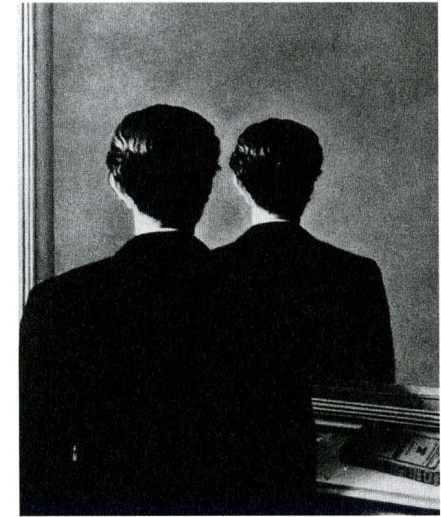


Peter Weibel, "Phantom Painting. Reading Reed: Painting Between Autopsy and Autopsy," *New Paintings for the Mirror Room and Archive in a Studio Off the Courtyard* (Graz: Neue Galerie Am Landesmuseum Joanneum, 1996), 49-55.

*"Je suis comme un peintre qu'un dieu moqueur
Condamne à peindre, hélas! sur les ténèbres;"*

La Reproduction Interdite René Magritte 1937-39

Charles Baudelaire, "Un Fantôme, I Les Ténèbres"
1861



Phantom Painting

Reading Reed: Painting between Autopsy and Autopsy

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND VAMPIRISM

In his 1836 project, *The Romantic School*, Heinrich Heine aptly wrote that the 19th century "saw specters all around." In Henrik Ibsen's drama of 1882, which is appropriately titled *Ghosts*, the character Mrs. Alvig says, "I almost think we are all of us ghosts. It is not only what we have inherited from our father and mother that 'walks' in us. It is all sorts of dead ideas and lifeless old beings and so forth. They have no vitality, but they cling to us all the same, and we can not shake them off.... There must be ghosts all the country over..."

What gave rise to this view of that era? It was a view of life as a *Ghost Sonata*, as August Strindberg titled it in his drama of 1908. What is the origin of this perspective that immerses reality in a ghostly twi-

light? It's in this haze that Baudelaire can reverse what is glamorous.

In a poem of 1861, he writes of *Les Métamorphoses du Vampire*:

*Et quand je les rouvris à la clarté vivante,
À mes côtés, au lieu du mannequin puissant
Qui semblait avoir fait provision de sang,
Tremblaient confusément des débris de squelette,...*

Here we see the first signs of the motifs that will characterize vampirism: blood transfer, mortal agony and light.

The last third of the 18th century saw the birth of the Gothic novel in England (for example, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*,



1764, Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794, or *The Monk*, 1796, by Matthew Gregory Lewis). William Beckford's *Vathek* of 1787 would herald the coming of the grand Satanic glory of Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Baudelaire.

Out of the tradition of the Gothic novel (crowned by Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* of 1820) there evolved a proliferation of ghost and vampire stories. This type of work is exemplified by Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, in which Lady Usher, wrapped in shrouds, apparently awakes from death. Poe's *The Premature Burial* exploits the universal fear of being buried alive. Encounters with the dead and the seemingly dead developed in 19th-century England into the literature of the Fantastic.

I will attempt to demonstrate that Reed's painting is an innovative element within this tradition. As Reed stated in 1995: "The Fantastic is the subject of my paintings." Here, I will try to show what the Fantastic means in Reed's painting.

In Immanuel Kant's essay *Dreams of the Spirit Seer, Explained by the Dreams of Metaphysics*, 1766 (the "spirit seer" refers to Swedish spiritualist Emanuel von Swedenborg), Kant defines the Fantastic in his very first sentence: "The shadow empire is the paradise of those who dwell in the realm of the Fantastic. Here they find a land without borders where they can settle however they please." Within this tradition, Friedrich Schiller's only novel, the Gothic fragment of 1787, *Der Geisterseher* (The Spirit Seer), links the secretive, the extrasensory and the uncanny, but wants to resolve and explain them as social phenomena.

