

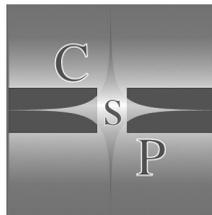
# Space, Haunting, Discourse



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Images..... vii

Introduction: Space, Haunting, Discourse  
Elisabeth Wennö and Maria Holmgren Troy ..... 1

## **Part I: Economic Space**

“Breaking the Surface of the Real”: The Discourses of Commodity  
Capitalism in Clive Barker’s *Hellraiser* Narratives  
Patricia Allmer ..... 14

Re-Reading the Haunted House: Victorian Quests for Property  
Madeleine A. Vala ..... 25

## **Part II: Interior and Exterior Space**

*Amazing Stories from the Future that Never Was*: Neo Rauch  
and the Haunted Spaces of Science Fiction  
Neil Matheson ..... 42

Inverted Worlds: Spectral Phenomena and the Discourse of the Interior  
in the Salem Witch-hunt  
Michael Martin ..... 60

Valancourt the Wanderer: Space, Self and Truth in *The Mysteries  
of Udolpho*  
Claire Wrobel ..... 78

## **Part III: Textual Space**

The Haunted Space of Desire: The Meta-Textual in Vernon Lee’s  
“Amour Dure”  
Rachel Jackson ..... 94

Representations of Big Sur in Late Modernist and Early Postmodernist American Writing Bent Sørensen.....	107
Mapping Exilic Spaces through Ethnic Hi/stories in Mona Latif-Ghattas's <i>Le Double Conte de l'Exil</i> Oana Sabo.....	118
<b>Part IV: Ethical Space</b>	
Desert Mournings María del Pilar Blanco .....	132
Paul Auster's Ghost Writers David Coughlan .....	143
The Site of Murder: Textual Space and Ghost Narrator in Toni Morrison's <i>Love</i> JaeEun Yoo.....	153
<b>Part V: Spaces of Exception</b>	
Maze of Camps: (Im)mobilities, Racism and Spaces of Exception Mekonnen Tesfahuney and Magnus Dahlstedt.....	170
Haunted by Harm: Tortured Bodies and Exceptional Spaces in the Halls of Jurisprudence Maurice E. Stevens .....	200
List of Contributors.....	210
Index .....	214

## LIST OF IMAGES

1-1	The puzzle box, from Clive Barker's film <i>Hellraiser</i> (1987) .....	22
3-1	Neo Rauch's <i>Scala</i> (2000) © DACS 2007 .....	46
3-2	Cover of <i>Amazing Stories</i> (September 1951).....	46
3-3	Neo Rauch's <i>Hatz/Hunt</i> (2002) © DACS 2007 .....	48
3-4	Detail of Neo Rauch's <i>See/Lake</i> (2004) © DACS 2007.....	52
3-5	Cover of <i>Amazing Stories</i> (October 1951).....	52
3-6	Neo Rauch's <i>Schicht/Stratum</i> (1999) © DACS 2007 .....	53
3-7	Cover of <i>New Worlds</i> (Winter 1951). Reprinted with kind permission of Michael Moorcock for New Worlds Publishing .....	53
3-8	Neo Rauch's <i>Weid/Pasture</i> (2001) © DACS 2007.....	55



# INTRODUCTION: SPACE, HAUNTING, DISCOURSE

ELISABETH WENNÖ  
AND MARIA HOLMGREN TROY

This anthology reflects the current critical interest in the concept of space as symbolic representation, analytical tool, discursive strategy, and haunting effect. As Edward W. Soja points out in his book *Thirdspace* (1996), there has been a significant development of thought in recent years in the Humanities. The traditional historical and social approaches to human life are being enriched by the addition of a third dimension, namely spatiality, and he suggests that the inseparable and interdependent historical-social-spatial complex “is beginning to lead to major revisions in how we study history and society” (3). Space matters in an increasingly globalised world and there is every reason to take Doreen Massey’s plea for further elaboration on the way space is imagined seriously (9).

The contributors represent a wide range of disciplines in the Humanities: Literature, Photography, Art, Human Geography, Ethnic Studies, and Cultural Studies. Given the background of the contributors, space is not treated as a geometrical or mathematical concept, or as related to the stratosphere, but rather as an approach to social, mental, or discursive configurations and interpretations. The essays invite the reader to consider the functions of space in human constructions in terms of liminality, limitation, liberation, interiority, exteriority, ideology, narrativity, allegory, ambiguity, exile, and tropology. In the spirit of Henri Lefebvre’s assertion that “In space, what came earlier continues to underpin what follows” (229), most contributions also address the haunting aspects of space and the power of space to evoke, sustain, and challenge symbolic orders and cultural mind-sets.

The objects of interrogation in this anthology are novels, films, art, and cultures. The representations of space focused on are the body, the desert, the house, the room and the city, as well as the metatext, private and public space, ideological and exilic space, the *genius loci*, symbolic and literal camps, space as setting, and textual space. In a wider context the

contributions have ethical, political, historical, and cultural implications. In this sense they all contribute to the “social space” that Lefebvre notes “is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products” but a concept which “implies a great diversity of knowledge” and “subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity—their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder” (73). This anthology testifies to the interrelationships of social space as well as to order and disorder, and to Massey’s assertion that space and multiplicity are “co-constitutive” (9).

The title of this anthology, *Space, Haunting, Discourse*, indicates that the contributors share a conception of space as socially constructed and as a relational process rather than as a Newtonian absolute. While Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift’s anthology *Thinking Space* sets out to chart “the role of space in the construction of theory” (3), this anthology demonstrates how applied approaches to spatiality in various forms of discourse can lay bare how space is constructed and what effects are achieved when it is employed as a haunting or recurring strategy in discourse. After all, as Avery Gordon points out, “Haunting is a constituent element of modern social life” and she insists that any study of social life must address “the ghostly aspects of it” (7).

