'Gothic' Body Parts in a 'Postmodern' Body of Work? The Hinchcliffe/Holmes Era of *Doctor Who* (1975-77)

Matt Hills

(1) The names Philip Hinchcliffe and Robert Holmes may not be greatly familiar to many academic readers of this volume, unless, that is, they also happen to be fans of the (1963-1989, 1996, 2005-) BBC TV series *Doctor Who*. Hinchcliffe was the producer of this series on all episodes originally transmitted in the UK between 25/1/1975 and 2/4/77, while Holmes was script editor on all material broadcast between 28/12/74 and 17/12/77. However, he went un-credited in this role on stories where he was named as writer, due to BBC regulations which forbade script editors to commission from themselves (see Howe and Walker, 1998). In story terms, Philip Hinchcliffe produced 'The Ark in Space' through to 'The Talons of Weng-Chiang', whilst Holmes script-edited stories running from 'Robot' through to 'The Sun Makers' (1977). Under Hinchcliffe as producer, Holmes also wrote 'The Ark in Space', 'The Deadly Assassin' and 'The Talons of Weng-Chiang', and effectively wrote, or at least heavily reworked, 'The Pyramids of Mars' and 'The Brain of Morbius' (on-screen, these were attributed to the pseudonyms Stephen Harris and Robin Bland). Today, Philip Hinchcliffe is a regular contributor to DVD commentaries and features accompanying 'his' *Doctor Who* stories. Robert Holmes passed away on 24th May, 1986: his overall contribution to *Doctor Who* is the subject of a documentary on the DVD release of the (1985) story 'The Two Doctors'. Holmes' influence on the programme also extends to the credit which he received – as creator of the monstrous Autons – on the opening story of *Doctor Who* (2005), 'Rose'.

(2) Though Hinchcliffe and Holmes may well be household names in any household containing at least one fan of the original or 'classic' series of *Doctor Who*, they are likely to hold a far more mysterious quality for general (but perhaps affectionately nostalgic) audiences looking back on 1970s *Doctor Who*. One function of this piece, then, is to attempt to bridge that divide between fans' knowledge of 'classic' genre television, and the more general audience's sense of this TV as having been unauthored or somehow entirely divorced from the bodies and practices of its otherwise 'mysterious' production teams. In short, the 'mysterious bodies' of this edited collection may well be behind the television camera, as well as in front of it. And by taking *Doctor Who* as my focus – or, at least, one part of its lengthy history – I will also be discussing specific types of on-screen bodies: namely, gothic mutations, distortions and disintegrations of the human form created by Hinchcliffe and Holmes. Though textually dictated, this focus simultaneously arises out of the way in which gothic fictions tend to centre on, and circle around, the body, albeit as 'a profoundly unstable concept' subject to monstrous fabulation and fabrication (Spooner 2004: 201). The gothic therefore offers up one cultural site where 'mysterious bodies' are especially likely to be found, represented, and iterated.

(3) Working together on 16 stories featuring Tom Baker as the fourth Doctor, Philip Hinchcliffe and Robert Holmes have frequently been viewed by fans as overseeing one 'golden age' in *Doctor Who*'s long history (Tulloch and Jenkins 1995; Chapman 2006). Indeed, commentary on the artfulness and auteurism of the pair is rife within *Who* fandom:

> The series had a mood, and a charisma, and atmosphere and a sort of gripping drama to it during the Hinchcliffe era. The stories were meticulously made. A ... TV series like *Doctor Who* can turn out to be a work of art if everything comes together in the end, which a lot of Hinchcliffe's were (Ian Levine quoted in Tulloch and Jenkins 1995:146).

> What makes it a classic?... Robert Holmes.... [T]ry *Ark in Space* with the sound down. It's a small number of people, in cardboard rooms talking a lot.... But with the sound up... you just believe it [thanks to a] writer... as blindingly good as... Holmes (Moffat 2004: 17-8).

(4) Despite such fan eulogising, there has been relatively little discussion of Hinchcliffe and Holmes, and their work in popular TV drama, within television studies. Neither has become a canonical figure in the academy, deemed worthy of articles, essays, or book-length studies. In this, their situation mirrors that of many practitioners working within popular, genre television. For, as Jonathan Bignell has noted:

> Canonical status has been attributed to programmes that are based on cultural forms... accorded greater prestige, such as the adaptation of 'classic' literature and theatre, or... the prestige television play or ... serial.... With some exceptions, this association has taken place around high-profile prime-time programmes... peripheral to the generic closure supposed to delimit series and serial drama in the popular genre... of fantasy (2005: 19).

Bignell points out that TV professionals working on popular, genre television such as *Doctor Who* might well be accorded "extensive non-academic publication" on their work, "such as articles in... *Doctor Who Magazine*, but very little work on... [their]... output in texts with pedagogical or research aims" (2005: 26). And yet, although this may seem to capture a difference between fan and academic cultures, Bignell also usefully reminds us that there has been "some similarity of approach between the idea of quality in academic television studies and the interests of television fans, who might be assumed to adopt a quite different attitude" (2005: 25).