Several popular genres of literature in the 19th century drew on the supernatural: horror and ghost stories, vampire, werewolf, Dracula and Frankenstein novels. In that famous summer of 1816 at the Villa Diodati in Geneva, Lord Byron, Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley and Byron's doctor, John William Polidori, wrote four related answers to the challenges of the industrial revolution, answers which were to unsettle contemporary thought. Through a thundering storm, the friends read ghost stories aloud. The stories were selected French translations of the five volume German *Gespensterbuch* (published by F. Schulze and J. Apel between 1811-15). Byron proposed that the friends write ghost stories themselves. Mary Shelley wrote the novel *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818). Percy Shelley wrote *Alastor*. Byron began his Faustian drama *Manfred* (1817), and

left behind an unfinished fragment that elaborated the motif of another fragment, the vampire from his Turkish tale *The Giaour* (1813). Polidori wrote *Ernesto Berchtold, or The Modern Oedipus* (1819). More momentous was the fact that Polidori later completed Byron's fragment, giving the vampire an aspect of Byron himself. A Hegelian master-servant relationship had developed between Polidori and Byron, a relationship comparable to that between Frankenstein and his creature. Polidori's tale, *The Vampyre*, was published in England in 1819, first erroneously under Byron's name, and then correctly under Polidori's. Bram Stoker's masterpiece *Dracula* (1897), a compendium of fin-de-siècle phobias, is the direct successor. Polidori's rendering became extremely popular. Many plays were adapted from his story and were enormously successful in London and Paris (for example, J. R. Planché's melodrama, *The Vampire, or The Bride of the Isles* of 1820). The popular thriller series *Varney; the Vampire, or The Feast of Blood* by James Malcolm Rymer, initially incorrectly ascribed to Thomas Preskott Prest, was published between 1845 and 1847. *The Vampyre* by Polidori was the prototype for all vampire art that was to follow, from Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), which portrayed a female vampire, right up to Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976). It was also the prototype for vampire films, from *Nosferatu: a Symphony of Horror* by F. W. Murnau (1922), to *Dracula* by Tod Browning (1930), to *Vampyr* by Carl Theodor Dreyer (1932), a free interpretation of *Carmilla*, to Kathryn Bigelow's *Near Dark* (1987).

How should we interpret this fascination with horror and ghost stories, this fear of the living dead? Was 19th-century society really a society of ghosts as Karl Marx suggested at the beginning of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). Was it true that "A specter is haunting Europe"? In his book *Capital* (1867), he goes so far as to compare capital to an actual vampire, dead labor living on living labor. The capitalist as blood-sucker is born.

But what had transformed society from a realm of *Dead Souls* (Nikolai Gogol's novel of 1842) into *The Dance of Death* (Strindberg's play of 1900)? What had triggered a crisis of middle-class consciousness in Europe, a crisis so elemental (as Hegel diagnosed it) that people saw their own reality as alien, eerie and uncanny? Freud published his work on *The Uncanny* in 1919. What were the unconscious structures of order that made the 19th-century subject feel buried alive? What did the dominating social powers of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie fear would tear apart their web of lies? Nina Auerbach rightly indicates in *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1995) that Stoker's

Dracula of 1897 is a compendium of fin-de-siècle fears and that today also vampires personify our fears: fears of homosexuality, social change, Communism, nuclear war, and the fear of life itself. What did people fear could dwindle and vanish? Was it conviction, ideology, and belief that had died and could only be kept alive artificially? Or was it the fear of the demise of a particular class and a particular social form?

