

City University of New York (CUNY)

CUNY Academic Works

Dissertations and Theses

City College of New York

2016

The Force of Imagination and the Limits of the Rational in Polidori, Stoker, and Weird Fiction

Eric Mattina
CUNY City College

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc_etds_theses/580

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).
Contact: AcademicWorks@cuny.edu

The Force of Imagination and the Limits of the Rational
in Polidori, Stoker, and Weird Fiction

by Eric Mattina (emattina89@gmail.com)

Mentor: Prof. Robert Higney

Second Reader: Prof. Renata Miller

May 6th, 2016

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
of the City College of the City University of New York.

Contents

Chapter I

Eye, Vampyre:

Visual Verification and Imagination in John Polidori's "The Vampyre"..... 3

Chapter II

Evil Eye:

Darwinian Theory and the Ocular in *Dracula* and Other Works by Bram Stoker

I..... 20

II..... 43

Chapter III

Beings Beyond Evolution:

Cthulhu, Cat People, and Other Monsters in Weird Fiction..... 58

Epilogue..... 89

Endnotes..... 92

Bibliography..... 104

Chapter I

Eye, Vampyre

Visual Verification and Imagination in John Polidori's "The Vampyre"

Although it may feel like a disservice to the important Gothic novels of the late 18th century, such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764)¹ or Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), the appearance of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* in 1818 and the legacy that stems from its publication offers a foundational text from which to chart the popularity of supernatural horror fiction from its Gothic origins into what would later become dubbed "the weird tale." In a later edition of the novel in 1831, published while a stage play of her story was proving to be highly lucrative, Shelly included an introduction where she tells a story of the narrative's origin. While vacationing in Switzerland, Mary Shelley, her husband Percy Shelley, the poet Lord Byron and the doctor John Polidori passed the time by reading *Fantasmagoriana*, a German collection of ghost stories. The quartet concluded that each should try their hand at writing one of their own in order to "prove supremacy in horror-making" (*Supernatural Horror* Lovecraft 44).² Ever the imaginative author, Shelley dramatizes the anecdote as a way to set the tone for the horror within the forthcoming novel. These embellishment result in the story being, according to D. L. MacDonald, "wrong in almost every verifiable detail" (MacDonald 83).³ However, the fiction she creates of the novels inception would become the reality for readers and authors influenced by the tale, arguably making it as canonical as the actual narrative itself. Shelley centers the introduction around a specific image that she cites as crucial to the inspiration.⁴ It is a passage that has, as will be further

suggested, exerted an indispensable influence on a myriad writers over the course of the next century:

Perhaps a corpse would be reanimated. . . I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision. . .He sleeps; but he is awakened; he opens his eyes; behold, the horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains and looking on him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes, (Shelley 263-264).

Shelley is attracted to the concept of the eye staring back at the spectator, haunted by the notion that it is also the first time the eye is being opened at all. It is a striking image to linger upon: a perfect tease of the forthcoming narrative as well as a haunting connection between the real life creation of the novel and the fictional creation of the monster. It is strong enough to even be the precise visual cited by H. P. Lovecraft one hundred years later in his survey *Supernatural Horror in Literature* when briefly describing of novel: “Some of the scenes in *Frankenstein* are unforgettable, as when the newly animated monster enters its creator’s room, parts the curtains of his bed, and gazes at him in the yellow moonlight with watery eyes—‘if eyes they may be called’” (45). In recalling the awakening of the creature, Shelley essentially positions herself as her protagonist Dr. Frankenstein and the imagination overlaps with reality.

Scholars such as MacDonald and Christopher Frayling have sorted through various diaries and letters written at the time in order to pluck out the melodrama and set down more accurate accounts of what transpired on the trip. According to Frayling’s take on the subject in the introduction to this anthology book *The Vampyre: A Bedside Companion*, Shelley is crafty in her approach in writing this preface:

Clearly, she did not have an accurate memory. . . . But her distortions and inaccuracies go beyond the relatively trivial question of whether or not she was factually correct. For she creates an *atmosphere* and a *legend*, both of which have coloured all subsequent accounts of the genesis of the vampire in modern literature. . . . By making the story of the genesis of *Frankenstein* into a cliffhanger, she probably hoped to increase sales of her book, but in the process she suggests that the other contributions to the ghost story session were a great deal less interesting than they in fact were; particularly, by ignoring the role which Polidori played. . . . (24-25).⁵

Essentially, the imagination Shelley incorporates into her preface adds a depth to the mythos behind the writing of the story. It was an amount of imagination missing from horror literature at the time as “natural horror was as far as novelists were prepared to go at this stage: there could be no appeal to the imagination that went beyond rational causes” (Clery 23).⁶ Shelley’s imaginative preface positioned Frankenstein's monster into a higher stratosphere of horror, creating greater suspense within the novel because of the build-up she creates for it before the story begins. When writing the novel in 1818, she wrote a simple horror narrative that was rooted in traditional literary practices. By adding on a preface rooted in imagination in 1831, she crafted a legacy.

As Shelley worked on what would become her infamous monstrous creation, John Polidori was also beginning to compose what would become his own most notable one. Published in 1819, “The Vampyre” is a short tale: rarely anthologized but equally important in determining the beginning of the history that will be traced here. The story

revolves around the relationship between the orphan Aubrey and the much older Lord Ruthven. Much like the gaggle of both eligible and married females in the high society social scene, Aubrey becomes fascinated with Ruthven and, hearing rumors of a tour that he will be taking, requests to accompany him on his journey around Europe. As the two travel together, Aubrey comes to the realization that Lord Ruthven basks in a plethora of vices and enjoys witnessing the ruination of others, primarily women, causing him to leave his companion. While traveling alone, Aubrey learns of the legend of the vampire, a creature who drains the blood of its human victims, and makes a connection between the lore of the village and his former friend. The two meet again, are attacked by bandits, and Ruthven is fatally attacked. Before succumbing to his wounds he makes Aubrey promise not to reveal his death for a year and a day, a vow to which Aubrey agrees. Returning to England, Aubrey is shocked to discover that Ruthven is still alive and the surprise causes him to have a mental breakdown. Things only get worse for Aubrey when he discovers that Ruthven is engaged to his sister, but his vow renders him speechless in his attempts to provide her with a warning. The oath ends on the same day as the wedding, but Aubrey is unable to prevent the marriage in time: Miss. Aubrey becomes the next victim of The Vampyre.

While there has been a burgeoning interest in Polidori's story in recent years, the lack of much serious critical analysis of the piece feels unwarranted considering that it is actually a landmark work of supernatural literature.⁷ For a long time, the major notoriety of the publication of "The Vampyre" stemmed from the controversy ignited when *New Monthly Magazine* erroneously included the subtitle "A Tale by Lord Byron". Byron and

Polidori had a close relationship, evident by the aforementioned ghost story contest but also in the younger acting as the elders physician and travel companion, echoing the relationship between Aubrey and Ruthven⁸. In an attempt to correct the magazines mistake, Polidori made public in a letter to Colburn, *New Monthly's* editor, of the fact that he indeed culled his tale from a fragment written by Byron for the contest, but elaborated the gem of the idea for his own purposes, writing “the fact is, that though *the groundwork* is certainly Lord Byron’s, its development is mine, produced at the request of a lady, who denied the possibility of any thing being drawn from the materials which Lord Byron had said he intended to have employed in the formation of his ghost story” (MacDonald 181). However, the egregious misprint is actually quite revelatory in establishing Polidori’s desire to create something unique with his work: “The reasons for the influence of Polidori’s tale have, however, more to do with what it owes to Byron directly. . . This not only helped Colburn pass it off as Byron’s. . . but also induced Polidori to make the monster new—to modify the vampire of literary tradition” (MacDonald 192). Readers were hooked by the Byron name, but finished the story fascinated with what Polidori had done with the vampiric folklore.

Aside from the vampire in myth and folklore which, as Carol Senf writes in an essay on Polidori, was “a figure that had already attracted the attention of French Encyclopedists and German Romantics even before it became a popular subject in English literature” (“Polidori’s ‘The Vampyre’” Senf 199), Lord Ruthven is the first attempt at using the figure as it became popular in a prose narrative. Authors such as Goethe in his 1797 poem “The Bride of Corinth” create a character that rises from the

dead, but English Gothic texts from the same time period typically used the term “vampire” to describe a lecherous villain. Senf makes the distinction in her book *The Vampire in 19th Century English Literature*, noting that “while their works are peopled with numerous vicious characters, none is literally a supernatural bloodsucker” (Senf 21). Given how ubiquitous the vampire character has become it is forgivable to overlook how vitally novel was Polidori’s creation, evident by the popularity of the story among readers: “The public did find Polidori’s new monster a new pleasure: the tale went through five English language editions in 1819 alone. . . The bizarre success of Polidori’s tale depended on the ways in which his monster was new” (MacDonald 190). As a result of this, Ruthven does not embody many of the classic vampiric tropes that contemporary readers take for granted. Senf briefly describes these characteristics, which “among these are the ability to change shape, the aversion to certain culturally important symbols (such as the cross, holy water, or the Host), the necessity of sleeping in their native soil, and other purely physical characteristics such as sharp teeth, hypnotic eyes, and extreme pallor” (*Vampire in Literature* Senf 9).⁹ Being the first literary vampire, Lord Ruthven is a character stripped of the limitations of stereotype. The characteristics defined by Senf simply do not exist yet and the horror of the text comes from the ability for the reader to use their imagination in relation with Ruthven’s character without the reliance of formulaic tropes in which to guide their feelings.¹⁰ Polidori’s contribution to the list are the hypnotic eyes, forming a starting point for the importance of seeing that will follow both the vampiric narrative and the supernatural genre through the next hundred years. In this regard, there are three primary areas to explore in Polidori’s interest in the vampire

tale. All of these are worthy of analysis separately, but intertwine to the point where they are inseparable in the text. The first is, as already mentioned, the “hypnotic eyes” of Lord Ruthven. Eyes become the symbol for the importance of empirical verification in dealing with supernatural characters. Secondly, the fascination, or *curiosity*, with Ruthven that propels Aubrey’s actions throughout the narrative. This connects with a genuine *belief* in the supernatural possibilities being presented, already established through the importance of the visual motif. And lastly, Aubrey’s inscrutability as to whether or not the actions of the narrative are actually transpiring or if they are the result of his wild imagination and fragile mental state. These three themes and motifs—eyes, curiosity/fascination/belief, and ambiguity about the reality of events—are key in determining the evolution of Victorian horror and, later on, the “weird tale”.

Ruthven’s eyes are essentially the first physical attribute described during a party that begins the tale. When he walks into the room, “those who felt this sensation of awe, could not explain whence it arose: some attributed it to the dead grey eye, which, fixing upon the object’s face, did not seem to penetrate, and at one glance to pierce through to the inward workings of the heart” (3). Senf suggests that this “dead grey eye,” as well as the other facial features described “are clearly modeled on the vampire from folklore” (*Vampire in Literature* Senf 34). And just as Ruthven’s gaze “pierces” others, so does he attract their gazes as Polidori continues the ocular terminology through the phrase “all wished to see him” (3). And Ruthven’s seduction of the women around him remain rooted on a visual field: “Lady Mercer. . . threw herself in his way. . . to attract his notice;—though in vain:—when she stood before him, though his eyes were apparently

fixed upon her's, still it seemed as if they were unperceived" (3). On a practical level Ruthven's enticement of others through visual means makes it simple for him to ensnare victims for his dastardly deeds. Once he attracts their attention with his eyes, they become attached to the man that will ultimately lead to their downfall.

Polidori uses these "hypnotic eyes" as more than a mere characteristic of evil, making eyes and ocular verification a primary motif for the other characters within the text. Aubrey enters the narrative shortly after Ruthven is situated amongst high society. Before initiating any communication with Ruthven, Aubrey firmly uses his own eyes as a way to gain knowledge of the visitor: "He watched him; and the very impossibility of forming an idea of the characters of a man entirely absorbed in himself, who gave few other signs of his observation of external objects, than the tacit assent to their existence, implied by the avoidance of their contact" (5). Aubrey does not position himself in a vulnerable way in his contact with Ruthven, instead using a detached tactic of observation in courting the object of his intrigue. Consistently for Ruthven, "his eye spoke less than his lip" and Aubrey carefully follows, "purposing, in the mean while, to watch him more closely, and to let no slight circumstances pass by unnoticed" (7). Even when Ruthven attempts to use discretion in his actions, "Aubrey's eye followed him in all his windings" (8). Ruthven and Aubrey's relationship is purely visual: it begins through Aubrey's noticing of Ruthven and continues through his repeated observation.

Woven amongst the ocular phrases are lines that develop the second area of Polidori's interest: the emphasis on Aubrey's *curiosity* with Ruthven. As already established, Aubrey's interest in Ruthven is initially purely visual, but eventually the

desire to develop the relationship further begins to form. The chance to do this comes when Aubrey hears of Ruthven's plan to travel. Aubrey becomes "desirous of gaining some information respecting this singular character, who, til now, had only whetted his curiosity" (5). Curiosity propels the narrative forward, as Aubrey would not have become involved with these events had he remained outside of Ruthven's influence. And "curiosity" is a word repeatedly used in connecting the two characters, although it is also suggested that nothing can truly satisfy it: "though Aubrey was near the object of his curiosity, he obtained no greater gratification from it than the constant excitement of vainly wishing to break that mystery" (7). Satiating curiosity becomes problematic for Aubrey, as being in close proximity to Ruthven eventually paves the way for a desire to be even closer to the man, leading to their travels around Europe and the horrors that follow. Aubrey's curiosity develops from an initial passing interest into an imperative thirst for knowledge about his companion.

The visual motif and Aubrey's propensity towards curiosity as the driving force of the narrative merge to form the third crucial area of Polidori's interest: the question of whether or not the events being told are a legitimate reality or part of Aubrey's intense imagination and questionable mental state. That Aubrey has a wild imagination is established early on. During his initial observation of Ruthven, it is obvious that there is no way for Aubrey to be objective in his musings about Ruthven's personality. In general, Aubrey is described as being a person who has "cultivated more his imagination than his judgement. . . He thought, in fine, that the dreams of poets were the realities of life" (4). Given Ruthven's private and indecipherable personality, it is naturally difficult for

Aubrey to get a proper read on him: “allowing his imagination to picture everything that flattered its propensity to extravagant ideas, he soon formed this object into the hero of a romance and determined to observe the offspring of his fancy, rather than the person before him” (5). Aubrey’s active imagination make it difficult for him to discern whether or not a characteristic he attributes to Ruthven is legitimate or fabricated. In turn, it is difficult for the reader to determine if Aubrey’s fascination with Ruthven comes from a genuine interest in his true character or if it is rooted in a desire to morph him into a “hero of a romance”.

Aubrey’s imaginative continues to manifest itself when he and Ruthven leave on the tour. Early on in their travels, Aubrey is introduced to Ruthven’s vicious personality in regards to various women they encounter. During these meetings, the concept of imagination is brought to the forefront several times. This merges with, as previously mentioned through Senf, the initial definition of “vampire”:

If it had before entered into his imagination that there was an evil power resident in his companion, there seemed to give him almost sufficient reason for the belief. His guardians insisted upon his almost immediately leaving his friend, and urged, that his character was dreadfully vicious, for that the possession of irresistible powers of seduction, rendered his licentious habits more dangerous to society. It had been discovered, that his contempt for the adultress had not originated in hatred of her character; but that he had required, to enhance his gratification, that his victim. . . should be hurled from the pinnacle of unsullied virtue down to the lowest abyss of infamy and degradation: in fine, that all those

females whom he had sought, apparently on account of their virtue, had, since his departure, thrown even the mask aside, and had not scrupled to expose the whole deformity of their vices to the public gaze (Polidori 7).

Continuing the visual motif, it is striking that Ruthven's endgame in regards to dealing with the women of high society is to cast them out of favor in the public perception, or the public *eye*. Ruining their reputations causes him great pleasure, akin to the lecherous villains of earlier Gothic novels where the bad guys are not actual bloodsuckers but figurative ones.

It is shortly after Aubrey's discovery that the story takes on a more macabre sensibility. Senf observes that "Polidori establishes the destructive elements of Lord Ruthven's character long before revealing his vampire's supernatural abilities" (*Vampire in Literature* Senf 25). This structural choice is crucial in emphasizing Aubrey's questionable mental state, since well before the notion of the undead is introduced into the narrative Ruthven is already painted as a villain for different reasons. Coupling Ruthven's behavior with Aubrey's heightened imaginative prowess makes it quite easy for Aubrey to embark on notions of the fantastic when he hears a local legend about the vampire:

. . . as she told him the tale of the living vampyre, who had passed years amidst his friends, and dearest ties, forced every year, by feeding upon the life of a lovely female to prolong his existence for the ensuing months. . . She detailed to him the traditional appearance of these monsters, and his horror was increases, by hearing a pretty accurate description of Lord Ruthven; he, however, still persisted in

persuading her, that there could be no truth in her fears, though at the same time he wondered at the many coincidences which had all tended to excite a belief in the supernatural power of Lord Ruthven” (9-10).

It is crucial to note the changed spelling from the traditional “vampire” to the more folkloric “vampyre”. This suggests a difference between the identification of lecherous villains from Gothic novels and the supernatural being that Polidori is dealing with. Naturally, Aubrey makes obvious connections between the legend and the man. It has been established that Ruthven enjoys “taking away the life” of women through means of belittling their reputations. However, Aubrey takes this aspect of Ruthven’s personality and takes it to mean that he literally wishes to “feed upon the life” of his female victims. But it is the word “belief” towards the end of the passage that is central to the question rooted in Aubrey’s mind. An actual belief in the supernatural is imperative to understanding the heart and mind of the monsters that could be surrounding humanity, an understanding that, as will be shown, evolves into something grander with the development of the “weird tale” nearly a century later.

It is the capacity for belief of the supernatural in the every day that holds much of the horror of Polidori’s narrative. Therefore, “The Vampyre” lays at the crossroads between what Senf regards as Gothic fiction and “realistic fiction”:

That some of the first generation of Gothic novelists. . . had provided such rational explanations for the supernatural with their works is a reminder that Gothic literature had an oddly dual existence from the moment it appeared within English literature, one component accepting supernatural occurrences as literal

within its fictional world, the other insisting that the mystery originally attributed to the supernatural can be explained logically (*Vampire in Literature* Senf 26).

Senf is referring to the penchant of Gothic authors, such as Anne Radcliffe, to never see their macabre ideas through by including actual spectres, but instead to gravitate towards, what Lovecraft refers to, as “labored mechanical explanations” (*Supernatural Horror* Lovecraft 36) or “what has been termed the “explained supernatural,” where the supernatural is suggested at the outset but ultimately explained away as the product of misconstrual of trickery” (*American Supernatural Tales* Joshi xi).¹¹ It is rarely an real ghost that is haunting the protagonist, but simply a villainous character who has designed one in order to frighten the protagonist. But Polidori offers no mechanical explanation: Ruthven’s status remains ambiguous. The horror instead comes from the *potential* of him being a literal monster. The imagination for the terrible played a crucial role, “for certainly much of the horror of Polidori’s tale occurs when the reader realizes that unspeakable things can happen in the most ordinary places and to the most ordinary human beings” (*Vampire in Literature* Senf 36). There is a binary being created here, with Polidori being an early part of this history of placing the extraordinary into the lives of ordinary people.¹²

Following Aubrey’s education of vampire lore, the themes of vision and imagination become intrinsically linked. Sight and narrative ambiguity join hand in hand throughout the remaining major events of the novel. When wanting to avoid the sight of something potentially horrible, Aubrey “shut his eyes, hoping that it was but a vision arising from his disturbed imagination” (12). Being struck down by “a most-violent

fever”, Aubrey is “often delirious”. Ruthven arrives at the moment Aubrey comes to: “recovered from his delirium he was horrified and startled by the sight of him whose image he had no combined with that of a Vampyre. . . His Lordship seemed quite changed; he no longer appeared that apathetic being who had so astonished Aubrey” (13). The choice of words like “seemed” and “appeared” play with the question of reality, making Ruthven’s appearance during these moments are more of Aubrey’s perception of the events at hand and not an absolute certainty. Aubrey remains wary about believing Ruthven until his eventual death at the hands of the bandits. Deciding to bury his friend, Aubrey is aghast to be unable to find the corpse when he returns to where he left the body. In order to prove to himself that Ruthven is actually dead, he looks at the objects around him for the necessary evidence:

There were several daggers. . . Whilst turning them over, and examining their curious forms. . . he shuddered; hastening to gain further proof, he found the weapon. . . His eyes seemed to need no further certainty—they seemed to be gazing to be bound to the dagger: yet he still wished to disbelieve; but the particular form. . . left no room for doubt: there were also drops of blood on each” (16).