Crang and Thrift focus on three areas of space which they see as central to current theoretical thinking about space, namely “spaces of language and spaces of self and other”; “spaces of place and spaces of agitation”; and “spaces of experience and spaces of writing.” By extension, these areas are also seminal in critical writings on non-theoretical texts since they all figure and overlap in one way or another in our anthology. The contributions to *Space, Haunting, Discourse* explore the construction of artefacts and cultural discourses and phenomena rather than that of theory, and are therefore divided into categories that are suggestive of the areas that the analyses in this anthology are relevant to, namely economic space, interior and exterior space, textual space, ethical space, and spaces of exception.

In “Economic Space” we enter the spatial sphere of commodities, property and ownership, a part of capitalist ideology which transforms commodities and property into what Lefebvre calls “*abstract space*” in analogy with Marx’s “*abstract labour*” (Lefebvre 307), that is, a conceived, qualitatively undifferentiated social space divorced from concrete reality and reduced to the illusory coherence of money. As Andy Merrifield describes it, “money (the universal measure of value), and exchange value (price) all, by hook or by crook, set the tone of the structural conception of abstract space” (176). It is in this abstract and

contradictory space, according to Lefebvre, that “desire and needs are uncoupled, then, crudely cobbled back together” (Lefebvre 309).

The structure of the contradictory abstract space of commodities and property is revealed in Patricia Allmer’s “‘Breaking the Surface of the Real’: The Discourses of Commodity Capitalism in Clive Barker’s *Hellraiser* Narratives,” that is, the 1986 novella and the 1987 film, produced during Margaret Thatcher’s period in government. Allmer reads the narratives as critical examinations of Thatcherite versions of capitalist principles of ownership and entrepreneurialism. At the centre of the story is a puzzle box, which, when solved, is revealed as a commodity, literally producing the “hook” and “crook” mechanism that Merrifield metaphorically uses in his description above, as well as exposing the enslaving and enchainning effects of consumption—“the desire to own is also the desire to be owned”—and its contradiction of the capitalist promise of ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty.’ Allmer also shows how relationships are similarly commodified in the narratives and work according to the same principles as the economic system, conflating oppositions, and ultimately illustrating that “breaking the surface of the real” means tracing the demonic side of political discourse of individualism, ownership and exchange values.

The film Allmer discusses also explores the ideology of home ownership, private property and its revealing link to the etymological meaning of the word ‘mortgage.’ The house the couple move into is reminiscent of an old Victorian mansion, inherited by an American, his English wife and American daughter. Victorian quests for property and American quests for English property is the subject of Madeleine Vala’s contribution, “Re-reading the Haunted House: Victorian Quests for Property,” which focuses on the relationship between ‘haunted house stories’ and the late nineteenth century decline of the British landed aristocracy and the rise of American and British nouveaux riches. The ghost stories, she argues, reflect the precarious situation of the leisured classes in Britain at the turn of the twentieth century, and she shows how the stories display the strategy of commodifying the ghostly as a means of preserving the power and status of heritage and protect property value. A ghost works well as a metaphorical representation of commodity, reminding us of Marx’s speculations on the transcendental and mysterious quality of the commodity. Like Lefebvre’s commodity, a ghost is also “divorced, during its existence, from its materiality” and “asks for nothing better than to *appear*” (340). In the context of Vala’s analysis, the strategy of commodifying the ghost illustrates Lefebvre’s insistence on the social character of the commodity, whose enigma is not of nature, but “of money and property, of specific needs and the demand-money-satisfaction cycle” (340). Her analysis of

the upwardly mobile classes' acquisition of no-longer-toiled but haunted estates as a means of securing status can also be related to Lefebvre's idea of exchange in space as an "appropriation" of time when space loses its functionality: "Because in this way it is removed from the sphere of *lived* time, from the time of its 'users,' which is diverse and complex time. All the same, what is it that the buyer acquires when he purchases a space? The answer is time" (356).

The example of the relationship between space and time in terms of exchange value is just one aspect of their interdependence. There is no disputing the fact that space and time are intricately intertwined in any social practice, and Crang and Thrift comment on the extraordinary difficulty of writing about space isolated from time (1). "Representation," as Doreen Massey emphasises, must be seen as a time-space conceptualisation (27). The essays collected in "Interior and Exterior Space" approach the connection between inner and outer worlds through the concept of haunting, which by necessity introduces the dimension of time. The three contributions also emphasise the affects of social context in the time-space perception and conception of self and world.

In "Neo Rauch: Amazing Stories from the Future that Never Was," Neil Matheson analyses the work of the Leipzig painter Neo Rauch (b. 1960) in terms of the failed utopia of the former German Democratic Republic, a ghostly presence that continues to haunt Rauch's paintings and drawings. He shows how Rauch's world manifests a disturbing spatial ambiguity, where inside and outside are interwoven, where discrepancies of scale disorient the observer's sense of perspective, and in which temporal paradoxes enable Rauch to obsessively re-stage his own past. Matheson draws on Fredric Jameson's concept of the "future anterior" and on Freud to argue that Rauch's representational art works on two levels, exploring on the one hand the ideals and ideology of the never-fulfilled utopian building of the GDR, and on the other, the family romance of his childhood in the absence of the forever-lost parents. By juxtaposing old-fashioned features with the imagery and iconography of science fiction, Rauch achieves an effect of estrangement and a complex representation of a conflated past-present-future triad in his works, thus 'forever' haunted by a "'future that never was' at both a personal and a social level." Matheson's analysis exemplifies Lefebvre's claim that representational space (or spaces of representations), such as art, encompasses spatial practice (the "perceived") and representations of space (the "conceived") because it codes the conceptualised conceived and describes the subjectively "lived." He sees this moment of space as a potential "counterspace"

of resistance (Lefebvre 387), a space which resembles Foucault's concept of heterotopia and Soja's "thirdspace."