Our theory is that the Gothic novel and ghost stories of the 18th and 19th century are a reaction to the radical social upheaval engendered by the industrial revolution. Indeed, the industrial revolution did do away with everything people had formerly been familiar with – everything from familiar social hierarchies and rules to familiar experiences of space and time, both near and far. The industrial revolution (above all in England) was the source of the vision that immersed reality in a ghostly twilight. The reality people had known disappeared, or if it remained, it had become uncanny. Reality became a death dance of defunct ideas. It became eerie in the light of the new time of machines and speed. Indeed, the horror and monster novels accompanied monstrous social changes, they accompanied the demise of certain classes and their constructions of reality, and in turn, the works reflected these frightful changes in the social order. On the other hand, these novels are not just visions of horror but are also visions of elation. The vampire, phantom and ghost literature of the 19th century is a symptom of a crisis among a social class that had ruled hitherto. This class feared the decay and dissolution of historical structures of order. But these

processes of social decay were, in turn, a joy to the other classes that profited from the social changes. Fear and pleasure in horror are thus two sides of the same coin.

This interpretation is not diminished by the fact that technically the term ‘vampire’ was first recorded in 1732 as a Serbian word for an epidemic of disease that occurred in the Balkans, along the borders of the monarchy’s south-eastern defensive ring. (Cf. Augustin Calmet, *Dissertations sur les apparitions des esprits et sur les vampires au revenants de Hongrie, de Moravie & C.*, 1749.) The enigma of this epidemic, this vampiric disease, will always be connected with the nightmare that evokes the image of the living dead. The acute suffering and dying of the living was somehow connected with the imperishability of corpses – as evidenced by the continuing growth of hair, beard and nails. The relationship between the grotesque bodies of the dead and the disturbed souls of the living is thus the real problem and phantasm of the Serb syndrome. The living perish because of something dead that will not die. Because the dead, ‘death’, wants to continue to live, the living, ‘life’, must die. It is precisely within this relationship, this meshed dialectic of disappearance and presence, that we can discern the factors that were to favor the re-emergence of vampirism, a phenomenon that had vanished since 1770. This essay will look into vampirism, not as a real scourge, but as a cultural phenomenon, as an echo of the industrial revolution, and particularly today in the age of bioprostheses when the human body is being traded as if it were a spare parts depository for living organs.

THE MACHINE AS AN UNCANNY DOUBLE OF MAN

The crisis of the consciousness of reality corresponded to a crisis of representation in culture.

If instead of asking about the driving force behind the dissolution of historical constructions of reality, we ask about the driving force behind the dissolution of the historical systems of representation which correspond to them, we will find the answer to both the latter and the former question – the birth of the machine from the spirit of the industrial revolution. The machine is the uncanny, the monster, the horror that makes us shudder, that immerses reality in a ghostly twilight.

The machine is the heart of the radical transformation of 19th-century social order. The machine requires artificial food such as coal, gas, diesel and oil. It drained both Man and the land dry. The Gothic novels and vampire stories are tales of the history of the social transformation caused by the machine. Owing to its superiority, the machine not only threatens to bury the human body alive but also to replace it outright: from Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) to Gustav Meyrink’s *Golem* (1915), the machine becomes the symbol of artificial life and artificial beings. The machine becomes the doppelgänger of Man, who feels threatened by these mechanical doubles. So Man invents stories in which he recreates himself as a

ghost, vampire, machine monster or phantom. This is what gave rise to the motif of the doppelgänger in the era of the ghost stories and Gothic novels. E.T.A. Hoffmann, the so-called ‘Gespenster-Hoffmann,’ wrote two famous novellas with the motif of the doppelgänger, *The Devil’s Elixir* (1814) and *Princess Brambilla* (1820). Edgar Allan Poe, too, tells his version of the doppelgänger story in *William Wilson* (1839). The shadowless Peter Schlemihl from Chamisso’s wondrous tale returns in Hoffmann’s *Story of the Lost Mirror*. The vampire motif, blended with the motif of the doppelgänger as a mirror image, also underlies the successful film drama *The Student of Prague* by Hans Heinz Ewers. The hero Balduin by shooting his phantasmatic mirror image, actually shoots himself. The master-servant dialectics return in Andersen’s fairy tale *The Shadow*. In this tale, the shadow no longer wants to remain a slave, but rather wants to be the master. On the eve of the master’s wedding, the shadow degrades the original into a shadow, and then gets rid of his former master. Hoffmann also dealt with the doppelgänger motif in *The Stone Heart*, *Choosing a Bride*, *The Sandman* and, above all, in *Die Doppelgänger*. It was probably Jean Paul who first introduced the doppelgänger motif into Romanticism. In *Siebenkäs* and *Hesperus*, he has the Self shudder, facing itself rising as an eerie ghost.