All of the areas of interest come together simultaneously in this passage, from the curiosity of Aubrey merging with the “curious forms” of the weaponry, to the emphasis on the “eyes” as he looks for the evidence, and up to the usage of “seems” when he decides that Ruthven is certainly dead, a term that hints that Aubrey’s presumption could be very incorrect.

It is no surprise when, shortly after, Ruthven is actually revealed to still be alive, standing before Aubrey as he wakes from his delirium: “he gazed til his limbs almost refusing to bear their weight. . . he could not believe it possible—the dead rise again!—He thought his imagination had conjured up the image his mind was resting upon. It was impossible that it could be real” (18). Aubrey continues to imagine that by eradicating the sight of Ruthven, he can ignore his existence. Remaining in his room, “he saw no one . . . anxious to fly that image which haunted him” (19). However, the real twist comes in the form of Ruthven’s engagement to Aubrey’s sister. Bound by the vow that he made to Ruthven not to reveal the nature of his death for “a year and a day,” Aubrey is unable to tell his sister about the true nature of her betrothed. More horror comes when it is announced that the wedding will take place on the last day of the vow. Aubrey attempts to get them to change the date of the wedding, begging them “to delay but for one day”, but they do not acquiesce, instead “attributing this to the insanity they imagined had taken possession of his mind” (21). However, while Aubrey cites the vow as the reason he cannot convey the warning, there is no definite evidence that it is the case. Aubrey tries to tell his sister about the identity of Ruthven “but he could not advance—it seemed as if that voice again bade him remember his oath—he turned suddenly round, thinking Lord Ruthven was near him, but saw no one” (21). Once again, “seemed” creates an uncertainty in ascertaining whether or not Aubrey is literally bound by the supernatural, or if it is a product of his overactive imagination. Sight makes it apparent that there is nobody else in the room with them, and so nothing remains definite.

Interestingly, the ending of the story does provide the reader with a more firm answer to the question at the forefront of the narrative: is Ruthven an actual vampire or not? Answering the question in the last two paragraphs arguably lessens the horrific effects of the previous pages, but the way Polidori structures the reveal makes it apparent that Aubrey himself experiences this ambiguity until the very end:

The marriage was solemnized, and the bride and bridegroom left London.

Aubrey's weakness increased; the effusion of blood produced symptoms of the near approach of death. . . when the midnight hour had struck, he related composedly what the reader has perused—he died immediately after. The guardians hastened to protect Miss. Aubrey; but when they arrived, it was too late. Lord Ruthven had disappeared, and Aubrey's sister had glutted the thirst of a VAMPYRE! (23).

Miss. Aubrey's tragic ending at the hands of a bloodsucking vampire is proven to be reality, though Aubrey dies before ever gaining any confirmation on the subject. As far as he knows, the things he tells the guardians could very well be the rumblings of a madman. It remains unknown for Aubrey even when the reader is given privileged information regarding its authenticity. Aubrey never truly *sees* the result of his sisters marriage, and it remains something only glimpsed at by the other characters.

As noted earlier, "The Vampyre" was met with a huge amount of popularity. In an introduction to the story, Chris Baldick notes the importance of this reception in Europe: "The story had made an indelible impression on the imagination of Europe, and Polidori had succeeded, however inadvertently, in founding the entire tradition of vampire fiction.

Not only was his tale the first sustained fictional treatment of vampirism in English, it also completely recast the mythology upon which it drew” (“Introduction” Baldick x)¹³. Legend had stirred much attention, but a literary treatment of the figure had never before been seen. Polidori’s vampire had stirred the imaginations of the masses in unexpected ways. While Polidori was aware of the massive public interest in the piece, notably through the five English editions of the work as well as “wildly popular dramatic adaptations—a dozen or more in 1820 alone” (Stiles 790)¹⁴, the author would have no idea of the myriad ways that Lord Ruthven would affect the supernatural horror genre as a whole, nor would he have known how his three major themes—the importance of visual verification, curiosity, and the question of reality or imagination—would remain rooted in the subconsciousness of later authors. Lord Ruthven paved the way for several major fictional vampiric characters over the next several decades: one of which is Bram Stoker’s character of Count Dracula, a figure as indispensable to the scope of past and present horror culture as Frankenstein.

Chapter II

Evil Eye:

Darwinian Theory and the Ocular in *Dracula* and Other Works by Bram Stoker

I.

Following the publications and commercial successes of *Frankenstein* and “The Vampyre”, the supernatural element in literary fiction enjoyed a prosperous, but brief, ubiquity in Europe.¹⁵ However, several circumstances quickly led to a waning interest in the subject. Scientific progress went to the forefront of public interest in the realms of technology, medicine, history, and transportation. Logic and the rational were sought after. The ability to suspend disbelief and accept the presence of actual spirits in novels was falling victim to logic and reasoning. The literature of the time reflected the notion that “the Gothic age, precisely because of its relative barbarity, was especially conducive to the free play of imagination and that what the modern era had gained in civility it had lost in poetic inspiration” (Clery 27). The definition of “vampire” returned primarily to its non-Gothic meaning of a lecherous villain in a realistic setting in Victorian novels such as George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, Dickens *Bleak House*, Emily Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, and Charlotte Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*. The term “vampire” was used as “as a significant metaphor for destructive human behavior” rather than bloodsucking monster (*Vampire in Literature* Sent 94).¹⁶ Writers of the Victorian era such as Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens began to incorporate ghostly figures in their novels, however they would not always be genuine ghouls haunting the characters, often being explained away through Lovecraft’s aforementioned bemoaned mechanical explanations.¹⁷ Popular horror fiction

would include trepidations with science as a major theme, with authors like Robert Louis Stevenson utilizing narratives of mad experiments going wrong in stories such as *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in 1886 and *The Body Snatcher* in 1884.¹⁸ H.G. Wells used contemporary sciences as the basis for his “scientific romances” *The Time Machine* in 1895, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* in 1896, *The War of the Worlds* in 1898, *The Sleeper Awakes* in 1899, and *The First Men in the Moon* in 1901, dealing with a variety of subjects including time travel, lunar travel, invasions from Mars, and the ability to transform animal into man.¹⁹ This last subject was quite pertinent because of its connections with a highly controversial subject at the time: Darwin’s theory of evolution. Much anxiety and discomfort came from Darwin’s burgeoning theory that man evolved from the ape. The theory was seen as a threat to the religious orthodoxy, and was met and debated with a general uneasiness as people were faced with an alternative to the question of human origination. Scores of material was written about the subject at the time and science fiction authors like Stevenson and Wells clearly expounded on the debate in their fictions. But also subtly grappling with his feelings about the issue was the Dublin born author Bram Stoker. Stoker, most famous for the horror novel *Dracula* in 1897 that created the character of Count Dracula that would become synonymous with “vampire”, appears an unlikely candidate for an author commentating on evolutionary theory. However, the issues at the core of *Dracula* and several of his other fiction works make it apparent that evolutionary anxieties played a firm role in establishing the supernatural horror element within his narratives.

In the time between Polidori's "The Vampyre" and Stoker's *Dracula*, the vampire in fiction had a tumultuous history. As described in the last chapter, Polidori's Lord Ruthven set off the domino effect of a vampiric craze that would greatly affect Europe. Several stage productions based on Polidori's character were written and performed "immediately upon the furore created by Nodier's *Le Vampire*. . . in 1819 vampire plays of every kind from the most luridly sensational to the most farcically ridiculous pressed on to the boards. A contemporary critic cries: "There is not a theatre in Paris without its Vampire!" (Summers 303). The adaptations would often be highly fantastical, sometimes merging the Vampire with other supernatural characters like Frankenstein and Faust, until two plays were produced that showed the "growing emphasis on realistic settings and the desire for plausible human behavior" (*Vampire in Literature* Senf 40). This growing success made it appear that the vampire would be there to stay. However, the burgeoning interest in science led to a waning interest in the supernatural: "No longer could such entities as the vampire or the ghost—already becoming stale through overuse and. . . through the advance of a science that was rendering them so implausible as to become aesthetically unusable—be manifested without. . . a quasilogical rationale" (*American Supernatural Tales* Joshi xiii). The public had grown tired of the story. Too many stage adaptations were culled from the same handful of stories, and the over saturation caused boredom. And further, reliance on scientific theory and logic made it too difficult to focus on the extraordinary aspects of supernatural fiction.

Only two supernatural vampire novels were written during this time period, crucial to the mythology in their own ways. The first was Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's

Carmilla, published serially between 1871 and 1872, which remains a highly influential piece.²⁰ Once again the titular vampire character, in this text a young girl who happens to be thousands of years old, is placed within the framework of a realistic contemporary setting. The main character Laura, adamant about the rational being above all things, is left unaware of Carmilla's true supernatural identity until finally accepting the notion that there could truly be something beyond tangible human existence during the novel's climax.²¹ Another highly popular vampire novel is James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest's *Varney the Vampyre or: The Feast of Blood*.²² The novel is a massive work that was published serially in cheap "penny dreadful" pamphlets in 220 chapters between 1845 and 1847.²³ Despite plot inconsistencies and an episodic narrative as outlined in Senf's *The Vampire in 19th Century English Literature*, the gargantuan size of the novel remains a testament to the strong popularity and insatiable desire the public had for both the character of Varney and the vampiric figure in general.²⁴ Of the two works, *Carmilla* became a far more respected and oft analyzed piece of literature, but both novels are crucial in charting the expansion of the vampire myth that Polidori began decades before. *Carmilla* and *Varney* both inhabit preexisting aspects of vampirism through its folklore origins while also taking on different characteristics that would later become tropes. *Varney*'s plot is "lifted straight out of Polidori" (Frayling 41), continuing Polidori's incorporation of the vampire as an aristocrat, as well as the emphasis on the past, stemming from the "undead" aspect of these characters, over the protagonists rooted in the present day.²⁵ *Carmilla* is limited by several different "rules", including the inability to thrive in the daylight and a fear of various holy items.²⁶ These consistencies

and alterations of the vampire myth has authors engaging with one another over the decades, building up the figure gradually over time.

Dracula's publication in 1897, "the last major work in the nineteenth century to feature a vampire and not a vampiric character" (*Vampire in Literature* Senf 57) meaning a supernatural character and not a lecherous human one, arguably remains the high point of the vampire in literature. *Dracula* has continuously remained in print since its initial publication and has been translated into scores of foreign languages, signifying its major influence of similar narratives throughout the twentieth century and into the present day.²⁷ This statistic is all the more incredible considering how relatively unknown much of the other works in Stoker's canon are today. Much of Stoker's output was written relatively quickly, whereas with *Dracula* he "spent more than seven years on it, a degree of care unusual for him" (*Bram Stoker* Senf 54).²⁸ A close companion of the renowned actor Henry Irving, Stoker mostly worked in the Lyceum Theatre with writing being a hobby until he switched to it full time upon the theaters closure in the early 1900s. Despite still working at the theater during the writing of *Dracula*, the novel notably received more care and attention compared to the pittance amount of time Stoker spent on some of his other works. While the bulk of this section will consist of an analysis of this seminal masterwork, it is not only through the vampire character that Stoker utilizes and builds upon Polidori's example. Stoker's manifestation of his imagination through macabre and supernatural characters and events goes beyond *Dracula*, reinforcing Senf's point that "readers cannot see him as the author of only one novel" (*Bram Stoker* Senf 54). Additional texts by Bram Stoker that will be explored are the short stories "The

Judge's House" from 1891, "The Squaw" from 1893, and "The Burial of the Rats" and "Dracula' Guest" which all appeared in 1914 for the first time in the posthumously published collection *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories*, as well as the novels *The Jewel of Seven Stars* from 1903 and *The Lair of the White Worm* from 1911.²⁹

Stoker's interest in the vampiric figure in *Dracula* is clearly influenced by the example Polidori set both in content and writing style, although he goes further with them all while also incorporating his own novel themes fitting to his own time period. The visual motif of "The Vampyre" returns in *Dracula*, though Stoker goes further with it through a heavily complex and painstakingly precise method of having multiple narrators. This begins his own musings with the question of reality or madness, though the narrative style allows for a denser and more effective analysis of those issues. Lastly, the importance of curiosity and belief to drive the narrative come to the forefront, far more imperative to the novel than it was with Polidori. While Stoker's connection with evolutionary theory has been touched upon infrequently by scholars such as Kate Hebblethwaite³⁰ and Charles S. Blinderman³¹, *Dracula* has primarily been established as a character rooted in the past against the progressive technology of the main characters by writers like Senf and Richard Wasson³². According to readings by Senf and Wasson, the horror of the novel comes from this unknown entity of the past integrating himself and standing in the way of the development of the rational, scientifically minded, and progressive inhabits of urban London.. Senf emphasizes the conflict early on with protagonist Jonathan Harker's first encounter with the other passengers of the carriage ride in Transylvania where "instead of finding someone like himself at the end of his

journey. . . Harker discovers a ruined castle, itself a memento of bygone ages, and a man who. . . prides himself on being an integral part of his nation's heroic past" ("Unseen Face" Senf 164).³³ Senf goes further in regards to the divide between regression and progression in the essay "*Dracula* and *The Lair of the White Worm*: Bram Stoker's Commentary on Victorian Science", stating that "in a battle that only one side can win, the representatives of modernity. . . use the tools of the nineteenth-century science and technology and finally conquer the forces of the primitive past" (Senf 219).³⁴ Much of *Dracula's* early conversations with Harker revolve around how he will be a stranger in the progressive London over the traditions of his home land of Transylvania: "Here I am noble; I am *boyar*; the common people know me, and I am master. But a stranger in a strange land, he is no one; men know him not—and to know not is to care not for" (27). In his essay "The Politics of *Dracula*", Richard Wasson points out that the developments of science place Count Dracula in danger of being irrelevant, stating "Stoker sees the Count as a threat to progress. . . in the old days, the Count had to exist on the primitive frontier of Western culture, his best chance for survival is now in England, the most progressive, radical and democratic nation in Europe. . . technology progress. . . cut humanity off from the old superstitious" (20-21). While this is a very correct assessment of the character, Count Dracula is also a character to be feared because he is a being who has evolved past the average intelligence of the human characters, who are all too absorbed in their rational mode of thinking that the capacity to expand their imaginations and belief in *Dracula* hinders them from being able to overpower him.

In an age where scientific and technological progress was occurring at a rapid rate, there was a comfort in knowing that the bulk of change was taking place on a tangible and visual basis. People could see the progress around them. They could see the building of cities, the extension of railway lines, or the advances in medicine. Evolution theory was problematic to the public because there was no ocular proof of its existence. This is why it was referred as, and still is, a “theory” rather than a “fact”. As Gillian Beer states “scientific hypotheses in this period might seek to confirm themselves either through experimental practice. . . or through analogy and history, as Darwin was driven to do” (151).³⁵ Darwin developed his theory not through veritable experimentation, but through analysis of nature and observation of patterns throughout biological history. There can be no finite visual proof of evolution, which creates a trepidation and fear in those unwilling to accept it. Evolution cannot be grasped through experimentation or visual verification—it requires a more expansive concept of rationality. In this way it is similar to the character of Count Dracula. Everything about the existence of Dracula moves beyond rational thought: his ability to control animals and transform into them, his inability to exist in daylight hours, his need to sleep surrounded by dirt from his homeland, and his need to drain the blood of humans in order to remain alive. These are elements difficult to believe without expanding one's imagination, which, as has already been established, was not something easy to do during this period in history. Dracula is a representation of the past, but he is also an embodiment of the anxieties of the evolutionary future: he needs to be believed in fully in order to be overpowered. Refusal to believe in him will most certainly end in the deaths of the human characters. Stoker

develops these ideas through similar means as Polidori: the repeated motif eyes and the importance of visual verification, the inability to ascertain between reality and madness, and curiosity/belief, all three of which are intrinsically linked throughout the novel.

The narrative style of *Dracula* begins conventionally in the first four chapters before, as will be demonstrated later, Stoker experiments and takes a more complex approach by including a variety of narrators and styles. The early chapters are taken from the journal of Jonathan Harker as he takes a trip to Transylvania in order to help Count Dracula purchase a home in London. Narratively, Harker is in a situation similar to Aubrey. Both characters are placed into locations that are different to the rational and civilized landscape of London of which they are familiar. As a result, they are both exposed to traditions, myths, and customs vastly different to what they know. Harker arrives in Transylvania with the logic of London engrained in his mind. The first sentence of the journal entry is “Left Munich at 8:35 p.m. on 1st May, arriving in Vienna early next morning; should have arrived at 6.46, but train was an hour late” (7). Harker is focused on the very civilized notion of an ordered times table for his transportation. He is used to a very regimented system, and any deviance from that system, such as the train before late, is deemed worthy of mention. As he makes his way through the village, he encounters a variety of locals doing odd things, including repeating words regarding werewolves and vampires. He makes a parenthetical note to “ask the Count about these superstitions” (12). Harker does not have the imagination necessary to comprehend the reasoning behind local customs. For a rational mind like himself, he deduces that there is an answer to the question of superstition. Another local tradition Harker comes into

contact with during his initial foray into the village begins a usage of ocular terminology. This occurs while he is on carriage with a group of people from various cultural backgrounds:

When I got on the coach the driver had no taken his seat, and I saw him talking with the landlady. They were evidently talking of me, for every now and then they *looked* at me, and some of the people were were sitting on the bench outside the door. . . then looked at me, most of them pityingly. . . the crowd round the inn door. . . all made the sign of the cross and pointed two fingers towards me. . . I got a fellow-passenger to tell me what they meant; he would not answer at first, but on learning that I was English he explained that it was a charm or guard against the *evil eye*. . . I shall never forget the last *glimpse* which I had of the inn-yard. . . I soon lost *sight* and recollection of ghostly fears in the beauty of the scene as we drove along. . . (12-13:my italics).

Not speaking the language of the bulk of the passengers, Harker is forced to rely primarily on visual means for communication. He truly has no idea what is being said and comes to his conclusions solely based on the glances and visual cues. The only thing that he is able to extract from one of the passengers is that the others are performing a ritual to protect from the “evil eye”, revealing that the ocular can potentially be dangerous. Stoker does not simply use this as a moment to foreshadow Harker’s eventual encounters with Count Dracula, instead using it as a moment to join the visual themes with the narrative style. Bacil F. Kirtley finds these early moments as a way to provide a verification for the events of the narrative in a different way in the essay “*Dracula, the Monastic Chronicles*

and Slavic Folklore”.³⁶ Kirtley describes the supernatural events in the novel to be “faithful reproductions of superstitions which have undergone their most distinctive elaboration in the area of Southeastern Europe where the novel is set” (11). The moment of the “evil eye” is the first event in the novel that is culled from a variety of legend, folklore, and superstition, pieces that Kirtley describes as “documentary confirmation” for the evil that the characters feel they are experiencing (13).³⁷ Incorporating a realistic superstition into the fictional narrative provides a credence for the events taking place, establishing a reality within the imaginative.

It is in the second chapter that Harker finally meets Dracula and, based on the build-up he experiences with the village locals, he is surprised to find the Count to be of a very agreeable personality. During the May 5th journal entry of their meeting, Harker uses ocular terminology right before he enters the castle and meets the Count, writing “I began to rub my eyes and pinch myself to see if I were awake. It all seemed like a horrible nightmare to me. . . but my flesh answered the pinching test, and my eyes were not to be deceived” (22). There is already a disconnect between what Harker is seeing and what he is experiencing, but he is committed to feeling that his eyes are completely showing him the truth. When the Count comes to the door, the reader waits for a description of his eyes: the set-up of the “evil eye” during the carriage ride feeling like a hint of what Harker should be looking for during this initial encounter. But eyes are not physical described during this meeting, even when Harker finally has “an opportunity of observing him” (24). Throughout a paragraph of these observations, Harker describes Dracula’s face in great detail, touching upon the nose, forehead, hair, eyebrows, mouth,

teeth, lips, ears, chin, and cheeks. Other bodily observations include the backs of his hands, knees, fingers, palms, and breath (24-25).³⁸ However, there is not a single mention of his eyes: all of the ocular terminology used during this passage are simple verb usages by Harker, with the closest thing to Dracula's eyes being described are his eyebrows. When paired with Harker's encounter with the charm against the "evil eye", the omission is notable. The first mention of Dracula's eyes during this entry come after the two hear the howling of wolves in the distance. Right after hearing these noises, Harker writes that "The Count's eyes gleamed" before making a comment about the musicality of the howling.³⁹ Right after making this comment, Harker adds "seeing, I suppose, some expression in my face strange to me" (25). Stoker creates a rhythm in how Harker describes the Count based on the alteration of his feelings towards him during the scene. Harker initially finds pleasure in the "light and warmth and the Count's courteous welcome" that "dissipated all my doubts and fears" (23). All mention of eyes are completely eliminated during these early impressions. It is only after Harker begins to feel uneasy about the Count that he finally *does* mention eyes, as if he sees a connection between Dracula and the warnings of the "evil eye" that he receives on the way to the castle. His experience with the earlier warnings begins to stir his imagination as he makes a connection between them and the Count.