(5) In fact, I want to go a step further than this, and suggest that fan writing may not merely overlap with scholarly work in television studies, but that – at least in terms of analyses of TV authorship – it may actually be some way ahead of much academic debate. Whilst Television Studies has, until fairly recently, often restricted itself to a highly limited canon of 'authored TV', fandom has used the concept of authorship since at least the 1970s to valorise popular TV, going on to analyse this in considerable depth, 'with… fan scholars paying attention to the comings and goings of script editors, producers and BBC regimes, and the way behind-the-scenes personnel changes shape the programme' (Newman 2005: 113).

(6) Furthermore, not only has fandom arguably been chronologically ahead of academia in terms of according respect to authorship in popular genre TV, fans have also taken a more complex view of authorship than some academic work. Even now, work in television studies still tends to remain focused on the 'singular' auteur, whereas fans are happy to explore and conceptualise popular television production not just as collaborative, but rather as a case of multiple and intersecting 'author-functions' (Hills 2002). This has produced a situation where *Doctor Who* fans can weigh up and debate the relative authorial contributions of different producers and script editors:

> what constitutes 'the Hinchcliffe era' doesn't really begin and end with the tenure of the producer in question. It doesn't arrive, all guns blazing, in *The Ark in Space*, nor does it stop dead at the end of *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*.… The pattern of the Tom Baker years makes a lot more sense if we subdivide it… into script editors… The Robert Holmes era… is responsible for a succession of fundamental realignments of *Doctor Who*'s format which were so influential that they would come to define the show forever after (MacDonald 2004: 4, italics in original).

(7) Fan writer Philip MacDonald is, of course, quite correct in his recognition that the boundaries to something called the 'Hinchcliffe/Holmes' era of *Doctor Who* may well be extremely fuzzy. Any new production team would always have inherited already-commissioned or variously-developed scripts from its predecessors. Thus, the impact on televised *Doctor Who* (1963-1989) of any one set of story-commissioning and production strategies would almost always tend to be off-set in relation to changing on-screen credits. Basically, it would take some time for the approach of a new producer or script editor to fully filter through, and their distinctive approach would therefore also tend to linger for a time even after they were no longer officially working on the show. For example, the three (1977) stories which Robert Holmes script-edited following Hinchcliffe's departure as producer, 'The Horror of Fang Rock', 'The Invisible Enemy', and 'The Image of the Fendahl', all owe much to Hinchcliffe and Holmes' shared interest in placing strong basic story concepts – and representations of the fantastically abjected body – at the core of the programme.

However, while Philip MacDonald argues that *Doctor Who* can be subdivided either by producer or script editor, these divisions have not usually been viewed as either/or options by fans, who have instead considered how the performances and authorial functions of different actors, producers, script editors, writers and designers have intersected, or even conflicted, within certain 'eras' of the show.

(8) That being so, and following in the fan tradition of exploring the multiple authorship of producer and script editor teams, I am particularly interested here in the Hinchcliffe/Holmes era of *Doctor Who* because it has frequently been depicted as the most 'gothic' in the show's lineage. The mid-seventies, we are told:

> represented the darkest period thematically in the show's history. Producer Philip Hinchcliffe and script editor Robert Holmes… deliberately gave many of their stories an air of gothic horror…. The fact that *Doctor Who* was genuine family viewing enabled it to go the extra mile in terror (Couch, Watkins and Williams 2005: 13).

It has become an established part of fan 'lore… that the stories between *The Ark in Space* and *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* constitute "Gothic horror"' (Barnes 1999: 9, italics in original). The 'word usually used [by fans] to describe the Hinchcliffe era… is "gothic"' (Miles and Wood 2004: 17). Such has been the near-totemic predominance and repetition of this label within fan commentaries, that Philip MacDonald begins his *Doctor Who Magazine: Special Edition* overview of early Tom Baker stories with the 'assumption that you want to read the words… "Gothic horror"… [again] even less than I want to write them' (2004: 4).

(9) Though this demonstrates that there may be some similar pressures operating on fans writing for commercial fan magazines and academics writing for publication (neither wishing to just reproduce 'the same old reading'), it also highlights that 'gothic TV' has been a highly significant category in *Doctor Who*'s fan reception, with this specific period of the show – starring Tom Baker – also being one of consistent mainstream success and high ratings (see Howe and Walker 1998). And if this 'golden age' of *Doctor Who* can be thought of, in a variety of contested ways, as especially or remarkably 'gothic', then I want to argue that these 1970s episodes must remain of interest to any thinking on the 'mysterious bodies' of popular genre television.

(10) Latter-day *Doctor Who* script editor Andrew Cartmel has recently pointed out that the Hinchcliffe/Holmes 'classic era… [was] haunted by menacing titles of a uniform pattern: 'Seeds of Doom', 'Robots of Death', 'Planet of Evil', 'Hand of Fear', 'Face of Evil'' (Cartmel 2005b:124). What Cartmel fails to indicate, though, is that these 'X of Y' titles regularly focused audiences' attention on a gothicised, threatening body-part, as in 'The Brain of Morbius', 'The Hand of Fear', 'The Face of Evil', and somewhat more metaphorically, 'The Talons of Weng-Chiang'. Other titles of the time also focused on potential

anthropomorphism, as in 'The Planet of Evil', or on the threatening embodiment/emergence of alien-ness: 'Genesis of the Daleks', 'Terror of the Zygons', 'The Seeds of Doom'. Human bodies merging grotesquely with the alien, doppelgangers and fragmented bodies were all staple elements of Hinchcliffe/Holmes stories.