The Self, the bourgeois subject, the subjectivist appropriation and construction of the world, thus becomes a ghost in the industrial revolution. The Self is divided into two parts, the one a living being and the other in suspended animation, the mirror reflection. The doppelgänger is the result of a split Self that takes the vampire motif a step further, for the reflection lives on the living being and the living being lives on the reflection. Dorian Gray in Oscar Wilde’s novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) is a consummate synthesis of the doppelgänger and vampire motifs. The doppelgänger as reflection is usually a vampire of the living. But in this novel, the picture ages instead of the living person. The mirror, in this case the picture, is an inverse vampire. The Self is split and the subject becomes his own vampire – the literary manifestation of early capitalist self-exploitation and self-alienation.

The eyes of the sick corpses are not mentioned in reports on the Serb scourge and so they were depicted as faceless beings in 18th-century pulp fiction. This is the beginning of the absence of the vampire’s image in a mirror. The vampire is thus a fetish of absence. His eyelessness turns into

facelessness, and facelessness becomes the absence of sight. The vampire cannot be seen in the mirror and he cannot see his own reflection. Sight and light are his death, so the vampire is invisible, like death. The invisible figure of death, for death always approaches in an invisible form, is the doppelgänger of the vampire. Death and the vampire, who can only be seen by his shadow, are both signifiers of absence.

Dostoyevsky’s youthful novel *The Double* (1846) is the most lucid expression of this divided Self and self-alienation in the age of capital. By using the example of the mental disturbance of someone who doubles himself by transforming into an orderly official and a disorderly subject, he demonstrates the breakdown of historical constructions of reality. The mirror means doubling; it is the source of the doppelgänger. The reflection of reality no longer works in a disturbed or false consciousness. Familiar reality vanishes like the reflection, like the shadow. This is the trauma to which Romanticism reacts throughout the industrial revolution.

The vampire and the doppelgänger are thus corresponding concepts. Both are signifiers of disappearance and the fear of disappearing. The subject of death arises from vampirism and from the doppelgänger motif, the yearning for the cancellation of death, the narcissistic desire for immortality (the living dead, the return of the undead), and the subject of loss. The dissolution of the accustomed reality of the subject (for example, Dostoyevsky’s Golyadkin in *The Double*), as demonstrated by the industrial revolution, implied the destruction of the foundations of his world. The traumatic loss of reality, the terrible fear of one’s familiar world disappearing as a result of the omnipresent triumph of machines, is the origin of vampirism. The machine has brought about a phantomization of the historical world. Vampirism means phantomization, dealing with phantoms, with loss, disappearance, ghosts and the uncanny. The machine immerses the old world in the pale shine of the phantom; the old reality becomes invisible. The vampire as a fetish of absence is the real figure of the phantom and the phantom the allegory of absence. In this way it was possible for Dion Boucicault to change the name of his popular melodrama *The Vampire* (1852) to *The Phantom* without any alteration, inconsistency or consequences. The vampire is the measure of phantomization. Dealing with vampirism means dealing with phantomization. In today’s world where we are experiencing a new thrust of the industrial revolution, the digital phase, a piece of the old familiar world is again disappearing, a piece

of reality is again being phantomized and bleached, which is why we are seeing the resurgence of interest in vampire and doppelgänger myths as well as in other forms of escapism.