Being that these early chapters are entirely written through the journal entries, it is easy to be lulled into a false sense of security about the reliability of Harker's narration. It could be seen that the visual terminology and verification about these experiences are completely a result of Harker's *observation* with absolutely no omniscient presence to

mediate. The journal entries themselves are even reported to be “kept in shorthand”, further questioning their authenticity as shorthand could potentially be misinterpreted (7). Furthermore, the novel is set up with a frame narrator, beginning with a disclaimer from an unknown editor who makes it clear that all of the forthcoming statements are “given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them” (6).⁴⁰ As Senf points out in “Dracula: The Unseen Face in the Mirror”, this prologue is “unfortunately omitted in many modern editions”, but its importance in setting up this series of independent narrators remains crucial (161).⁴¹ However, the additional layer created by the usage of a frame narrator in conjunction with various pieces of documentary evidence feels like a way for the events of the novel to gain an additional credibility, as if reinforcing its insistence that this is a stack of various documents that stress the reality of this extraordinary event that has taken place.

The rest of Harker’s stay with Dracula follows these foundations of the visual motif showing the tension between Harker’s rational thinking being overpowered by the unusual circumstances in Dracula’s castle. Harker often tries to ground himself and remind himself that his “imagination must not run riot” (32). He wants to “begin with facts—bare, meagre facts, *verified*. . . and of which there can be no doubt” (37). However, he continues to have trouble feeling comfortable:

The castle is on the very edge of a terrible precipice. . . As far as the eye can reach is a sea of green tree-tops. . . But I am not in heart to describe beauty, for when I had seen the view I explored further: doors, doors, doors everywhere, and all

locked and bolted. In no place save from the windows in the castle walls is there an available exit. The castle is a veritable prison, and I am a prisoner! (33).

This passage is the very last sentence of Harker's second journal entry. The cliffhanger ending obviously functions as a way to ensure the readers interest in moving to the next section, but it is crucial to note the usage of the word "veritable" in the last sentence of the entry. Harker takes all of the information that he has received throughout the early days of his stay in the castle and allowed himself to bend his rational modes of thought. As a result, he is able to verify his beliefs that he is in a "veritable prison," a word signifying truth. In "The Narrative Methods of Dracula," David Seed notes that Harker begins to "confront Dracula's own vampirism, confronting the very thing that Harker's rationalism is unwilling to accept" (197).⁴² Harker's nerve gets increasingly unstable: "I start at my own shadow, and am full of all sorts of horrible imaginings" (41). Harker's fear allows him to come face to face with the notion that his life is in danger. These "imaginings" keep him on a high alert that prevents him from easily becoming Dracula's next victim.

Harker's first true experience with the horrific supernatural occurs during an entry dated May 12th. It is the middle of the night and Harker is at the peak of his paranoid fear of the Count and the castle:

I *looked* out over the beautiful expanse, bathed in soft yellow moonlight till it was almost as light as day. . . As I leaned from the window my *eye* was caught by something moving a storey below me. . . where I imagined, from the lie of the rooms, that the windows of the Count's own room would *look* out. . . I carefully

looked out. What I *saw* was the Count's head coming out from the window. I did not see his face, but I knew the man by the neck and the movement of his back and arms. In any case I could not mistake the hands which I had had so many opportunities of *studying*. . . my feelings changed to repulsion and terror when I *saw* the whole man slowly emerge from the window and begin to crawl down the castle wall over that dreadful abyss, face down, with his cloak spreading out around him like great wings. At first I could not believe my *eyes*. I thought it was some trick of the moonlight, some weird effect of shadow; but I kept *looking*, and it could be no delusion (41: my italics).

Stoker's approach at writing this passage allows for two major points. Firstly, being that the approach of the narrative has exclusively been Harker's journal entries, the security of Harker as narrator allows for the effect of this scene to be scary for the reader. But the wavering between reality and imagination in this passage is at a stark contrast with the more declarative "veritable" at the end of the second entry. Harker's abundance usage of ocular terms remind of the unreliability of the visual in telling truths. Dracula's eyes have still yet to be related to any evil outside of moments where Harker tries to assert what he sees as valid observations. However, shortly after, Harker has an experience with the Count and a group of vampiric women who visit him in his room. During this passage, Harker finally makes use of a description of the Count's eyes in horrifying ways:

I was afraid to raise my *eyelids*, but *looked* out and saw perfectly under the lashes . . . I closed my *eyes* in a languorous ecstasy and waited. . . I was conscious of the presence of the Count. . . As my *eyes* opened involuntarily I saw the strong

hand grasp the slender neck of the fair woman. . . the blue *eyes* transformed with fury. . . But the Count! Never did I imagine such wrath and fury, even to the demons of the pit. His *eyes* were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid, as if the flames of hell-fire blazed behind them” (45-46: my italics).

It is in this moment of supreme fear that Harker finally describes the burst of color that comes from the Count’s eyes. The last two sentences of the passage are a confirmation of the evil behind the Count. Harker uses the moment to finally fully make the connection between the “evil eye” of the passengers during the carriage ride and the man who he believes is planning something evil to him.

After the first four chapters, Stoker begins to jump between a variety of narrators and narrative techniques, ranging from additional diary entries from other characters (such as Harker’s fiancée Mina), letters between characters, and newspaper articles. While these early chapters follow a constant chain of solely Harker’s journal, the rest of the novel never gives nearly as much of a continuous thread for the other characters. This makes the reader more aware of the narrative technique, causing it to be more difficult to escape into the storytelling because one has to situate themselves again and again. The style “resembles a vast jigsaw puzzle of isolated and frequently trivial facts; and it is only when the novel is more than half over that the central characters piece these fragments together and, having concluded that Dracula is a threat to themselves and their society, band together to destroy them” (“Unseen Face” Senf 161). The doubts about what Harker writes diminish as the other “good” characters add their feelings to the manuscript that together essentially verify to the reader what Harker cannot verify alone. Stoker

continues the visual motif in a different way as the novel progresses, though is not as subtle as his way of connecting it with Harker's potential madness. The narrative style becomes, as Chris Baldick describes in a brief mention of Stoker in his book *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Writing*, a way to "corroborate rather than to question or challenge one another. . . the collated diaries and phonograph records dovetail into a consistent body of 'evidence' which both confirms the incredible events and justifies. . . there is no view or voice within the novel which can contradict" (148).⁴³ Even Dracula himself is never given his own voice, with no chapter devoted to his own interpretation of the events. He instead "appears to us. . . through his impact on the various narrators" (Frayling 74). Dracula is "*never* seen objectively and never permitted to speak for himself while his actions are recorded by people who have determined to destroy him and who, moreover, repeatedly question the sanity of their quest" ("Unseen Face" Senf 162). Senf is accurate in observing that there is no objective view of the Count throughout the entirety of the novel.

Stoker introduces the other characters by having them experience oddities and, like Harker, come to their own conclusions that something is wrong. They also worry about the location of Harker, who has gone missing since the events in the castle. When Harker eventually returns, the narrative explicitly discusses the need to place all of these various writing "in order", something Mina states doing herself. This means that the other characters actually read the first four chapters of the novel and, being loyal to Harker, it is natural to assume that they will either believe his reports or do what they can to confirm what he feels is occurring. They are also pushed to believe in the potential for

supernatural evil by the vampire hunter Van Helsing. Helsing provides the primary philosophy that can be gotten out of the novel during a conversation he has with Dr. Seward where he bluntly tells him “I want you to believe. . . To believe in things that you cannot” (206). Seward correctly interprets Van Helsing’s imploring words as “you want me not to let some previous conviction injure the receptivity of my mind with regard to some strange matter” (206). Seward’s basis in scientific thought, teaching, and practice hinders his ability to think outside of rational thought whereas Van Helsing insists that he attempt to train his mind to think in such ways.

The change in Seward comes later in the novel as the characters become worried for Mina, believing that the Count will be coming for her next. During an entry into Dr. Seward’s diary, they burst into the bedroom of the newly married Harker and Mina to find the Count:

His face was turned from us, but the instant we saw we all recognized the Count—in every way, even to the scar on his forehead. With his left hand he held both Mrs. Harker’s hands. . . her white nightdress was smeared with blood. . . As we burst into the room, the Count turned his face and the hellish look that I had heard described seemed to leap into it. His *eyes* flamed red with devilish passion. . .
(300:my italics).

This passage is framed within the narrative as another major moment of horror, a highly charged scene that comes after much buildup and speculation by several of the characters. Senf strongly infers that in several ways Dracula is a victim of mass assumption, believing that “Even if Dracula is responsible for all of the Evil of which he is accused,

he is tried, convicted, and sentenced by men. . . who give him no opportunity to explain his actions" and that there is a "flimsiness of such "evidence"" ("Unseen Face" Senf 163).⁴⁴ The above scene is a perfect illustration of the others characters jumping to a conclusion without having all of, if any, the evidence. Dracula himself is not given a voice to offer any possible explanation of his presence, with their belief in his evil coming from the pages that Harker had written. This is clear through shared language in Seward's journal entry. Seward, a character who prides himself on his rationality, falls into the trap of writing in a similar style to Harker. He recognizes the Count based on the writing of Harker and not based on any visual evidence of his own. It is a sight rooted in his *belief* of Harker and not from any personal ocular proof. Seward immediately notes the "red eyes" from Harker's earlier encounter, a connection that Seward most likely feels gives a confirmation to his friend's writings. However, he is betrayed by his usage of the word "seemed" right before it, which creates a suspicion about how firmly he believes in Dracula's supernatural existence. This imagery returns later when Seward states that "the expression in the Count's face was so hellish" continuing the connection between Dracula's face and hell (326). Seward and the other characters feel they have no other choice but to attack, instantly throwing up their crucifixes, harkening back to an earlier moment where Harker is given a crucifix by a villager before his carriage ride (11).⁴⁵ The group does not overpower Dracula during this scene because they still do not fully believe in him as a supernatural evil. Instead, the belief comes from their connection with Harker who did manage to fully abandon his rationality.

Right when they put up their crucifixes “the Count suddenly stopped. . . and cowered back” (301). While this can be viewed as a confirmation of the superstitions introduced by the old women in the beginning of the novel, it can also be seen as a man being attacked. This is taken further later in the novel when he attempts to escape to the safe confines of Transylvania, effectively fleeing from being attacked even more. Even though he is a supernatural being, Dracula still has to protect himself. His “cowering” resembles that of a frightened animal, one of many examples of Dracula being connected to a type of animalistic figure, leading to a major contribution Stoker makes to the developing supernatural novel: evoking animalistic imagery in the supernatural presence. Stoker connects Count Dracula with various animals throughout the novel, having the character both form intrinsic bonds with different species while also being able to turn into certain animals himself. When feeling threatened by the human characters, Dracula sends and controls hordes of rats or wolves to prevent them from achieving their goal and protect himself. There are a few references to “bats that they call vampires” that bite and take blood from humans (162). The insane asylum patient Renfield, who becomes hypnotized by Dracula’s spell and yearns for the arrival of the “Master”, has a “hobby (of) catching flies” (77). And even descriptions of Dracula are accompanied with animal metaphors, such as his “panther-like” movements (325). The humans become prone to fearing the animals around them, much as the public became frightened by the notion of their own connections with animals following their exposure to Darwinian theory. In addition, Dracula’s ability to transform into animals such as wolves or bats provides the human characters something that can be rationally explained: it is easier to explain that

they are being chased by a wolf rather than a undead man wishing to drain their blood. Stoker's method of using animals as a theme is not specific to *Dracula* alone: he had already used animals prominently in the short works "The Judge's House" and "The Squaw", and would develop the theme further in the stories "The Burial of the Rats," and "Dracula's Guest" as well as the novels *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, and *The Lair of the White Worm*, possibly as a response to Darwinian evolution theory.

These parallels between Dracula and animals leads to the natural assumption that if Dracula is connected with animals, and man is a *descendant* of animals, than this would be another example of Dracula being representative of the past. However, Dracula is almost always on step ahead of Harker and the others. During his early journal entries while staying at the castle, Harker remarks that "he was interested in everything, and asked me a myriad questions about the place and its surroundings. He clearly had studied beforehand all he could get on the subject of the neighborhood (Harker's neighborhood in London), for he evidently at the end knew very much more than I did" (29). Dracula's plan is extremely well-thought out and precisely plotted, as Harker realizes in hindsight:

Everything had been carefully thought out, and done systematically and with precision. He seemed to have been prepared for every obstacle which might be placed by accident in the way of his intentions being carried out. . . he had "taken no chances" and the absolute accuracy with which his instructions were fulfilled was simply the logical result of his care (241).

Even Dracula's intrusion into Harker and Mina's room is a result of his deft movement and intelligence. The other characters manage to prevent him from continuing his plans,

but it is only when they band together in a group that they are able to outsmart him and catch up with him as he flees London to return to the safe haven of Transylvania. They are only able to do this when they listen to the vampire-hunter Van Helsing's insistence that they "*believe* in things (they) cannot" and to "have an open mind, and not let a little bit of truth check the rush of a big truth" (206:my italics). But it is only until the end of the novel, after realizing that "it is impossible to destroy the malignant creations of folkloric minds solely by means of the heterogeneous weapons of science and conventional reasoning" that they are able to overcome him, making his supreme intelligence even more apparent (Gonzalez 23).⁴⁶ In many ways, Dracula is a character to be feared because he is actually in an extremely *evolved* state, a further link on the evolutionary scale that human beings are not able to fathom. He is a man rooted in both myth and superstition, but also one who embodies a future state of man that no other person has been able to overpower: a reminder of the horrific lore of the past as well as the dark unknown of the future.

The final entry of the novel is a "note" written by Harker seven years after the primary action. Harker provides further details about the events of these years, concluding the motifs of the ocular and belief by saying "it was impossible to believe that the things which we had seen with our own eyes and heard with our own ears were the living truths. . . We could hardly ask anyone, even did we wish to, to accept these as proofs of so wild a story. . . we ask none to believe us" (402). It is also revealed that Mina has given birth to Harker's son: "his bundle of names links all our little band of men together: but we call him Quincey" (402) suggesting that they have named him after all

of the characters that have united in order to overpower Dracula. However, Maurice Hindle suggests in his introduction to the novel that Stoker uses young Quincey as a way to subtly create ambiguity about the ending, believing that Harker is “conveniently forgetting that something *else* has ‘passed into’ the body of little Quincey too: Dracula’s blood. Or all Dracula’s victims, it is Mina alone who has been forced to drink his blood. . . the Harker’s and the rest. . . are all convinced that Count Dracula and his kind have been vanquished. . . Was Stoker as convinced?” (xxxvi).⁴⁷ Hindle’s interpretation creates a subtly ambiguous ending of horror cloaked in the cheerful conclusion that Harker tries to depict. If Dracula’s bloodline remains in Quincey from the aforementioned attack on Mina, then it can be argued that only this incarnation of Dracula that has been destroyed. His presence could potentially manifest itself in different ways as Quincey grows older. Dracula, often seen as the embodiment of past tradition, ends the novel by possibly evolving into the next form: into whatever it is that Quincey could potentially become. He has enforced his lineage into the next generation of Harkers, meaning that the group did not overpower him after all.

II.

Dracula is Bram Stoker's most celebrated novel. It has never been out of print in the nearly one hundred and thirty years since its publication, it has been translated into many different languages, it has scores of scholarly articles written about it, and it has had more film adaptations than any other novel. The influence of the character is so strong that it has been the basis of countless vampire stories written since. However, the interest Stoker has with the struggle between the rational and the imagination as seen the trouble of visual verification, belief/curiosity, the line between madness and sanity, and evolutionary anxieties that create a battle between man and animals, had both already been a factor of his previous fiction and would continue to be a focal point of future works.

Following his death in 1911, Stoker's financially destitute widow posthumously published a collection of short stories penned by her husband under the title *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories* in 1914. The collection included previously published works as well as additional stories being published for the first time: it is unknown to what level of completion the newer stories were and if Stoker had even intended for them to be read in their current state. The oldest story in the collection is the "often anthologized" "The Judge's House" from 1891 (Senf 11 *Bram Stoker*). Despite being a popular work for collections, "The Judge's House" has only been met with a handful of scholarly response: most notably a short passage in Senf's *Bram Stoker* and Antonio Ballesteros Gonzalez's "Portraits, Rats and Other Dangerous Things: Bram Stoker's "The Judge's House". In the story, mathematical student Malcolm Malcolmson decides to

retreat to a more peaceful location in order to study for an upcoming mathematical examination. Malcolm ends up taking residence in the home of a deceased judge with a foul reputation, ignoring the warnings that the place is haunted. Malcolm finds the place perfect to suit his needs and begins to study for the exam. The house is infested with rats, but he is actually comforted by the sounds of them scampering in the cellars. There is also a portrait of the judge adorning the wall. Malcolm is comfortable until he begins to be watched by one enormous rat who comes down from a rope attached to an alarm bell, who refuses to budge even when Malcolm throws large mathematical books at him. He learns that this is the same rope that the judge used to hang himself. The others in the town believe that Malcolm is going mad as a result of staying in the house and become increasingly worried. One night, Malcolm is haunted by the rats even further, and is shocked to find that the judge is missing from the portrait and is sitting there in the room with him. The judge places the noose from the alarm bell around Malcolm's neck. When the sounds of the alarm go through the town, the inhabitants head to the judge's house to find Malcolm dangling dead from the bell with the judge in the picture giving a "malignant smile" (36).⁴⁸

This short work shows that Stoker is already interested in the themes and motifs that he will later develop in novel form. Continuing the lead from Polidori, the story "juxtaposes the Gothic with ordinary reality and makes it difficult to determine whether the protagonist is insane or haunted by something supernatural" (Senf 11 *Bram Stoker*). Malcolm is a rational minded young man, surrounding himself with mathematical studies that have concrete answers and do not require any imaginative thinking, mathematics

being the “evident referent of logical reasoning” (Gonzalez 19). He would never be the first to jump to the interpretation that the things occurring around him have a supernatural core. Malcolm’s first encounter with the house is through the local real estate agent who assures that over the years some kind of “absurd prejudice has grown up about it”. It is not until shortly after that he brings up the house to another local who “grew pale as she spoke” to him (19). Malcolm voices his skepticism, stating that “a man who is reading for the Mathematical Tripos has too much to think of to be disturbed by any of these mysterious ‘somethings’, and his work is of too exact and prosaic a kind to allow of his having any corner in his mind for mysterious of any kind” (20). Mathematics is precise and offers finite answers. There is no room for the imagination or alterations of the ideas based on previously established proofs.

Stoker makes use of the visual motif when Malcolm encounters the great rat. While studying he notices “an enormous rat, *steadily glaring at him with baleful eyes*” (24: my italics). Malcolm hits the rat with the poker and it scurries up the alarm bell, causing him to no longer pay it any mind. As he grows accustomed once again to the sounds of their scampering, he reflects on the nature of rats, how they “came to the mouths of their holes and to the chinks and cracks and crannies in the wainscoting til their eyes shone like tiny lamps as the firelight rose and fell. But to him. . . their eyes were not wicked; only their playfulness touched him” (26). Having only one encounter with the large rat at this point, Malcolm has yet to suspect any supernatural element. Stoker ensures that the connection is made during the second encounter with the large rat shortly after, when Malcolm “instinctively. . . *looked* at the chair standing close by the

fireside. There, on the great old high-backed carved oak chair beside the fireplace sat the same enormous rat, *steadily glaring at him with baleful eyes*” (26:my italics). The verbatim repetition of the last seven words does not need the emphasis to be a striking parallel. From this point in the story, the importance of eyes and watching makes itself known. Malcolm becomes a constant observer, observing even the smallest actions: “Without stirring, he *looked to see* if his pile of books was within range, and then *cast his eye* along the rope” (27: my italics). The phrase “baleful eyes” is even attributed to the great rat on multiple occasions (Stoker 31).

The connection between man and animal is made through the method of eyes and seeing when Malcolm discovers the portrait of the judge hanging on the wall. Unlike Harker’s initial description of Count Dracula omitting that facial feature, Malcolm focuses primarily on them:

The *eyes* were of peculiar brilliance and with a terribly malignant expression. As he *looked* at them, Malcolmson grew cold, for he saw there the very counterpart of the *eyes* of the great rat. The lamp almost fell from his hand, he saw the rat with its *baleful eyes peering* out through the hole in the corner of the picture. . .

