Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis
Author(s): Kathleen L. Spencer
Source: *ELH*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Spring, 1992), pp. 197-225
Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2873424
Accessed: 14/05/2013 10:48

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The Johns Hopkins University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *ELH.*

http://www.jstor.org

All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

PURITY AND DANGER: *DRACULA*, THE URBAN GOTHIC, AND THE LATE VICTORIAN DEGENERACY CRISIS

BY KATHLEEN L. SPENCER

> I believe that ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created.
>
> —Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*[1]

> The construction of categories defining what is appropriate sexual behavior ("normal"/"abnormal"), or what constitutes the essential gender being ("male"/"female"); or where we are placed along a continuum of sexual possibilities ("heterosexual," "homosexual," "paedophile," "transvestite" or whatever); this endeavor is no neutral, scientific discovery of what was already there. Social institutions which embody these definitions (religion, the law, medicine, the educational system, psychiatry, social welfare, even architecture) are constitutive of the sexual lives of individuals. *Struggles around sexuality are, therefore, struggles over meanings*—over what is appropriate or not appropriate—meanings which call on the resources of the body and the flux of desire, but are not dictated by them.
>
> —Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality and its Discontents*
> (emphasis added)[2]

Interpreting *Dracula*'s sexual substrata has become something of a cottage industry of late, so much so that one more reading of the text's unconscious may seem a bit pointless. Yet there is something curious going on here: despite certain disagreements as to what kind of sexuality is present in the novel, almost all readings presume a given sexuality that is repressed and displaced throughout the text, which it is the critical task to uncover and articulate. In other words, despite local disagreements, all of these readings approach the text from a fairly orthodox version of depth psychology.[3] While this focus has certainly been productive, there are other questions about the text that cannot be answered by focusing on the unconscious sexuality of the author, or a character, or even, as in Freudian/Marxist readings, on the class system.

What I propose is a different kind of historical reading of *Dracula* to supplement the previous approaches; my concern is less with Stoker's position as a representative late-Victorian man that with the novel as a representative late-Victorian *text*. For *Dracula* is not an isolated phenomenon, but is part of a literary/cultural discourse comprised not only of other tales about vampires, but of other fantastic novels and stories that also focus on sexual dynamics, whether covertly or overtly.[4] Whatever it is that *Dracula* is saying about sex, then, it is saying not in isolation but as part of a dialogue.

The first step in this broader historical explication of Stoker's novel is to identify its literary context: the "romance revival" of the 1880s and 1890s—more explicitly, that species of romance called "the fantastic." Having located the text generically, we can then clarify its cultural context—the late-Victorian world of imperialism and degeneracy theories, purity crusades and the New Woman, materialist medicine and its opponents (continental psychology on the one hand, Spiritualism and assorted occultisms on the other). To illuminate this social context I will read the novel against models of cultures in crisis drawn from René Girard and anthropologist Mary Douglas. Finally I will consider the relationship between *Dracula*'s genre, its historical context, and its popularity, to see what light this analysis can shed on a larger question—why the fantastic as a genre should have flourished so dramatically in this period of cultural transformation.

I: THE FANTASTIC

Like "romance" itself, "the fantastic" is a much-disputed term. While some theorists use "fantasy" and "the fantastic" interchangeably, others see them as referring to two quite different kinds of stories, and still others see the fantastic not as a genre at all but as an element that can appear in many kinds of tales (as the term "gothic" can be applied either to a specific fictional configuration common at the end of the eighteenth century, or to a literary mode which can appear in works of any period).

The most famous definition of the term "fantastic" is Tzvetan Todorov's, but what seems to me the most functional, precise explanation of the fantastic is that proposed by the Polish semiotician Andrzej Zgorzelski. For Zgorzelski, the fantastic as a genre is signaled by "the breaching of the internal laws which are initially assumed in the text to govern the fictional world." The opening of the text indicates that the fictive world is based on a "mimetic world model," a model that is violently breached by the entrance of the fantastic element and changed into a different world, one in which the fantastic element does not violate the laws of reality. A fantastic text, then, builds its fictional world as *"a textual confrontation of two models of reality."*[5]

Two elements are essential for the characteristic *frisson* of the fantastic: first, the impossible event must genuinely be happening (not a dream, a hallucination, a mistake, or a deliberate trick); and second, the tone of the narrative emphasizes initial disbelief, and (usually) horror. The characters react with fear and revulsion at encountering what is not only unexpected, but *unnatural* according to the laws of the world they inhabit, and readers usually respond with the same feelings, not only because we identify with the characters, but because the world the characters initially inhabit is our own world. Further, the narrative voice insistently emphasizes violation and transgression, the logical contradiction between the impossibility of the occurrence and its actuality. For example, when Dracula appears in Picadilly at high noon, the characters react initially with disbelief and a kind of horrified vertigo at discovering that the monstrous is real and walking the streets of their ordinary modern city.

Defined in this way, the fantastic as a genre is relatively modern. The low mimetic (to use Northrop Frye's familiar term) must be a well-established fictional convention before we can conventionalize its violation, a condition that does not obtain till the mid-eighteenth century. Before the convention of realism became the norm—in the medieval quest narrative or Renaissance romance, for example—the intrusion of the supernatural or monstrous did not create an experience of the fantastic for either the characters or the readers. A questing knight may be seriously dismayed to discover a dragon or a magician in his path, but the mere existence of the supernatural does not force him to rethink reality, because it does not violate the laws of nature. For Prince Hamlet, seeing his father's ghost is certainly alarming; but it is the ghost's message, not its presence, which so distresses him. The serious question for Hamlet is not whether the ghost is real but whether it is "honest"—genuinely his father's spirit or a demon sent to tempt him to regicide.

Modern readers of these texts need not believe in the actual existence of dragons or ghosts to recognize that the text treats these occurrences as natural. The conventions of fictional realism do not apply, any more than they apply to modern fantasy or science fiction, whose readers learn to respond without astonishment to the presence of wizards or of faster-than-light space vessels. But a wizard or faster-than-light ship introduced into a text whose opening pages signal a contemporary realistic setting would produce reactions from the characters, the narrator, and the readers that would signal the presence of the fantastic.

In light of this requirement, I would argue that the Gothic tales of the late eighteenth century are the first fantastic fictions, Horace Walpole and Anne Radcliffe among the first writers to experiment with the emotional possibilities (for both characters and readers) of violating the laws of nature. Since such violations are radically new, the earliest writers tend to soften the effects a bit. In the first place, Gothic fictions are traditionally distanced somewhat from the world of their audience, set back in time and "away" in space—preferably in Spain or Italy during the Inquisition—making the stories more plausible (to an English audience) by the superstitiousness of their settings, and at the same time lessening the intensity of the fear, for the readers if not the characters. As another softening device, some of the early Gothic writers, notably Radcliffe, tidy away the fantastic by giving us rational explanations for the apparent supernatural events—though not till the end of the novel, so we have plenty of time to experience the fantastic *frisson* first. However, this tidying strategy was soon abandoned. While second-generation Gothic writers like Monk Lewis and Charles Maturin still set their novels in Inquisition Europe, they apparently felt less need to reassure their readers at the end that the ordinary rational laws of reality governed the world inside the text as well as outside.

But the fantastic that develops at the end of the nineteenth century (exclusive of the ghost story, a popular but traditional form) is identifiably different from the Gothic of one hundred years before. First and most important, the new authors insist on the modernity of the setting—not on the distance between the world of the text and the world of the reader, but on their *identity*. A modern setting means, most profoundly, an urban setting, as by the end of the nineteenth century well over half the population of the British Isles lived in cities. To be modern also means that science is the metaphor that rules human interactions with the universe, so the new fantastic adopts the discourse of empiricism even to describe and manipulate supernatural phenomena.

These characteristics of the modern fantastic, as distinct from the earlier variety, suggest we need a new term to refer to it; and I would argue that "Urban Gothic" is particularly appropriate for the new type, acknowledging the eighteenth-century ancestry while identifying the major modifications that have been made to adapt the fantastic to the needs of a new era.