(11) This strong emphasis on televisual 'body-horror' – on the human body's intense problematisation and abject breaching by an alien Other – emerges in the very first story Hinchcliffe and Holmes worked on together (which Holmes also wrote), 'The Ark in Space':

> A tale of parasitic body-horror for tea-time television, it ushers in an age when the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association considered *Doctor Who* to be a prime target.… Watch out, in particular, for the scene in which Commander Noah wrestles with his alien-infected "evil" hand and it's treated as if it were a moment of horrific psychological intensity (Miles and Wood 2004: 17).

Presenting 'some of the most horrific material to have been featured in the series up to this point', 'The Ark in Space' differs greatly from the preceding 'lightweight action-adventure' of the very first Tom Baker story, 'Robot' (Howe and Walker 1998: 275). In 'Ark', giant insect-like creatures called the Wirrn lay their larvae inside hibernating human bodies, with the result that these characters mutate into human-insect hybrids.

(12) Possession is also very much 'a standby of the Hinchcliffe stories' (Miles and Wood 2004: 71). The integrity of self-identity repeatedly is mentally and physically assaulted – though mental 'possession' in these tales almost always carries diegetically embodied and highly visible correlates, such as Noah's hand-grub, or the Krynoid man-plant creature in 'Seeds of Doom'. *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text* has explored these 'gothic' body horror themes as authored themes:

> By strongly emphasising the Gothic concept of possession, Hinchcliffe felt he could evince the drama of horror: 'One, by concentrating on the person being possessed, the twin personalities fighting for control etc., and two, by showing the reaction of those around him to that developing horror'. The possession theme could relate to the organic…or to the mechanistic (Tulloch and Alvarado 1983: 112).

'Organic' possession would include the Wirrn or the Krynoid – alien insects and seed pods fusing with possessed human characters – while 'mechanistic' possession occurs in stories such as 'The Robots of Death' where a mad scientist character, Taren Capel, over-identifies with robots, and behaves as if he has become one. 'Genesis of the Daleks' and 'Revenge of the Cybermen' also feature images and themes of 'mechanistic' possession. The character of Davros from 'Genesis of

the Daleks' is designed and visually represented as a semi-Dalek, despite the fact that this is not diegetically and narratively signified – a case of 'design imagery almost … [constituting]… a commentary on the narrative' (Britton and Barker 2003: 144-45) rather than merely being co-terminous with it. And the Cybermen, as their name suggests, are cybernetically sustained and augmented humans.

(11) All these recurrently possessed and hybridised bodies allowed the programme to explore – and fantastically represent – what it meant to be human or to lose one's humanity. The collision of 'self' and 'other' in Hinchcliffe/Holmes' stories was not frequently one of hypnotic suggestion or mind-control exercised by a human tyrant over his 'servants', nor was it typically a satirical loss of self (with consumers or employees being 'possessed' by capitalism). Rather, the threatened and abjected body on show tended to be a human/alien fusion: Commander Noah in 'The Ark in Space', Davros the visually-coded human/Dalek in 'Genesis of the Daleks', the Cybermen *en masse*, the anti-matter-mutating Sorenson in 'Planet of Evil', Marcus Scarman in 'The Pyramids of Mars', Winlett and Keeler in 'The Seeds of Doom', Hieronymous absorbed into the Mandragora Helix in 'Masque', Sarah Jane Smith possessed by Eldrad in 'The Hand of Fear', and Taren Capel as a pseudo-robot in 'Robots of Death'. Across such different stories, the *leitmotif* of this era of *Doctor Who* would appear to be the human body corrupted, infiltrated and degenerated.

(12) As Catherine Johnson has argued, telefantasy may not always possess generic stability, but it does tend to possess self-identity through the fact that

> any attempt to represent the fantastic leads to the use of similar strategies that are beyond, and transgress across, the expectations and conventions of specific genres such as science fiction and horror… these strategies arise from the shared concern within fantasy programmes to solve the problem of how to represent that which 'doesn't exist', which confounds socio-cultural verisimilitude (2005: 6).

As Johnson puts it, 'between the specific generic conventions and the tone of each programme, are shared concerns with representation… with the role of seeing, and with the image, that arise specifically through the representation of the fantastic' (2005: 6). One of the examples Johnson gives of strategies shared across telefantasy TV shows is 'the development of a dark visual style… to hide the fantastic in shadows' (2005: 6), and this is often a feature of Hinchcliffe/Holmes' *Doctor Who*. Alongside this, however, Hinchcliffe and Holmes also used the visual revelation of the human-alien hybrid body as a key moment of TV spectacle: 'the sight of the monster was a "tease", usually left until the first cliffhanger. In an odd sort of way, the monster …[was]…something there primarily as a spectacle and with characterisation a poor second' (Miles and Wood 2004: 159). Of the 52 cliffhangers constructed in this period of the programme (excluding story-ending episodes), five focus purely on the unveiling of human-alien hybridity: this happens twice in 'The Ark in Space', recurs

with the first appearance of Davros and a Dalek at the end of episode one of 'Genesis of the Daleks', and happens again in 'The Seeds of Doom' and 'The Masque of Mandragora'. Other cliffhangers focus on the literal unmasking of alien monsters or deformed humans, as with the Sontaran at the conclusion of 'The Sontaran Experiment' episode one, and 'The Talons of Weng-Chiang' episode five.