(32: my italics).

At this point. Malcolm has made an irreversible connection between animal and man, believing that he is seeing the exact same expression between the large rat and the judge in the portrait. At the climax of the story, Malcolm sees the portrait empty and the judge sitting in a nearby chair. As the story builds, the emphasis on the eyes is great. Malcolm sees “fascination in the judge’s eyes, which he never took off him” and when the judge

prepares a noose for Malcolm's neck he is "ever keeping his baleful eyes fixed on him" (35). Earlier in the story, Malcolm visits Dr. Thornhill, inquiring about the situation in the house. Thornhill tells Malcolm the entire story of the judge's suicide. It is crucial to note that after Malcolm leaves the doctor, the narrative briefly remains with Thornhill as he has a short discussion with someone. Thornhill considers Malcolm "as sound and healthy a young man, mentally and bodily, as ever I saw—but then the rats—and that suggestion of the devil". He hopes to be warned if Malcolm is in danger: "He may get in the night some strange fright or hallucination and if he does I want him to put that rope. All alone as he is it will give us warning, and we may reach him in time to be of service" (30). Senf interprets this line as Stoker making it clear that Malcolm is *not* mad (*Bram Stoker* Senf 12).⁴⁹ However, Stoker does not allow for a simple "mad or sane" interpretation, instead creating a gray area in confirming him as one or the other. Malcolm is the one who makes the connection between the rat and the judge, indicated by his repeated usage of the phrase "baleful eyes". It is through the *belief* in the judge's presence that he receives from the other townsfolk that he ends up slowly realizing through the course of the story. By hanging onto his rationality and not escaping from the house, Malcolm is unable to escape from his grisly end. When Thornhill and the other townspeople rush into the house after hearing the alarm bell, they find that "there at the end of the rope of the great alarm bell hung the body of the student, and on the face of the Judge in the picture was a malignant smile" (36). The crucial word in this, the last sentence of the story, is "malignant," which is used during Malcolm's description of the judge's eyes in the portrait. Despite being written in a third person narration, Malcolm's

presence in almost every scene of the story arguably connects the narration closely with him. The scene where the townspeople discover Malcolm's hanging body switches to Dr. Thornhill and allows the two to share the language of the word "malignant". Based on Senf's interpretation of the story, this shared language between Malcolm and Thornhill would indicate that Malcolm is sane because Thornhill is seeing things in the same vernacular as Malcolm. However, if Malcolm is falling into the belief of the paranoia of the town that the judge's house is haunted. Stoker is not outright in saying that the expression of the portrait does actually change, continuing to leave it open for interpretation. He leaves the emphasis on the ability to believe in the possibility of the supernatural. It is only the characters open to the idea of a supernatural presence, in this case the townspeople, who avoid the hanging noose in the judge's house.

Another short work by Stoker that explores similar areas is the also frequently anthologized "The Squaw" from 1893. The plot involves an unnamed narrator and his recent wife Amelia, who are joined on their honeymoon by the American Elias P. Hutcheson. While at a popular tourist location, Elias looks down from an incline and spots a mother cat and her kitten. He picks up a small stone and throws it with the intention of scaring them for fun. Instead the stone hits the kitten on the head and "shattered out its little brains then and there" (39). The cat shrieks upward at Elias despite his attempted assurances that it was an accident. The tourists continue their sightseeing and eventually explore an old torture chamber. The cat returns and startles Elias causing him to become maimed by spikes that are part of a torture device. The story ends with the narrator picking up a sword and cleaving the cat in two.

The tale has the same interests of “The Judge’s House,” except that it replaces the rats of the former story with cats.⁵⁰ Stoker begins the visual motif directly following the graphic imagery of the death. Right after the brains splatter:

the black cat cast a swift upward *glance*, and we saw her *eyes* like green fire fixed an instant on Elias. . . and then her *attention* was given to the kitten. . . Suddenly she seemed to realize that it was dead, and again threw her *eyes* up at us. *I* shall never forget the *sight*, for she *looked* the perfect incarnation of hate. Her green *eyes* blazed with lurid fire. . . (39: my italics).

This is the first physical description of the cat that the narrator offers, only previously referring to the mother and kitten as “a pretty *sight*” (38: my italics). However, the narrator immediately latches onto the cat’s eyes, suddenly paying careful attention to the gaze of the cat over any other physical attribute. When encountering Elias shortly after, the cat is said to have a “blind unreasoning fury” (41). Inside the torture chamber, Elias is fascinated by a device that maims its victims through the eyes. His natural curiosity gets the better of him and he moves forward to examine it (47). The cat gets involved and Elias is impaled through the eyes with the device and the narrator watches as the cat “licked the blood which trickled through the gashed socket of his eyes” (49).⁵¹ This is when the narrator picks up the sword and cuts the cat in two. There is no clear evidence that the actions of the cat are a devious attempt on its part to get revenge on Elias. It becomes implied as the narrator embraces the notion of the cat being a supernatural, or at least a highly evolved, cat. The focus of the narrator-observing the eyes of the cat following the killing, the torture devices, and the cat licking the bloody eye sockets-allow

him to form his own hypothesis about the cat being supernatural, but it is never clear in the narrative aside from his own assumptions, anxieties, and imagination.

Some of Stoker's other works focus on anxieties regarding animals in a variety of ways. The rats in "The Burial of the Rats" work as an extended metaphor about a pair of people who have lived through a dark period in France. The narrator attempts to escape them when he realizes they intend on killing him for his money. The narrator's fear of the two manifests itself in the connection he makes between human and animal. The events the "rats" have witnessed have stripped them of their humanity, showing that regardless of their exposure to aspects of civilization, humans cannot escape certain traumas. The narrator's original uneasiness about the two "rats" ends up saving his life, with imagination coming into play into the development of his theory that they were after him. "Dracula's Guest" is an interesting piece because of how its origins are fully unknown and its connection with *Dracula* is met with "considerable debate" (*Dracula's Guest* Intro Hebblethwaite xiii). When *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories* was published, Stoker's widow Florence Stoker claimed that it was an unpublished first chapter of *Dracula*, excised because of the length of the book. This claim makes sense as the story does regard a unnamed man traveling through Munich on his way to Transylvania. It is Walpurgis Night, a night of celebration for witches in Germanic folklore, and the narrator stays out late despite being warned to return home early. He gets lost and encounters a large tomb. Inside the tomb he discovers a beautiful woman sleeping, but a bolt of lightning strikes and the tomb is destroyed while the woman screams for her life. He continues looking for his shelter and encounters a wolf with "two great flaming

eyes” (13). The wolf nearly overcomes the narrator, but is stopped by a group of men who attack it while shouting that it is “a wolf—and yet not a wolf!” (15). The narrator learns that the men have been looking for him after being warned about the dire weather and wolves by their master: Count Dracula. It is most likely that the financially hard-up Florence Stoker used the work as a means to draw public attention to the book and it is agreed that “it is unlikely that the story as it now stands was precisely that which was initially planned for publication with *Dracula*.” (*Dracula’s Guest* Intro Hebblethwaite xiv). But the interests Stoker has in the story—most notably, the visual motif and the connection between man and animal—do show that there may have been a stronger connection between “*Dracula’s Guest*” and the novel. Hebblethwaite maintains that the story being “a first-person account written by an *anonymous* author” shows that it is dissimilar, though it feels obvious that Stoker removed the journalistic frames with his retooling of the story (*Dracula’s Guest* Intro Hebblethwaite xiv). It remains a canonical short work by Stoker, however its full intentions remain unknown.

Lastly, two of Stoker’s novels in the post-*Dracula* era continue to develop the interests that are laid out in these other works: the 1903 novel *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and the 1911 novel *The Lair of the White Worm*. Both novels are considered minor works in his canon, though they continue his struggle with the tension between the real and imagined. *The Jewel of Seven Stars* starts off as an “ostensibly classic whodunit—somewhat along the lines of those of Stoker’s friend Arthur Conan Doyle” (*Jewel* Intro Hebblethwaite xii Jewel Introduction).⁵² The protagonist Malcolm Ross is brought to the home of Mr. Trelawny, an Egyptologist who is mysteriously attacked. Ross is a self-

proclaimed rationalist, primarily getting involved in the mystery because of the torch he carries for Trelawny's daughter Margaret. The first half of the novel features Ross and the detectives assigned to the case trying to piece together the events of the attack in an orderly manner. When they run out of any potential leads, they become anxious about Margaret's kitten being involved in the attack, emphasizing the concerns Stoker continues to have with the potential for animal to evolve past man. The characters continue to hit a series of walls in their investigation, notable because all of their attempts at solving the case are through highly practical, rational, and ordered means. As a result, the first half of the book takes place in nearly the same space (the Trelawny residence) and delivers small pieces of information with very little advance to the plot. It is only until Trelawny wakes up from his coma that the characters can progress and at this point the novel takes supernatural turns. The climax in Ancient Egypt revolves around the awakening of an undead Queen, testing the limitations of Ross' rationality as "logic and science are conclusively challenged" (*Jewel* Intro Hebblethwaite xiii). Unlike *Dracula*, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* is written entirely in the third person, giving the supernatural events a more objective and matter-of-fact approach as opposed to the gray areas that are offered in the previous book. The same can be said of "The Judge's House," though the brevity a short work offers does not make the continuous need for narrative veritably through style as indispensable as the case with *Dracula*. The novel stems from the fascination that Stoker, and much of Europe, had at the time with Ancient Egypt, and large portions of the novel have the author showcasing his knowledge of the subject. But by also giving the novel an

omnipotent voice, it does not leave room for much questioning of the validity of events. The only thing that Ross needs to believe is the continued visual proof.

The Lair of the White Worm was the last novel published before Stoker's death in 1912.⁵³ At the time of its publication, it was not met with a great reception and much of the scholarly writing that has offered analysis of the work has "been shrouded in some embarrassment" (Punter 173).⁵⁴ The novel focuses on Adam Salton, who travels to Mercia at the request of his great uncle Richard who wishes to make Adam his heir. While there, a number of strange occurrences take place all connected with Lady Arabella, a local woman who seems to have her eyes set on marrying into the esteemed Caswall family. Eventually it is revealed that Lady Arabella is "a huge white worm living in a noxious orifice beneath her house", a legendary beast from local folklore who has mastered the ability to be seen as both her grotesque self and an ordinary human (Ellmann, xiii).⁵⁵ Adam is eventually forced to outsmart the White Worm, luring her into her pit and destroying her with dynamite.

At the start of the novel, Adam is in a position similar to Harker in *Dracula*. He is introduced as a character of a rational and calm mentality, meticulous in his usage of technology in order to travel to Mercia: "he would catch the 11.40 for Euston, arriving at 2.10. Thence, driving to Waterloo, he could catch the 3 P.M., due at Southampton at 5.38. He would that night stay. . . either on the ship. . . or. . . at a hotel" (156). Arriving in Mercia, his uncle proudly shows him a fancy carriage, showcasing the "suitability of the trap to every need of travel" (160). The Saltons are rooted in their admiration of the modern and their excitement for the technological future. When they are forced to reckon

with Lady Arabella's true self they are "driven against their will to believe in phenomena beyond their wildest dreams" (Punter 173). When it comes to the past, Adam's knowledge solely comes from books (Punter 175).⁵⁶ When it comes to the present, Adam is in the near constant state of observation. Stoker lingers on his eyes, at times emphasizing that he "seemed all eyes" (163), that his "eyes were in constant employment" (165), or that he "naturally followed with his eyes all that went on within their scope, taking note of all who seemed to afford any interest" (181). There is noticeable emphasis on the *lack* of sight when Adam hears the legend of the White Worm, being asked

"Is it possible that there was a way by which a monster such as you have spoken of could travel up and down, and yet no chance recorder have ever seen him? . . . The lair of such a monster. . . would not have been disturbed for hundreds—or thousands of years. . . That such a time was we have evidences in geology by there only. We can never expect proofs such as this age demand. We can only imagine or surmise such things. . . (188-189).

The legend of the White Worm remains a legend because of the lack of any visual confirmation. Adam's trepidation of believing in the Worm stems from his need to see something with his eyes in order to ascertain that it is real, wanting to "follow blindly the lead of logic" (204) instead of allowing himself to use the imagination necessary for belief. Stoker is once again "blurring apparent differences between reality and imagination" (*Dracula's Guest* Intro Hebblethwaite xxxi), forcing the characters to go against the realities they are familiar with in order to believe in the seemingly impossible.

Lady Arabella herself is representative of the same type of animalistic anxiety that is shown in *Dracula*. When Adam is first introduced to Lady Arabella, her demeanor is sweet and unassuming. Right after the introduction, Adam encounters a group of black snakes coming into proximity with her: “She was already among the snakes when he called out to warn her. But there seemed to be no need of warning. The snakes had turned and were wriggling back to the mound as quickly as they could. . .he whispered ‘No need to fear there. They seem much more afraid of her than she of them’” (175). It is directly after this moment that Adam takes “a look long at her” and the reader is offered an extended physical description (175). Much like Harker with Count Dracula, it is only after a strange incident that the characters take careful stock of specific aspects of the other. A later encounter with a mongoose exhibits the potential wildness of her character. When the mongoose comes close to Lady Arabella it “looked so furious and so intent on attack” (201). Arabella shoots the mongoose with a revolver, but the killing goes beyond a simple means of self defense as “not satisfied with this, she poured shot after shot into him till the magazine was exhausted. . . she seemed more furious even than the animal” (201). Despite not writing in the first person for Adam, the usage of variations of the word “seem” maintain the mystery of Arabella’s character, unwillingly to fully attribute her to any supernatural or odd characteristics.

The revelation of Arabella’s ability to transform between the form of the Worm and the form of a woman reveals her positioning as on the crux between the ancient and the evolved. Many of the early scenes of the novel set up the dichotomy between the past and the future. Adam goes to the “real heart of the old kingdom of Mercia” (161). Mercia

is frequently attributed with the adjective “old”, reminding both the reader and Adam of its ancient standing. As described earlier, the Saltons are rooted in both the present day technology and a maintained rationalism, so there is a natural trepidation in accepting Arabella as the Worm. Much like *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, the mystery is explored through logic. There is a need for “an eyewitness who (they) do believe and trust” (281). They admit that “in an age of investigation. . . when we are returning to science as the base of wonders. . . we should be slow to refuse to accept facts, however impossible they may seem to be” (283). These characters must accept the potential for the supernatural to exist in order to battle it. It is only in belief that they can overcome it, but Stoker’s interest in the belief in “the evidence of things unseen” (283) is more important than the actual destroying of the creature itself. Given that the Worm being a figure of local legend, Mercia being repeatedly attributed to the “old”, and the interest in technology exhibited by the Saltons, it is a safe assumption that Stoker is describing another tension between past and future: if the Worm is not destroyed, the future cannot continue. However, Arabella is a figure that is constantly evolving. Some of Stoker’s methods of establishing the mythology of the Worm is unclear. Stoker’s health at the time was rapidly deteriorating and the novel, according to Harry Ludlam, was written quickly.⁵⁷ Whether Arabella is simply the host for the Worm at his point in time and it jumps from person to person over time or if Arabella has been the human representation of the Worm for a long time is unknown. But the Worm’s ability to master both the animal and the human realm provides a case for its being in a more advance state than the other human characters. The Worm exhibits an obvious dominance in its mammoth size, rapid speed,

and reptilian danger, while Arabella is prone to violent outbursts, manipulation, and trickery as a human. This is where the true horror of her character lies.

Adam is able to defeat the Worm by trapping it in its cavern and throwing dynamite into its pit, a testament to his own mastery of present day technology. The tension during this climax comes because “he had wanted to know and to feel that he had seen the last of the White Worm” (Stoker 361), the desire to *see* the downfall of the creature being the most important part of the sentence. And the novel ends with the characters viewing the wreckage from the explosion of the dynamite and the carnage of the Worm’s demise with Adam suggesting they try “to find a way down so that they might see it closely” (369), continuing his desire to observe. The novel ends on a more triumphant note than *Dracula*, suggesting more acceptance of the threat of the past and the anxieties of evolution than the earlier work. Much like *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, the novel is written in the third person, with Stoker omitting the potential for bias that *Dracula*’s multiple narration style offers. He appears to be less interested in the gray area between imagination and reality, instead focusing on the need to extend the imagination into believing the seemingly impossible, making *The Lair of the White Worm* a precursor to the “weird fiction” writing which would imminently rise in popularity.

Chapter III

Beings Beyond Evolution: Cthulhu, Cat People, and Other Monsters in Weird Fiction

Being written concurrently with Stoker's output was a less publicized "underground" series of short tales known as "weird fiction". The stories accepted as weird fiction were published in various magazines and periodicals, such as *Time and Tide* and *Westminster Review* in England and *Weird Tales* and other pulp publications in America (*Weird Tale* Joshi 5).⁵⁸ The most accepted working definition of weird fiction by preeminent researchers of the authors such as S.T. Joshi or D. Thin is still considered to be H. P. Lovecraft's description in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*:

The true weird tale has something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains according to rule. A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer known forces must be present; and there must be a hint, expressed with a seriousness and portentousness becoming its subject, of that most terrible conception of the human brain—a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space. . . . Atmosphere is the all important thing, for the final criterion of authenticity is not the dovetailing of a plot but the creation of a given sensation. . . . Therefore we must judge a weird tale not by the author's intent, or by the mere mechanics of the plot; but by the emotional level which it attains at its least mundane point (Lovecraft 28).

This definition would stand in direct contrast with the focus on logic and reasoning that made its way around Europe during the middle of the Victorian age. “Weird fiction” is a response to the notion that science is the center of universal truths and facts and that the only things that are real are things that are fixed, finite, and *be seen*. A “weird tale” embraces the notion that the universe can be full of things that *cannot* be seen, that only by bending the “laws” that are dictated by scientific practice can one have a fuller potential for understanding the world. Imagination once again becomes crucial to the works. It is for this reason that weird fiction authors primarily write in contemporary settings, emphasizing the potential for these occurrences to take place in reality as “the familiar scenes of daily life fall away to reveal an unthinkable encompassing alien dimension that threatens to engulf and destroy everything. It may break out of space or out of time. . . may break out of the supposed sanctum of the self—the familiar figure in the mirror abruptly proving itself a stranger” (Thin 350).⁵⁹ The supernatural in horror transforms into something more cosmic, questioning the laws of nature, physics, and time that have been accepted as governing all of mankind’s life. However, they also closely adhere to these established rules of Nature: “Serious weird stories are either made realistically intense by close consistency and perfect fidelity to Nature except in the one supernatural direction which the author allows himself. . . happen in true accord with certain types of imagination and illusion normal to the sensitive human brain” (*Supernatural Horror* Lovecraft 81). The horror exists both in the unknown and the unknowns relationship with tangible and accepted science. These authors center their fictions on the unseen, the impossible, and the improbable.