In summary we can say that Man has become faced with a doppelgänger in the form of the machine, a double that phantomized the

historical world of experience so that there really were “specters all around” as Heinrich Heine asserted. The historical world of experience became a world of ghosts because of the industrial revolution. The machine age, the experience of time through machines in factories, indeed transformed minutes into what author Charles Robert Maturin called “hours in the night-book of horror.”

MACHINE, MEDIA AND VAMPIRIC PAINTING

The dissolution of the subjectivist consciousness of reality by the advent of the machine triggered a general crisis in systems of representation. In art, the machine was the technical apparatus of photography, the image machine. Along with machines for transporting goods (the train, the car and the plane), the 19th and 20th centuries saw the arrival of machines for transporting information (the telegraph, the telephone and television). These machine-aided systems of image production, transfer and reception were later called media. The photographic, film, video and computer media as data processing, transferring and producing machine systems triggered a drastic crisis in the classical systems of representation since these forms of representation had been essentially manual tools, i.e. defined by the artist's hand.

There were several ways to react to this crisis. One was to resist the dissolution of classical representation, insisting on historical forms for the construction of representation and reality (Naturalism, Realism or the New Objectivity). Another was to give in to this subjectivist dissolution of historical structures, depicting the reproduction of reality itself as a flow of reality particles and subjective emotions (Impressionism). Or a third way was to react to the uncanny realm of alienation in the industrial revolution by inventing one's own phantoms, artificial creatures and alternative, perhaps more human, ghosts (Symbolism). Or fourth, there was what would appear to be the most legitimate reaction, to respond to the advent of the machine by entering into a critical dialogue with the machine and changing one's own methods of production and representation.

At the level of systems of representation, photography as an image machine implied the same displacement and threat for the historical ordering structure of painting as industrial machines posed for the social systems of order and their constructions of reality. So only the

artist who critically analyzed and reviewed his own historically evolved systems of representation was able to become the real seismograph of social change induced by the industrial revolution, the triumph of machines. Such an artist was, for example, Marcel Duchamp who thought through the whole range of topics of the industrial revolution, from the industrial ready-made to the *Bachelor Machine*. Since the beginning of photography, painting has existed against the background of the machine. During its hundred-year monopoly as the medium of images, the machine and photography, have threatened, assaulted and castrated painting.

The many well-known statements made by painters and photographers in the 19th and 20th centuries which declare painting dead, are an indication that the advent of photography caused painting to become a ghost of itself, a specter and phantom, no more living than dead, buried alive. To stay in the logical vein of our analysis, photography became the doppelgänger of painting, causing painting to fear for its existence. And painting became the doppelgänger of photography, castrating photography's claim to be art. Photography phantomized painting, as it were, transforming it into a ghost, a specter that could only be kept alive by means of artificial infusions. All new media not only double reality – they do this only fragmentarily – but also, above all, they are the doppelgängers of the old media. Media as doubling machines are vampires. The old media fear that the new doppelgängers will live on their blood, that they will be bled dry, consumed and contaminated. The new media always claim to replace the old media. But the old and the new media ought to know that whoever kills his doppelgänger, also kills himself. The different media behave towards each other like vampires, doppelgänger reflections. The substance and innate essence, such as the Self, is concentrated only in the doppelgänger. Each medium lives like a vampire on the doppelgänger, as Dorian Gray lived on his picture. Self identity

(the identity of the medium) comes from the doppelgänger, says Lacan's famous mirror stage theory. In his work *The Uncanny* (1919) Freud picks up on Otto Rank's study *The Doppelgänger* (1914). Not being able to see and recognize oneself in a mirror means not being one with oneself. But in the myth of Narcissus, as soon as I see myself in the mirror, I am lost. Vampirism is thus also a modified myth of self-love, narcissism. This is why the vampire, the phantom, is a signifier of absence. For the figure of the doppelgänger as the narcissistic other also stems from the fear of encountering oneself, only to be disappointed or in one's own way. This is why we prefer encountering and thus losing ourselves in the other. The doppelgänger is thus a figure of the fear of loss, of death, and with that a figure of death itself. The doppelgänger as a narcissistic other is both protection from death and a harbinger of death, a defense mechanism against destruction and loss, as well as an expression of loss and lack of uniqueness. While doubling expresses the fear of castration and absence, it also implies them. This is like the head of the Medusa, the myth of the castration complex, where the great number of snakes on her head conceals the fact that the one decisive snake is missing.