(13) One could argue that the human-alien bodily hybridisation functioned as a perfect economic and cultural condensation of *Doctor Who*; economically it reduced the cost of designing full-body-suit monsters – or at least allowed budgets to be stretched further – but just as importantly, it also rooted the fantastic Saturday-night drama of *Doctor Who* in the ordinary and the human, allowing viewers to identify with the human being eaten away by the monster, as well as with victims' concerned compatriots. Rather than representing the fantastic purely in terms of Othered alien races and invaders, Hinchcliffe and Holmes' favoured 'production strategy' – based on frequently representing the fantastic as a human body fused with alien material – offered an affective, economical solution to achieving dramatic impact. As Kim Newman has written of this phase of the programme: 'it seemed to grow up with its audience by becoming more ambitious in production and dramatic terms… *Who* was no longer content to be a "kiddie *Quatermass*".' (2005: 5) In fact, later script editors working on the series, such as Andrew Cartmel, increasingly came to believe that, in general, *Doctor Who* worked most effectively when it represented monstrosity via minimal design, make-up and prosthetic additions to actors, rather than through attempting full body-suit monsters: 'part of my policy [was] to have the monsters in our stories as near to ordinary humans as possible [rather than]…anything more emphatically alien' (2005a: 182).

(14) Arguably, the most spectacular distortions and disruptions of the human body in Hinchcliffe/Holmes stories were reserved for renegade Time Lords Morbius and the Master. Though the latter had formerly been played by Roger Delgado as a bearded, saturnine figure, Hinchcliffe and Holmes opted not to recast the Master as a similar-looking actor (an option taken up later in the series). Instead, '*The Deadly Assassin*'s grisly re-imagining of the Master' (MacDonald 2004: 5) was as a decomposing, cowled figure, humanoid in form but not at all identifiable as the actor inside the costume, Peter Pratt. Likewise analoguing the basic human form while severely distorting it, fellow Time Lord Morbius was depicted as an upright bidepal creature whose body was diegetically built up out of various parts (including a claw in place of one hand). Atop this combination of body-parts was a spherical Perspex tank containing 'The Brain of Morbius'. Evidently, the production team were so pleased with this design creation that they used its revelation in cliffhangers at the end of episode one of the story – where the audience see it clearly for the first time – and episode three, where the Doctor's temporarily-blinded companion Sarah first sees the Morbius creature.

(15) As entities which could narratively rival the Doctor's abilities and technologies, Morbius and the Master appear to have merited treatment as out-of the-ordinary visual and fantastic threats, even

within the series' own established parameters. Whereas the Doctor's alien-ness is, of course, visually indistinguishable from humanity, thus relying on different actors' performance codings of 'the alien' – and providing a heroic but still realist-identificatory figure for audiences – Morbius and the Master were diegetically and graphically represented through extreme and spectacular codings of bodily monstrosity, seemingly in line with their narrative potency as evil renegade Time Lords.

(16) Prior to these stories, the body of non-Time Lord Davros had been used 'as a microcosmic representation of the body politic' (Bignell and O'Day 2004: 146) in 'Genesis of the Daleks'. The Kaled scientist's fascistic search for racial purity was linked to the story's visual and narrative movement from human embodiment (the humanoid Kaleds), to the half human/half Dalek mediating figure of Davros, and from Davros into full Dalek 'machines' or, rather, casings. Davros's deranged 'desire...to create [a] unified...body politic' (Bignell and O'Day 2004: 148) had thus been figured through his creation of the Daleks. Taking a similar approach, Time Lords Morbius and the Master can also be viewed as simultaneously microcosmic and monstrous bodies: Morbius' cobbled-together and fragmented body bespeaks an almost wholly dis-integrated and dissolving body politic seeking to cling to power, while the Master also figures decay and dissolution combined with surprising power. It is as if the series is cautioning that power, at the level of the Doctor's people, leads neither to technocracy nor serene Godliness, but rather to stagnation and degeneracy.

(17) However, 'The Brain of Morbius' and 'The Deadly Assassin' do not only feature decaying or composite bodies which are among the most graphic ever represented in the series. They also place a considerable weight on the 'minds' of the Time Lords, whose 'lordliness' as Masters of Time seems to inhere less in their bodily unity or strength than in their mental powers and capacities. To this end, 'The Brain of Morbius', having already fetishised the brain as the ultimate source of self-identity, then fittingly concludes with a 'mind duel' between the Doctor and Morbius, which resembles nothing more than a bizarrely Mensan or middle-class version of 'whose is bigger?'. 'The Deadly Assassin', meanwhile, predates cyberpunk by introducing a virtual realm of pure mentality – 'The Amplified Panatropic Computer Net' – which houses the minds of past Time Lords. The degenerate and dis-integrating bodies on show here can thus be liberated, and brought back under control, by pure mind alone. As Philip MacDonald has suggested, the Hinchcliffe/Holmes' stories create a 'new tradition' for *Doctor Who* whereby 'the Fourth Doctor goes head-to-head with the alien threat in a meeting of minds... hence his appeal to the mutating Noah's dwindling memories of humanity in *The Ark in Space* [and] his lively ethical discourses with Davros in *Genesis of the Dalek*s' (MacDonald, 2004:8). And nowhere is this going 'head-to-head... in a meeting of minds' taken more literally than in the cases of 'The Brain of Morbius' and 'The Deadly Assassin' and their Time Lord opponents (Tulloch and Alvarado 1983: 138).