In order to achieve the terror and fear associated with these imaginings, these authors tend to write shorter fictions than their predecessors. Whereas Stoker uses various forms of documentary styles and evidence to maintain the readers belief in *Dracula* for several hundred pages, the weird fiction authors tend to use the short story in order to maintain an atmosphere that would be lost in a piece of a longer length: “compression was a key element in producing the frisson of supernatural terror. . . an emotion so fleeting as that of fear could best be generated in short compass” (*American Supernatural Tales* Joshi xii). Terror is such a fleeting emotion that to attempt to prolong it with a long work would be a fruitless endeavor. In addition, the content of the horror had begun to change. The supernatural for the weird writer “must keep pace with science. Although it draws upon myth and folklore in its exhibition of ghosts, vampires, werewolves. . . it can only do so at a time when these elements are generally believed to defy what are commonly understood to be the laws of nature” (*White People* Intro Joshi xiii).⁶⁰ Monsters of the past—the vampire lore that aids the writing of *Dracula* or “The Vampyre”—are simply not as relied upon. Scientific progress has not necessarily made this practice obsolete, but it has make it more difficult to easily believe in the existence of monsters like vampires, werewolves, or witches. The imagination must be expanded for new horrors to enter. Lovecraft asserts that the four of what he dubs are the “modern masters” of the form in his time are Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, Lord Dunsany, and M.R. James. In Joshi’s overview of weird fiction *The Weird Tale*, he maintains Lovecraft’s four while also expanding to the works of Ambrose Bierce and Lovecraft himself. This piece will focus primarily on Machen and Lovecraft while asserting the

importance of the American writers Clarke Ashton Smith, and William Sloane as crucial members of the weird fiction movement.⁶¹

The first author that forayed into this territory is the Welsh born Arthur Machen, who actually wrote his most analyzed works *before* the publication of *Dracula*: the novella *The Great God Pan* in 1894⁶² and *The Three Imposters* in 1895.⁶³ *The Great God Pan* revolves around a young woman named Mary who undergoes a scientific experiment that allows her to see beyond the realm of mankind and into the spirit-world. As a result of having “seen the Great God Pan” (15), she is rendered into a vegetated fool and dies shortly after. Several years later, a series of incidents occur that are all connected with a young orphan woman named Helen Vaughn, “a wonderful and strange beauty” (28) who seemingly comes out of nowhere to suddenly marry Charles Herbert, a university friend of one of the protagonists. These events include a young boy who is driven insane after seeing her “playing on the grass with a strange naked man” (21) and a series of suicides by people who have come into contact with her. The woman is discovered to be Mary’s daughter, with the father being the Great God Pan that put her in her catatonic state. She is put to death.⁶⁴

Machen, like Stoker, utilizes a number of different narrative techniques in telling this story, including third person narration, memoirs, and letters. The first chapter, which describes the experiment that drives Mary insane, lays the foundation for the scientific differences Beer sets up. It is primarily a dialogue between Clarke, a man who is described as being “a person who character caution and curiosity were oddly mingled” (16) and Dr. Raymond. The contrast between Clarke’s rational personality and

Raymond's imaginative one is quickly established. Raymond has been called a "quack and charlatan and imposter" based on his radical theories and is excited for the experiment he is about to perform. Clarke is doubtful, saying "I should like to believe it is all true. . . are you perfectly sure, Raymond, that your theory is not a phantasmagoria—a splendid vision, certainly, but a mere vision after all?" (6). Clarke remains a skeptic about these issues, too grounded in logic to embrace the theories that Raymond is discussing. His questioning of Raymond's ideas as a "vision" is notable in that it suggests that visual verification is necessary in order to believe.⁶⁵ In answering Clarke's question, Raymond lays down a crucial theme of the novel that remains indispensable to Machen's general philosophy in his fiction:⁶⁶

"Look about you, Clarke. . . You see me standing here beside you, and hear my voice; buy I tell you that all these things. . . are but dreams and shadows; the shadows that hide the real world from our eyes. There is a real world, but it is beyond this glamour and this vision. . . as beyond a veil. I do not know whether any human being has ever lifted that veil; but I do know, Clarke, that you and I shall see it lifted this very night before another's eyes. You may think this all strange nonsense; it may be strange, but it is true, and the ancients knew what lifting the veil means. They called it seeing the god Pan" (6).

Raymond continues this line of thought adding that he "saw, mapped out in lines of sight, a whole world, a sphere unknown", an "unthinkable gulf that yawns profound between two worlds, the world of matter and the world of spirit", "a great empty deep stretch dim before me, and in that instant a bridge of light leapt from the earth to the unknown shore,

and the abyss was spanned” (8-9). Raymond believes there are two ways through life: the way of “matter”, a firm and tangible belief, and the way of “spirit”, the ability to embrace the possibilities of the universe. Raymond’s language is full of worlds signifying divides: “gulf”, “two”, “bridge”, and “abyss”. These terms emphasize the great divide that science creates between the rational and the imagination. It is this divide that causes Raymond to be reputed as a “quack”.

When the experiment with Mary occurs, she is instructed to “shut (her) eyes” (14), important because in closing her eyes to the present world she will be able to “gaze on a spirit-world” (9). Mary’s reaction to having “seen the Great God Pan” is highly violent:

As they watched. . . the colour that had vanished to the girl’s cheeks, and suddenly her eyes opened. . . looking far away, and a great wonder fell upon her face, and her hands stretched out as if to touch what was invisible; but in an instant the wonder faded, and gave place to the most awful terror. The muscles of her face were hideously convulsed, she shook from head to foot; the soul seemed struggling and shuddering within the house of flesh. It was a horrible sight. . . (14-15).

Mary reacts to something that is in front of her in the spirit world, but those in the world of matter, such as Clarke and Raymond, deem these sights to be “invisible.” Despite Raymond emphatically stating that she has “seen the Great God Pan”, the lack of any visual verification of Pan causes this incident to have “faded slowly from his memory” when the following chapter picks up years later (17).

Clarke picks up a report about strange occurrences that took place upon the mysterious arrival of Helen Vaughn, Helen is an orphan around the age of twelve who is brought to a small village by a distant relative who thinks she should be around people her own age. She is seen by a local boy named Trevor “playing on the grass with a strange naked man”, and the fright causes Trevor to become an “imbecile” (18), suffering from a “violent hysteria” (22). Shortly after Clarke reads these memoirs, the narrative shifts to Villiers. Villiers has an encounter with an old friend named Herbert, who reveals his marriage to Helen Vaughn. Herbert situates the story of his marriage with this preface:

“you can have no conception of what I know, not in your most fantastic, hideous dreams can you have imaged forth the faintest shadow of what I have heard—and seen. . . I have seen the incredible, such horrors that even I myself sometimes stop in the middle of the street and ask whether it is possible for a man to behold such things and lived. . . I was a ruined man, in body and soul—in body and soul . . . I could tell you certain things which would convince you, but you would never know a happy day again. You would pass the rest of your life, as I pass mine, a haunted man, a man who has seen hell” (29-30).

Villiers hears about the horrors that have been afflicting Herbert through another acquaintance, struck by the content. The tension between the rational and the imaginative comes to the foreground when Villiers and Clarke meet. Months after reading the case file, Clarke still finds himself curious about the incidents involving Helen: “he could not hush the wonder and the strange curiosity. . . he had put the case. . . conjecturally to a scientific friend, who shook his head, and thought Clarke getting queer, and on this

particular evening Clarke was making an effort to rationalize the story” (37). Clarke continues to struggle with his own capacity for believing in the irrational. He seems prepared to accept the bizarre happenings, but returns to his rational frame of mind when asking the experience of a scientist. The rational continues to hinder his ability to believe. When Villiers explains additional information regarding the incidents involving Helen, Clarke stops him by saying “there are, no doubt, circumstances in the case which seem peculiar. . . but, after all, it is conceivable that the facts may be explained in a straightforward manner. As to your own sensations. . . I would suggest that they were due to a vivid imagination” (42). The comic irony that Clarke is missing here is that it is exactly a “vivid imagination” like the one he accuses Villiers of having that is needed to find the solution to this problem. Despite being present for the experiment with Mary, it remains that Clarke did not actually *see* any of the horrors that Mary saw. It remains difficult for him to make the connection between these two threads: Mary’s experiment and the troubles interwoven with Helen. Much like *Dracula*, Clarke’s lack of belief allows the horrible events to continue, and the series of suicides in the area by men who all met Helen soon take place. Retaliation cannot occur until belief has been established. When the pieces are ultimately put together, the characters confront Helen and convince her to hang herself. Her death is horribly violent and is described as “during the end of the her life the characters watch “the blackened face, the hideous form upon the bed, changing and melting before (their) eyes from woman to man, from man to beast, and from beast to worse than beast” (82). Helen is a composite of a mortal woman and a mythological entity, a figure that is beyond any comprehensible human lineage. She is the

result of something that is beyond evolutionary, and so her true form is one that is beyond man or beast. It is nameless in human language because it is completely nonhuman.

Several of Machen's short works explore the horrors associated with the acceptance of the unknown. His 1894 story "The Inmost Light" begins with a discussion very similar to the one between Villiers and Clarke regarding the strange events. Charles Salisbury runs into an old acquaintance named Dyson and the two share a meal while discussing a weird event. Salisbury "describe(s) himself as a man of science" and believes that Dyson is "misled by a too fervid imagination" (2-3). Dyson relates a story to Salisbury about Mr. and Mrs. Black. The Blacks were known to go on walks around the town until Mrs. Black suddenly stopped appearing. Mr. Black insists that she is ill, but she essentially vanishes from daily life. Dyson becomes taken with this mystery, especially when he spies a glimpse of Mrs. Black in the window of her home: "it was the face of a woman, and yet it was not human. . .I hope you never may (see), for as I saw that face at the window, with the blue sky above me and the warm air playing in gusts about me, I knew I had looked into another world—looked through the window of a commonplace, brand-new house, and seen hell open before me" (6). Dyson attributes his uneasiness to a "nameless terror" (6), notable because the lack of any prior experience with the sights he sees through the window make the horror completely unidentifiable. Upon reading about Mrs. Black's death in the newspaper, Dyson questions the local doctor who examined her shortly before her expiration. He states that she had a "nervous organization of a wholly different character from that either of man or the lower animals" (7). Once again, there is no identifying term in human language that can be attributed to

the form that Dyson is seeing. It is much like Helen's transformation in death between man and animal.

Machen's episodic novel *The Three Imposters*, published in 1895, continues developing thoughts of rationalism and imagination started in *The Great God Pan*.⁶⁷ The novel revolves around a trio of people who are circulating London in search of a "young man with spectacles". On their travels, they encounter a variety of individuals who provide interpolated tales of horror. The only two tales that directly deal with the supernatural have been frequently anthologized separately with the permission of Machen: "Novel of the Black Seal" and "Novel of the White Powder". Despite not having the full context of the novel surrounding it, "Novel of the Black Seal" retains a small frame of the original novel at the onset of the narrative. It begins right in the middle of a conversation between Miss Lally and Mr. Phillipps. Lally identifies Phillipps as "a determined rationalist", while Phillipps responds by stating that he "will never believe, nor will I pretend to believe, that two and two make five, nor will I on any pretences admit the existence of a two-sided triangle" (29). Phillipps remains cemented on fact. He will not waver in his firm belief and reliance on scientific practices such as mathematics. The equation two plus two *must* be four because it has been continuously perceived to be four. The tale begins with Professor Gregg meeting Lally and entreating her to come and work for him. Gregg is a "man whose one thought was for knowledge", and he is a self-proclaimed "explorer". In response to Lally's statement that "there is little left to explore. You have been born a few hundred years too late for that", Gregg provides a concise statement of the philosophy Machen continues to hone:

“I think you are wrong. . . there are still, depend upon it, quaint, undiscovered countries and continents of strange extent. . . believe me, we stand amidst sacraments and mysteries full of awe, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. Life, believe me, is no simple thing, no mass of grey matter and congeries of veins and muscles to be laid naked by the surgeon’s knife; man is the secret which I am about to explore, and before I can discover him I must cross over weltering seas indeed, and oceans and the mists of many thousand years. You know the myth of that lost Atlantis; what if it be true, and I am destined to be called the discoverer of that wonderful land?” (34-35).

Much like the speech by Dr. Raymond in *The Great God Pan*, Gregg returns with a vernacular concerning bridges, gulfs, and the crossing from one realm to the other. This is what he means using the term “explorer”, meaning that instead of having to cross actual physical space he must cross a line into a more metaphysical and cosmic location. Scientific terms such as “grey matter,” “veins,” and “muscles” must be left behind in order to understand more comprehensive mysteries. It is this speech that causes Lally to “burn(ed) with curiosity” (37), to become absorbed in “the odd mixture of fact and fancy” (41) and to become in contact with “that shapeless, formless dread of the unknown that is worse than death itself” (44). Once again, moving into this realm allows nameless entities, both physical and mental, to materialize.

“Novel of the Black Seal” is a notable work in that it begins Machen’s repeated fascination with the mythology of the “Little People.” Machen often writes about these horrifying beings: “Of recent years abundant proof has been given that a short, non-

Aryan race once dwelt beneath ground, in hillocks, throughout Europe, their raths have been explored, and the weird old tales of green hills all lighted up at night have received confirmation” (“Folklore” Machen 272).⁶⁸ Machen was fascinated by the notion that the Little People could exist and that their presence can be “confirmed”, and incorporates them into a handful of short works. They gradually become woven into the narrative of Professor Gregg and Lally, described as “a race which had fallen out of the grand march of evolution” (58). “The Little People” are beyond the spectrum of accepted evolution theory, and so to believe in them is to believe past the status quo science offers. For Machen, the fascination with the “Little People” remain in their “symbolism. . . They are horrible and loathsome, to be sure, but they have at least once advantage over modern human beings—they have retained that primal sacrament (perhaps, of course, by bestiality and violence) which links them with the Beyond” (*Weird Tale* Joshi 24). The “Little People” are the link between the past and the future, the un-evolved and the Beyond that exists past evolution. The tale ends with a striking image “beyond the power of human conception and the most fearful fantasy” in the form of a “slimy, wavering tentacle” that emerges from someones body (64). It is an image that causes Lally to “vainly try to reason” that she had seen “nothing supernatural; that a snail pushing out his horns and drawing them in was but an instance on a smaller scale” of what was seen “and yet horror broke through all such reasonings” (65). The desire to connect the tentacle with something tangible and known like a snail in nature is present, but the link is truly impossible to make once the acceptance of beings beyond science is allowed. Lally ends her story with this image. There is no finite conclusion to her story, with several elements

of the tale remaining hanging. The climax instead comes in the form of the sight that causes the irreversible belief in the unknown. There is a brief return to the frame where Phillipps is clearly shaken by the tale: “He, for his part, was sunken in a deep reverie of thought. . . all the hum and press of actual life seemed unreal and visionary, a dream in the morning after an awakening” (66). This final line of the story stands in direct correlation to a line Lally makes at the beginning of her story about how the memory of her walk on the day she met Professor Gregg seemed “but the broken fragments of an evil dream” (31). Both characters reach a point where following their respective “awakenings” where the lives they led before encounter the possibilities of the supernatural become dream-life. And so the ending of “Novel of the Black Seal” represents a beginning for Phillipps, who is given the ability to wake up from his close-mindedness and see what has been accepted as a reality around him in a different light.

Machen’s writing career was multifaceted, with his focus on the supernatural being phased out as he moved onwards to various journalistic endeavors. But these supernatural works continue to hone his ideas about the issues presented in *The Great God Pan* and “Novel of the Black Seal”. “Novel of the White Powder” which, as mentioned above, is also frequently anthologized outside of its context of *The Three Imposters*, revolves around a tension between “men of science who have dabbled a little in the unseen, and have timidly hinted that perhaps the senses are not, after all, the eternal, impenetrable bounds of all knowledge, the everlasting walls beyond which no human being has ever passed” (79). In this story Machen suggests that the gulfs that characters like Dr. Raymond or Professor Gregg wish to explore and move past are

hindered by metaphorical giant walls and monoliths that science creates. “The Red Hand” from 1895 brings back the characters of Dyson and Phillipps to return to the mythology of the “Little People”, who exist in “woods and hills” that are “apt to suggest the mystical to any one strongly gifted with imagination” and fill people “with fancies beyond the bourne of rational expression” (102). “The White People” from 1899, which H.P. Lovecraft referred to as the “second greatest weird tale ever written”, begins with the proclamation of “sorcery and sanctity. . . are the only realities. Each is an ecstasy, a withdrawal from the common life” (111). The bulk of “The White People” is a nearly thirty page uninterrupted paragraph about the horrific sights seen by a little girl. Joshi notes that this seems to be in “anticipation of stream-of-consciousness” of the forthcoming modernist authors such as James Joyce (*Weird Tale* Joshi 32), and the style enhances the terror of the story because it offers no easy breaks or natural stopping points. Lastly, the later tale “Out of the Earth” from 1915 incorporates the mythology of the “Little People” with Machen’s career as a journalist. The narrator of the tale offers details that are similar to events in the life of Machen and the style suggests that the horrors of the “Little People” should be retold in a way as matter-of-fact as a newspaper article, while still maintaining that “there never is any first-hand evidence in these cases” (268). It is a style that stands in direct contrast with such an early work as “The Inmost Light”, which has further pieces of the mystery relayed slowly: “This has the advantage of compelling the reader to become the author’s collaborator by piecing apparently unrelated scraps of information together until finally the full truth of the situation emerges with their sum” (Wagenknecht 103-104).⁶⁹ In the two decades “The

Inmost Light” and “Out of the Earth”, Machen's coyness in asserting the existence of the Beyond appears to be quashed. Later efforts of mixing fiction with journalism heightens the tension between rational and imagination, fact and theory, and truth and madness that is so crucial to understanding his work.

As Machen moved away from primarily writing supernatural fiction, Algernon Blackwood began to produce his own. The bulk of supernatural work offered by Algernon Blackwood comes after the turn of the century, moving closer towards Edwardian London than Victorian.⁷⁰ His works also explore the struggle between real and imagined events in tales such as “The Willows” from 1907, “The Wendigo” from 1910, “The Insanity of Jones” from 1907, “Ancient Sorceries” from 1908.⁷¹ The first two are linked by being, as Edward Wagenknecht refers to as, “outdoor ghost stories” (75). “The Willows” is notable for being Lovecraft’s own personal favorite weird tale, and its incorporation of the supernatural within the confines of a natural setting emphasizes the tension between rationality and imagination.⁷² The two characters at the center of the narrative—an unnamed narrator and a Swede—are taking a canoe trip down the Danube River. The natural landscape described upon their arrival is telling of Blackwood’s interests:

We entered the land of desolation on wings. . . there was neither boat nor fishing-hut. . . nor any single sign of human habitation and civilisation within sight. The sense of remoteness from the world of human kind, the utter isolation, the fascination of this singular world of willows, winds, and waters, instantly laid its spell upon us both, so that we allowed laughingly to one another that we ought by

rights to have held some special kind of passport to admit us, and that we had, somewhat audaciously, come without asking leave into a separate little kingdom of wonder and magic—a kingdom that was reserved for the use of others who had a right to it, with everywhere unwritten warnings to trespassers for those who had the imagination to discover them (18).

The divide between the rational human world and the imaginative “other” world is instantly discovered by the two friends. Blackwood focuses on the transplanting of these characters from one world to the next, while also setting up an environment of natural beauty that will later be deceptive and horrific much like the one Machen uses in establishing the home of the “Little People.” It is the “imagination” that the narrator mentions at the end of the above passage that ends up being the primary motivator of fear in the text: “the willows connected themselves subtly with my malaise. . . contriving in some way or other to represent to the imagination a new and mighty power, a power, moreover, not altogether friendly to us” (23). The narrator continues to assert that they “had trespassed here upon the borders of an alien world, a world where we were intruders” (24). It is the unseen forces around them and the “unnamed fear” that propels the horror. There are no tentacles to shock, but instead there is a “black thing” (25). Shadows and darkness haunt the characters, causing the imagination to fill in the spaces with whatever horrible image they wish to see. There is a similar conflict in the later tale “The Wendigo”, though the horrific being as the antagonist of that text is rooted in folkloric tradition: “The Wendigo or Windigo is a mythical creature imagined by the Algonquian tribes inhabiting central Canada and the Midwest. It was envisioned in a

variety of forms. . . the conception was apparently inspired by native fears of starvation and exposure in the wilderness” (“Notes” Joshi 362).⁷³ Once again the central characters are being haunted by a Being in the wilderness, among the “black splendours of these remote and lonely forests. . . tangled backwoods which can only be described as merciless and terrible” (154). However, instead of being haunted by the black entities of “The Willows”, the Wendigo is unseen by everyone that it is not haunting, with its shape altering depending on who it is. Defago, the protagonist of the narrative, scoffs at such a notion, believing it to be something that is impossible to see but for a different reason than one being terrorized: “It’s nuthin’—nuthin’ but what those lousy fellers believe when they’ve bin hittin’ the bottle too long” (162). Defago’s rational interpretation of the unseen horror of the Wendigo prolongs its life. His refusal to believe in it makes it impossible to overcome. At the end of the narrative, Defago accepts the existence of the Wendigo after seeing it for himself: “The terror of a whole race drove him. He knew what it all meant. Defago had “seen the Wendigo” (191). This recalls Mary’s “seeing of The Great God Pan” or Phillipps’ “awakening” at the end of “Novel of the Black Seal”. The sight of the Beyond transforms the person in irrevocable ways.

The other two stories are also notable for their placement of protagonists from their “real and rational” existences into a supernatural and imaginative realm. “The Insanity of Jones” begins with a line of declaration, not attributed to any character in the world but the omnipotent narrator: “Adventures comes to the adventurous, and mysterious things fall in the way of those who, with wonder and imagination, are on the watch for them; but the majority of people go past the doors that are half ajar, thinking

them closed, and fail to notice the faint stirrings" (63). The narrative begins by placing Jones into the category of those who "are born with this awful certainty in their hearts" (63). Jones has a firm belief that "he stood on the borderland of another region, a region where time and space were merely forms of thoughts, where ancient memories lay open to the sight, and where the forces behind each human life stood plainly revealed" (63). The visual motif is strong in these opening passages, emphasizing the importance of "sight" in coming to terms with the existence of the unseen. The titular "insanity" therefore does not appear to be a detriment to Jones, but a term that would be attributed to him by the scientifically minded "normal" world. For Jones, he "never for one moment did doubt the Invisibles behind the veil" (67). But his true problem is that "among the things that he *knew*. . . was that he plainly saw himself as the inheritor of a long series of past lives, the net result of painful evolution. . . but he was just as sure he had been at this weary game for ages as that he breathed, and it never occurred to him to argue, to doubt, or to ask questions" (64-65). Jones exists on the dividing line, understanding and believing in something beyond the rational and the mundane but not trying to further that belief. "Ancient Sorceries" also begins with a the similarly declarative:

There are, it would appear, certain unremarkable persons, with none of the characteristics that invite adventures, who yet once or twice in the course of their smooth lives undergo an experience so strange that the world catches its breath—and looks the other way! . . . the world, of course, asks for some plausible basis to which it can attach credence—something it can, at least, pretend to explain" (87).