Such a space of resistance is treated by Michael Martin in "Inverted Worlds: Spectral Phenomena and the Discourse of the Interior in the Salem Witch-hunt." His essay considers the role of private space in the spectral images that were perceived in the Salem, Massachusetts, witch-hunting phenomenon, arguing that the images, hallucinations, and ghosts were in fact inverted versions of the "interior" of the accusers. The interior realm of the collective social body became a site of resistance, forced and translated into the public because of the historical forces operating at the time, namely the attempts of Cotton Mather and Deodat Lawson to coerce a shared, private religious experience onto an increasingly heterogeneous social body. As in the case of Rauch's works, the spectral imagery emanates from and relies on the dialectic of the interior and the exterior as the perceived and the lived are conceptualised and thus exteriorised through translation into discourse. Martin draws on Foucault's analysis of Velázquez's painting *Las Meninas* and his conception of "pure reciprocity" to support his argument that there is no differentiation between those who perceive and that which is perceived. Although Martin sees the interior as a separate individualised space, he points out that it takes the consensus of a community to construct the 'texts' of the interior. In the case of the Salem community, haunting images, hallucinations and ghosts were a feasible reality. If this representational space at the time served as a counterspace to avert the threat of loss of public control over private space, today this representational body of texts may serve as a counterspace to inspire reflection on the myths that are enforced on us today to close ranks and unite against the invisible 'other.' The contributions in the last section "Spaces of Exception" especially address this issue.

Martin rejects any optical-based theories as inadequate to fully explain the space of the interior because the human interior is more than the reflection and dissemination of images. Claire Wrobel, on the other hand, points to both the magic lantern and the *camera obscura* as apt analogies of the workings of mind and memory in Ann Radcliffe's writings. Her essay, "Valancourt the Wanderer: Space, Self and Truth in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*," sets out to describe the interconnection between space, haunting and discourse in Radcliffe's novel and singles out the discourses of memory association, the legal system, and sentimentality as the discursive agents defining the conspicuously absent hero of the novel and as modes of "experiencing self and truth." Associations sacralise space and exemplify a crypto-religious relation to it, in Eliade's sense, and a synecdochic strategy is used as a device for "re-animation." Metonymy is also

used in the second mode, “rearticulation,” that is, rational reconstruction based on signs. Wrobel suggests that Radcliffe indicates that issues of identity are contained in legal discourse since identity is shown to be a matter of “public interpretation” and judgement. The public sphere yields to the private in this novel, however, and the discourse of sentimentality allows the self to prevail in the “heart-to-heart transparency of sentimental lovers” as Valancourt’s self is reaffirmed in Emily’s inner space through her recollection and inner rearticulation of non-verbal, bodily signs.

Basically, then, both Martin and Wrobel’s reading of Radcliffe argue for an essentialist view of interior space as an ontological absolute, although susceptible to external forces, while also stressing that its visibility comes only in externalised, mediated forms. In conclusion, Wrobel’s analysis evokes the notion that the self is constituted by the gaze of the other, be it in an individual or the public eye, the truth of which Radcliffe apparently ascribes to the individual. As Bakhtin puts it: “A person has no internal sovereignty, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking inside himself, he *looks into the eye of another* or *with the eye of another*. ... I cannot manage without another, I cannot become myself without another” (287).

In the section “Textual Space,” Rachel Jackson, in “The Haunted Space of Desire: The Meta-Textual in Vernon Lee’s ‘Amour Dure,’” draws on Derrida and on Lacan’s mirror metaphor and argues that, although haunting implies a sense of interiority, the meta-text serves to reveal “all of textual signification as phantasmagorical” in the same way that a mirror reflects an illusion. She demonstrates how the meta-textual introspective gestures in “Amour Dure” reveal the frustrated search for a referent, blurring the boundaries between the interior and the exterior and textualising desire. As she points out, once conceptualised, as well as textualised, desire ceases to be. Jackson’s contribution shows how textual space lacks an internal space with boundaries that can contain “desire, meaning and the textual.” Boundaries are fluid or transgressed, meaning collapses, and the chain of signification is ongoing in the interplay of absence and presence, an issue which also figures in Matheson’s, Martin’s and Wrobel’s arguments as an indicator of spatial uncertainties and anxieties.

Presence and absence are also features of Bent Sørensen’s “Representations of Big Sur in Late Modernist and Early Postmodernist American Writing.” The textual referent is the actual geographical Californian Big Sur, inscribed with meanings by three writers in such a way that it is rendered absent and instead emphasises loss and disillusion. In effect, his analysis supports David Harvey’s argument that the *genius loci*, the place