(18) A resolutely Cartesian and gothicised fear of the body thus worms its way through Hinchcliffe/Holmes' *Doctor Who* narratives: the body-

as-vehicle may betray the pure mind-as-self which it carries, but the (human) mind can fight back and achieve a mental victory over subverted, alien flesh. This mind/body dualism is especially strongly visualised and fantastically coded in 'The Hand of Fear', where the villainous protagonist Eldrad is embodied in a female form for much of the story (played by Judith Paris), before being re-embodied as a more traditionally ranting, male villain (Stephen Thorne). Indeed, this mind/body, substance/vessel binary is even carried across into 'Genesis of the Daleks' and its construction of monstrosity. For the fearful and overdetermined threat of the Daleks is not just a matter of their fascistic evil. It is also that their 'Dalekness' will thoroughly encase and dominate any vestiges of the Kaled (for this, allegorically read 'human mind') trapped inside each 'Travel Machine' Dalek body.

(19) Although 'the Gothic' has frequently been used as a reception category and fan-commentary description for Hinchcliffe/Holmes' stories (Seasons 12-14), there has also been some fan-cultural debate over its appropriateness. Writing about 'The Pyramids of Mars', Justin Richards concedes of its 'Gothic masterpiece' label: 'I might give way on Gothic, but it's certainly a masterpiece', pointing out that if Gothic is a useful term here, 'it's surely more "popular" than "textbook" Gothic' (2004: 34). Others, such as J.K. Muir, have argued that ''Pyramids of Mars' is notably anti-gothic in its depiction of protagonists and villains' (1999: 240). Muir bases this on the observation that the story's villain, Sutekh the Destroyer, is not 'simultaneously frightening and alluring' as truly Gothicised figures like Count Dracula should be (1999: 240), and thus the hero and heroine, the Doctor and Sarah Jane Smith, are not darkly captivated by Sutekh, but are instead staunchly opposed to him. For Muir, the Gothic involves some embodied and moral hesitation, while by contrast *Doctor Who* generally proceeds on the basis of its lead character's moral and embodied certainties of heroism. Indeed, it is an extremely unusual moment when, in 'The Genesis of the Daleks', the Doctor himself actually does express moral and embodied ambivalence – refusing to place together the two wires which could explosively wipe out the Dalek race.

(20) Noting the wide variability in referents for 'the Gothic' forms a part of Alan Barnes' discussion of 'Gothic' *Who* in *Doctor Who Magazine*: 'English Lit graduates, scholars and emeritus professors will doubtless be appalled by the necessary brevity of the following summary. Sorry. Don't write in.' (1999: 9) Through such playfulness, Barnes seems to lampoon and somewhat undermine academic readings of the Gothic. At the very least, he seeks to ward them off, displacing such commentary with his own fan expertise. And yet Barnes is himself engaged in a scholarly fan interpretation, asking 'what constitutes "the genuine Gothic" – and where is it found in Hinchcliffe and Holmes' *Doctor Who*?' (1999: 9)

(21) For Barnes, the 'Gothic' nomination of these stories actually serves, in part, to reduce and simplify the scope of their intertextualities:

> Yes, *The Brain of Morbius* is rooted in *Frankenstein*, commonly labelled a Gothic text – but… *The Deadly Assassin* was inspired by *The Manchurian Candidate*, a 1960s political thriller; *The Robots of Death* by the murder mysteries of Agatha Christie; *The Seeds of Doom* and *The Android Invasion* by cheesy 1950s sci-fi movies; and *The Ark in Space* by the Old Testament. None of these will be indexed under 'Gothic' in any library or reading list you care to name (Barnes 1999: 9).

However, having indicated that 'the Gothic' may well be a short-hand for the textual complexities of these *Doctor Who* stories, Barnes then goes on to argue that they do, by and large, share some Gothic attributes:

> the essential tension underpinning the Gothic narrative is simply Old World versus New Age – where, for example, Van Helsing's methods against the ancient Count include modern recording apparatus…. Such preoccupations go hand-in-hand with the basic ethos which underlines *Doctor Who*, where the heroic Doctor always expounds the truth of scientific reason (Barnes 1999: 10).