The change from Gothic to Urban Gothic allows writers to call on the powers of what Henry James, in a review of the sensation novels of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, called "those most mysterious of mysteries, the mysteries which are at our own doors." As James observed, the innovation of bringing the terror next door gave an entirely new direction to horror literature. The new strategy

> was fatal to the authority of Mrs. Radcliffe and her everlasting castle in the Apennines. What are the Apennines to us, or we to the Apennines? Instead of the terrors of "Udolpho", we were treated to the terrors of the cheerful country house and the busy London lodgings. And there is no doubt that these were infinitely more terrible.

In 1865, James was moderately scornful of the supernatural as a fictional device, remarking in this same review that "a good ghost-story, to be half as terrible as a good murder-story, must be connected at a hundred points with the common objects of life."[6] But twenty-five years later he himself found uses for the supernatural by following his own advice and connecting it "at a hundred points to the common objects of life"—and so did his "fellow" (if we can so call them) romancers. In short, James, along with many of his contemporaries, explored the Urban Gothic.

II: THE ROMANCE REVIVAL

But the Urban Gothic was only part, if a crucial part, of a larger literary movement of the last two decades of the century: the romance revival. "Romance" is another of those protean literary terms whose meaning varies with the frame of reference, but in the context of the 1880s, the term has a fairly stable meaning. The "romance revival" began as a reaction against the "high realism" of the 1870s, which was, in its turn, a reaction against the "sensation novels" of the 1860s. The theorists of high realism rejected the sensation novel's emphasis on plot, arguing that it demanded less of readers than novels that required them to interpret the subtleties of human motives. In addition, it was believed, too strong an emphasis on plot would interfere with the "naturalness" of characters.

By the 1880s, these novels of "character analysis" themselves came under attack. First, being limited to and by "gross" reality, the novels (their critics argued) were dull and trivial. Second, these novelists had chosen to adopt the "heartless" methods of science ("vivisection" is a common metaphor), treating their characters with no sympathy or decorum, dissecting them in public. Then, when "high realism" transposes into naturalism, new grounds for rejection appear. For one thing, naturalist novels persistently tried to introduce moral, middle-class readers to the kinds of persons—prostitutes, criminals, beggars, and other "undeserving" or unappealing poor people—whom they had no desire to meet. For another, realism, especially when pushed to the extremes of naturalist determinism, allowed no room for the higher workings of Providence, no room for the reward of the virtuous and the punishment of the guilty. Finally, since naturalism was identified in the minds of English readers with Zola, James, and Howells, it became for some readers and critics a patriotic duty to resist "foreign influences," and to call for a healthy *English* fiction.[7]

The result was a resurgence of interest in bold, high-stakes adventure, larger-(and simpler-) than-life characters, exotic locales and incidents, idealistic quests, world-class criminals, disguises and escapes, rescues and disasters. Anthony Hope Hawkins, author (as Anthony Hope) of one of the best-known romances of the period, *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1893), exclaimed that in romance,

> Emotion must be taken at high pitch. It must be strong, simple, confident; otherwise it lacks the quality needed for romance. . . . romance becomes an expression of some of the deepest instincts of humanity.
>
> It has no monopoly of this expression, but it is its privilege to render it in a singularly clear, distinct, and pure form; it can give to love an ideal object, to ambition a boundless field, to courage a high occasion; and these great emotions, revelling in their freedom, exhibit themselves in their glory. Thus in its most worthy forms, in the hands of its masters, it can not only delight men, but can touch them to the very heart. It shows them what they would be if they could, if time and fate and circumstances did not bind, what in a sense they all are, and what their acts would show them to be if an opportunity offered. So they dream and are happier, and at least none the worse for their dreams.[8]

Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, H. Rider Haggard, Arthur Conan Doyle, and (in his early works) H. G. Wells are the best-known figures of this new movement, along with Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, and Andrew Lang, several of whom also wrote manifestos for the critical journals in favor of romance.[9] In addition to these relatively familiar names, a whole army of romancers, once popular but now practically unread and in many cases entirely forgotten, produced large quantities of this fiction to supply the new markets.[10]

But if the revived romance of the 1880s takes its declared form from an ancient tradition, the new romancers (like the authors of the Urban Gothic) draw on contemporary interests for their characters, settings, and themes: the exotic reaches of the empire—Africa, Egypt, India, Australia—as well as such regions as China, the South Pacific, and South and Central America; dead civilizations of the ancient past (Egyptian, Peruvian, Celtic, Neanderthal), their tales enlivened by information culled from the newest archaeological reports; lost races inside volcanoes, at the bottom of the sea, in the polar regions, on other planets, in the future; the thrilling possibilities of modern technology (electrically-induced immortality or eternal youth; brain transplants; memory recordings; time travel); or the beliefs and rituals of that other revival of the 1880s, the occult revival (Spiritualism, Theosophy, the Society for Psychical Research, and the magicians of the Order of the Golden Dawn).[11]

III: PURITY AND DANGER

Thus not only the Urban Gothic but the romance revival as a whole transforms a traditional literary genre by an infusion of modern perspectives. But the Urban Gothic and the romance share another crucial characteristic beyond their common reliance on contemporary adventure and exoticism: a concern for purity, for the reduction of ambiguity and the preservation of boundaries. Both attempt to reduce anxiety by stabilizing certain key distinctions, which seemed, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, to be eroding: between male and female, natural and unnatural, civilized and degenerate, human and nonhuman. At issue, finally, underneath all these distinctions, is the ground of individual identity, the ultimate distinction between self and other.

Where once a complex web of traditional roles and relationships grounded individual identity, in the new capitalist world of the cash-nexus, Anthony Giddens observes, the bulwarks of identity were reduced essentially to two: the arena of intimate relationships (that is, the family, personal and highly sexualized), and the arena of "mass ritual," of sporting events and political ceremonies, especially the fervent impersonal group identity we call nationalism. "In such conditions of social life," writes Giddens, "the ontological security of the individual in day-to-day life is more fragile than in societies dominated by tradition and the meshings of kinship across space and time."[12]

Instead of being broadly supported by a web of interlocking kinship links, work groups, ceremonial societies, traditions, routines, and even the continuities of place and seasonal cycle, identity for the ordinary middle-class Briton now hung delicately on two slender threads at the extreme margins of scale, the intimate and the national. So it is hardly surprising that many people grew anxious to preserve the clarity and purity of the distinctions that supported this system.

However, even at this time of their heightened significance, these very distinctions came under attack. Darwinian evolutionary theory blurred the boundaries between human and animal in not one but two ways: by the famous argument that humans and apes had a common ancester, but also by the implied hierarchy at the end of *The Descent of Man* which leads from the ape-like ancestor through primitive peoples to civilized Europeans. The imputed inferiority of the lower races, as George Stocking points out, "although still in the first instance cultural, was now in most cases at least implicitly organic as well."[13] Thus the boundary between human and ape became a matter of scientific doctrine, but (as Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* pointed out) an ambiguous one: what was actually a philosophic and political debate was concealed under the language of science. Yet since "scientific" language could not hope to stabilize a fundamentally unscientific boundary, the issue continued unresolved.

Nor was this boundary a matter of abstract speculation for civilized Europeans; for if humans could evolve, it was thought they could also *de*volve or degenerate, both as nations and as individuals. At what point in a downward slide did a human being cross over the line into animality? Lombroso addressed this question with his new "science" of criminal anthropology, which purported to demonstrate through elaborate measurements and charts of facial angles that habitual criminals were throwbacks to primitive ancestors, with more of the ape than the human about them. Fear of such national "degeneracy" was further highlighted for Britons by the Boer War of 1899–1902, first by the series of unprecedented defeats handed the greatest army in the world by a handful of Dutch farmers, and second by the recruiting campaign that discovered the physical inadequacies of the men from London's East-End slums, who were alarmingly undersized, frail, and sickly.[14] Such concerns underlay the tremendous public anxiety at the end of the century about the condition of the British Empire and the warnings that, like its Roman predecessor, it could fall, and for what were popularly perceived as the same reasons—moral decadence leading to racial degeneration.