The ocular based expression of “look the other way” introduces the desire for the rational to divert their attention from what is unexplained, but this story makes a claim that the ignored and the strange are the most adventurous things of all. In the frame of the story, Dr. John Silence has a conversation with Arthur Vezin about an extraordinary experience Vezin has while traveling. Vezin finds himself in a strange town that was “like becoming part of a softly-coloured dream which he did not even realise to be a dream” (93). Everyone in the town appears to move “about silently, softly, with padded feet, like cats” (97), which is because the people in the town are of the ability to transform between humans and cat-like animals. As Vezin falls in love with one of the cat women, he notices a change in himself, “the beginning of some horrible transformation of himself into something else” (118). Once again, the willingness to accept this type of belief begins an irrevocable change of character.

The European quartet of weird fiction writers—Machen and Blackwood as well as Lord Dunsany and M.R. James—heavily influenced a series of writers across the ocean in the United States. Explorations of the weird and bizarre were not confined to Europe, and perhaps no other writer in this area has been as analyzed, celebrated, and heralded as H.P. Lovecraft, whose weird writings and essays about other weird writers remain canon. His embrace of his influences as well as his attempts to correct the unsatisfactory elements of their works in his own is crucial to his successes. Of particular interest for their engagement with themes of rationality and imagination are “From Beyond” written in 1920 and first published in 1934, “Herbert West—Reanimator” which was published serially between 1921 and 1922, and “The Call of Cthulhu” published in

1928.⁷⁴ “From Beyond” is a brief tale that begins with the lament of the unnamed narrator that his friend Crawford Tillinghast has experienced a change that is “horrible beyond conception” (23), once again focusing on the nameless factor of things past human comprehension. Much of the narrative is in the form of extended speech by Tillinghast as the narrator prepares to view an experiment. His preface to the experiment continues the philosophies of Machen:

“What do we know. . . of the world and the universe about is? Our means of receiving impressions are absurdly few, and our notions of surrounding objects infinitely narrow. We see things only as we are constructed to see them, and can gain no idea of their absolute nature. . . I have always believed that such strange, inaccessible worlds exist at our very elbows, *and now I believe I have found a way to break down the barriers*” (24)

Once again, the world is simply a construct blocking people from being able to see the Other realms that are around them. The narrator is struck by his “growing curiosity and fascination” (25) and implores Tillinghast to show him what he means. The experiment focuses on the visual: Tillinghast has invented a device based on ultra-violet:

“You thought ultra-violet was invisible, and so it is—but you can see that and many other invisible things *now*. . . The waves from that thing are waking a thousand sleeping senses in us; senses which we inherit from aeons of evolution from the state of detached electrons to the state of organic humanity. I have seen *truth*, and I intend to shew it to you” (25).

The images and beings Tillinghast wishes to show the narrator go beyond any accepted forms of evolution. The invisible will become visible, and if what Tillinghast will show the narrator is his version of “truth” than the constructs of reality are the real lies. The narrator takes in the ultra-violet rays: “I looked about the immense attic room. . . dimly lit by rays which the every-day eye cannot see. . . the whole place took on a hazy unreality which obscured its nature and invited the imagination to symbolism and phantasm. . . my mind opened to the impressions coming from what Tillinghast called “*beyond*” (27). The beings that the narrator sees offer a variety of horrors, “indescribable shapes both alive and otherwise. . . close to every known thing were whole worlds of alien, unknown entities. . . foremost among the living objects were great inky, jellyfish monstrosities which flabbily quivered” (28). It is crucial to note that the narrator is not transported to another realm, but is simply given the power to see the other entities that exist all around the human world. He is also unable to identify the creatures on their own terms, using the human terms of “jellyfish” with which to create a comparison. Delightfully mad in his success, Tillinghast proclaims “Look at me. . . do you suppose there are really any such things as time and magnitude? Do you fancy there are such things as form or matter?. . . I have seen beyond the bounds of infinity and drawn down daemons from the stars” (28-29). Tillinghast rejects these concepts—time, magnitude, form, and matter—instead pronouncing that all of it will be eradicated when the forms around humanity are rendered visible. The story ends with Tillinghast being arrested for the murders of servants that are killed in the experiment, but the narrator does not offer any information about what he has witnessed: “I did not tell very much of what I seen, for I feared the

coroner would be sceptical” (29). The narrator fears being deemed insane by the authorities that take away Tillinghast, choosing to keep the images that he has seen from beyond to himself.

“Herbert West—Reanimator” is not frequently analyzed when discussing Lovecraft. The story was written serially in six installments over the course of a year, a method of writing rarely used by the author, with frequent “recaps” of the events of the prior installments at the start of new ones. The story is six episodes in the relationship between the narrator and Herbert West, a college classmate who, at the time the story begins, has disappeared. The narrator is fascinated by West’s experiments and with West having vanished he asserts that “memories and possibilities are ever more hideous than realities” (50). West primarily concerns himself with the reanimation of man from death, although he has difficulties finding corpses that are “fresh” enough to inject with the serum he has created. The first time the narrator comes into contact with one of these revived beings is through a strange sound, “Human it could not have been—it is not in man to make such sounds” (54). In preventing the natural cycle of life and death, West is moving beyond the spectrum of evolutionary thinking. He is creating beings that are neither dead nor alive, existing on a level completely unique to human thought. The narrator states that West “had sought new worlds to conquer” (72) in his experimentations. Much like Dr. Raymond and Professor Gregg in Machen, and Tillinghast in “From Beyond”, he is attempting to explore that gulf between rational human thought and imaginative and outside thinking. Much of the narrative involves the narrator grappling with the question of how to make his reader *believe* what he has

witnessed. The sight of bodies returning from the dead and speaking is a radical concept, and the narrator often adds sentences like “what followed, I shall never positively know. It may have been wholly an hallucination from the shock caused at the instant by the sudden and complete destruction of the building. . . it was queer that we both had the same hallucination” (75). In this instance, the narrator offers a sound explanation—an explosion—as a potential for the sight of a reanimated corpse being seen being seen, though adds the unlikeness of this since both him and West are privy to the same visual. However, with West disappeared, it is difficult to get a further confirmation. The ending of the story makes it clear that the narrator is in an insane asylum, stating that “detectives have questioned me, but what can I say?. . . So I told them no more. They imply that I am a madman or a murderer—probably I am mad” (80). Like the narrator in “From Beyond”, this character is written off as simply insane, making it easy for others to deny the existence of the thin line between the rational and the imagination.

Inversely, “The Call of Cthulhu” is one of Lovecraft’s famous works, both in the present day and at the time of its publication. It is the first in a series of stories that form the basis of the “Cthulhu mythos”, with Lovecraft creating his own series of rules similar to how one of his idols Lord Dunsany created the mythological realm of Pegana.⁷⁵ “The Call of Cthulhu” is an excellent example of how Lovecraft builds on the work of his predecessors: “works by Dunsany utilize imaginary gods from time to time. . . but Lovecraft’s stupendous achievement was to transfer his pantheon from Pegana to the real world” (*Weird Tale* Joshi 190). Whereas Dunsany remains entirely in the realm of the fantastic, Lovecraft explores what happens when the fantastic realm enters the realistic

one. “The Call of Cthulhu” is far more concerned with frames and methods of documentary evidence than most of Lovecraft’s other works, as if insisting on the potential reality of its contents. It is purported to be written on pages “found among the papers of the Late Francis Wayland Thurston of Boston” (139) and features a variety of interpolated styles throughout. The tale begins with the very declarative “the most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of the black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far” (139). One easily recalls Tillinghast’s cries throughout “From Beyond” and his disturbed madness after having seen the jellyfish-like creatures floating around him. Cthulhu is first hinted at through an image on a hieroglyphic, with Thurston stating that “my somewhat extravagant imagination yielded simultaneous pictures of an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature. . . . A pulpy, tentacled head surmounted a grotesque and scaly body with rudimentary wings” (141). Cthulhu is depicted as beyond human or animal, but also crossed with the fantastic figure of the dragon. It is clearly a being that is impossible to class as human or animal, but also as possible or impossible.

Even the name is purposefully designed to be impossible to pronounce. While modern readers have come to the general consensus that it should be pronounced as “Ka-Thu-Lu”, Lovecraft’s original designs are anything but simple:

. . . the word is supposed to represent a fumbling human attempt to catch the phonetics of an *absolutely non-human* work. The name of the hellish entity was invented by beings whose vocal organs were not like man’s, hence it has no

relation to the human speech equipment. The syllables were determined by a physiological equipment wholly unlike ours, *hence could never be uttered perfectly by human throats* (*Letters* Lovecraft 10-11).⁷⁶

Right down to the pronunciation of its name, Cthulhu is meant to be entirely based outside of the constraints of human constructs. Language is something created by man, so any attempt to properly pronounce Cthulhu's name is simply a way to attribute some rational meaning to its existence. Thurston continues to try and find a rational meaning to the cult of Cthulhu that he reads about: "and I can at this date scarcely envisage the callous rationalism with which I set them aside" (146). However, the past tense style of the writing makes it clear that a change has occurred for him: "my attitude was still one of absolute material, *as I wish it still were*, and I discounted with almost inexplicable perversity the coincidence of the dream notes and odd cuttings" (159). The dramatic italics denote the shudders and potential madness experienced after catching a glimpse into the Other realm. As more evidence continues to come his way, such as newspaper clippings relating to strange events on the sea, he is forced to ask himself "was I tottering on the brink of cosmic horrors beyond man's powers to bear?" (162). Even grappling with the notion is too intense to bear: "When I think of the *extent* of all that may be brooding down there I almost wish to kill myself forthwith" (165). Simply put, the story poses the the question of whether or not is to possible to survive after coming to terms with such unknown entities.

The climax of the story comes when Cthulhu emerges from the water and the gulf between known and unknown is quickly filled. In the build up to the story's climax

fundamental constructs are turned upside down: “the geometry of the place was all wrong. One could not be sure that the sea and the ground were horizontal, hence the relative position of everything else seemed phantasmally variable” (166). And a physical description of Cthulhu’s appearance is essentially skirted over in order to maintain Its elusiveness: “The Thing cannot be described—there is no language for such abysses of shrieking and immemorial lunacy, such eldritch contradictions of all matter, force, and cosmic order” (167). Much like Machen’s technique of the “waving tentacle” in “Novel of the Black Seal,” it is the sight of Cthulhu that serves as the climax of the story rather than any violent act that It performs. The sight of It is enough to cause a change in the characters who witness It. As Joshi points out, “Cthulhu’s existence means that we have somehow horribly misconstrued the nature of the cosmos and our place within it: our reaction can only be horror and madness” (*Weird Tale* Joshi 191). There is simply no physical space in which Cthulhu should exist, and the mere fact that It does calls into question everything that has been asserted through science and rational thought before Its emergence.

Writing concurrently with Lovecraft were a variety of weird fiction authors in the United States. Two key writers were the Brooklyn born Robert W. Chambers and the California based Clarke Ashton Smith. Chambers wrote a sparse amount of supernatural fiction, forgoing the field and opting to primarily focus on writing romantic bestsellers for financial purposes and became one of the most popular authors in that field at the time. However, the major work he is remembered for is the 1895 short story collection *The King in Yellow*.⁷⁷ The first four stories in the collection are the only ones that deal

with the supernatural—“The Repairer of Reputations,” “The Mask,” “In the Court of the Dragon,” and “The Yellow Sign”—all of which revolve around a play called *The King in Yellow* that was seized and banned by the authorities because it drives insane anyone who reads it.⁷⁸ Chambers uses various lines and exchanges of dialogue from the fictional play as epigrams for some of the stories interchangeably with actual quotes from real works as a way to heighten the reality of the content. Inverse to Chambers abandonment of the field was Clark Ashton Smith, who dabbled in a variety of creative outlets to depict the weird such as the prose short story, the prose poem, poetry, painting, and sculpture.⁷⁹ While many of his stories follow the Dunsany approach of creating new worlds from scratch, such as “The Tale of Satampra Zeiros” from 1929 or “The Last Incantation” also from 1929, a sampling of his work explores the notion of crossing the fantastic with the real.⁸⁰ “The Devotee of Evil,” written in 1930 but published in 1933, functions in many similar ways to Lovecraft’s “From Beyond”, in which a man purchases a house purported to be haunted in order to figure out what he believes are the unseen, non-human entities that are responsible for the supernatural occurrences. “The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis,” published in 1931, echoes “The Call of Cthulhu” in its focus on exploration and the monstrous beast at the climax. The finale is more action-packed than the finale of the Lovecraft story, but the foundational notion of being driven to insanity after seeing elements from the Other realm is apparent.

Lastly, following the tradition of Lovecraft and the other weird writers before him was Massachusetts based William Sloane whose works of cosmic horror have been completely overlooked. Sloane published two moderately successful novels of

supernatural horror: *To Walk the Night* in 1937 and *The Edge of Running Water* in 1939, published together under the title *The Rim of Morning* in 1964, before moving on to teaching and editing for the remainder of his career. *To Walk the Night* is told through the frame of a conversation between Bark Jones and Dr. Lister, the father of Bark's friend Jerry who recently committed suicide for unknown reasons.⁸¹ Bark tells the story of how he and Jerry discovered the burning body of Jerry's friend and mentor Professor LeNormand at their old alma mater. The death looks like an apparent suicide, though the positioning of the body makes it seem like there has been foul play. Bark and Jerry are shocked to learn that LeNormand had recently and hastily married the mysterious Selena and visit the widow to offer support. Selena is stunningly beautiful but Bark remains uneasy about her character. Events progress with a stunning rapidity and Bark is amazed when Jerry and Selena begin a romantic relationship of their own and marry shortly after. Bark continues to be suspicious of her, and when a possible connection is made between her and the disappearance of a mentally disabled local girl presents itself by an eager police officer he wonders if it is possible they are the same person. The novel reaches its climax with a visit Bark makes to Arizona to visit Jerry and Selena. Jerry complains to Bark about the strangeness of Selena as a wife, wondering why she never brings up the past before her marriage to LeNormand. A conversation between man and wife ends with Jerry coming to an unspoken understanding before taking a gun out of his desk and shooting himself in the head. Returning to the frame, Bark and Dr. Lister are visited by Selena who confirms that she is an other worldly entity, making it clear that Jerry had to die because he figured out her identity. Selena returns to wherever it is that she came

from because she did indeed love Jerry. Her experiences with the human emotion of love causes her to leave because the one man she did love is no longer living.

To Walk the Night is presented as a detective story in many ways, following the cues of the early works by Machen where information is offered piecemeal as the narrative progresses. In the opening scene of the frame story, Bark implores to Dr. Lister that “thinking won’t get you anywhere. Don’t refer to what I say to any system of logic, or to your scientific training. I’m certain of one thing. The answer we are looking for doesn’t lie in anything you—or I—know. Maybe it’s in what we don’t know. And perhaps there isn’t any answer. . . not with logic” (20). This preface to the story he tells stands as a contrast to the very meticulous forms of investigation he performs while trying to figure out the mystery behind Selena, looking for a rational process as opposed to accepting the illogical answer he implores Dr. Lister to consider. Upon meeting Selena, Bark is warned of her beauty but her face does not look like the common notions of beauty that society suggests: “I had the impression of an abstraction or a conscious work of art which expressed not the beauty of a single woman but the essence of all women’s faces” (66). Selena’s other-worldliness makes her entire being an *interpretation* of human constructs. She is mirroring the way other people act in various circumstances: when it is appropriate to laugh, be sad, etc. Her beauty is a depiction of a variety of beauty, with Sloane’s emphasis on the term “abstraction” reminding one of the construction of beauty as opposed to it being a finite thing. It is even difficult to other characters to describe her physical appearance, finding several aspects puzzling to consider: “But the eyes. . . they aren’t the eyes of a girl who’s just lost her husband in a dreadful sort of—accident. They

aren't the eyes of a girl at all, really" (94). A series of events occurs that causes Bark to believe that Selena is able to make some kind of mind-reading connection with people. She is able to guess his card during a magicians card trick while at a party. She prevents him from a sudden car accident after having a picnic one afternoon. And, ultimately, Jerry's suicide seems spurred on by a somewhat telepathic moment the two have with each other. These moments are frightening in the novel because of the impossibility to verify them visually. They are based on the unseen, and Bark has absolutely no additional evidence with which to aid his further investigations of them.

The return to the frame story at the end of the novel has Bark imploring Dr. Lister to understand that his interpretation of the events involving Selena are cosmic. Guessing that Dr. Lister will naturally assume that he is going mad, Bark continues to beg of him the same amount of intellectual consideration as he did before telling the story, stating "before you make up your mind that I'm suffering from some sort of delusion, try thinking about what's happening from the other point of view" (201). The usage of the word "other" harkens back to the "gulf" terminology of Machen and Blackwood, emphasizing that there is another side to the rational existence people take for granted. In many ways, this is the conversation that is not dramatized by the narrators of "From Beyond" or "Herbert West—Reanimator", where the rational and scientific mind deems the anomalous protagonist to be insane. As a result of this divide between Bark and Dr. Lister, Bark clearly tries to carefully present his words: I knew that he would think I was out of my mind. There was no way of expressing it that would not sound incredible" (206). After Selena arrives, able to show up because she is aware that her true

self is being discussed, and finally offers an explanation Bark nastily tells her to “go back where (she) came from” (216). Even when Selena tells Dr. Lister that “Bark’s answer is the only one” (218) before she leaves, the scientifically minded Dr. Lister refuses to believe, ending the conversation (and the novel) with a contemptuous “There is no proof. It is all fantastic. She talked like a madwoman and yet. . . the only real fact is that Jerry is dead” (218). Even when presented with truth, it is tempting for the rational mind to refuse belief. And yet, had Bark or Jerry been able to believe such incredible notions, the horrific events of the novel would have never taken place.

Epilogue

The supernatural in literature remains a fascinating topic because of its continuously changing role in satisfying the needs of the public. The success, republications, and adaptations of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and John Polidori's "The Vampyre" were reflective of the clear desire for the usage of imagination by a reading and viewing public that had grown weary of the presence of the "explained supernatural" in Gothic novels such as the highly popular works by Anne Radcliffe. In these works, the supernatural element is frequently explained away in a highly rational way, and they refuse to embrace the possibility to the existence of other worldly beings. Despite its plot being about a mad scientist who experiments with the brains of corpses in order to achieve his dream of creating a man, *Frankenstein* is still rooted in an environment of rationality. The science may be unlikely to be replicated, but the reminder of the place of science in the world is present. Polidori strips his narrative of such references to science and imagination is central to the effective of the novels horror. The public's need to revisit the narrative of "The Vampyre" in different forms shows that its contents were filling a void in the consciousnesses of the people. They were receiving a pleasure that had been clearly missing from literature: the stimulation of their imaginations rather than a reliance on their rational reasoning.

The thread of imaginative literary and theater soon became at odds with another thread: scientific progress. As science began to visually show its successes in areas such as transportation, medicine, and technology, the shift of the interest in supernatural bloodsucking waned and the return of the "explained supernatural" returned in realist

novels by authors such as Wilkie Collins or Charles Dickens. Literature began to take a step back in terms of style and real vampires, witches, wolves, and other specters were simply not in as high demand as they were following the Shelley and Polidori texts. However, several anxieties related to the strand of scientific advancement presented themselves, namely the highly charged debate regarding Darwinian evolution theory. The factual nature science had been quickly replacing the pleasures of the unknown, and evolution theories basis in theoretical assumption and pattern study did not offer the finite visual verification that other areas in the field offered. Authors in the horror and science fiction genre, such as Robert Louis Stevenson or H. G. Wells, thrived on the concept in various works, though the canon of Bram Stoker arguably a continuing honing of these themes from early short stories, through his most legendary novel *Dracula*, and ending with his final novel *The Lair of the White Worm*. Stoker's protagonists were often rational young men. Malcolm in "The Judge's House," Elias in "The Squaw," Jonathan Harker in *Dracula*, and Adam Salton in *The Lair of the White Worm* are all put in danger when their refusal to embrace their imaginations and accept the potential existence of the various supernatural presences around them. Enormous rats, vengeful cats, bloodsucking vampires, and mammoth white lizards all have the ability to overpower these protagonists until they have their respective awakenings. It is only when they can expand their imaginations that they can properly fight the demons haunting them.