This clash between superstition and rationality – the 'ancient' ways versus modernity – is said to characterise much of Hinchcliffe and Holmes' joint work on the series. However, though it relates clearly to some stories, notably 'The Face of Evil' and the 'Masque of Mandragora', its application to tales such as 'Brain of Morbius' and 'Pyramids of Mars' is complicated by the science-fictional aspects of these narratives: the 'Old World' forces of both are actually alien super-beings – Morbius is a renegade Time Lord, while Sutekh is a member of the Osiran race. Although these stories certainly represent the *iconographies* of 'ancient' Old Worlds, impacted upon by the arrival of scientific know-how, any clear opposition of irrational non-science with scientific reason is *narratively* undercut.

(22) For example, Sutekh uses 'scientific' means to escape imprisonment, and thus his science and technology (robot-mummies; a pyramidal rocket; deflection barrier and time-space tunnel) come to be pitted against the Doctor's scientific knowledge. Stripping away the imagery of ancient Egyptian culture, such as the wrappings of the mummies (Muir 1999: 238), this clash occurs between what amounts to good and bad forms of science rather than singularly coding any 'fundamental opposition [between new/old world or] the "rightness" of New Age values' (Barnes 1999: 10). The fact that a number of Hinchcliffe/Holmes' stories concern 'good' versus 'bad' science is not developed, nor accounted for, in Barnes' use of the Gothic. This *aporia* leads him to put forward a rather convoluted and forced account of 'Genesis of the Daleks':

> *Genesis*... posits the Doctor as an agent of the Old World of Gallifrey, seeking to undermine the New Age on Skaro, whose civil war will be brought to an end with the creation of the Daleks. Here, the Time Lords fail, as Gothic's perversely anti-Gothic creed demands all Old World agencies must do; the Doctor, however, triumphs by surmising that for the entire universe to enter its New Age, the Daleks must be allowed to run rampant – only through which "some great good" can prevail (Barnes 1999: 10).

(23) However, this 'old/new world' reading requires Davros' creation of the Daleks to be seen as a triumph of rational science over older, superstitious/non-scientific thinking – something which simply isn't the case in this story. It also requires the Doctor's race, the Time Lords, to be represented as 'Old World', when narratively their technology (e.g. the 'Time Ring') is that of an alien super-race. A far more convincing reading can be produced simply by acknowledging that:

> Science fiction enables a contrast to be made between science being employed negatively as a tool of power and science being used in a positive manner.... Davros uses cold science in order to establish an autocratic regime.... Science and war merge, and indeed Davros himself is a two-sided character embodying both. He is described as the Kaled's 'greatest scientist' and is using scientific methods to create the Dalek army (Bignell and O'Day 2004: 136).

Far from representing Davros' engineering of the Daleks as a victory for science over superstition, his act of 'genesis' is very much represented as the machination of non-democratic, "mad" science (see MacDonald, 2004: 6). And his hybridised body (already visually coded as half-Dalek) encodes his transgression of the categories 'man' and 'monster', making him narratively-speaking a Frankenstein scientist figure *and*, iconographically-speaking, an instance of Frankensteinian recombinant monstrosity.

(24) Raising the trope of the invaded/fragmented/hybridised body to centrality in both its story titles and its key SFX images, mid-seventies *Doctor Who* thus seemed to stray remarkably close to becoming televisual horror aimed at a family or child audience, or 'body-horror for tea-time television', as Miles and Wood have provocatively quipped (2004: 17). Indeed, no less a film and TV critic than Kim Newman describes *Doctor Who* as follows in *The BFI Companion to Horror*: 'Essential viewing for children of the 60s and 70s, *Doctor Who* may yet prove a major influence on British horror' (1996: 96). Indeed, ten years on from this pronouncement, 'may yet prove' seems to have translated into 'has proven to be'. Many major figures producing British horror fiction have been linked to *Doctor Who*. Best-selling Brit-horror writer Stephen Gallagher wrote for the series some time after its Hinchcliffe/Holmes phase (see Gallagher 1988 and 1989; Lydecker

1982); Mark Morris penned a BBC Books sequel to the Hinchcliffe/Holmes story 'Terror of the Zygons', entitled *The Bodysnatchers*, in 1997; Christopher Fowler introduced a tie-in novella, *The Dalek Factor*, written by Simon Clark (Clark 2004; Fowler 2004); and Newman himself also wrote a *Doctor Who* novella for the BBC-licensed small press, Telos Publishing (Newman 2001).

(25) Given these genre-production interconnections, it may be more accurate to think of *Doctor Who*'s mid-seventies shift into 'body-horror' simply as an instance of 'TV horror'. And yet the terms 'Gothic horror' or more simply 'the Gothic' have repeatedly been applied to the programme's representations of horrifyingly disrupted bodies, despite fan debate over whether or not 'the Gothic' is an accurate term for all of this:

> If horror and television have endured a difficult relationship, then one exnominating strategy that can be used to ameliorate horror's cultural threat (as something 'inappropriate' for TV and its domestic, family audiences) is the displacing category of 'Gothic TV' (Hills, 2005: 119).

As I've argued elsewhere, the category of 'gothic TV' has frequently been used to generically reposition horror on TV, especially horror which may be viewed by children. 'Gothic TV' has tended to function as a discursive Other to TV horror, the latter being associated with gore and low culture, while 'the Gothic' instead carries safer and more high-cultural connotations of historical tradition. It can therefore work discursively to potentially defuse social tensions surrounding the depiction of horrifying material for children (tensions which are as real in the noughties as they were in the seventies, when introducing too much horror into *Doctor Who* eventually cost Hinchcliffe his producer's job).