of special significance to the individual and the community, “is open to contestation, both theoretically (as to its meaning) and concretely (as to how to understand a place)” (309). Henry Miller, Jack Kerouac and Richard Brautigan all wrote prose about Big Sur, and Sørensen demonstrates how this *locus* haunts these texts in three significantly diverging ways: Miller’s *locus amoenus*, Kerouac’s *tremens*, and Brautigan’s *topos*. Within the short span of seven years, the potential of Big Sur as a *locus* representing ideas and emotions has been transformed into a fully textualised *topos*, which can only serve as a vehicle for pastiche and postmodern parody of Brautigan’s modernist precursors’ anxieties. His text is haunted by the intertextual ghosts of Kerouac’s and Miller’s gender and racial values, which are parodied by Brautigan’s incongruous collection of beatnik womanisers and exploiters of both land and Native American (and Confederate) heritages. At the end of the essay Sørensen quotes J. Gerald Kennedy’s remarks on the distinction between a subjective concept of place and a “textual, writerly image”: the difference between the two is not a structural one of “real and fictive” but “between textual scenes and the symbolic experiences of place which they inscribe.” Taking it one step further we could say that Sørensen’s analysis of modernist and postmodernist inscriptions also reflect the epistemological shift in theory as well as the shift in literature from the crypto-religious impulse of modernism to the playful linguistic preoccupation of much postmodernism.

Oana Sabo also points to a literary strategy that is suggestive of the rewards of other ways of thinking and writing. In “Mapping Exilic Spaces through Ethnic Hi/stories in Mona Latif-Ghattas’s *Le Double Conte de l’Exil*,” Sabo explores the exilic spaces of the two ethnic minority members in Quebec presented in the novel. She examines these spaces in terms of “sites of becoming,” or counterspaces, with a focus on the role of writing as a way to cope with past trauma and to reconstruct identity in an alien place. She proposes that Latif-Ghattas in effect demonstrates that marginality can be overcome. Language is the tool by which the characters engage in fictional narration to negotiate their individual and cultural identities in encounters with “cultural others” and create for themselves subject positions that are neither exilic nor Canadian. In her analysis of the function of writing fiction as a means of coping with trauma and loss of identity, Sabo emphasises the challenge posed by the narrative act from a marginal position to notions of unity in the way the narration constantly reshapes the centre from within, exposing its “historical traces of otherness” and creating a relational and dynamic space for others to speak from. Her argument not only evokes Homi Bhabha’s concept of negotiating cultures from an “in-between” or “third space,” but also the

Deleuzian concept of “intensive space,” in the sense “that movement, in process, cannot be determinately indexed to anything outside of itself” but “is in becoming, absorbed in occupying its field of potential” (Massumi 7). As Manuel DeLanda puts it, intensive space is “the site of processes which yield as products the great diversity of extensive spaces” (81), that is, “states of arrest” (Massumi 6). There is surely an analogy between Deleuze’s illustration of intensive space as the shooting of an arrow (with reference to Bergson) and ‘the spinning of a yarn.’ We might also recall Massey’s suggestion that space could be envisioned “as a simultaneity of stories-so-far” (9) and the process of becoming as open (21).

The healing stories of trauma that the protagonist of *Le Double Conte de l’Exil* tells are set in the desert. In her essay “Desert Mournings,” Maria del Pilar Blanco draws attention to the recurrence of the desert as a trope of rebirth and renewal, but also to the juxtaposition of desert and desertion in desert narratives (and we might add ‘death’), indicating that this leads to an interest in “the relations between space and ethics, locations and agency.” In the section “Ethical Space,” she examines Juan Rulfo’s novel *Pedro Páramo* and Clint Eastwood’s film *High Plains Drifter* as desert narratives employing haunting as a device to explore the potentials of the desert location. Both narratives centre on returns to *unheimlich* ghost towns, which raises questions of responsibility and accountability in communities. She suggests that reading and writing the space of the desert must be done with regard to the historical shaping and obliteration of agency in any specific place haunted by violence. This echoes Terence Hawkes’s view that criticism should not only “raise the spectre of the *unheimlich*” but also be prepared to include it and bring it forth in the texts examined, concluding that the criticism he advocates implies the kind of morality that Adorno said entails not being “at home in one’s home” (Hawkes 312).

The second contribution in the section “Ethical Space” also deals with the *unheimlich* but not in the quiet of a ghost town but in the noise of a labyrinthine city and in the company of “Paul Auster’s Ghost Writers,” who withdraw to the room, writing the lives of others. Basing his analysis on Freud’s understanding of the uncanny as the defamiliarizing effect that “reveals the homely in the unhomely,” David Coughlan explores the theme of death and return in Auster’s novels and its relation to the uncanny and to his numerous “ghost writers,” men who are living dead, lost in the city’s networks and multitude of intersections and chance encounters in time and space. He argues that Auster theorises the nature of reading and writing as ethical practices related to the past, mourning, betrayal, and responsibility, and shows how resurrecting another through

writing means discovering the self. Although the uncanny, as Terry Castle observes, is a “function of *enlightenment*” (7), Coughlan also points to the problems involved in representation and mediation, and to the link between death, text, life and sacrifice.

A similar postmodern distrust in the possibilities of representing reality in language is displayed in Toni Morrison’s novel *Love*, or rather, as JaeEun Yoo argues in “The Site of Murder: Textual Space and Ghost Narrator in Toni Morrison’s *Love*,” Morrison exploits the reader’s assumptions about mediated reality. The spatial logic of interior/exterior is disrupted and boundaries of text/reader and imagined/real are transgressed. *Love*, as Yoo shows, produces a spectral space through the narration of the absent ghost, which, as it were, invades the time and space of the reader and violates the distinction between the imagined and the real, transforming the materiality of the book into a liminal space. The effect is that *Love* turns into a version of Fredric Jameson’s postmodern ‘hyperspace’ where there is no distinction between the interior and the exterior, but—in the case of this novel—without the subsequent ruling out of historicity that hyperspace entails. Thus it becomes a haunting injunction to the reader to respond to patriarchal injustice and to the absence of representations of women. Yoo’s argument would seem to support Gordon’s view that writing ghost stories is tantamount to saying that ghosts are real in the sense that they “produce material effects.” Ghost stories draw attention to “the dialectics of visibility and invisibility” which necessitates negotiating “what can be seen and what is in the shadows” (Gordon 17).