Another crucial distinction under attack was that between male and female. By all the superficial criteria of appearance, behavior, and legal status, Victorian men and women must have seemed almost like two different, though symbiotically related, species. It has been argued that never in western society have gender roles been more rigid or more distinct (at least in the middle classes) than in the late nineteenth century. Victorian science, especially Victorian medicine, lent the weight of its prestige to the position that the physical distinctions between women and men were absolute, and absolutely determinate. In their very nature and essence, said the doctors, women were unlike men; and this difference explained their limitations—physical, moral, and intellectual—and justified their legal and social disabilities.[15]

It was woman's special nature that fitted her for the task she had been assigned by Victorian society. In her guises of maiden, wife, and above all mother, Woman (with a capital) had been appointed the guardian of moral virtue; the home, Woman's realm, became both a refuge from the hard necessities of the utilitarian business world and the temple of a new religion that served to supplement or substitute for the weakening Christian orthodoxy—the religion of romantic love as the source of salvation, and of the family as a haven for all the human warmth, grace and affection that had been banished from the father's daily life in the world. Woman, as the Angel in the House, was to save Man from his own baser instincts and lead him toward heaven.

Jenni Calder's study of the Victorian home further clarifies the significance of this domestic religion. While Victorians genuinely desired to make the world a better place, Calder argues, the social problems facing them were so massive and so intractable that they usually had to settle for making the home, as the only part of the world responsive to their actions, a better place instead. Thus "the angel in the house was at the root of multitudes of Victorian assumptions and ideas, and Victorian rationalizations and ideals."[16]

But this position did not go unchallenged. Throughout the century, women argued for reforms of marriage and divorce laws, and in particular for the right of married women to own property in their own names. The kind of resistance they faced is revealed most potently in the comments of Lord St. Leonards, who argued against the passage of the Married Women's Property Bill of 1857 on the grounds that it would "place the whole marriage law . . . on a different footing and give a wife all the distinct rights of citizenship," an argument that indicates that for this distinguished jurist and former Lord Chancellor the categories of "wife" and "citizen" were mutually exclusive.[17] A few men joined the fray on the distaff side, most notably John Stuart Mill, who argued against such logic in *The Subjection of Women* in 1869 and even tried to get women the vote, on the grounds that only if they could vote for their representatives would Parliament take their needs seriously; but considerable discussion produced little substantive action.

The debate grew even more heated in the last few decades of the century when the New Woman arrived on the scene, wanting higher education, striving to enter the learned professions, and ever more frequently working outside the home for money (that is, middle-class women began to do so, for of course lower-class women had long been so employed). And some of the most radical New Women even argued that they were entitled to the same freedom of sexual expression as men. In short, more and more women insisted on leaving the house of which they had been appointed angel, the house that, if a refuge for men, became for many middle-class wives and daughters a more or less pleasant prison. But in the eyes of most Victorian men, for women to deny their traditional role was to deny their womanhood, to challenge the distinctions between women and men upon which the family—and therefore society—depended.

Nor was the New Woman the only source of threat to gender categories. Homosexuality was brought into the consciousness of a horrified public, first by the Cleveland Street scandal in 1889, which revealed a homosexual brothel catering to the upper classes (including the Prince of Wales's closest friend and, by rumor, the Prince's eldest son as well).[18] More dramatic still was the infamous Wilde trial in 1895, which made "homosexuality" both as an ontological state and as a chosen lifestyle available to ordinary middle-class imaginations for the first time.[19] To late Victorians, if the New Woman's desire to achieve higher status by "becoming" a man was at least understandable, though outrageous, what could be said about men who deliberately refused to be men? Such depravity challenged not just the distinction between male and female but that between natural and unnatural as well.[20]

The debates about sex and sex roles in the nineteenth century, argues Ludmilla Jordanova, "hinged precisely on the ways in which sexual boundaries might become blurred. It is as if the social order depended on clarity with respect to certain distinctions whose symbolic meanings spread far beyond their explicit context."[21] In this perception she is quite right: anthropologists tell us that social order depends precisely on the clarity of such distinctions. But anthropologists can tell us more: they can help us see the dynamics at work in late Victorian England in a larger social context—the context of a culture in crisis.

Mary Douglas's work on pollution fears and witchcraft societies is surprisingly appropriate here.[22] All cultures that explain evil as a product of witchcraft—from certain African tribes to Salem Village in the seventeenth century—share certain characteristics, she notes. Most importantly, there is strong pressure on group members to conform, but the classification system of the society is somehow ineffective in structuring reality: it is too narrow and rigid to deal with the variety of actual experience, or it is inconsistent, or has gaps, or is in competition with another system of classification that weakens the effectiveness of both.

In such a society, the universe is dualistic: what is inside is good, what is outside is bad. The group boundary is therefore both a source of magical danger and the main definer of rights: you are either a member or a stranger. Evil is a foreign danger introduced by foreign agents in disguise, but abetted by deviant members of the group who must be identified and expelled for allowing the outside evil to infiltrate. Since not only the society itself but the entire cosmos is endangered by the vile, irrational behavior of these human agents of evil, a witchcraft society is preoccupied with rituals of cleansing, the expulsion of spies or witches, and the redrawing of boundaries to mark the pure (inside) and the evil (outside).

Though the late Victorians did not explicitly attribute evil to witches, they manifested the same fears of pollution from outsiders, the same suspicion of deviants as traitors, and the same exaggerated estimation of what was at stake—in short, the same social dynamics as more traditional witchcraft societies. The pressures on middle-class Victorians to conform were intense (and too well known to need documentation), while the model to which they were required to conform was losing its clarity. The old consensus on the central distinctions of their society—on which distinctions were indeed central, and on how those distinctions were to be defined and maintained—was breaking down. In the last twenty years of the century, an intense debate developed between those who sought to shore up the old crumbling distinctions and those demanding change—nontraditional women, homosexuals, socialists, some artists and intellectuals, a few scientists, working-class men who had acquired some education. One side strove to widen or redefine cultural boundaries, to let some of the "outside" in, while the other fought desperately to maintain the "purity" of the inside by expelling as traitors those who breached the boundaries.

Douglas mentions one other key factor in a witchcraft society that the Victorians also shared: the leadership of the group is precarious or under dispute, and the roles within the group ambiguous or undefined. Because no one person or faction has sufficient authority to stabilize the situation, the struggle for leadership prompts what we might call "purity competitions": who is most vigilant at ferreting out enemies, especially those disguised enemies lurking within the society itself? In other words, the struggle for power and stability under these social conditions leads inevitably to scapegoat rituals.[23]

The struggle for leadership of a divided and confused people also characterized late Victorian society. For the Victorians, neither traditionalist nor "rebel" forces could take complete command: the traditionalists had the numbers and most of the worldly power, but the rebels tended to be educated and articulate, many were influential, and all had ready access to a public forum in the wide-open periodical market of the 1880s and '90s. As a result, they could make their voices heard in disproportion to their numbers and official positions. The battle produced numerous cries of "seize the witch!"—directed both at groups (Jews, Germans, Slavs, Orientals, birth control advocates, promiscuous women, decadent French authors [especially Zola], homosexuals) and at individuals—most spectacularly, though by no means solely, Oscar Wilde.

And here is where we reconnect the social and the literary. The romance, I would argue, and in particular the Urban Gothic, not only in its characteristic subject matter but more importantly in its very form, is the perfect literary reflection of the cultural crisis Britain experienced between 1880 and 1914. In such an atmosphere, the modern fantastic became a potent vehicle for social drama—potent because the images of the fantastic are always drawn from our dreams and nightmares. The fantastic as a genre is based on violations of reality, which means it is fundamentally concerned with *defining* reality; and the nature of reality is exactly the question at issue in late-nineteenth-century England. Finally, since at the end of a fantastic tale the violating element is characteristically expelled and the mimetic world, the status quo, is reestablished, the fantastic proved ideal for symbolically reaffirming the traditional model of reality.

As Northrop Frye told us long ago, the romance is traditionally a *psychomachia*, a struggle between the forces of good and evil in which evil is defeated, and the modern romance (as Hope's quotation suggests, with its emphasis on clarity and purity and "great emotions in their glory") retains this pattern. The Urban Gothic extends the tradition in a peculiarly modern way by defining the enemy as not only evil but *unnatural*: she/he/it has no right to exist at all. In the very form of both the romance and the Urban Gothic, then, we find repeated the contemporary drive to purify the inside and expel the foreign pollution: at the heart of both lies the scapegoat ritual.