The development of weird fiction by Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood and H.P Lovecraft, among others, came off of the tensions between rationality and imagination. The monsters in these works exist in realms outside of the sphere of human

comprehension. Their presences bend scientific ideas of physics, time, and space, forcing their protagonists to question all of the supposed facts that science offers. However, where Stokers villains are often able to be overpowered by the awakenings of the protagonists, the central characters of weird fiction are almost always irrevocably altered by their experiences with the bizarre entities at the heart of the stories. They are either driven insane, resorted to suicide contemplation, or cast out of society by others who were not exposed to the weird and therefore retain their social credibility. Weird fiction suggests that the only natural course of progression is through the expansion of the imagination by looking towards the cosmic and looking for the existence of other beings in realms around the human one.

Regardless of the progress in the realistic world, the supernatural element in literature will remain a constant presence, but the fascination and popularity of it is retained by the way authors adjust its meaning to the state of the contemporary world. Polidori, Stoker, and the weird fiction writers of Europe and the United States used the supernatural to respond to the state of literature and science of their own times, finding ways to create horror out of the needs and anxieties of their public. This pattern will continue as long as authors of the supernatural explore collective contemporary unease and private worries, forcing their readers to abandon rational answers to what ails them and embrace the imaginary evils that represent these fears.

Endnotes

-
- ¹ Widely agreed upon as the first of what would later be defined as the “Gothic novel”.
- ² Lovecraft, H.P. *The Annotated Supernatural Horror in Literature*. Ed. S. T. Joshi. New York: Hippocampus Press, 2012. Print.
- ³ MacDonald, D.L. *Poor Polidori: A Critical Biography of the Author of The Vampyre*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. Print.
MacDonald goes well in-depth in regards to this now infamous “ghost story contest” amongst the authors. He pieces together a more accurate timeline that does not situate Shelley as the “damsel in distress” in terms of not having a story prepared until inspiration miraculously strikes. Shelley even downgrades Polidori’s efforts by referring to him as “poor Polidori,” from where MacDonald seemingly gets the title for his biography.
- ⁴ According to Shelley, the introduction as commissioned by “the publishers of the Standard Novels” who selected the novel for a new edition for their series. Shelley is a bit suspect from the very beginning of this introduction as she seems adamantly focused about answering a question “frequently” asked of her: How she, then a young girl, came to think of and to dilate upon so very hideous an idea?” (Shelley 259). It is no wonder that her response is as focused on dramatics as much as the narrative is.
- ⁵ Frayling, Christopher. *The Vampyre: A Bedside Companion*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1978. Print.
Frayling’s book is a quite accessible compilation of various vampire texts, offering a few full length stories such as “The Vampyre” along with short fragments of longer works such as *Dracula* and *Varney the Vampyre*, both all of which will be discussed further in the coming pages.
- ⁶ Clery, E. J. “The Genesis of “Gothic” in Fiction.” *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. ed. Jerrold E. Hogle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 21-39. Print.
- ⁷ H. P. Lovecraft is astute in giving some well-deserved space in *Supernatural Horror in Literature* towards recommending Polidori’s “The Vampyre” as a worthy piece of horror fiction, remarkable considering its relative obscurity: “Dr. Polidori developed his competing idea as a long short story, “The Vampyre”: in which we behold a suave villain of the true Gothic or Byronic type, and encounter some excellent passages of stark fright, including a terrible nocturnal experience in a shunned Grecian wood” (Lovecraft 45).
- ⁸ The nature of the Polidori-Byron relationship is deemed essential enough by MacDonald that he structures Polidori’s entire biography into three sections—“Before Byron,” “Byron,” and “After Byron”.
- ⁹ Senf, Carol A. *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature*. Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988. Print.
Senf includes this short chapter at the beginning of her book primarily as a point of comparison for her deeper study of the nineteenth-century vampire. Listing the characteristics, quickly providing an overview of some familiar contemporary titles, and coming up with some kind of definition for the term “vampire” is crucial in showing how vastly different the vampire in between Polidori and someone more recent like Anne Rice, situating her argument that the vampire in literature evolves around its historical context.

¹⁰ It would be untrue to say that Polidori completely did not borrow any features from the folkloric vampire in his depiction of Lord Ruthven, but the lack of any prior *literary* influence is stunning considering how many elements from Ruthven have been maintained throughout the two hundred years of vampire texts that have come since.

¹¹ Joshi, S.T. Introduction. *American Supernatural Tales*. New York: Penguin Books, 2007. Print.

Joshi edited this strong volume of American supernatural tales with samples from older authors such as Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, H.P. Lovecraft, Edgar Allen Poe, Robert Chambers, Clarke Ashton Smith, and Ambroise Bierce, as well as contemporary ones such as Stephen King, Thomas Ligotti, and Joyce Carol Oates.

¹² Senf continues this topic in *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature*: “However, while early Gothic works are set in the remote past or in a timeless never-never land, quite different from the England inhabited in both writers and readers, the second generation of Gothic writers (Mary Shelley and Polidori, for example) move their mysterious tales to their own era and to more ordinary settings. Interested in exploring the psychology—often the abnormal psychology—of characters who appear perfectly ordinary, in probing the more mysterious occurrences of life, and in avoiding the stultifying rationalism that they associated with their predecessors. . . the second generation of Gothic writers discovered that they could create realistic characters and settings and still relate the profound sense of mystery achieved by the early Gothic writers” (Senf 24).

¹³ This passage comes from Chris Baldick’s introduction to his compilation *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*. The collection is quite strong despite the fact that the bulk of the stories included are simply not relevant to the subject at hand. Highly recommended pieces from the similar time period include Edward Bulwer’s “Monos and Daimonos” (1830), James Hogg’s “Some Terrible Letters from Scotland” (1832), Anonymous’ “Life in Death” (1833), Letitia E. Landon’s “The Bride of Lindorf” (1836), and, the most famous author of the set, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu’s “Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess” (1838).

¹⁴ While not particularly relevant for these purposes, Anne Stiles, Stanley Finger, and John Bulevich’s article “Somnambulism and Trance States in the Works of John William Polidori, Author of *The Vampyre*” is a terrific and informative piece regarding Polidori’s thesis on somnambulism, newly translated from Latin at the time of its publication, and its connection with his two major literary works, “The Vampyre” and *Ernestus Berchtold or: The Modern Oedipus* (1819).

¹⁵ H. P Lovecraft offers the most concise outline of the most crucial works from the period in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*. Lovecraft is extremely thorough in his survey of supernatural literature, spanning the two continents and a myriad countries that explore works of the macabre. For these purposes it feels important to stay within the confines of Europe. However, it would be completely wrong to not point out the important of American authors like Edgar Allan Poe, Washington Irving, and Nathaniel Hawthorne for their amazing contribution to the horror genre influencing both the late Victorian authors and the later “weird fiction” writers.

¹⁶ Carol Senf devotes a remarkable two chapters to this more metaphorical vampire in *The Vampire in 19th Century English Literature*, covering the three works mentioned here as well as Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, saying that these novels “use the vampire in more obviously metaphoric ways. . . and the difference is revealed most clearly by the fact that a character or characters use the term “vampire” as a significant metaphor for destructive human behavior and shows, therefore, that he or she is aware of the literary tradition and of the social or historical resonance of the vampire motif” (Senf 94).

¹⁷ It would be wrong to say that Dickens and Collins never included actual specters in their works, but several major works reveal the “ghost” to be nothing more than part of the dastardly plots of their villains or something else entirely that can still be explained by rational means.

¹⁸ Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Complete Stories of Robert Louis Stevenson: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Nineteen Other Tales*. ed. Barry Menikoff. New York, The Modern Library 2002. Print.

In a different version of this project, Stevenson would have been included but for lack of space he had to be sacrificed. However, an exploration of the supernatural horror within his works would certainly make these points more complete in several ways, despite the fact that Stevenson’s strong interest and inclusion of science in his novels somewhat make him a hinderance to charting the literary influences leading up to the “weird fiction” authors. Lovecraft heralds Stevenson in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, however does point out his flaws as a writer of the supernatural, stating “we may say that this school still survives; for to it clearly belong such of our contemporary horror-tales as specialise in events rather than atmospheric details, address the intellect rather than the impressionistic imagination, cultivate a luminous glamour rather than a malign tensy or psychological verisimilitude, and take a definite stand in sympathy with mankind and its welfare. It has its undeniable strength, and because of its “human element” commands a wider audience than does the sheer artistic nightmare. If not quite so potent as the latter, it is because a diluted product can never achieve the intensity of a concentrated essence” (Lovecraft 48).

¹⁹ The following editions are great entrances into these seminal fictions by Wells. Patrick Parrinder’s introductions in the Penguin editions are indispensible resources, and John Calvin Batchelor’s dual reading of *The Time Machine* and *The Invisible Man* is fascinating. In a longer version of this project, a portion on Wells’ contribution to this subject would provide more depth, especially concerning his unexpected similarities with Stoker.

Wells, H.G. *The First Men in the Moon*. ed. Patrick Parrinder. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.

Wells, H.G. *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. ed. Patrick Parrinder. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.

Wells, H.G. *The Sleeper Awakes*. ed. Patrick Parrinder. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.

Wells, H. G. *The Time Machine and the Invisible Man*. ed. John Calvin Batchelor. New York: Signet Classics, 2007. Print.

Wells, H.G. *The War of the Worlds*. ed. Patrick Parrinder. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.

²⁰ Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. *In A Glass Darkly*. ed. Robert Tracy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Print.

²¹ From *The Vampire in 19th Century English Literature*: “Carmilla is a centuries old vampire, not a wicked human being. However, because Laura and her father refuse to believe in the supernatural, the truth about Carmilla isn’t revealed until the end of the book. Astute readers have probably come to the conclusion that Carmilla is a vampire by that time, but they can still concentrate on the commonplace details that Laura observes (and on the similarities between the vampire’s traits and ordinary human evil) up to that point” (Senf 50).

²² Rymer, James Malcolm. *Varney the Vampyre*. London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2010. Print.

²³ “Penny dreadful” is a term used to describe small pamphlets published weekly that cost one penny to purchase. Its contents were serialized stories that were continued week to week. In the case of *Varney the Vampyre*, the parts were put together and published in novel form upon completion. As a result of the rapidity imperative for publication, stories in “penny dreadfuls” are not heralded for their strong prose or character development, focusing more on action and suspense to keep the public interest. An informative, if slightly outdated, survey of them can be found in Michael Anglo’s *Penny Dreadfuls and Other Victorian Horrors* (1977).

²⁴ “Because of its numerous inconsistencies, including the inconsistencies in Varney himself, *Varney the Vampyre* is almost as difficult to classify as a literary work as it is to read: in numerous scenes. . . Varney is a character who might have come straight from folklore. However, in other scenes, there is even a question whether Varney *is* a vampire” (Senf 45).

²⁵ From *The Vampire in 19th Century English Literature*: “Not only does *Varney* adapt existing material about the vampire, but it also adds to the popular concept of the vampire: it reinforces an idea begun by Polidori that the vampire is an aristocrat; suggests that the vampire represents the power of the past over the present. . . Like *Lord Ruthven*, *Sir Francis Varney* is an aristocrat; and the association of the literary vampire with the aristocracy will continue throughout nineteenth-century literature” (Senf 43).

²⁶ From *The Vampire in 19th Century English Literature*: “Although the vampire does have the power of life and death over its apparently helpless victim, it is subject to a number of constraints: It is powerful only at certain times of day; it is immobilized by certain holy objects (the vampire’s fear of religious artifacts is a commonplace in twentieth-century horror films, but Carmilla’s discomfort when she hears the funeral hymns is the first literary example of the power that religious artifacts have over the vampire): and it has to use anagrams of its original name (apparently another of LeFanu’s additions although one that has *not* become part of the tradition) (Senf 53).

²⁷ While this study is primarily rooted in literature of Victorian London, the small reference to Le Fanu and the forthcoming heavy analysis of Stoker feels acceptable due to Great Britain’s colonizing of it at the time. Furthermore, the bulk of *Dracula* takes place in London, with the vampiric figure acting as an Other and taking over the land, so clearly these issues of national identity were weighing on Stoker’s mind.

²⁸ Senf, Carol A. *Bram Stoker*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010. Print.

Senf’s book is an excellent survey on almost all of Stoker’s works and their relation to the Gothic, even giving short analysis’ on lesser known short works.

²⁹ The three editions these texts are being culled from are as follows, with all of the short stories coming from the same volume:

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. ed. Maurice Hindle. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. Print.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula’s Guest and Other Weird Stories with The Lair of the White Worm*. ed. Kate Hebblethwaite. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. Print.

Stoker, Bram. *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. ed. Kate Hebblethwaite. New York: Penguin Books, 2008. Print.

³⁰ Hebblethwaite, Kate. Introduction. *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories with The Lair of the White Worm*. By Bram Stoker. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. Print.

“The certainties of what it meant to be human became increasingly unstable. . . following evolution theory’s unwelcome suggestion that both man and ape evolved from a single lineage. . . a definable body of fiction emerged which confronted the potentials of this narrowing gap between man and beast” (xix-xx).

Hebblethwaite naturally uses the short works within the volume as illustrative of her point while also including Robert Louis Stevenson and H. G. Wells, but many of her ideas connect with the way characters interact with Count Dracula.

³¹ Blinderman, Charles S. “Vampirella: Darwin and Count Dracula.” *The Massachusetts Review*. Vol. 21, No. 2 (Summer, 1980, pp. 411-428. Web.

³² Wasson, Richard.. “The Politics of *Dracula*.” *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*. Ed. Margaret L. Carter. Ann Arbor/London: UMI Research Press, 1988. 18-23. Print.

³³ Full quotation: “While journeying from London to Transylvania, Harker muses on the quaint customs which he encounters; and he notes in his journal that he must question his host about them. Stoker uses Harker's perplexity to establish his character as a very parochial Englishman whose apparent curiosity is not a desire for understanding, but a need to have his preconceptions confirmed. However, instead of finding someone like himself at the end of his journey, a person who can provide a rational explanation for these examples of non-English behavior, Harker discovers a ruined castle, itself a memento of bygone ages, and a man who, reminding him that Transylvania is not England, prides himself on being an integral part of his nations heroic past” (Senf 164).

³⁴ Senf, Carol. A. “*Dracula and The Lair of the White Worm*.” *Gothic Studies*. Volume 2, Number 2, August 2000, pp. 218-231.

³⁵ Beer, Gillian. *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Print.

Beer’s book remains a marvelous study of Darwinian theory in conjunction with various Victorian narratives.

³⁶ Kirtley, Bacil F. “*Dracula*, the Monastic Chronicles and Slavic Folklore.” *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*. Ed. Margaret L. Carter. Ann Arbor/London: UMI Research Press, 1988. 11-17. Print.

³⁷ Kirtley’s essay is light on close reading, but a fascinating wealth of historical information about vampiric legend that makes great use of its short length.

³⁸ Full quotation from *Dracula*: “His face was a strong—a very strong—aquiline, wit high bridge of the thin nose, and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor. Hitherto I had noticed the backs of his hands as they lay on his knees in the firelight, and they had seemed rather white and fine; but seeing them now close to me, I could not but notice that they were rather coarse—broad, with squat fingers. Strange to say, there were hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point. As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, to what I would, I could not conceal” (Stoker 24-25).

³⁹ “Listen to them—the children of the night. What music they make!” (Stoker 25).

⁴⁰ Full quotation from *Dracula*: “How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made manifest in the reading of them. All needless matters have been eliminated, so that a history almost at variance with the possibilities of later-day belief may stand forth as simple fact. There is throughout no statement of past things wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them” (Stoker 6).

⁴¹ Senf, Carol A. “Dracula: The Unseen Face in the Mirror.” *The Journal of Narrative Technique*. Vol. 9, No. 3 (Fall, 1979). pp. 160-170. Web.

⁴² This passage comes at the very end of the second chapter. David Seed brilliantly deconstructs the narrative style of the novel in his essay “The Narrative Method of *Dracula*”, noting that the ending of all of Harker’s early chapters end with a moment of intensity: “The four chapters of Harker’s journal all end on a point of crisis: the attack by the wolves, his realization that he is a prisoner, his near seduction, and his vision of Dracula in his box. The progression of events is remorselessly toward confronting Dracula’s own vampirism, confronting the very thing that Harker’s rationalism is unwilling to accept. There is therefore a constant backwards pull in Harker’s journal, an attempt to retard or even suspend the flow of events so that he can organize them into some kind of explanation” (Seed 197).

⁴³ Baldick, Chris. *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-century Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. 146-148. Print.

⁴⁴ Full quotation from “*Dracula: The Unseen Face in the Mirror*”: “Finally, even if Dracula is responsible for all of the Evil of which he is accused, he is tried, convicted, and sentenced by men (including two lawyers) who give him no opportunity to explain his actions and who repeatedly violate the laws which they profess to be defending: they avoid an inquest of Lucy’s death, break into her tomb and desecrate her body, breaking into Dracula’s houses, frequently resort to bribery and coercion to avoid legal involvement, and openly admit that they are responsible for the deaths of five alleged vampires. While it can be argued that *Dracula* is a fantasy and therefore not subject to the laws of verisimilitude, Stoker uses the flimsiness of such “evidence” to focus on the contrast between the narrators’ rigorous moral arguments and their all-too-pragmatic methods” (Senf 163).

⁴⁵ “She then rose and dried her eyes, and taking a crucifix from her neck offered it to me. I did not know what to do, for, as an English Churchman, I have been taught to regard such things as in some measure idolatrous, and yet it seemed so ungracious to refuse an old lady meaning so well and in such a state of mind. She saw, I supposed, the doubt in my face, for she put the rosary round my neck. . . I am writing this part of the diary. . . late; and the crucifix is still round my neck” (Stoker 11).

⁴⁶ Gonzalez, Antonio Ballesteros. “Portraits, Rats and Other Dangerous Things: Bram Stoker's ‘The Judge's House’”. *That Other World: The Supernatural and the Fantastic in Irish Literature and its Contexts*. ed. Bruce Stewart. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smyth Ltd, 1998. 18-29. Print.

⁴⁷ Hindle, Maurice. Introduction. *Dracula*. by Bram Stoker. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. Print.

⁴⁸ “The Judge’s House” is greatly indebted to the plot of Le Fanu’s “Mr. Justice Harbottle,” which is included in the collection *In a Glass Darkly* cited above (see note 16).

⁴⁹ “Eventually Stoker shifts from plausible explanations to focus on the supernatural. . . Malcolmson is not mad, for the physician describes him as ‘sound and healthy a young man, mentally and bodily as ever I saw’” (Seng 12).

⁵⁰ “instead of rats, a mysterious black cat demonstrates superiority over the human characters” (*Bram Stoker* Senf 17).

⁵¹ Full quotation: “I want to feel the same pleasure as the other jays had when those spikes began to move towards their eyes. . . Once more the resolution that is born of curiosity triumphed. . . Hutcheson's face was positively radiant as his eyes followed the first movement of the spikes” (Stoker 47).

⁵² Hebblethwaite, Kate. Introduction. *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. By Bram Stoker. New York: Penguin Books, 2008. Print.

⁵³ Lovecraft on *The Lair of the White Worm* in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*: “Bram Stoker. . . created many starkly horrific conceptions in a series of novels whose poor technique sadly impairs their net effect. *The Lair of the White Worm*, dealing with a gigantic primitive entity that lurks in a vault beneath an ancient castle, utterly ruins a magnificent idea by a development almost infantile” (Lovecraft 74).

⁵⁴ Punter, David. “Echoes in the Animal House: *The Lair of the White Worm*.” *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic*. Eds. William Hughes and Andrew Smith. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 1998. 173-187. Print.

⁵⁵ Ellmann, Maud. Introduction. *Dracula*. By Bram Stoker. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

⁵⁶ “Young Adam Salton, when he arrives from Australia at the beginning of the novel's action, knows nothing; or rather, his knowledge of the remote past comes from books, and he has yet to be immersed in the 'real' life of history figured here as the 'old world' of historic and prehistoric Mercia” (Punter 175).

⁵⁷ Ludlam, Harry. *A Biography of Bram Stoker the Creator of Dracula*. London: New English Library, 1977. Print.

“The writing terse, bare, jerky, hurrying on to the next contrived scene, compressing great strides in sentences of convenience” (Ludlam 165).

⁵⁸ Joshi, S.T. *The Weird Tale*. Pennsylvania: Wildside Press, 1990. Print.

