dreadful Pleasures*, 11, 17.

15. For an exhaustive catalogue and analysis of words related to fear and bravery in the Homeric epics, see Robert Zaborowski, *La crainte et le courage dans l'Illiade et l'Odysée* (Warsaw: Stakroos, 2002). See also Gregory Nagy, “The Subjectivity of Fear as Reflected in Ancient Greek Wording,” *Dialogues* 5 (2010): 29–45; David Konstan, “Fear,” chapter 6 in *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); and Part I, “Theoretical Views About Pity and Fear as Aesthetic Emotions,” in Dana LaCourse Munteanu, *Tragic Pathos: Pity and Fear in Greek Philosophy and Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

16. John Miles Foley, “‘Reading Homer’ through Oral Traditions,” in *Approaches to Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey*, ed. Kostas Myrsiades (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 29.

17. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Martin Hammond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 250.

18. See Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 153–54, for a critique of Ammonius’s distinction.

19. See H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon, with a Revised Supplement*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996).

20. Goethe, *Faust II*, line 6272: Shuddering [the shudder; to shudder] is the best part of humankind. Constantine translates this as “Best faculty in man’s the thrill of dread.” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Part 2*, trans. David Constantine (London: Penguin, 2009), 56.

Nietzsche will echo this in a fragment in the *Nachlass* from 1872–73: “Das Erschrecken ist der Menschheit bestest Theil” (Terror is the best part of humanity). The philosopher of laughter (and dance) was also very much a philosopher of the shudder. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Nietzsches Werke: Schriften und Entwürfe 1872 bis 1876* (Leipzig: Druck und Verlag von C. G. Naumann, 1896), 209.

21. Robin Wood, “The American Nightmare: Horror in the 70s,” in *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan . . . and Beyond*, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, [1986] 2003), 71. Judith (Jack) Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 21.

22. See Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (New York: Verso, 2009).

23. Wood, "American Nightmare," 70. Stephen Prince, "Introduction: The Dark Genre and Its Paradoxes," in *The Horror Film*, ed. Stephen Prince (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 2. On horror as historical allegory, see Adam Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 1–16.

24. Siegfried Kracauer, "Hollywood's Terror Films: Do They Reflect an American State of Mind?" *New German Critique* 89 (spring–summer 2003): 105; originally published in *Commentary* 2 (1946): 132–36. "The monster, as we know it, died in 1963 when Hannah Arendt published her 'Report on the Banality of Evil' entitled *Eichmann in Jerusalem*" (Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, 161).

25. L. Williams, "Film Bodies," 4, 5. See, for example, claims such as, "My other anchoring point is the body, especially the moment of visceral contact between the viewer's and the character's, as foregrounded in examples of graphic Horror, mutilation or torture. This cinematic moment [. . .] is, for me, the epitome of the moment of affect: the point at which our bodies may be moved by those we see on the screen." Xavier Aldana Reyes, *Horror Film and Affect: Towards a Corporeal Model of Viewership* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 3.

26. Robert Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies: The Coming of Sound Film and the Origins of the Horror Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 2. Powell, *Deleuze and Horror Film*, 5.

27. Philip Brophy, "Horrorality: The Textuality of Contemporary Horror Films," *Screen* 27, no. 1 (January–February 1986): 5.

28. Carol Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 9. Morris Dickstein, "The Aesthetics of Fright," in *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press: 1996), 69.

29. See Matt Hills, *The Pleasures of Horror* (London: Continuum, 2005), 73–90; and Isabel Cristina Pinedo, *Recreational Terror: Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 12–14.

30. For example, in a *New York Times* article about the inaugural issue of the journal *Horror Studies*, the lede is deferred until a time-honored question is posed: "With gruesome television series about vampires, werewolves, serial killers and zombies earning huge ratings, and a new cinematic bloodbath opening seemingly every week, the cultural appetite for horror raises a curious question: why do so many of us enjoy being disgusted and terrified?" Jason Zinoman, "The Critique of Pure Horror," *New York Times*, July 16, 2011. A useful survey of approaches to the broader aesthetic paradox can be found in Aaron Smuts, "Art and Negative Affect," *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 1 (2009): 39–55.