And this finally brings us to *Dracula,* a classic example of the conservative fantastic: in the end Dracula is killed, the alien element expelled and the ordinary world restored. But what exactly is being expelled? In particular, how would Stoker's original audience have read this novel? In the cultural context of 1897, what threat did Dracula represent that needed so desperately and at such cost to be driven out? How was the culture being instructed to protect itself, and from what?

Another way to put the question is this: who is the scapegoat in *Dracula,* and to what end is that scapegoat sacrificed?

IV: RITUAL VICTIMS IN *DRACULA*

As René Girard tells us in *Violence and the Sacred,* what all sacrificial victims have in common is that they must recognizably belong to the community, but must at the same time be somehow marginal, incapable of fully participating in the social bond—slaves, criminals, the mad, the deformed. They are enough of the community to substitute for it, but between them and the community "a crucial social link is missing, so they can be exposed to violence without fear of reprisal. Their death does not automatically entail an act of vengeance." As a result, sacrificing them will end communal violence rather than prolonging it.[24]

In *Dracula,* I argue, Lucy Westenra fills the category and the social function of the surrogate victim who is sacrificed to restore a lost order. On the surface, it would seem that Lucy belongs to the class Victorians would find *least* sacrificeable rather than most—a young, beautiful, virtuous girl—and that, in any case, she is a victim not of her own community but of a monstrous outsider. However, we are given numerous indications that Lucy, for all her sweetness, purity, and beauty, is a marginal figure. In the first place, her social connections are alarmingly tenuous: her father is dead, and she has no brothers or other family to protect her except her mother, who is herself very weak both psychologically and physically (and in fact predeceases her daughter). There is no one to protect Lucy from attack, or to revenge her death at the hands of her own community.

More crucially, Lucy's character is "flawed" in a way that makes her fatally vulnerable to the vampire. She is a woman whose sexuality is under very imperfect control. She is loved devotedly by three different young men, which in itself is not a fault, but her reaction to this situation reveals a problem. When she writes to Mina about her suitors, she can't help gloating about "THREE proposals in one day."[25] Worse, although she says she is greatly in love with Arthur, she also feels very badly about turning down those two splendid fellows, John Seward and Quincey Morris, and bursts out, "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?" Immediately afterward she admits that "this is heresy, and I must not say it" (59); but even so, we sense that she means what she says: she really would like to marry all of them.

And, according to the novel's own semiotics, she gets her wish. At her funeral Arthur declares that, because he has given Lucy his blood, he feels that she is his true wife in the sight of God. Under the circumstances, his friends naturally refrain from telling him about the transfusions Lucy had received from her other two lovers and Dr. Van Helsing; but later, alone with Seward, Van Helsing bursts out in uncontrollable laughter thinking of it. True, as Seward observes, the thought is very comforting for Arthur. But if Arthur is right in his belief, Van Helsing points out, what about the other three donors? "Then this so sweet maid is a polyandrist" (176).

Nor is this desire to marry all three of her suitors the only sign of Lucy's suspect character. She is a sleepwalker, a habit traditionally associated with sexual looseness. She is therefore doubly vulnerable to Dracula's approach; in the symbol-system of the novel, she has signaled her sexual receptivity. It cannot be an accident that on the night of the storm, when Dracula's ship lands, Lucy indulges again in sleepwalking, leaving the house dressed only in her nightgown. Considering the armor-like characteristics of the ordinary Victorian woman's daytime clothing—the heavily-boned corsets, the immense weight of petticoats, the endless layers of cloth—Lucy in her nightdress might as well be naked. Worse yet, she goes to the old cemetery, alone, and to the grave of a suicide (the only spot of unsanctified ground in the churchyard). The traditional equation of sexuality and death could hardly be clearer, nor her invitation of Dracula more explicit.

What makes Lucy's sexuality threatening to the community—sufficiently threatening that she becomes an appropriate surrogate victim—is that she will not limit herself to one man. While she does officially choose one of her three suitors, her choice is insufficiently absolute to control the competition among the three for her possession. Stoker downplays the competition by making the men such good friends and such decent, self-controlled characters that the threat of disorder is concealed, but nonetheless that competition remains as a source of potential violence.

But in order to function as a surrogate victim who can purge the community of its universal violence, something further is required: Lucy has to take on the aspect of the monstrous. In one light, Lucy functions as the monstrous double of Mina, the virtuous wife; seen another way, she functions as her own monstrous double, for there are two aspects to her personality whose separation becomes increasingly marked throughout her transformation into a vampire. She is both the image of purity, sweetness, and beauty—the traditional blond angel in the house—and the creature of sexual appetites, the sleepwalker who accedes to violent penetration by the vampire. Her saving grace, according to Van Helsing, is that she yielded to Dracula only during a trance—that is, when her conscious personality was not in command—so her unconscious personality alone has become vampiric.[26] During her last hours, she manifests both sides of her personality in alternation, sometimes the sweet pure Lucy they all love, and sometimes the wanton, voluptuous creature with cruel mouth and hard eyes. When she is awake and thus "herself," she clutches the garlic flowers to her; but in her sleep, she thrusts away that protection, embracing her monstrous fate. Since she dies in her sleep, her future as one of the Un-Dead is inescapable.

As a vampire she is even more beautiful than in life, but no longer the Lucy they had known. "The sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness. . . . Lucy's eyes [have become] unclean and full of hell-fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we knew"; they blaze with "unholy light" and she is as "callous as a devil" (211). Again and again, Seward uses the words "wanton" and "voluptuous" to describe Un-Dead Lucy's smile, her tones "diabolically sweet"—until she is thwarted, at which point she becomes overtly monstrous, her eyes throwing out "sparks of hell-fire," the brows "wrinkled as though the folds of the flesh were the coils of Medusa's snakes" (212). These same images are repeated when the four men, Dr. Van Helsing and Lucy's three suitors, return the next day to free Lucy's soul, to save her by killing her. "She seemed like a nightmare of Lucy as she lay there; the pointed teeth, the bloodstained, voluptuous mouth—which it made one shudder to see—the whole carnal and unspirited appearance, seeming like a devilish mockery of Lucy's sweet purity" (214).

But the rite of sacrifice, an act of terrible violence, restores both Lucy and the community she had threatened. As Stoker describes it, the final killing of Lucy is quite clearly both a religious act and a communal one. The setting is a solitary tomb lit only by candles. Arthur drives the stake through Lucy's heart, as the one with the best right to so violate her offending body and release the innocent soul, and he is supported in his work by the priestly figure of Dr. Van Helsing and by his two closest friends, Lucy's other lovers, who read the prayer for the dead as he strikes home.

> The thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, bloodcurdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. His face was set, and high duty seemed to shine through it; the sight of it gave us courage so that our voices seemed to ring through the little vault. . . .
>
> There, in the coffin lay no longer the foul Thing that we had so dreaded and grown to hate that the work of her destruction was yielded as a privilege to the one best entitled to it, but Lucy as we had seen her in life, with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity. (216)[27]

In death Lucy becomes again the angel she had been in life; she also becomes a bond between her three rivals, where in life she could only have been a source of division. Despite their personal grief, it is for them an ideal solution to the problem she represented. In sacrificing Lucy, the four men purge not only their fear of female sexuality generally, of which she is the monstrous expression, but also—and more importantly—their fear of their own sexuality and their capacity for sexually-prompted violence against each other.

The scene in the tomb exemplifies a key element of the sacrificial rite, "the atmosphere of terror and hallucination that accompanies the primordial religious experience."[28] The violent hysteria, the decisive act of violence perceived as religious experience, the succeeding calm and the atmosphere of holy mystery covering the participants, all function to fuse the men into a closed and harmonious community. Although Lucy is no longer available to any of the men as a bulwark of his personal identity, her death serves to reinforce their common bond, their dedication to each other and to a sense of shared interest, thus bolstering that other pole of Victorian identity that Giddens defines as nationalism.