Warhol's multiplication of a motif (for example, the Coca-Cola bottle) not only references the industrial mass production of this bottle, but is equally an expression of painting's crisis of representation, its fear of castration. Instead of painting one Coke bottle, Warhol manufactures lots of bottles, or soup cans, with the aid of machine printing (silk screen). He duplicates the motif in the way that the snakes on Medusa's head are multiplied. Warhol multiplies painting mechanically from fear of castration. He tries to escape from admitting that painting has lost its monopoly as an image medium. Like a consumer, he flees from the problem of painting precisely by multiplying it, as if panic stricken by fear of Medusa.

In a different way Reed also recognizes how the existence of painting is imperiled by machines and the media. He acknowledges the historical objectivity of this threat and gets to the root of it. He realizes that the identity of painting in the age of the media cannot be the same as it was formerly. And he realizes that the origin of the crisis of painting is in the birth of the machine in the industrial revolution for this has phantomized all subsequent historical systems of representation, transforming them into ghosts. Since then, painting has existed split in two and has lived because of this split. It lives on the 'post-modern' reflection of its history, and this history lives on the present. Painting lives on the encounter with its doubles, media such

as photography, film, video and the computer. It tends to encounter itself in the other, in the other media, fearing to be lost within them, and getting lost for that very reason. Reed takes another attitude. In order not to lose painting, he declares 'lack' and 'loss' as the starting point of his vampiric painting. In his painting, he takes up the master-servant dialectic between the original (painting) and the copy (media) just as he does the motif of the doppelgänger. So in Reed's painting, the Fantastic means admitting to the fact that painting must deal with the 'uncanny' nature of the machine and the media and the resultant phantomization of its own historical function, must deal within an aesthetic of absence.

The doppelgänger and vampire motifs are metaphors for the crisis of both the social and the cultural orders, both of which were transformed by the industrial revolution. So when David Reed reflects upon the vampire motif in his painting, he is not concerned with the picturesque superficial elements of vampire stories. Rather he is involved with fundamental reflections on painting as a construction of representation and reality in the age of the machine, the media and the post-industrial revolution. Reed is reacting to the phantomization of painting by art requiring technical equipment, from photography, film and video, to computers. Reed reflects methodically on all the possibilities of modern-day technical machine image systems that replaced the historical systems. He uses them to visualize the status of painting as a phantom on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to overcome this status with new painterly methods. He is trying to make painting its own vampire and double. Reed's preoccupation with the vampire motif and his investigations into painting as a doppelgänger of video, computer and film (for example, the artificial, synthetic incorporation of his paintings into Hitchcock's film scenes – veritable metaphors of vampiric blood transfer), are a fundamental reflection of the changes undergone by painting in the age of the industrial and post-industrial revolution, the fundamental changes undergone by painting as a system of representation and construction of reality in the age of the machine. Precisely in this way, painting finds its way out of its condition of phantomization. Reed's mediatization of painting and, at the same time, his immunization of painting against the media, make him one of the most central painters of the nineties.