31. Powell, *Deleuze and Horror Film*, 8; Williams, "Film Bodies," 2; Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 20. That attention to the specific iconography on screen returns not only to the felt experience of the body, but to the felt experience of the critic's body, is a broader shortcoming in theories of affectivity that rely on a

phenomenological theory of embodiment, about which I have written elsewhere. See Brinkema, *Forms of the Affects*, 26–46.

Of the confessional tendency, most notably there is this: “I first started paying attention to horror movies when I was a teenager dating Karla Decker in the 1970s. Karla was a leggy cheerleader who was usually distant and physically unapproachable [. . .]. In the darkened theater of a gripping horror film, however, Karla became uncharacteristically animated: She required me [EB: !] to hold her clammy, manicured hand, put my arm around her trembling shoulders, and supply a brave chest to shield her exquisitely beautiful face from the terrifying action occurring on the screen in front of us.” Indeed, Tony Magistrale, *Abject Terrors: Surveying the Modern and Post-modern Horror Film* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), xvii.

32. As Stanley Solomon pronounced in 1976, “It seems to be incontrovertible that the horror genre in the American cinema has been primarily exploitative, artless, frequently without taste or restraint or sense, and generally unworthy of serious attention.” Stanley Solomon, *Beyond Formula: American Film Genres* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 112.

33. Magistrale, *Abject Terrors*, xvii.

34. Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1986), 6.

35. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 2nd ed., ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 190. Sigmund Freud, “The ‘Uncanny;’” in *Writings on Art and Literature*, ed. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery, foreword by Neil Hertz (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 194.

36. David Hume, “Of Tragedy,” in *Eight Great Tragedies*, ed. Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman, William Burto (New York: Meridian, 1996), 433. The 1757 essay was first published as the third dissertation in Hume’s *Four Dissertations*, of which the fourth was his companion work on aesthetics, “Of the Standard of Taste.”

37. Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 221.

38. Twitchell, *Dreadful Pleasures*, 9; Stephen King, *Danse Macabre* (New York: Gallery Books, 1981), 28. The general form of this question is impossible to shed; one begins to paranoiacally glimpse it everywhere. Kristen Wright’s recent version of the paradox wonders almost identically, “How can something that we desire suddenly become disgusting? And how can something that is monstrous elicit both of these opposing emotions?” Kristen Wright, *Disgust and Desire: The Paradox of the Monster* (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2018), vii.

39. Carroll, *Philosophy of Horror*, 158. This question is given multiple variations throughout his text: “Why are horror audiences attracted by what, typically (in everyday life), should (and would) repel them?” and “How can horror audiences find pleasure in what by nature is distressful and unpleasant?” Carroll, *Philosophy of Horror*, 159.

40. Aikin, "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror," in *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764–1840*, ed. Rictor Norton (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 282–83.

41. Aikin, "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror," 283.

42. Carroll's theory of art-horror requires a monster—it conceptually fails without it—precisely because that figure is the nonarbitrary site of revulsion and fear that simultaneously constitutes a riveting attraction and curiosity, enhanced and sustained through narrative structures related to disclosure. He thereby resolves his paradoxical presumptions in favor of a fascination at the very category admixtures that constitute the provocative object of fear and loathing. The very broad promise, then, of a philosophy of (all) art-horror is achieved at the expense of conceptual reach: the theory requires a scientifically uncountenanced monster (Carroll does not admit *Psycho* as a horror film) in a carefully structured narrative form (he does not admit non-narrative elements), in which emotions are the "rivet" bonding viewer to objects on screen, keeping them cognitively engaged in this process of satisfying curiosity. Those three reductions negatively supply the capacity to make a positive claim for the resolution of the aesthetic paradox.