But Lucy is not the only scapegoat in the novel. Count Dracula himself is also sacrificed for the common good. Like all sacrificial victims, he must be both connected and marginal. His links to the community are literally *blood* ties—the blood of Jonathan, Lucy, and Mina. Further, he resembles his enemies in several important ways: he is (or was once) human, he is European, he is extremely intelligent and has a most powerful will. But his roots are in *Eastern* Europe—Slavic, Catholic, peasant, and superstitious where England is Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, industrial, and rationalist. Further, unlike Arthur, the bourgeois aristocrat, Dracula belongs to a much older, more feudal sort of aristocracy, one that was was going out of favor in England.[29] In fact, the most unmistakable sign of his allegiance to that older pattern may be his sexuality, which partakes of the ancient *droit du seigneur*. "Your girls that you all love are mine already," he gloats (306), taunting his opponents; and throughout the novel he lets his appetites run rampant, voracious and (as Freud says of the child's sexuality) polymorphously perverse—a most appropriate phrase, since the narrative repeatedly emphasizes Dracula's "child brain" (335), as opposed to the adult brains of his enemies. Even Mina has, we are told, a *man's* brain to go with her woman's heart (234).

But we know that civilized adult men control their appetites; his failure to do so marks the crucial distinction between Dracula and his opponents: he is *degenerate*, "a criminal and of criminal type" according to the theories of Lombroso and Nordau, which means he has an "imperfectly formed mind" (342).[30] Consequently he can only work on one project at a time, and in emergencies must fall back on habit—which is why, closely pursued, he can do nothing but flee to his castle, while his opponents are able to innovate strategies for his defeat. As criminal and degenerate, Dracula is by definition selfish, evil, solitary; despite his pride in his descent from Attila and in his people's valiant struggles against the Turk, as a vampire he has no true "national" identity, no "community" to belong to. Even the three vampire women at the castle who could conceivably function as a family for him, if not a nation, do not appear to do so. By contrast the "band of brothers" is selfless, good, and unified into a community both by their shared sacrifice of Lucy and their shared devotion to Mina. It is, as Van Helsing tells them, one of their great advantages over Dracula—the "power of combination," along with the "sources of science" and "devotion in a cause" (238).

However, despite all these differences, the truth gradually emerges: the Count represents precisely those dark secret drives that the men most fear in themselves, which are most destructive to both poles of identity—the intimate self of the family man, threatened by unrestrained sexual appetites, and the communal self of the nation, undermined by violent internal competition more than by external invasion. Representing a real aspect of his enemies, but one that they consciously wish to reject, Dracula has both the necessary connections to the community and the necessary separation from it to fulfill the scapegoat's purgative function.

And like Lucy's sacrifice, the scene of Dracula's death contains all the elements of the primordial religious experience. The atmosphere is terrifying and hallucinatory: the two parties desperately racing the sun, each fighting for life—Dracula to reach his castle, the band of heroes to catch the vampire before sunset restores his deadly power; the Count's glaring eyes and "horrible vindictive look" as he lies helpless in his coffin, and his triumphant expression as he sees the sun setting and anticipates his revenge. Like the earlier sacrifice, this act is communal: two of the young men together pry off the lid of the coffin with their knives and strike simultaneously, one slashing the Count's throat, the other plunging a knife into his heart—all described in words that intensify the terror of the moment ("sweep," "flash," "shriek," "shear," "plunge" [377]).

"It was like a miracle," cries Mina in relief; but, as the Count's body crumbles into dust before their eyes, she adds, "Even in that moment of final dissolution, there was in the face a look of peace, such as I never could have imagined might have rested there" (377). As at the moment of Lucy's death, the sacrificial victim is pictured as at peace, almost grateful to die for the greater good of the community. And indeed, there may be a reason for both Lucy's and Dracula's curious passivity at the moment of death. Mary Douglas remarks in *Purity and Danger* that "if a person has no place in the social system and is therefore a marginal being, all precaution against danger must come from others. He cannot help his abnormal situation." But to say that he cannot help his situation is to suggest that he would *like* to help it, that he does not want to be a danger to others.

However we read this reaction, the atmosphere of the scene changes dramatically at the moment of the vampire's death: Castle Dracula is suddenly seen standing out against the sunset sky as we have never seen it before, every stone blazing in the light. The violence and horror is succeeded by holy awe and peace, which is capped when Quincey Morris sees Mina's forehead now clear of its shameful scar, and vows with his last breath that this outcome is worth dying for. It is the ultimate confirmation that the community has been saved.

V: WHAT IS LOST: WHAT IS SAVED

But it has been a near thing, and the cost high: Lucy is lost to them (though her soul was saved), Quincey is dead, and both Jonathan and Mina suffer severely before Dracula is defeated. Stoker's novel, then, reveals two complementary perspectives on its subject. If Lucy and Dracula demonstrate the terrifying powers of degeneracy, so threatening that they must at all costs be expelled from the community and from life itself, Jonathan's and Mina's experiences exemplify the difficulties and the rewards of resistance.

According to Victorian sexology, in Dracula's castle Jonathan is a man at risk: he is engaged to Mina, but they are not yet married, so that his sexual fantasies are inflamed but not yet lawfully satisfied. Further, he is far from home and isolated from other living human beings. For the Victorians, solitude greatly increased sexual danger: the solitude of privacy allowed one to indulge in masturbation, while the different solitude of anonymity left one free to indulge in the kinds of sexual experiences one would, as member of a family, have been ashamed to admit desiring.[31] Jonathan is both alone and anonymous. Confronted with the three mysterious and beautiful women in the moonlit room, he admits, "I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (37). The scene that follows, when he very nearly (and disastrously) gets his wish, is recorded with incandescent detail:

> The girl went on her knees and bent over me, simply gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. Lower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth and seemed to fasten on my throat. . . . I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the super-sensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in languorous ecstasy and waited—waited with beating heart. (38)

The erotic charge of the scene is quite remarkable, as is Jonathan's fascinated passivity in surrendering to his sexual fantasies, even while admitting the wickedness of what he desires. What we see and he does not, at this moment, is that he is risking not the "little death" of orgasm, but the real thing. Ironically, Jonathan is saved from the women not by his own virtue, but by Count Dracula's opportune arrival. However, he is rescued from the evils of feminine sexuality only to be plunged into the horrors of homosexual passions. "How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it?" Dracula furiously asks his handmaids. "This man belongs to me!" The women answer, with a laugh of "ribald coquetry," "You yourself never loved; you never love!" The Count looks at Jonathan's face "attentively," and says in a soft whisper, "Yes, I too can love" (39). As Dracula approaches him, Jonathan conveniently sinks into unconsciousness—into the same state in which Lucy had yielded to the vampire's blandishments. If we had had any doubts about the equation of violence and sex in the novel, this scene would dispel them: Dracula's own language conflates erotic desire and feeding; the mouth both kisses and consumes, the same organ gratifying two distinct hungers.

The encounter seems to "cure" Jonathan of his sexual desires (desires he will later pay for in the brain fever which sends him to his wedding an invalid). The text attributes his reaction to the fact that he now understands who, or rather, *what* the fatally beautiful creatures are, and thus sees them with horror rather than his earlier guilty fascination. "I am alone in the castle with those awful women. Faugh! Mina is a woman, and there is nought in common. They are devils of the Pit!" (53). His beloved, he insists, though a woman, has nothing in common with these creatures. He means, of course, that she does not have their evil capabilities—but neither, we notice, does she have their voluptuousness. He never records any erotic reaction to Mina at all, let alone one of this feverish intensity. In fact, since their marriage begins with her nursing him through his illness, Mina's relationship to her husband always seems more maternal than wifely. But in late-Victorian theory, that is as it should be. Marriage is designed to tame the sexual impulses of husbands; and as for wives, as Krafft-Ebing remarks, "Woman, if physically and mentally normal, and properly educated, has but little sensual desire. If it were otherwise, marriage and family life would be empty words."[32]

Victorian sexual theory also helps us to understand the difference between Lucy and Mina, to explain why Mina takes longer to succumb to the vampire count, and why she is able to resist more effectively than her friend. In the first place, while Lucy satisfies her own unconscious desires in yielding to Dracula, Mina's vulnerability results as much from the failures of others as her own weakness. It is no action of Mina's that allows the count access to her bedroom, but Renfield's betrayal in giving his master the necessary permission to enter the house. Further, her husband and her friends, who should be protecting her, instead become so obsessed with the fight against Dracula—a fight from which they deliberately, and with the best motives, exclude her—that they leave her too much alone. Solitude is a danger to her as it was to Jonathan; and while Mina has presumably had little personal experience of sexual desire, she has, we must remember, read Jonathan's journal in the process of transcribing it. That means she has read his description of his adventure with the three female vampires. Her own husband, then, in another sort of betrayal, has exposed Mina to his sexual fantasies.