I have attempted to show that the vampire and the doppelgänger are structurally related and that reflection is the link between them (this also applies to the myth of Narcissus). Within the dialectic of

reflection (the doubling and mutual dependence of the self and the mirror self, the image and the mirror image), a drama of visibility evolves, a dramatic transformation of the conception of the visual. All the aforementioned aspects of history, the doppelgänger, vampire and reflection myths, represent the history of machines and media, the visual media first and foremost. Painting has undergone a dramatic history of being doubled, reflected and phantomized by the media. This history could also be seen as one of loss and castration. The advent of the photographic machine destroyed the foundations of painting and its constructions of reality and representation. Reed's painting, like vampirism, is a phantom between autopsy and autopschy. Autopsy is the viewing and examination of corpses with the naked eye. Autopschy means something like viewing oneself. It is the branch of clinical pathology in which a person really believes that he can meet or see his doppelgänger. Reed's painting is between autopsy and autopschy, between being seen by others and being seen by one's self, and it is thus painting that attempts the impossible: to see with one's eyes closed or to see one's self in the mirror closing one's eyes. Reed's painting is thus discursive painting in which the formal problems of the visual are obsolete. He performs an autopsy on the phantom of painting. He carries out a transfusion on the corpse of painting with the blood of the new media.

Reed is concerned with the doppelgängers of painting such as film, video and computers, aiming to prevent the castration of painting, its loss and disappearance. That is what his famous statement of 1987 means: "We see paintings in a different way now, because of film and video." His painting is a narcissistic self-reflection of painting and at the same time a dissimulation of painting by means of doubling and reproduction. In his painting, he analyses the methods of production and constructions of representation in the new media. He has recognized the real function of the doppelgänger (such as shadow, reflection, Narcissus, and vampire). The doppelgänger's function (for example, photography's in relation to painting) is not only to be insurance against the disappearance of the original (painting as the first image medium), but also to show that it is the harbinger of its own disappearance (other technical means have also existed to produce images since photography). This paradox is precisely what triggers the uncanny, as Freud recognized in continuing Rank's study of the doppelgänger. Doubling does not lead to the original becoming immortal, to the corpse not decaying, but rather to its phantomization and loss. This paradox of the twin relationship between averting death on the one hand and welcoming death on the other, is expressed in the

vampire. This paradox creates the dimension of the inexplicable, the uncanny. Reed's painting is thus 'uncanny' painting, which fights for the status of painting, conflicted between averting and taking pleasure in its own disappearance. His paintings, inserted like vampires into film stills from Hitchcock, live on the blood of the new media. His work tries to resolve and at the same time to realize the uncanny. To do this would be to see one's reflection in the mirror closing one's own eyes. 'Uncanny' painting would make manifest the lack of painting within the medium of painting itself, making the figure of absence present in an invisible manner. Reed's vampiric painting can watch itself in the mirror of painting, knowing that it has already lost its historical autonomy. Reed does not want to conceal the historical castration of painting by the new image media with the aid of an illusion: pluralist, post-historical, post-modern reproduction. Rather, he admits this condition of painting, taking it as the starting point for his own painting. This gives rise to a new form of painting as a phantom between autopsy and autopschy, between being seen by others and by oneself. His aim is to define the real of painting within the unreflectable, for the vampire, too, is unreflectable.

Nothing could be more supportive and probative of my argument than the fact that Reed has undertaken this deliverance of painting, of the reality of painting (this reality depends on and acknowledges painting's historical loss and lack vis-à-vis the new media), by showing his work in the Mirror Hall of the Neue Galerie in Graz. This hall of multiple lights and multiplying mirrors, the room of the Medusa, is not far from Sheridan Le Fanu's Castle Hainfeld where Carmilla suffered her fate. In this hall of mirrors, the image of the vampire is not reflected – see the motif on the invitation card, a film still from *The Brides of Dracula* by Terence Fisher (1960). In the Mirror Hall painting is constructed as an allegory of the visible at the moment in history when it wishes to see itself close its eyes in the mirror reflection of the other media and watch itself disappear as an image, and even as an image medium. But as we know, this is not possible. In a mirror, the subject that closes his eyes can only partially see his own eyes closing and cannot see, can only imagine, the end of the gesture. This is why painting, like the vampire, cannot die.

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