The strategies exemplified in all the sections above can be seen as successful attempts to combine the spatial-social-history triad to achieve aesthetic effects and to force the reader into a counterspace of ethics. In “Right and Wrong Political Uses of Literature,” Italo Calvino stresses the power of literature to give “a voice to whatever is without a voice” and to give “a name to what as yet has no name, especially to what the language of politics excludes or attempts to exclude” (101). Many of the analyses so far have indicated such a political concern in literature, film and art. The space is widened by the contributions in “Spaces of Exception,” which make political and ethical gestures with reference to actual social and political practices.

In “Maze of Camps: (Im)mobilities, Racism and Spaces of Exception,” Mekonnen Tesfahuney and Magnus Dahlstedt scrutinise the biopolitical and geopolitical strategies by which the white Western world maintains sovereignty. Taking Giorgio Agamben and Derek Gregory as starting points and making frequent references to contemporary events and tendencies, they show the extent to which the world is subjected to the

principles of material and immaterial “camps” as spaces of exclusion and inclusion. They contend that the ambition to beleaguer human and non-human worlds spatially, corporeally, and symbolically has been a defining feature of modernity and liberalism. The world is replete with institutions and apparatuses that enclose and confine in manifold ways. The result is that the world is fenced in, not only in terms of areas set up to contain the non-human, the ‘strange,’ the ‘aberrant’ and the ‘unwanted’ (slums, prisons, ‘natural’ reservations, ‘wildlife’ conservation areas, ‘safe havens,’ and asylums), but also in terms of venues and spaces reserved for the elite/powerful, the ‘chosen’ ones (exclusive clubs, sororities, and gated communities). Likewise, the world is indexed and cordoned off along racial, cultural, and national markers. Their essay focuses on racism, mobility control, graduated mobility, and spatial access as actualizations of biopolitics, surveillance, and geographies of exception. It shows that racialised mobility control delineates and regulates regional, national and global circulation and access to space. They suggest that there are strong links between racism, sovereignty and the society of control that explain graduated mobility and privileged access to space, but they also affirm, in the spirit of Deleuze and Guattari, the resistance to power, control and surveillance that the nomadic principle of mobility and becoming can muster.

In a similar vein of critical inquiry of sovereignty, Maurice Stevens, in “Haunted by Harm: Tortured Bodies and Exceptional Spaces in the Halls of Jurisprudence,” takes us to the materiality of the Abu-Ghraib Prison in Iraq and its digital images of torture and debasement inflicted on the detainees, viewed in the immaterial context of American racialised metaphorisation. Notably, metaphorisation as spatialisation is also a concept Lefebvre uses to describe how “living bodies” are transformed into “images, signs and symbols” (98). Stevens offers explanations to this example of metaphorisation in the American history of racial terror, drawing on Lacan’s theory of subjectivity and on Agamben’s theory of exception, by pointing to the political and legal processes which resulted in an accepted and sanctioned double state of social and juridical exception. This entailed, for instance, the reduction of humans to bare life and the contortion of logic filtering down through public institutions to the individual soldier inscribing the signs of state power on the material body of exception. As Stevens argues, such racialised logic, which also reserves the right to decide which body is to be declared a tortured body, reveals in the encoding not only the fictional basis of its biopolitics but also the anxiety of the state and the grounds for challenging the ethics of its power.

It seems appropriate that the final essay in this collection highlights the body-subject-object entity since all essays broach this topic in one way or another. As Lefebvre asserts: “The whole of (social) space proceeds from the body, even though it so metamorphoses the body that it may forget it altogether—even though it may separate itself so radically from the body as to kill it” (405). Here he is primarily using “kill” figuratively—although a literal reading would ring true—since he eventually goes on to point out that the traditional Western philosophy of denying the body by contributing to the process of its metaphorisation and dichotomization has been superseded by the view that the body is “the base and foundation, *beyond philosophy*, beyond discourse” (407). If the essays in this anthology in some way pay attention to the body as the means through which the world appears, in addition, they all clearly demonstrate Lefebvre’s assertion that whatever space is (a “medium,” “milieu,” “intermediary,” as he asks), its function is “less and less neutral, more and more active” (411).

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**PART I:**  
**ECONOMIC SPACE**

“BREAKING THE SURFACE OF THE REAL”:  
THE DISCOURSES OF COMMODITY  
CAPITALISM IN CLIVE BARKER’S  
*HELLRAISER* NARRATIVES

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In her 1957 speech to her North London constituency of Finchley, Margaret Thatcher presented her new conservative ideology under the acronym TUDOR, in which, she argued, “O” stood for ownership (Thatcher). Clive Barker’s 1987 film *Hellraiser* is based on his novella *The Hellbound Heart* (1986), and makes use of a gutted North London mansion as the scenario and site of hell. Both novella and film were produced around Thatcher’s re-election for a third term in June 1987; during the next four years up to her resignation as Prime Minister in 1990, her party extended its implementation of policies based on the ideologies of low taxation, property ownership and the reduction of state costs. This essay will explore the filmic analysis offered by *Hellraiser* and the novella on which it is based. I will show that the representations of hell are deeply immersed and entangled in the problematics and perverse relations of Thatcherite versions of capitalist principles of ownership, ranging from home-ownership to marriage and interpersonal relations. In both texts these capitalist principles of desire and satisfaction are represented through a labyrinthine structure, in which characters, in a Sisyphean effort, discover that there is no beginning or end but instead there is only repetition. This labyrinth-as-repetition allegorises the commodity’s exchange and politics as an ‘eternal-return-of-the-always-the-same.’