Thus isolated and exposed, Mina's experience of marital sex, such as it has been, gives her no protection against the count's powers of sexual fascination. When she recognizes him in her bedroom, she is appalled but paralyzed, unable to respond or cry out as he bares her throat to refresh himself. Such paralysis is bad enough, but worse, to her bewilderment she discovers that, "strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him. I suppose it is a part of the horrible curse that such is [*sic*], when his touch is on his victim" (287). Dracula has drained not only her blood, but also her will to resist. He is, in sexual terms, more seducer than rapist. For a modern reader, this might lessen the crime, but for Victorians seduction would have been infinitely worse. In Victorian theory, it is sexual desire rather than sexual activity that is the true source of danger; and as Mina herself makes clear, she experiences desire under Dracula's attentions.

This explains why Mina's forehead is scarred by the Host, why she herself suffers such (to us disproportionate) agonies of guilt and self-revulsion. But once she is no longer isolated, once she is included in the community of her husband and their friends, she is able to resist desire, to exert her will against Dracula to help defeat him. Thus when he dies, the shameful scar disappears from her forehead. With help, Mina has conquered temptation and the dangers of degeneracy. It is this effort of will, the effort to conquer her own sexual imagination, that makes her worthy of the sacrifices of the others—that makes her worthy, in the end, of salvation.

What, then, has been achieved? By the end of the novel Lucy is dead, Quincey Morris is dead, Mina and Jonathan have both come close to death—or worse, to the death-in-life of the degeneracy which vampirism represents; but they have, after all, repented and are now stronger than ever. Dracula has been killed, and England and the world preserved. The fantastic element has been expelled, and we return to the safe, ordinary reality of the opening.

In fact, the novel ends quite abruptly, barely a full page after Dracula's death. In a brief note we are told that Mina and Jonathan have a son, that Seward and Gadalming are happily married (Lucy's role filled by other women), and that Van Helsing is now incorporated into the extended family. We also learn that the story we have just been told is, despite its elaborate detail and fundamentally documentary nature, unsupported by any original documents—nothing exists but Mina's typescript, which is hardly proof of the remarkable narrative we have just read. Thus we, the fictive audience, are left to accept or reject based purely on the internal evidence, and—since the danger is safely past—need not react at all if we choose.[33]

VI: *DRACULA* AND THE URBAN GOTHIC

But if comparatively little has happened in the world of the fictive audience, in the world of the actual audience Stoker's novel has accomplished a good deal. With Dracula's death, the "natural" superiority of Englishmen over the "lesser" races has been once again convincingly portrayed. More importantly, a number of profoundly disruptive elements have been symbolically expelled from society and the crumbling boundaries between certain key categories reaffirmed: between life and death, civilization and degeneracy, human and nonhuman, desire and loathing—all of which boundaries Dracula had blurred or violated. The even more fundamental boundary between self and other, which Dracula's ability to override his victims' willpower so terrifyingly challenges, is seen once again triumphant in Mina's recovered purity and self-control.

In *Sexuality and Its Discontents*, Jeffrey Weeks connects the development of sociology with the simultaneous development of sexology. As these two new disciplines struggled to define the "laws" of behavior in their respective realms, he argues, a powerful interdependency sprang up between them. At the same time as sexuality was being constituted as a key area of social relations, where it helped to define personal identity, sex as what Freud would soon call a "drive" came to be perceived as "a force outside, and set against society," as "part of the eternal battle of individual and society."[34] Thus sex is paradoxically seen as both social and anti-social; it helps to define individual identity while at the same time threatening the collective. No wonder, then, that sex is such an explosive issue for the late Victorians, for whom these two poles of identity had become so crucial and so fragile. (It may also help to explain why sex is still an explosive issue for us, their grandchildren, a hundred years later—apparently so different from them, but living in a society which, like theirs, balances precariously on the same two poles.)

The sex/society formulation, Weeks continues, "evokes and replays all the other great distinctions which attempt to explain the boundaries of animality and humanity"—like nature/culture, freedom/regulation—the "two rival absolutes."[35] As we have already seen, these are some of the central categories at play in *Dracula*. The outcome of the novel suggests Stoker was arguing that the solution to the late Victorian crisis lay in privileging society over sex, that in order to preserve the nation it was necessary to sacrifice some degree of personal freedom. That would explain the novel's insistent pattern of the many against the one, the community against the scapegoat; it might also help explain the novel's popularity at a time of imperialist fervor concealing deep anxieties about the future of the empire.

And it is the generic conventions of the fantastic that have made this resolution possible, by creating an imaginative way simultaneously to affirm and deny the reality of chosen cultural elements. The fantastic allows writers and readers to take those aspects of their own culture that are most emotionally charged, most disruptive, and identify them as monstrous—that is, as violations not just of human law but of the very nature of reality—so that society can be symbolically purged of its pollution.

However, *Dracula* is not merely fantastic; it is an example of the Urban Gothic, that modern version of the fantastic marked by its dependence on empiricism and the discourse of science. The difference can be seen most clearly by comparing *Dracula* to its immediate predecessor and reputed inspiration, Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1871). Le Fanu's story of a female (and lesbian) vampire is, in fact, quite powerful and subtle, but the tale is set in a remote country house in eighteenth-century Transylvania, whereas Stoker goes out of his way repeatedly to emphasize the modernity of his setting. For example (more or less at random): Van Helsing observes, "A year ago which of us would have received [i.e., believed] such a possibility, in the midst of our scientific, sceptical, matter-of-fact nineteenth century?" (266); or again, in "this enlightened age, when men believe not even what they see, the doubting of wise men would be [Dracula's] greatest strength" (321). In addition to such references, which could easily be multiplied, the band of heroes relies readily and matter-of-factly on modern technology like blood transfusions, typewriters, telegraphs, and Dr. Seward's "phonograph diary" (219).

But these are mere decorations on the surface of the text. More important, the approach of the characters to their tasks in each tale shows the same contrast. Carmilla is tracked to her lair and killed by reference to the past—her own history, and the traditional religious knowledge of the community, while Dracula is identified and defeated by painstaking investigation of his present actions. Dr. Van Helsing's knowledge of vampire lore eventually becomes essential, but it is of no use until Dracula can be conclusively identified as a vampire. Thus the most crucial event in *Dracula* occurs when Mina types up all the documents of the case (Jonathan's diary, Seward's records, her own correspondence with Lucy, newspaper clippings, even telegrams) and assembles them in chronological order—the order in which we read them. Only with chronology does narrative emerge; only then does a collection of data turn into a hypothesis. And, as in science, hypothesis is a necessary prelude to action. In other words, while *Carmilla* resembles a traditional ghost story, *Dracula* is constructed like that other form which comes into its own in the 1890s, the detective story.[36]

The implications of this difference are crucial. The ghost story, like the eighteenth-century Gothic to which it is closely related, usually finds its methods in the shared knowledge of the community, whether this means traditional religious approaches to the supernatural or the ancient remedies of the folk. In either case, the necessary knowledge is both implicit and communal. In the modern world, and therefore in the Urban Gothic, there is no implicit knowledge: everything must be tested and proved. A method for dealing with the supernatural must be created, drawing on the most powerful and prestigious tools at their disposal: the methods of science, shaped by a secular world view—paradoxically, the very world view that was initially overthrown by the fantastic intrusion.[37]

How are we to read this paradox, so central to the Urban Gothic? Is the primary effect to invalidate the supernatural, seeing it as an alien intruder in the modern world? Is it, on the contrary, to affirm the reality of the supernatural in the very act of expelling it? Or is it to demonstrate the efficacy of the scientific method in addressing any kind of crisis? I would argue instead that the central appeal of fantastic literature is that, like the violent scapegoat rituals it mimics, it allows its writers and readers simultaneously to acknowledge and deny those aspects of themselves and their world that they find most troubling—to see them both as part of the community and as available for sacrifice.