(26) In marked contrast to the cultural dangers of depicting horror, it can also be suggested that the 'safety of "the Gothic" for TV producers' lies not just in its higher cultural value, and its 'literary'/historical associations, but also 'in the fact that its texts are often highly familiar to audiences, being effectively pre-sold through audience recognition' (Hills 2005: 120). Exploiting this familiarity was very much a part of Hinchcliffe and Holmes' production strategy, since many of their stories were 'knowing homages to the icons of gothic horror' (Britton and Barker 2003: 176). The story and iconography of 'Brain of Morbius' were a partial reworking, or pastiche, of *Frankenstein*, whilst 'Pyramids of Mars' was heavily indebted to Hammer horror. 'The Hand of Fear' 'was commissioned because Robert Holmes wanted a story about a crawling hand' (MacDonald 2004: 5), and 'Planet of Evil' 'originally grew [out] of an idea to have a Jekyll and Hyde planet' (Hinchcliffe quoted in Tulloch and Alvarado 1983: 112). Across these stories, the gothic was recurrently recycled:

> We did quite a few Gothic ones, because I like the trappings. What I liked to do was to go to a literary convention or a science fiction convention… and borrow the trappings of it, and then re-dress that up within the *Doctor Who* format (Hinchcliffe quoted in Tulloch and Alvarado 1983: 112-3).

(27) Indeed, such was the rampant intertextuality underpinning the show's pastiched representations of gothicised and fragmented body-parts that some writers have viewed this period of *Doctor Who* as almost 'postmodern':

> This Doctor, like this actor, is suited to being dropped in the middle of established stories because he enjoys playing in them – whether he is required to be…Van Helsing, or Quatermass. These horror skits are among the most *knowing* serials in *Who* history, too much fun to be *avant-la-lettre* postmodern…. They *are* scary, but with a wink… the Tom Baker-era spookshows have too much fun with the trappings of genre to be… ruthless (Newman 2005: 88).

> The show's loyal fans… have also used media and cultural theory to explain their favourite show…. An excellent example of this is an article written by fan author Lance Parkin, exploring whether *Doctor Who* is an example of 'postmodern' TV… Parkin's argument builds around the fact that… *Doctor Who*… routinely pastiches a range of source material (Hills 2004: 78).

(28) However, just as debate has tended to qualify *Doctor Who*'s 'gothic' nature under Hinchcliffe and Holmes, so too has its status as 'postmodern' been invoked but then placed under erasure. Kim Newman, quoted above, sets up a rather bizarre contrast between 'fun' and 'postmodernism', as if the postmodern essentially calls for earnestness. And fan-scholar arguments such as those of Lance Parkin also appear to assume that the 'postmodern' is to be equated purely with an aesthetic strategy of knowing pastiche.

(29) What this era of *Doctor Who* certainly does achieve – regardless of how useful labels such as 'the gothic' and 'the postmodern' are – and what Hinchcliffe and Holmes's practices of commissioning and story-generation indicate, is the reiterated 'placement of generic icons in altered contexts' (Wyatt 1994: 55). Stories such as 'Genesis of the Daleks' and 'The Brain of Morbius' don't just replay *Frankenstein*; through design and narrative they condense monstrous creator and creation together in one body (Davros in 'Genesis'), and recontextualise *Frankenstein* within a pulp-sf-Cartesian tale of pure self-identity persisting in the mind ('Brain of Morbius'). Intertextual and generic sources are not obscured, but are, instead, radically played up through the detailed design and *mise-en-scene* of the

programme (Britton and Barker 2003: 140-142 and 177-8). The Hinchcliffe/Holmes stories announce themselves through their generic precedents:

> As with "The Brain of Morbius" and its recycling of *Frankenstein*, the programme-makers almost seem to say out loud [of 'Talons of Weng-Chiang']: 'We're doing Fu Manchu meets Sherlock Holmes this week; deal with it!" (Miles and Wood 2004: 155).

This reliance on pre-sold genre, combined with gothic concepts of bodily splitting and abjection/disintegration, may actually be best described not via the 'gothic' and 'postmodern' monikers which have widely circulated in fan and scholarly debate, but rather via the notion of 'high concept' telefantasy. In his (1994) book-length analysis, *High Concept*, Justin Wyatt notes that, although the term has been most frequently linked to cycles and types of film, it also has a lineage which begins with 1970s television:

> According to the folklore of the entertainment industry, high concept as a term was first associated with Barry Diller, during his tenure in the early 1970s as a programming executive at ABC. Diller received much credit for bolstering the network's poor ratings, partly through the introduction of the made-for-television movie format. Since Diller needed stories which could be easily summarized for a thirty-second television spot, he approved those projects which could be sold in a single sentence. This sentence would then appear in the advertising spots and in *TV Guide* synopses (Wyatt 1994: 8; see also Edgerton 1991).