*Hellraiser* has invited readings positioning the film both as reactionary and neo-conservative—as for example by Christopher Sharrett and Anna Powell (88)—or as liberatory, as argued by Sarah Trencansky and Kim Newman. This essay, however, will argue that rather than trying to pin down the film’s tendency to one or the other, it is more fruitful to see how it tries to conceptualise questions of ownership and property, and how it can be regarded as a reaction to Thatcherite politics.

Wholly structured around relationships based upon bargaining and exchange, *Hellraiser* foregrounds capitalist exchange right from its beginning. In the film an ancient, gold-plated puzzle box is at the centre of the story: it enables the appearances of the film's agents of horror, the Cenobites, and functions in the narrative as an object of desire which is also a gateway to hell. *Hellraiser* opens with commercial exchange: the opening scene shows close-ups of the desired box and a bundle of money which Frank Cotton, a man bored with earthly pleasures, exchanges for the box. The dialogue accompanying this Faustian bargaining establishes the discourse of the commodity, of the object of consumption which always already belongs to the consumer: as the salesman says after Frank claims the box, "Take it; it's yours—it always was." The puzzle box reveals itself as a version of Pandora's box or a demonic version of Aladdin's magic lamp when Frank solves the puzzle box, unleashing hell in the form of summoning the Cenobites, which tear his body and soul apart. The novella's exploration of this moment is worth mentioning as Frank eagerly leads the discussion with the Cenobites to aspects of trading, namely supply and demand, as he states: "So ... you know what I've dreamt about. You can supply the pleasure?" (10).

Like the film, then, the novella reveals the puzzle box as commodity. Whilst the act of purchasing the box would seem to suggest a straightforward exchange for a simple article, the box has a religious, transcendental dimension, enforced by the use of the name of the seller of the object, Kircher, which stems from the German word *Kirche* meaning church. The purchase of the box is described in indirect terms, and closely linked to its collapsing of object and function, linking the material and the metaphysical in ways that suggest the box's commodity status:

The price? Small favours, here and there. Nothing exceptional. ... There had been instructions from Kirchner, on how best to break the seal on Lemarchand's device; instructions that were part pragmatic, part metaphysical. To solve the puzzle is to travel. ... The box, it seemed, was not just the map of the road, but the road itself. (47)

While this scene is transformed in the film into a clear exchange of money (a pile of filthy notes) for object, the novella's description of the box is clearly reminiscent of Marx's description of the commodity:

A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. So far as it is a value in use, there is nothing mysterious about it. ... But, so soon as it

steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. (Marx 76)

*The Hellbound Heart's* and *Hellraiser's* well-known sado-masochistic and fetishistic tendencies attain here also the connotations of commodity fetishism. The box becomes Frank's "new addiction" which "quickly cure[s] him of dope and drink" and which seems to promise new "ways to bend the world to suit the shape of his dreams" (47).

Like the symbolic exchange which inaugurates the narrative, relationships between the characters, in both novella and film, are also built on the principles of demand and supply. Frank's love affair with his sister-in-law, Julia, whose help he needs to be rescued from the Cenobites, is built on bargaining and possession. Whilst in the film Frank says, "We belong to each other. That's what you want isn't it?," the novella makes Julia's intentions explicit: "Now it was incontestable. She *made* this man, or remade him ...; The thrill she felt, touching this too vulnerable body, was the thrill of ownership" (76). Indeed everything and everybody in this tale are commodified and ultimately open for trade and ownership. This is also suggested by Frank's comments to Julia:

You don't belong to him, Julia. Not any more. ... We belong to each other. That's what you want isn't it? ... You know I think if I'd had you I wouldn't have despaired. ... Wouldn't have given away my body and soul so cheaply. (76 - 77)

Frank's life and Julia's love here are couched wholly in terms of a business deal, recalling Thatcher's assertion that "Life is a reciprocal business" (Thatcher, Interview for *Woman's Own*, 23 September, 1987)—although, of course, business and profit are not necessarily built on reciprocity.

The moment in the film when Frank solves the puzzle box shows the box producing chains which hook into and pierce his skin. Thus, the appearance of the Cenobites in the room is accompanied by a transformation of domestic space into a torture chamber filled with chains and hooks. Whilst conventional readings explore such sequences in terms of the semiotics and practices of sado-masochism, they can be read allegorically as signifying the commodity's hooking itself into the consumer; chaining, enslaving the consumer to itself. Perhaps a different level of torture and slavery can also be traced here, which is anchored in British colonial history and was particularly prominent in Liverpool, Clive Barker's home town.

Liverpool's wealth is based on the slave trade which, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, changed the town from a fishing village to a wealthy trading port. Liverpool became a major slaving centre and its ships and merchants dominated the transatlantic slave trade in the second half of the century. Historical accounts of this time describe shop windows displaying chains, manacles, neck rings, thumb-screws and other equipment used to bind and to torture slaves (see Hochschild). Liverpool's slave trade began with a ship called the *Liverpool Merchant*, reminiscent of the name of the maker of the puzzle box, Lemarchande, which means 'The Salesman' in English. Colonial history also seems to be present in the opening sequence of the film, which displays, along with the puzzle box and the bundle of money, items which were based on the slave trade: sugar, coffee, and tobacco (in the form of a cigarette), not to forget Frank's surname, Cotton.