Douglas observes that one of the sources of ritual pollution is "the interplay of form and formlessness. Pollution dangers strike when form has been attacked."[38] Dracula is a perfect example of the "formless" attacking form (he is, after all, a shape-changer); but at the same time, our cultural experience of the novel suggests that, in creating his vampire count, Stoker has given to formlessness itself a form of continuing potency.

University of Nebraska

NOTES

Some of the research for this essay was done during an NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers on "British Literature and Culture 1840–1900" given at Brown University in 1989. I am grateful to the NEH, to the seminar's directors, Profs. Roger Henkle (English) and L. Perry Curtis (History), and to my colleagues in the seminar for their advice and support.

[1] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 4.

[2] Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality and Its Discontents: Meanings, Myths, and Modern Sexualities* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 178.

[3] The most common positions are that *Dracula* is either about male sexuality threatening passive female innocence, or about the need to control rampant female sexuality. But it has also been argued that the novel is about covert homoerotic desire displaced onto women, and even that all the sex in the book is sadomasochistic. For a convenient collection of the best recent criticism of *Dracula*, see Margaret L. Carter, *The Vampire and the Critics* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988). For some non-psychological readings of the novel, see Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982), and Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990).

[4] For example: Rosa Campbell Praed, *Affinities: A Romance of Today* (1885); Rider Haggard, *She* (1887); Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Parasite* (1894); Richard Marsh, *The Beetle* (1897); Somerset Maugham, *The Magician* (1907); Algernon Blackwood, "The Camp of the Dog" in *John Silence, Physician Extraordinaire* (1908); Sax Rohmer, *The Brood of the Witch-Queen* (1918); Jessie Kerruish, *The Undying Monster* (1922).

[5] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1975); Andrzej Zgorzelski, "Is Science Fiction a Genre of Fantastic Literature?" *Science-Fiction Studies* 6 (1979): 289 (emphasis in original). Todorov defines the fantastic in relation to two other genres, the "uncanny" and the "marvellous." In a realistic world—that is, a textual world modeled on the world we inhabit—an event occurs that appears to violate the laws of this world. The character who experiences this seemingly abnormal event (and, more importantly, the reader of the text) must choose between two explanations: either the event is a product of illusion, or imagination, or deliberate deception—in which case the familiar laws remain intact (and the text is an example of the uncanny); or else the event has genuinely occurred, is a part of reality, in which case the laws must be modified to allow for the existence of, say, ghosts or the Devil. In that case, the text belongs to the category of the marvellous. If, on the other hand, it is impossible for character or reader to decide whether or not the event is genuine, the text is, by Todorov's definition, fantastic. "The fantastic is that *hesitation* experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an *apparently supernatural* event" (25; emphasis added). The problem with Todorov's definition is that most texts do actually commit themselves about the event; thus very few texts that we normally think of as fantastic end up qualifying as such by Todorov's definition. For a more extended discussion of Zgorzelski's definition and its implications, see Kathleen L. Spencer, "Naturalizing the Fantastic: Narrative Technique in the Novels of Charles Williams," *Extrapolation* 28 (1987): 62–74.

[6] Henry James, "Miss Braddon," *The Nation*, 9 Nov. 1865, 593–94; reprinted in *Notes and Reviews* (Cambridge: Dunster House, 1921), 110. Jane Austen makes a

similar point in *Northanger Abbey*, contrasting the imaginary horrors in the Gothic novels her heroine is so fond of reading with the more mundane but very real cruelties she finds practiced in her own modern, ordinary England.

[7] For a fuller discussion of this material, see George Kenneth Graham, *English Criticism of the Novel 1865–1900* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 51–109. For a more traditional (that is, judgmental) treatment of the romance-realism debate see Lionel Stevenson, *The English Novel: A Panorama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960) and John Halperin, "The Theory of the Novel: A Critical Introduction" in *The Theory of the Novel: New Essays*, ed. John Halperin (London, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), 3–22. For the patriotic argument for rejecting naturalism, see William C. Frierson, "The English Controversy Over Realism in Fiction 1885–1895," *PMLA* 43 (1928): 533–50.

[8] Cited in Sir Charles Mallett, *Anthony Hope and His Books* (London: Hutchinson, 1935), 114.

[9] See, for example: R. L. Stevenson, "A Gossip on Romance," *Longman's Magazine* 1 (November 1882): 69–79; Stevenson, "A Humble Remonstrance," *Longman's Magazine* 5 (December 1884): 139–47; H. Rider Haggard, "About Fiction," *Contemporary Review* 51 (February 1887): 172–80; Andrew Lang, "Realism and Romance," *Contemporary Review* 52 (1887): 683–93; George Saintsbury, "The Present State of the Novel.I," *Fornightly Review*, n.s., 48 (September 1887): 410–17; "The Present State of the Novel.II," *Fortnightly Review*, n.s., 49 (January 1888): 112–23; and Hall Caine, "The New Watchwords of Fiction," *Contemporary Review* 57 (April 1890): 479–88.

[10] For example, Marie Corelli, George Griffith, Guy Boothby, William Le Queux, Sax Rohmer.

[11] For a fuller discussion of the late Victorian fascination with the far reaches of empire, see Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1839–1914* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1988). Though the futuristic plot settings of some of these novels may make them sound very much like science fiction, they do not as a rule qualify as such by any reasonably rigorous criteria, not even the novels set on other planets. Their generic affiliations are rather with the imaginary voyage and the utopia, which are quite different traditions. For a survey of these texts and an alternate view of their genre, see Darko Suvin, *Victorian Science Fiction in the UK: The Discourses of Knowledge and Power* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1983). For a brief description of the occult revival, see Kathleen L. Spencer, "The Urban Gothic In British Fantastic Fiction 1880–1930" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1987), 34–98. For more detail, see John J. Cerullo, *The Secularization of the Soul: Psychical Research in Modern Britain* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982); Frank Miller Turner, *Between Science and Religion* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1974); Alan Gauld, *The Founders of Psychical Research* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968); and Ellic Howe, *Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order 1887–1923* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).

[12] Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, Vol. I: Power, Property, and the State* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1981), 194.

[13] George W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1968), 121.

[14] For a discussion of the East End and degeneracy, see Gareth Steadman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationships Between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 149.

[15] For discussions of this point, see (for example) Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988), and Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture 1830–1980*, 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin, 1987). While the female role as constituted in theory was quite rigid, in practice both working-class and aristocratic women experienced some relaxation of its rigors, especially in economic and (therefore?)

in sexual activities: aristocrats, because of the traditional privileges of their class and the sense that their lives are not bound by the same rules as everyone else; and working-class women, because they were needed in the paid work force by both their families and their employers.

[16] Jenni Calder, *The Victorian and Edwardian Home* (London: Batsford, 1977), 132.

[17] 3 Hansard, CXLV, 800. Quoted by Lee Holcombe, "Victorian Wives and Property: Reform of the Married Women's Property Law, 1857–1882" in *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1977), 12. Holcombe's article as a whole (3–28) is an illuminating and scholarly discussion of the struggle of Victorian wives to reform property laws.

[18] For detailed discussions of the Cleveland Street brothel, see H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Cleveland Street Scandal* (New York: Coward, McCann, and Geoghagan, 1976), and Colin Simpson et al., *The Cleveland Street Affair* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976).