Wyatt defines 'high concept' as being a form of narrative which has a highly marketable 'hook': i.e. it can be summarised in a sentence, but still appeal to a very wide audience (1994: 8). 'High concept' narratives are also realised through a specific design 'look', one which condenses narrative possibilities into a specific series of images. Furthermore, Wyatt argues that 'genre can be conceived as a pre-sold property and basis for the viewer's identification [−] high concept relies very heavily on a familiarity with genre.' (1994: 55). The idea of 'placing generic icons in altered contexts' (Wyatt 1994: 55), which I cited above, comes not from an analysis of postmodernism, but from a study of 'high concept' film and television.

(30) Hinchcliffe and Holmes' production strategies testify to a form of *avant-la-lettre* or emergent 'high-concept' approach. Hinchcliffe has stated that: 'what we went for was a very powerful concept. So we borrowed from science fiction… and we borrowed from established horror themes and Gothic' (Hinchcliffe quoted in Tulloch and Alvarado 1983: 112). This approach was linked to consulting 'very early with

designers [of the calibre of Roger Murray-Leach] in order to think up frightening and fantastic visual effects' (Tulloch and Alvarado 1983: 113). Sometimes, Hinchcliffe and Holmes would set out with a single striking image in mind – the crawling hand which underpinned 'Hand of Fear' – or they would commission a story based around one initial concept such as a 'Jekyll and Hyde planet', or a 'fake Earth where every familiar character is actually their android double.' These 'high concept' and genre-reliant mechanics of the show's format could then be used to sell stories and their condensed imagery to a wide, mainstream audience. Fans' 'golden age' of *Doctor Who* between 1975 and 1977 – also a time of high ratings – was not just about 'the Tom Baker years.' It was a phase where design was successfully and powerfully integrated into the show's sf-gothic 'look' (Russell, 2004: 60), and a time when the show's special effects were not criticised by mainstream audiences for their cheapness, but were actually viewed as a key part of the show's success in representing fantastic, gothicised hybrid bodies: 'costumes, setting and make-up (particularly that of Davros) were commended, as were the "special effects"' (BBC Audience Research Department 5th May 1975, report on 'Genesis of the Daleks' Part 6, cited in Richards and Pixley 2001: 368).

(31) Every two, four, or six weeks, Hinchcliffe and Holmes had to sell a new story to their audience. This had to be something which could be easily marketed via brief on-screen trailers or synopses in *The Radio Times*; something which audiences could latch on to straight away. Hence the bold, attention-grabbing story titles, which don't obfuscate matters or confuse the viewer, but often work very simply and directly to indicate a story's key, gothicised image of bodily monstrosity ('The Brain of Morbius', 'The Hand of Fear', 'The Planet of Evil') or to flag up gothic-sf combinations ('The Android Invasion', 'The Pyramids of Mars', 'Robots of Death'), or to promote the return of a monster, as in 'Genesis of the Daleks' and 'Revenge of the Cybermen'. Hinchcliffe and Holmes may well not have formalised and labelled their production strategy as 'high concept', but I've suggested here that this term nevertheless offers a helpful way to think about the insecurely 'gothic' bodies and questionably 'postmodern' body of work attributable to these auteurs of popular genre TV.

(32) When *Doctor Who* finally returned to BBC TV screens in 2005, after a very long break, it was reanimated as an explicitly 'high-concept' show, executive-produced and lead-written by a self-confessed fan of the 1970s Hinchcliffe-Holmes stories, Russell T. Davies (see Miles and Wood 2004: 73). In his TV-industry pitch for the series, Davies wrote:

> The stories should be strong… I mean unashamedly high-concept. This programme's going to be fighting in the heat of the Saturday night ratings war, so every bloody week, there should be something to grab a new viewer…. Big, cheeky headlines. Rose sees the end of the world! The Doctor meets Charles Dickens! (Davies, 2005: 43).

And given that *Doctor Who* is a series based around the notion of time travel, it may come as no surprise to find (production) history repeating itself; the first time as *avant la lettre* or emergent 'high concept', and the second time as marketing-savvy, formalised 'high-concept' popular television (see Hills forthcoming).

(33) In this chapter, I have sought to argue that the work of Philip Hinchcliffe and Robert Holmes on 1970s *Doctor Who* can be viewed as far from 'mysterious': as key members of the then-production team, Holmes and Hinchcliffe were involved in a wholesale appropriation of gothic themes and images, leading media historian James Chapman (2006: 98-117) to describe their collaboration as a 'High Gothic' phase in the series' history. But while this may be a well-established fan (and scholar-fan) narrative, the real mystery, for me, is that Holmes and Hinchcliffe's status as pop-gothic TV auteurs has not yet attained wider currency in the canon(s) of TV Studies, or beyond. Attempting to redress this, I have also argued that the equation of textually mysterious and monstrous bodies with 'the gothic' – or indeed with the 'postmodern' whereby Robert Holmes's scripts are said to "depend upon the audience's knowledge of the generic references for some of their effect" (Chapman 2006: 109) – has led some fans and scholar-fans to underplay the emergence of 'high concept' television in and through the working practices of this producer-writer/script editor team. In many of their 'golden age' *Doctor Who* stories, textually distorting and deforming human bodies (in a variety of manners, as I've shown here) offered one way of condensing image and narrative together into memorable, clear, and significantly pre-sold products which would quickly and effectively make sense to 'mainstream' TV audiences.

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