Hence, the numerous ways that capitalism enchains its consumers and producers emerge in this film. A close-up of Frank's face, distorted by the tortures induced by the hooks in his flesh, is followed by a shot of the house in which he solved the box, an English Victorian mansion in North London. The house is an inheritance, 'willed' to both Frank and his brother Larry. This scene introduces a different form of ownership, namely private property, which is another form of being enchained, as is evident in the word 'mortgage,' which translates from French as 'being chained to or until death.' Indeed, the house ownership here fulfils this meaning of 'mortgage,' being fatal to Frank, his brother and his sister-in-law.

A further chain is present in the theme of marriage. Frank sees his deal with the Cenobites as a "mistaken marriage" (49) and Frank's brother is married, perhaps also 'mistakenly,' to Julia who, on the day of their wedding, sleeps with Frank and is still yearning for him. Both of these marriages are fulfilled in the promise 'till death parts us.' However, promises and contracts in this narrative, whilst finding their deadly fulfilment, always turn out to be different from what they offer, disappointing and fatal. When Larry and Julia decide to move into the inherited house, her first words, in the novella, are "It's not quite what I expected" (17), echoing Frank's disappointment with the box, which stems from his error of naively believing "that *his* definition of pleasure significantly overlapped with that of the Cenobites" (48). This is reminiscent of commercial misrepresentations, like those found for example in advertising and sales pitches and political promises as double speak. Indeed much of the dialogue in the film is reminiscent of advertising discourse: human relationships in *Hellraiser* are constituted by unfulfilled speech

acts and performatives, proposals and promises, which are repeatedly betrayed and open to misinterpretation.

The private home is the centre of events and the locus of hell in *Hellraiser*. It is the place where Frank solves the puzzle box, is torn apart by the Cenobites and then revived, his shattered body seemingly trapped underneath the floorboards of the attic, surviving as a metonymic fragment of himself with the potential to be reborn. It is also Larry's and Julia's new home, in which Larry hopes to strengthen his relationship with Julia, and her relationship with his daughter, Kirsty. The discrepancies between the house as 'proper' home and as property are clearly outlined in the novella. When Julia enquires about Frank's possible claim on his inherited half of the house, Larry replies: "He's got no interest in property" (17). He counters Julia's query of "suppose we move in, and then he comes back; wants what's his?" with, "I'll buy him out. I'll get a loan from the bank and buy him out" (17), failing to grasp the nature of Frank's real interest in property.

Frank's return is initiated by Larry's blood being accidentally spilt on the attic's floorboards from a wound caused by his help in the move. This return could also be understood as a reclaiming of the property, a revenge on Larry's inappropriate appropriation of the shared property. In its concerns with property and its invasion the film actually resembles the House Horror films of the 1980s and early 1990s, such as *Fatal Attraction* (1987) and *Single White Female* (1992). Frank's revenge is anchored in re-appropriation as he increasingly appropriates Larry's position and possessions: Julia becomes Frank's lover; his advances to his niece, Kirsty, are accompanied with the sentence "come to daddy," signalling his replacement of Larry as Kirsty's father; and he steals Larry's skin and face in his final stage of becoming human again. Larry's deadly conflation of his desire for a 'proper' home, the propriety of the family and its home, with his desire for 'property' ownership can be traced in language where the word 'propriety,' which is that which is sacred and proper, stems from the word property.

Jacques Derrida, in *Glas*, explores the Greek word for 'tomb' (*oikesis*), arguing that it is akin to the Greek word for house (*oikos*)—indeed in *Hellraiser* the house is a tomb or coffin for Frank, reminiscent of the function of the tomb as displaced 'home' in Vampire narratives. However, the word 'economy' also derives from this Greek root for house, consisting of *oikos* (house) and *nemein* (to manage). Therefore Derrida connects the terms in speaking of an "economy of death" (4). In *Hellraiser* the house becomes the centre of an economy of death in its literal sense, because it becomes the space of dying, but also in its metaphorical sense,

as an economy which, by stressing property ownership and fervent individualism as the proper, causes the withering away and violent destruction of the very individuality it seeks to assert—the Cenobites famously ‘tear your soul apart,’ Frank’s body and face are torn apart and his only way to complete his human form on his return is to take another person’s, his brother’s, skin and appearance.

Here, far from Thatcherite promises of ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty,’ ownership leads to death, destruction and fragmentation, not least of the very individuality that ownership tries to establish and protect. The *heimlich* here turns out to be an *unheimlich* of conservative political beliefs and practices reminiscent of a more general gothic element detectable in the presentation and representation of Thatcher and her politics, present in her image-styling (consisting of her trademark stiffly up-combed hair, eighties-style power-dressing which masculinises the feminine figure, and the wearing of dark red lipsticks), in her representation in the satirical TV show *Spitting Image* as Hannibal Lecter, and in opposition slogans such as (in the 1970s) “Margaret Thatcher Milk Snatcher.” This element is also present in Thatcher’s own self-referential rhetoric, as for example in her speech to the Conservative Election Rally in Plymouth in 2001:

It's wonderful to be here this evening, campaigning for a Conservative victory, in this enterprising port of Plymouth. I was told beforehand my arrival was unscheduled, but on the way here I passed a local cinema and it turns out you were expecting me after all. The billboard read *The Mummy Returns*. (Thatcher)

Notably there seems to be no ‘society’ in *Hellraiser*: the film presents only individuals and their hells of individualist desires. State and social apparatuses and institutions, apart from the hospital, are virtually absent. Frank (or what remains of him) is trapped underneath the floorboards of the house, Julia and Larry are trapped in a loveless marriage and Kirsty has to battle against family and other demons largely on her own. As Sarah Trencansky has argued, Kirsty

is completely bereft of aid throughout her ordeal; the love interest sent to ‘help’ her fight proves ineffectual throughout the course of the movie and is barely developed at all as a character. (66)