[19] For a discussion of the way the Wilde trial helped turn "homosexual" from an adjective describing certain kinds of behaviors into a noun indicating a kind of person and the significance of this change for the subsequent history of homosexuality, see Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics, and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (London: Longman, 1981). To give one small example of the trial's effect on the general cultural atmosphere (beyond the terror it struck in the hearts of homosexuals): in the late 1880s and early '90s, there had been an explosion of novels treating sympathetically such previously untouchable subjects as female sexuality, free love, and fallen women. Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), for example, was received not without controversy, certainly, but with a good bit of support for Hardy's sympathetic treatment of Tess. But *Jude the Obscure*, published in 1896 after Wilde's public disgrace, was greeted with such a firestorm of disapproval that Hardy swore off writing fiction forever (for this argument, see Eric Trudgill, *Madonnas and Magdalenes: The Origins and Development of Victorian Sexual Attitudes*, [London: Heinemann, 1976]). *Dracula*, published in 1897, reached the public at the height of this antisexual hysteria; it should not surprise us to find reflections of this mood in such a popular text—meaning both one that was addressed to a less sophisticated audience and one that was very widely read at the time.

[20] In this same decade, the "unnaturalness" of homosexuality was also being challenged by Havelock Ellis, along with several prominent apologists like Edward Carpenter and John Addington Symonds who in the 1890s published books arguing that homosexuals were not "failed" or "unnatural" men or women but were instead members of a third or "intermediate" sex (Ellis, who was married to a lesbian, was the first to write sympathetically about lesbianism). In the early editions of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Richard von Krafft-Ebing argued that all homosexual behavior was degenerate, but after the turn of the century he softens this judgment, concluding that *some* homosexuals indeed seemed to be "born" not "made,"—in his words, "congenital." See, for example, the lengthy discussion of "Homosexual Feeling as an Abnormal Congenital Manifestation" (356–90). He explores the available explanations of "sexual inversion" from the traditional "vice" to the more "scientific" cause, excessive and/or early masturbation, and finally concludes that in some cases an explanation based on physiological factors—something in the structure of the brain, something therefore not subject to the will of the "invert"—rather than the old medico-moral explanation of "willful indulgence in depravity," is the only logical conclusion. He does not altogether abandon degeneracy as an explanation even in these cases, arguing that "In fact, in all cases of sexual inversion, a taint *of a hereditary character* may be established"; but he admits that "What causes produce this factor of taint and its activity is a question which cannot be well answered by science in its present stage" (370; emphasis added). By allowing for the possibility of inherited tendencies to degeneracy, Krafft-Ebing simultaneously takes back and lets stand his uneasy conclusion that some homosexuals do not seem to be morally responsible for their sexual orientation. (Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psy-*

chopathia Sexualis: A Medico-Forensic Study, Latin trans. Harry E. Wedeck [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965]. This edition, with an introduction by Ernest Van Den Haag, is described as "The first unexpurgated edition, with the Latin texts translated into English for the first time" by Dr. Wedeck, but does not specify who translated the German parts of the text. I suspect this edition is based on the translation of the 12th German edition by F. J. Rebman published in 1934 by the Physicians and Surgeons Book Company, but cannot verify my suspicion at this time.)

[21] Ludmilla Jordanova, "Natural Facts: An Historical Perspective on Science and Reality" in *Nature, Culture, and Gender*, ed. Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980), 44.

[22] The following discussion is drawn primarily from Mary Douglas's *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Random House, 1972).

[23] For other examples of modern "witchcraft" societies, consider Nazi Germany and McCarthy-era America. Indeed, the current struggle between social liberals and religious fundamentalists over issues like abortion and pornography manifests many of the same dynamics.

[24] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1977), 13. Interestingly enough, despite the fact that in many cultures women are not afforded full status, they are seldom chosen as surrogate victims. Girard speculates that because a married woman retains ties with her parents' social group as well as her husband's, to sacrifice her would be to run the risk of one group or the other interpreting the sacrifice as "an act of murder committing it to a reciprocal act of revenge," and so not ending the communal violence, but increasing it (13).

[25] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), 59. All further citations will be to this text. Showalter in *Sexual Anarchy* (note 3), which I did not see until after this essay was submitted, makes the same essential point about Lucy.

[26] Simon Williams, analyzing Charles Nodier's play, *Vampire* (1820), part of the response to Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), finds a very similar pattern. "Sexual desire is exhibited as supernatural possession that causes the heroine to wander deliriously in caverns and shady places in search of her demon lover. But once she returns to consciousness, she is totally unaware of the dark forces that have briefly taken over her body" ("Theatre and Degeneration: Subversion and Sexuality," in *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress*, ed. J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman [New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1985], 246). The terms "conscious" and "unconscious" may seem anachronistic, but the English had casually accepted the idea of an unconscious mind by the latter part of the nineteenth century; the idea is expounded in a number of different places in the last two decades. It was not the concept of the unconscious that made Freud so shocking, but his notion of what kinds of material the unconscious contained. As Nina Auerbach (note 3) points out, Stoker might well have known of Freud by the time he wrote *Dracula*, since F. W. Myers had presented a lecture to the Society for Psychical Research on Freud and Breuer's work with hysterics in 1893; and in the novel itself Dr. Seward mentions Charcot, Freud's teacher (22–23).

[27] Most critics discuss this scene as symbolic of sexual intercourse and orgasm, even going so far in one case as to liken it to the "painful deflowering of a virgin, which Lucy still is" (C. F. Bentley, "The Monster in the Bedroom: Sexual Symbolism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Literature and Psychology* 22 [1972]: 31). While I recognize the elements of the scene that make it possible to draw the parallel, what most strikes me in the description (and, I suspect, most women readers) is the violence—which is, because of the religious overtones of the scene, weirdly impersonal. Indeed, it is rather alarming to me to think that this scene can be read so easily, and apparently without qualms or qualifiers, as an image of sexual intercourse. What does such a reading suggest about our culture's confusion of sex and violence?

[28] Girard (note 24), 161.

[29] This popular disapproval of the aristocracy became particularly apparent after the

publication of Sir Francis Galton's *Hereditary Genius* in 1869, which attacked both inherited wealth and the titled nobility.

[30] For a detailed discussion of Dracula as Lombroso's "criminal man," see Ernest Fontana, "Lombroso's Criminal Man and Stoker's *Dracula*," in Carter (note 3), 159–66. For a more thorough examination of the place of degeneracy theory in late Victorian thinking, see Chamberlin and Gilman (note 26).

[31] Douglas (note 1), 97. Richard Sennett and Michael Foucault, "Sexuality and Solitude," in *Humanities in Review* 1, ed. Sennett et al. (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), 4.

[32] Krafft-Ebing (note 20), 42. Not all Victorian doctors agreed with this, but it does seem to have been a majority opinion, expressed categorically, publically, and often. Poovey in *Uneven Developments* (note 15) offers the clearest explanation of the thinking behind what now seems a ludicrous position. Victorian doctors knew so little about female physiology, she observes, that the only model they had for sexual response was the familiar male tumescence/ejaculation sequence. Failing to find this sequence in women, they concluded that women normally did not experience orgasm. Of course, this does not explain Krafft-Ebing's value judgment about the incompatibility of female sexual desire with marriage and family life; that, after all, is a matter of culture, not science. Nonetheless, Poovey's observation does give us a welcome alternative to the reductive explanation of "sexism" as to how otherwise intelligent men could arrive at such absurd conclusions.

[33] This detail is characteristic of fantastic texts, that finally we are left with just the testament itself, and no "external" proofs.

[34] Weeks (note 2), 81.

[35] Weeks, 97.

[36] Rather than pointing to *Carmilla*, I think that Stoker's most important literary source is Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), or more likely (since Stoker was a theatrical man) one of its many dramatic redactions. Polidori's text creates a modern fantastic effect, deriving its potency from the device of bringing his nobleman/vampire into the city of London—seventy-five years before Stoker does the same thing.

[37] One way to distinguish between the traditional ghost story and the Urban Gothic is that the ghost story, although genuinely fantastic, is much closer in tone to the original Gothic. In addition, ghosts generally have quite a limited repertory of objects, motives, and behaviors: to get revenge, to make restitution, to finish an important task left incomplete at death, to warn the living (generally family members or descendants), or to reenact endlessly the crucial event of their lives (as in Yeats' "Purgatory"). In the Urban Gothic, the supernatural powers have a much broader scope for action.

[38] Douglas (note 1), 104.