Julian Hanich, in a rejoinder to Carroll's privileging of the cognitive over the sensory, remains also with the formula so durable since Hume, titling his 2012 book *Cinematic Emotion in Horror Films and Thrillers: The Aesthetic Paradox of Pleasurable Fear*. Hanich's phenomenology of horror attends to the lived experience of "the emotionalized body, the cinematic surroundings, the threatening film, the captivated co-viewers." Decrying the emphasis on representation and "interpretive methods" that have ignored the experiential dimension of fear, Hanich, like Twitchell, explicitly opposes his project to formal readings. "Focusing on experience implies that we stop treating films like de-contextualized 'texts,'" Hanich posits, "but take them as events that take place in special environments. We should refrain from looking at frightening films as autonomous aesthetic products, but situate the embodied viewer within the spatial and social surroundings of a specific site of exhibition." And to his word, if not his credit, Hanich does describe nuances of experience without considering texts as aesthetic objects. This is particularly apparent in his language of aim-achievement when he turns to alliterative phenomenologies of variations of fear ("frightening fascination," "startling scares," "apprehensive agitation"). In perceptual reference to matters of "increase of loudness" and "deliberate distraction," and "filmic strategies of suggested horror," the formal is subsumed into the felt, textual aesthetics rendered mere strategy, which is to say: a plan aiming at achieving *something else*. Hanich does away with catharsis theories, resolving his version of the paradox in favor of a pleasurable "subjective *intensity* including remarkable metamorphoses of the lived body and the foregrounding of time as well as valuable instances of *collectivity*" (emphasis in original). This model is not only invested in the bristle; it is one whose paradox-resolution is coextensive with (it happens, as it were, on the back of) an agitated neck: the rippling of erectable hairs is the source of the calming of paradoxical turmoil, a bodily tautology given meaning from functionalized aesthetic strategies.

Julian Hanich, *Cinematic Emotion in Horror Films and Thrillers: The Aesthetic Paradox of Pleasurable Fear* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 15, 16–17, 24.

43. Alex Neill, “On a Paradox of the Heart,” *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 65, nos. 1/2 (1992): 53–65; Berys Gaut, “The Paradox of Horror,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 33, no. 4 (1993): 333–45; Katerina Bantinaki, “The Paradox of Horror: Fear as a Positive Emotion,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70, no. 4 (2012): 383–92.

44. Andrew Tudor, “Why Horror? The Peculiar Pleasures of a Popular Genre,” *Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3 (1997): 461 (emphasis in original).

45. Angela Ndaliansis, *The Horror Sensorium: Media and the Senses* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012), 16.

46. Ndaliansis, *Horror Sensorium*, 17.

47. Ndaliansis, *Horror Sensorium*, 32.

48. Ndaliansis, *Horror Sensorium*, 34.

49. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: HarperCollins, 1962), sect. 307, 355. All references to *Being and Time* cite the section and page number in the Macquarrie and Robinson translation.

50. Althusser, *Reading Capital*, 17.

51. Jacques Derrida, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*, trans. Marian Hobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 164.

52. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 58.

53. Jean-Claude Lebensztejn and John Johnston, “Star,” *October* 1 (spring 1976): 88.

54. Andrew Tudor, *Theories of Film* (New York: Viking, 1973), 138, 139.

55. Jacques Derrida, “The Law of Genre,” *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1980): 65.

56. Derrida, *Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*, 166.

57. Jacques Derrida, “The Deaths of Roland Barthes,” in *The Work of Mourning*, ed. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 45.

58. Aristotle, *Metaphysica* (Metaphysics), trans. W. D. Ross, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 745–46.

CHAPTER TWO. THE ORDINAL (DEATH BY DESIGN)

1. André Gide, *The Counterfeiters*, trans. Dorothy Bussy (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 287; translation slightly modified.

2. Roland Barthes, “On Gide and His Journal,” in *A Barthes Reader*, ed. Susan Sontag (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 4.

3. Roland Barthes, “Reading Brillat-Savarin,” in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 250.

4. The interested reader should see Caetlin Benson-Allott, “Old Tropes in New Dimensions: Stereoscopy and Franchise Spectatorship,” in “Genealogical and Ar-