This isolation of characters, and the undermining of their striving for individualism, is also conveyed through their own lack of history and of locational contextual information. We find out nothing about Larry’s job except that it is “terrific”; we never find out about his first wife, Kirsty’s

mother; we never find out where the family came from, nor is there much indication in the film of where the house is actually located. Conflations between English buildings and streets and American accents further obscure the location of the characters and enforce the atmosphere of isolation, displacement and homelessness that lies at the heart of the film's exploration of the ideology of home ownership: the house they move into looks like an old English Victorian mansion, curiously inherited by the American Larry and his English wife and American daughter; the removal men are American, but the businessmen Julia tempts to the house are English. Individuals exist here, but only as actants, devoid of character or depth, suggesting a world in which even individualism has collapsed in upon itself.

The disinterest in the individual as other at the heart of individualism is also stressed by Julia's approach to the businessmen. They mainly remain anonymous, and the only one who reveals some information is, significantly, a 'salesman' who, in the novella, replies to Julia's question "What do you sell?" with "What do you care?" (68). The novella makes this anonymity even more explicit in stating that Julia "didn't want to know much about him. His name, if necessary. His profession and marital status, if he insisted. Beyond that let him be just a body" (54)—a description which could also apply to the characters in the film and its denial of their history: they are simply bodies serving a horror film.

Thus, society external to the family is only sketched briefly and marginally. This lack of society, paralleled by repeated pleas for help, enacts in chilling detail the official and controversial Thatcherite stance in relation to the social, a position particularly clearly expressed in a notorious interview for *Woman's Own* on 23 September 1987 in which Thatcher stated:

I think we have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand 'I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!' or ... 'I am homeless, the Government must house me!' and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. (Thatcher)

Furthermore, the film and the novella insist on the repeated conflation and misunderstanding of ostensibly clear, structuring oppositions between consumer and consumed, owner and owned, oppositions upon which the ideologies of Thatcherism were based. This is the case, for example, in Julia's luring of men to the attic to feed Frank who has, as it is strangely

phrased in the novella, “found a loophole in the system” to escape the Cenobites (a loophole suggests, among other things, tax-evasion strategies). Julia finds Yuppie businessmen in a bar, promises to sleep with them, and instead kills them and leaves them to Frank, who vampirically nurtures himself on their bodies. The opposition between the men as consumers and as the objects of consumption is repeatedly blurred, both in film and novella. Julia power-dresses and carries a briefcase, which, paired with her actions of leading men repeatedly back to the same house, is reminiscent of the professional activities of an estate agent. However, she also appears to the men as a kind of prostitute who they can consume (Frank and Julia’s illicit love is punningly alluded to in the novella as “a consummation of their feelings for each other” [27]). The novella refers to the men alternately as “wage slaves,” “poor lambs” and as “customers,” although it remains ambiguous as to whether they are customers of the bar or of Julia:

The customers came and went; young turks from firms of lawyers and accountants, debating their ambitions; parties of wine-imbibers whose only claim to sobriety was their suits; and, more interestingly, a smattering of individuals who sat alone at their tables and simply drank. (53)

The terms and definitions of Yuppie culture, owning and being owned (but also owing and being owed) are conflated here.

This conflation is also clearly expressed in the final scene of the film. Sarah Trencansky misreads the film’s end as depicting Kirsty, having closed the box, literally holding the Cenobites “in the palm of her hand, trapped inside the box she now owns” (67). However, the final sequence actually shows the box closing on and containing a scene of Kirsty and her boyfriend, revealing that the characters were always already in the box (Fig. 1-1). It also reveals the box as being both a commodity and, apparently, the home of the characters, so that the box contains the house and the narrative in which, paradoxically, it is itself contained. This state of affairs undermines the apparent success of Kirsty’s own bargaining with the Cenobites which involved offering Frank to them in exchange for her own life. The box, in this final scene, is ultimately back on the table of the oriental salesman who asks his servile question to the next customer: “What’s your pleasure, sir?” Here the customer is revealed as eternal slave to the commodity and to the desire to own it—the definition of “property” in the *OED* does not distinguish between ‘owning’ and ‘being owned.’ This also reveals once again the demonic aspect of Thatcher’s assertion that “as people earn more, they want to own more” (Thatcher, speech to Conservative Party, 9 October, 1987)—the desire to own is also the desire

to be owned. The final scene comes back full circle to the exchange of the commodity with which the film began: the game is the same, the players are different.



Fig. 1-1: The puzzle box, from Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*

This image of hell as Sisyphusian circularity also returns in *Hellraiser*'s sequel, *Hellbound* (which was directed by Tony Randel, but produced by Barker and based on his story), where hell is located in a labyrinth which has no beginning and no end. This circuitous, Sisyphusian return to the original scene seems to describe the commodity in terms reminiscent of Nietzsche's 'eternal-return-of-the-always-the-same' or, in the words of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, as a description of the process of capitalism itself: "Everything stops dead for a moment, everything freezes in place—and then the whole process will begin all over again" (Deleuze and Guattari 7). *The Hellbound Heart*, *Hellraiser* and its sequel *Hellbound* exemplify the perpetual, circular discourse on consumption which is, according to Jean Baudrillard,

articulated on the mythological sequence of the fable: a man, 'endowed' with needs which 'direct' him towards objects that 'give' him satisfaction. Since man is really never satisfied (for which by the way he is reproached), the same history is repeated indefinitely ... (35)