“Machen, Dunsany, and Blackwood were never published by any but major houses. The pulp magazine phenomenon in weird fiction never developed in England—British versions of *Weird Tales* and other pulps were infrequent and little regarded, and people like Blackwood and Dunsany did not publish in these magazines but rather in periodicals like *Time and Tide*, *Westminster Review*, and the like. (Dunsany was also a rare phenomenon in publishing his weird work extensively in American magazines like *Smart Set*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and the like through the 1940s, but this was probably a result of his anomalous fame in America.)” (Joshi 5 *The Weird Tale*).

⁵⁹ Thin, D. A Note on the Selection. *Shadows of Carcosa: Tales of Cosmic Horror by Lovecraft, Chambers, Machen, Poe, and Other Masters of the Weird*. New York: New York Review of Books, 2002. Print.

Full quotation: “The familiar scenes of daily life fall away to reveal an unthinkable, encompassing alien dimension that threatens to engulf and destroy everything. It may break out of space or out of time, a pastness or futurity suddenly erupting within or descending upon the present. It may break out of the supposed sanctum of the self--the familiar figure in the mirror abruptly proving itself a strange, a ghost, a mere host to an entity of some unimagined sort. Or it may emerge in the body like a disease, corrupting its tissues and disorganizing its structures, so that it turns pestilent and repugnant, oozing or crumbling away before our eyes” (Thin 350).

This volume edited by D. Thin is a terrific sampling of "weird fiction", offering some of the best individual stories by the authors presented. Notable works include Arthur Machen's "The White People," Robert. W. Chambers' "The Repairer of Reputations," and Algernon Blackwood's "The Willows".

⁶⁰ Joshi, S.T. Introduction. *The White People and Other Weird Stories*. New York; Penguin, 2011. Print.

⁶¹ Dunsany, James, and Bierce are all interesting "weird fiction" authors in their own ways, though the focuses on the bulk of their works are simply not particularly relevant to this course of study. Dunsany and James' *philosophies* of "weird writing" are more crucial to this study than perhaps close readings of individual texts would be.

Dunsany's contribution to the world of fantasy stories is immense, and his rather amazing series of stories revolving around the mythical Pegana are highly recommended. Pegana exists out of the refusal to accept that our existence is the only true reality. Dunsany also dabbled with stories emphasizing the differences between the imagination and reality such as "The Wonderful Window" (1911), "The Coronation of Mr. Thomas Shap" (1911), and "The City on Mallington Moor" (1913). Joshi's edited *In the Land of Time and Other Fantasy Tales* (2004) through Penguin is a widely accessible and excellent overview of the variety of tales by Dunsany during his career

Joshi's chapter on Lord Dunsany in *The Weird Tale* is an excellent analysis of the concept of reader belief in Dunsany's fiction, as well as a section on his usage of animals in connection with man. While it is on a somewhat different tract from the ideas presented here, it makes a terrific and very complete companion about the notion of believing in the extraordinary events depicted in the stories of weird writers.

H.P. Lovecraft on Dunsany in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*: "Unexcelled in the sorcery of crystalline singing prose, and supreme in the creation of a gorgeous and languorous world of iridescently exotic vision. . . whose tales and short plays form an almost unique element in our literature. Inventor of a new mythology and weaver of surprising folklore, Lord Dunsany stands dedicated to a strange world of fantastic beauty, and pledged to eternal warfare against the coarseness and ugliness of diurnal reality. His point of view is the most truly cosmic of any held in the literature of any period" (Lovecraft 89).

James' output was just about entirely ghost stories. Recommended works that connect to this area of study are "Number 13" (1899), "Casting the Runes" (1911), and "The Haunted Dolls' House" (1923). Joshi edited a pair of Penguin editions that present the entirety of James' ghost stories: *Count Magnus and Other Ghost Stories* (2005), and *The Haunted Dolls' House and Other Ghost Stories* (2006).

H.P. Lovecraft on James in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*: "An almost diabolic power of calling horror by gentle steps from the prosaic daily life. . . the art of Dr. James is by no means haphazard, and in the preface to one of his collections he has formulated three very sound rules for macabre composition. A ghost story, he believes, should have a familiar setting in the modern period, in order to approach closely the reader's sphere of experience. Its spectral phenomena, moreover, should be malevolent rather than beneficent; since *fear* is the emotion primarily to be excited. And finally, the technical patois of "occultism" or pseudo-science ought carefully to be avoided; lest the charm of casual verisimilitude be smothered in unconvincing pedantry. . . Creating the illusion of every-day events, he introduces his abnormal phenomena cautiously and gradually; relieved at every turn by touches of homely and prosaic detail, and sometimes spiced with a snatch or two of antiquarian scholarship. . . he generally provides remote historical antecedents for his incidents" (Lovecraft 91-92).

⁶² Machen, Arthur. *The Great God Pan*. New Jersey: J.P. Piper Books, 2015. Print.

⁶³ Machen, Arthur. *The Three Imposters*. Mineola: Dover Publications, 2007. Print.

⁶⁴ Lovecraft on *The Great God Pan* in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*: “But the charm of the tale is in the telling. No one could begin to describe the cumulative suspense and ultimate horror with which every paragraph abounds without following fully the precise order in which Mr. Machen unfolds his gradual hints and revelations. Melodrama is undeniably present, and coincidence is stretched to a length which appears absurd upon analysis; but in the malign witchery of the tale as a whole these trifles are forgotten, and the sensitive reader reaches the end with only an appreciative shudder and a tendency to repeat the words of one of the characters: “It is too incredible, too monstrous; such things can never be in this quiet world. . . . Why, man, if such a case were possible, our earth would be a nightmare” (Lovecraft 83).

⁶⁵ It is most likely a coincidence, but Clarke's usage of the word “phantasmagoria” creates an amusing full circle with the book that inspired the ghost story contest in which Shelley and Polidori participated.

⁶⁶ From *The Weird Tale*: “Machen must refute science in some fashion or other, however bungling and inept, because its truth would (so Machen thinks) make untenable the belief in the mystery of the universe--something that he clings to with the desperation of neurosis. If science were true, the world would be such a *dull* place; *therefore* (as Machen, like so many other mystics, reason), science must be wrong. What Machen really resents is science's intrusion into fields--principally art and religion--where he feels it doesn't belong” (Joshi 15-16).

⁶⁷ Machen, Arthur. *The White People and Other Weird Stories*. ed. S.T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 2011. Print.

With the exception of *The Great God Pan*, all citations from the Machen stories will be culled from this volume.

⁶⁸ Machen, Arthur. “Folklore and Legends of the North.” *Literature*. September 24th, 1898. pgs 271-274. Web.

⁶⁹ Wagenknecht, Edward. *Seven Masters of Supernatural Fiction*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1991. Print.

Wagenknecht's book is a strong overview of a variety of supernatural fiction writers, some featured here and some not, providing biographical information, bibliographic information, and literary criticism. Wagenknecht offers pieces on Le Fanu, Henry James, M.R. James, Algernon Blackwood, Machen, Walter de la Mare, and Marjorie Bowen. Joshi's *The Weird Tale* makes a nice companion in both style and substance, though Wagenbecht's treatment of James is much more fleshed out and informative.

⁷⁰ H.P. Lovecraft on Blackwood in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*: “for no one has even approached the skill, seriousness, and minute fidelity with which he records the overtones of strangeness in ordinary things and experiences, or the preternatural insight with which he builds up detail by detail the complete sensations and perceptions leading from reality into supernormal life or vision. . . he is the one absolute and unquestioned master of weird atmosphere. . .above all others he understands how fully some sensitive minds dwell forever on the borderland of dream, and how relatively slight is the distinction betwixt those images formed from actual objects and those excited by the play of the imagination” (Lovecraft 87).

⁷¹ Blackwood, Algernon. *Ancient Sorceries and Other Weird Stories*. ed. S.T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 2002. Print.

⁷² H.P. Lovecraft on "The Willows" in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*: "Here art and restraint in narrative reach their very highest development, and an impression of lasting poignancy is produced without a single strained passage or a single false note" (Lovecraft 88).

⁷³ H.P. Lovecraft on "The Wendigo" in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*: "Another amazingly potent though less artistically finished tale. . .where we are confronted by horrible evidences of a vast forest daemon about which North Woods lumbermen whisper at evening. The manner in which certain footprints tell certain unbelievable things is really a marked triumph in craftsmanship" (Lovecraft 88).

Joshi, S.T. Explanatory Notes. *Ancient Sorceries and Other Weird Stories*. New York: Penguin, 2002. Print.

⁷⁴ Lovecraft, H.P. *The Dreams in the Witch House and Other Weird Stories*. ed. S.T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 2002. Print.

Lovecraft, H.P. *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*. ed. S.T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 1999. Print.

These three stories are culled from these two editions: "From Beyond" from the former, and "Herbert West--Reanimator" and "The Call of Cthulhu" from the latter. All citations from the stories will be from its respective volume.

Joshi also edited a third volume of Lovecraft stories through Penguin: *The Thing on the Doorstep and Other Weird Stories* (2001). His explanatory notes in all three volumes are terrific and essential for the Lovecraft scholar.

⁷⁵ Dunsany's "The Gods of Pegana" is fully a fantasy story, comprised on a series of short sketches of the various gods of Pegana, in a style similar to Greek or Biblical mythology.

⁷⁶ Lovecraft, H.P. *Selected Letters Vol. 5: 1934-1937*. Wisconsin: Arkham House, 1976. Web.

⁷⁷ *The King in Yellow* was widely unavailable for several years until it was revealed to be the inspiration for the popular HBO television show *True Detective* in 2014. There was a quick rush by various publishers to get it back in print while interest was present, and the best of these editions seems to be the Joshi edited volume from *The Barnes & Noble Library of Essential Reading* from 2014. It is not nearly as heavily annotated as his Penguin editions of the other authors, but does add some references as opposed to just the complete text.

⁷⁸ H.P. Lovecraft on Robert W. Chambers in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*: "Very genuine, though not without the typical mannered extravagance of the eighteen-nineties, is the strain of horror in the early work of Robert W. Chambers, since renowned for products of a very different quality. . . *The King in Yellow*, a series of vaguely connected short stories having as a background a monstrous and suppressed book whose perusal brings fright, madness, and spectral tragedy, really achieves notable heights of cosmic fear in spite of uneven interest. . . The most powerful of its tales, perhaps, is "The Yellow Sign", in which is introduced a silent and terrible churchyard watchman with a face like a puffy grave-worm's. . . One cannot help regretting that he did not further develop a vein in which he could so easily have become a recognised master (Lovecraft 69).

While Lovecraft (among many others) cites "The Yellow Sign" the highlight of the collection, "The Repairer of Reputations" stands out as being a highly original and dark futuristic tale with a haunting conclusion.

⁷⁹ Much of Clark Ashton Smith's work has also been difficult to find, aside from the recent Penguin edited by Joshi called *The Dark Eidolon and Other Fantasies* (2014). All of the stories mentioned in the body can be found in this volume.

⁸⁰ H.P. Lovecraft on Clark Ashton Smith in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*: “Of younger Americans, none strikes the note of cosmic terror so well as the California poet, artist, and fictionist Clark Ashton Smith, whose bizarre writings, drawings, paintings, and stories are the delight of a sensitive few. Mr. Smith has for his background a universe of remote and paralysing fright—jungles of poisonous and iridescent blossoms on the moons of Saturn, evil and grotesque temples in Atlantis, Lemuria, and forgotten elder worlds, and dank morasses of spotted death-fungi in spectral countries beyond earth’s rim. . . In sheer daemonic strangeness and fertility of conception, Mr. Smith is perhaps unexcelled by any other writer dead or living. Who else has seen such gorgeous, luxuriant, and feverishly distorted visions of infinite spheres and multiple dimensions and lived to tell the tale? His short stories deal powerfully with other galaxies, worlds, and dimensions, as well as with strange regions and aeons on the earth” (Lovecraft 72).

⁸¹ Sloane, William. *The Rim of Morning: Two Tales of Cosmic Horror*. New York: New York Review of Books, 2015. Print.

Bibliography

Baldick, Chris. *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-century Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. 146-148. Print.

Baldick, Chris and Robert Morrison. Introduction. *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*. Eds. Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.

Beer, Gillian. *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Print.

Blackwood, Algernon. *Ancient Sorceries and Other Weird Stories*. ed. S.T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 2002. Print.

———“Ancient Sorceries.” pp. 87-130.

———“The Insanity of Jones.” pp. 63-86.

———“The Wendigo.” pp. 147-191.

———“The Willows.” pp. 17-62.

Chambers, Robert. W. *The King in Yellow*. ed. S. T. Joshi. New York: Barnes & Noble Library of Essential Reading, 2014. Print.

———“In the Court of the Dragon.” pp. 50-58.

———“The Mask.” pp. 33-49.

———“The Repairer of Reputations.” pp. 1-32.

———“The Yellow Sign.” pp. 59-77.

Clery, E. J. “The Genesis of “Gothic” in Fiction.” *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic*

Fiction. ed. Jerrold E. Hogle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 21-39. Print.

Ellmann, Maud. Introduction. *Dracula*. By Bram Stoker. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Frayling, Christopher. *The Vampyre: A Bedside Companion*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978. Print.

Gonzalez, Antonio Ballesteros. "Portraits, Rats and Other Dangerous Things: Bram Stoker's "The Judge's House". *That Other World: The Supernatural and the Fantastic in Irish Literature and its Contexts*. ed. Bruce Stewart. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smyth Ltd, 1998. 18-29. Print.

Hebblethwaite, Kate. Introduction. *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories with The Lair of the White Worm*. By Bram Stoker. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. Print.

Hebblethwaite, Kate. Introduction. *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. By Bram Stoker. New York: Penguin Books, 2008. Print.

Hindle, Maurice. Introduction. *Dracula*. by Bram Stoker. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. Print.

James, M. R. *Count Magnus and Other Ghost Stories*. ed. S. T. Joshi. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.

———"Casting the Runes." pp.158-179.

———"Number 13." pp. 51-66.

- James, M. R. *The Haunted Dolls' House and Other Ghost Stories*. ed. S. T. Joshi. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. Print.
- “The Haunted Dolls' House.” pp. 78-89.
- Joshi, S.T. Explanatory Notes. *Ancient Sorceries and Other Weird Stories*. New York: Penguin, 2002. Print.
- Joshi, S. T. Introduction. *American Supernatural Tales*. New York: Penguin Books, 2007. Print.
- Joshi, S. T. *The Weird Tale*. Pennsylvania: Wildside Press, 1990. Print.
- Joshi, S. T. Introduction. *The White People and Other Weird Stories*. ed. S. T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 2011. Print.
- Kirtley, Bacil F. “*Dracula*, the Monastic Chronicles and Slavic Folklore.” *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*. Ed. Margaret L. Carter. Ann Arbor/London: UMI Research Press, 1988. 11-17. Print.
- Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. *In A Glass Darkly*. ed. Robert Tracy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Print.
- “Carmilla.” 243-319.
- “Mr. Justice Harbottle.” pp. 83-118.
- Lord Dunsany. *In the Land of Time and Other Fantasy Tales*. ed. S. T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 2004. Print.
- “The City on Mallington Moor.” pp. 229-236.
- “The Coronation of Mr. Thomas Shap.” pp. 224-228.
- “The Gods of Pegana.” pp. 3-48.

———“The Wonderful Window.” pp. 219-223.

Lovecraft, H.P. *The Annotated Supernatural Horror in Literature*. Ed. S. T. Joshi. New York: Hippocampus Press, 2012. Print.

Lovecraft, H.P. *The Dreams in the Witch House and Other Weird Stories*. ed. S.T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 2002. Print.

———“From Beyond.” pp. 23-29.

Lovecraft, H.P. *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*. ed. S.T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 1999. Print.

———“The Call of Cthulhu.” pp. 139-169.

———“Herbert West—Reanimator.” pp. 50-80.

Lovecraft, H.P. *Selected Letters Vol. 5: 1934-1937*. Wisconsin: Arkham House, 1976. Web.

Ludlam, Harry. *A Biography of Bram Stoker the Creator of Dracula*. London: New English Library, 1977. Print.

MacDonald, D.L. *Poor Polidori: A Critical Biography of the Author of The Vampyre*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. Print.

Machen, Arthur. “Folklore and Legends of the North.” *Literature*. September 24th, 1898. pgs 271-274. Web.

Machen, Arthur. *The Great God Pan*. New Jersey: J.P. Piper Books, 2015. Print.

Machen, Arthur. *The White People and Other Weird Stories*. ed. S. T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 2011. Print.

———“The Inmost Light.” pp. 1-28.

———“Novel of the Black Seal.” pp. 29-66.

———“Novel of the White Powder.” pp. 67-82.

———“Out of the Earth.” pp. 265-271.

———“The Red Hand.” pp. 83-110.

———“The White People.” pp. 111-147.

Polidori, John. “The Vampyre.” *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*. Eds.

Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

3-23. Print.

Punter, David. “Echoes in the Animal House: *The Lair of the White Worm*.” *Bram Stoker:*

History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic. Eds. William Hughes and Andrew Smith.

London: Palgrave Macmillan. 1998. 173-187. Print.

Rymer, James Malcolm. *Varney the Vampyre*. London: Wordsworth Editions Limited,

2010. Print.

Seed, David. “The Narrative Method of *Dracula*.” *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*.

Ed. Margaret L. Carter. Ann Arbor/London: UMI Research Press, 1988. 11-17.

Print.

Senf, Carol A. *Bram Stoker*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010. Print.

Senf, Carol A. “*Dracula* and *The Lair of the White Worm*.” *Gothic Studies*. Volume 2,

Number 2, August 2000, pp. 218-231.

Senf, Carol A. “*Dracula*: The Unseen Face in the Mirror.” *The Journal of Narrative*

Technique. Vol. 9, No. 3 (Fall, 1979). pp. 160-170. Web.

Senf, Carol A. "Polidori's 'The Vampyre': Combining the Gothic with Realism." *North Dakota Quarterly*. 56 (1988): 197-208. Web.

Senf, Carol A. *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature*. Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988. Print.

Shelley, Mary. *Three Gothic Novels: The Castle of Otranto; Vathek; Frankenstein*. Ed. Peter Fairclough. London. Penguin, 1986. Print.

Sloane, William. *The Rim of Morning: Two Tales of Cosmic Horror*. New York: New York Review of Books, 2015. Print.

———*To Walk the Night* pp. 1-219.

Smith, Clark Ashton. *The Dark Eidolon and Other Fantasies*. ed. S.T. Joshi. New York: Penguin Books, 2014. Print.

———"The Devotee of Evil." pp. 21-33.

———"The Last Incantation." pp. 16-20.

———"The Tale of Satampira Zeiros." pp. 3-15.

———"The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis." pp. 91-111.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Complete Stories of Robert Louis Stevenson: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Nineteen Other Tales*. ed. Barry Menikoff. New York, The Modern Library 2002. Print.

———"The Body Snatcher." pp. 710-727.

———*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. pp. 251-324.

- Stiles, Anne, Stanley Finger and John Bulevich. "Somnambulism and Trance States in the Works of John William Polidori, Author of *The Vampyre*". *European Romantic Review*. Vol. 21, No. 6, December 2010. 789-807. Web.
- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. ed. Maurice Hindle. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. Print.
- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories with The Lair of the White Worm*. ed. Kate Hebblethwaite. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. Print.
- "The Burial of the Rats." pp. 93-117.
- "Dracula's Guest." pp. 5-17.
- "The Judge's House." pp. 18-36.
- "The Lair of the White Worm." pp. 151-369.
- "The Squaw." pp. 37-49.
- Stoker, Bram. *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. ed. Kate Hebblethwaite. New York: Penguin Books, 2008. Print.
- Summers, Montague. *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin*. New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 1960. Print.
- Thin, D. A Note on the Selection. *Shadows of Carcosa: Tales of Cosmic Horror by Lovecraft, Chambers, Machen, Poe, and Other Masters of the Weird*. New York: New York Review of Books, 2002. Print.
- Wagenknecht, Edward. *Seven Masters of Supernatural Fiction*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1991. Print.
- Wasson, Richard.. "The Politics of *Dracula*." *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*. Ed. Margaret L. Carter. Ann Arbor/London: UMI Research Press, 1988. 18-23. Print.

Wells, H.G. *The First Men in the Moon*. ed. Patrick Parrinder. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.

Wells, H.G. *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. ed. Patrick Parrinder. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.

Wells, H.G. *The Sleeper Awakes*. ed. Patrick Parrinder. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.

Wells, H. G. *The Time Machine and the Invisible Man*. ed. John Calvin Batchelor. New York: Signet Classics, 2007. Print.

Wells, H.G. *The War of the Worlds*. ed. Patrick Parrinder. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.